



# Corporate overview

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## The Minister and Parliamentary Secretary



*The Hon Greg Hunt MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, launching new interpretive signage for the Sydney Region Gully at the Australian National Botanic Gardens on 23 May 2005.*

Ministerial responsibility for Australian Government protected areas transferred from the Hon Dr David Kemp MP to Senator the Hon Ian Campbell on 19 July 2004. Following the October 2004 election, Senator Campbell was reappointed as Minister for the Environment and Heritage and the Hon Greg Hunt MP was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister. From November 2004 Mr Hunt had ministerial responsibility on behalf of Senator Campbell for terrestrial Commonwealth

reserves established under the EPBC Act, and for the Director of National Parks. Senator Campbell retained responsibility for Commonwealth marine reserves.

In this report reference to the Minister includes the Parliamentary Secretary.

Ministerial responsibilities in relation to the Director include the approval of proposals for establishment of Commonwealth reserves and conservation zones under the EPBC Act, approval of management plans for Commonwealth reserves, establishment and appointment of members of boards of management for Commonwealth reserves jointly managed with Aboriginal owners, resolution of disputes between the Director and boards of management, and the approval of Commonwealth reserve use fees and other charges.

## The Director of National Parks

The Director of National Parks is a corporation sole under the EPBC Act, and a Commonwealth authority for the purposes of the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997* (CAC Act). The corporation has a single director—the person appointed to the office named the Director of National Parks. The current office holder is Peter Cochrane.

The EPBC Act requires the Director to perform functions and exercise powers in accordance with any directions given by the Minister, unless the Act provides otherwise. The Minister may also notify the Director under the CAC Act of general policies of the Government that are to apply to the Director.

The EPBC Act provides for the proclamation and management of Commonwealth reserves and conservation zones. The term 'Commonwealth reserves' includes all the areas proclaimed under the EPBC Act with names such as national parks, marine parks, national nature reserves, marine national nature reserves, marine reserves, and botanic gardens. Thus this report generally uses the term 'reserves' to encompass all parks and reserves under the EPBC Act.

The Director of National Parks is responsible under the EPBC Act for the administration, management and control of Commonwealth reserves and conservation zones. The locations of the Commonwealth reserves and conservation zones are shown at Figure 1.

The Director is assisted by staff of Parks Australia, a division of the Department of the Environment and Heritage. For 2004–05, staff of the Australian Antarctic Division of the Department, under delegation from the Director, undertook management of the Heard Island and McDonald Islands Marine Reserve while staff of the Marine Division, under delegation from the Director, undertook management of the remaining Commonwealth reserves established in Commonwealth marine areas.

In this report, reference to Parks Australia refers to the Director of National Parks and Parks Australia staff.

## Functions

The Director is responsible for the administration of Divisions 4 and 5 of Part 15 of the EPBC Act (Commonwealth reserves and conservation zones) and regulations made for the purposes of those divisions. The functions of the Director as set out in subsection 514B(1) of the EPBC Act are:

- to administer, manage and control Commonwealth reserves and conservation zones
- to protect, conserve and manage biodiversity and heritage in Commonwealth reserves and conservation zones
- to cooperate with any country in matters relating to the establishment and management of national parks and nature reserves in that country
- to provide, and assist in the provision of, training in the knowledge and skills relevant to the establishment and management of national parks and nature reserves
- to carry out alone or in cooperation with other institutions and persons, and to arrange for any other institution or person to carry out, research and investigations relevant to the establishment and management of Commonwealth reserves
- to make recommendations to the Minister in relation to the establishment and management of Commonwealth reserves

- to administer the Australian National Parks Fund
- any other functions conferred on the Director under any other Act
- to do anything incidental or conducive to the performance of any of the functions mentioned above.

## Other responsibilities

The holder of the office of Director of National Parks, Peter Cochrane, has been delegated functions and powers by the Minister for the Environment and Heritage and the Secretary of the Department of the Environment and Heritage for programmes that complement the statutory functions of the Director. Parks Australia staff administer these programmes.

Under these delegations, the Director administers the National Reserve System Programme—a programme of the Natural Heritage Trust that includes the Indigenous Protected Areas Programme. Outputs of the National Reserve System Programme are reported in the annual reports of the Natural Heritage Trust and the Department of the Environment and Heritage. Under section 45 of the *Natural Heritage Trust of Australia Act 1997*, the Director has been delegated the power to approve proposals to spend moneys within the meaning of the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*, in relation to the Natural Heritage Trust Reserve, to the limit of programme funds approved by the Minister.

The Director also manages the Australian Biological Resources Study and the development of Australian Government policy on management of Australia's genetic resources. Outputs of both programmes are reported in the Department's annual report.

## Parks Australia's values and approaches

As part of the Environment and Heritage portfolio, Parks Australia commits to professionalism as a major public service institution serving the Government and Minister in accordance with the values of the Australian Public Service and specific departmental values:

- caring for the environment
- respecting and responding to the values of Indigenous landowners and other partners
- engaging with and responding to stakeholders
- providing leadership and being active team contributors

- being personally committed to learning and development
- committing to excellence
- accepting responsibility and being accountable
- acting with integrity and achieving results.

Objectives are achieved by:

- valuing and investing in people to develop capabilities
- basing work on the best available information
- developing high quality policies and programmes based on high quality analysis
- working in partnerships to improve environmental, cultural and heritage outcomes
- monitoring and managing performance to ensure cost-effective outcomes are delivered
- effectively managing risks
- managing change in a strategic and flexible manner
- communicating and influencing effectively.