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Director of National Parks strategic planning and performance assessment framework

This annual report is one of a number of documents in the Director of National Parks strategic planning and performance assessment framework. Other major elements of the framework are described in this section of the report.

Portfolio Budget Statements

These documents detail Budget initiatives and appropriations against specific outcomes and outputs. The annual report completes the Budget cycle by reporting on achievements of these outputs and outputs for the year under review. The Director of National Parks is included in the Portfolio Budget Statements for the Environment and Heritage portfolio and contributes to the achievement of Outcome 1 (Environment):

The environment, especially those aspects that are matters of national environmental significance, is protected and conserved

The Director contributes to meeting this outcome through the sub-outcome:

Conservation and appreciation of Commonwealth reserves

There is one output identified under the sub-outcome:

Output 1.1: Parks and reserves

Table 10 reports against performance measures for the sub-outcome identified in the Portfolio Budget Statements.

Detailed performance information for individual Commonwealth reserves is included in the State of the Parks section of this report and on the websites for each of those reserves. The website for Commonwealth parks and reserves is: www.deh.gov.au/parks.

Department of the Environment and Heritage strategic plan and corporate plan

The strategic plan outlines the key strategic issues for the Department. It identifies agency priorities to achieve the objectives outlined in the Department's corporate plan. Both documents provide the direction, context and purpose for the activities and programmes supported by the Department.

Parks Australia Divisional Plan

This plan sets down the long-term outcomes and shorter-term outputs for the Director against seven key result areas (KRAs) as follows:

KRA1: Natural heritage management

KRA2: Cultural heritage management

KRA3: Joint management

KRA4: Visitor management and park use

KRA5: Stakeholders and partnerships

KRA6: Business management

KRA7: Biodiversity knowledge management

Not all key result areas are relevant to all reserves. For example, KRA3: Joint management is applicable only to the three jointly managed reserves—Uluru–Kata Tjuta, Kakadu and Booderee National Parks. The State of the Parks section of this report provides performance information only on those key result areas applicable to individual reserves.

Strategies to achieve the outcomes set down in the strategic and corporate plans are elaborated in more detail in Parks Australia branch, section, work team and individual work plans and in management plan implementation schedules.

Management plans

Section 366 of the EPBC Act requires the Director, or in the case of a jointly managed park, the Director and the relevant board of management, to prepare management plans for Commonwealth reserves.

Management plans provide for the protection and conservation of the reserve. They must state how the reserve is to be managed and how the features of the reserve are to be protected and conserved.

At 30 June 2006, the Director was responsible for the management of 20 Commonwealth reserves, 19 of which had management plans in place. The first plan for the Heard Island and McDonald Islands Marine Reserve came into effect on 25 August 2005. Work commenced on preparation of draft new plans for Uluru–Kata Tjuta and Norfolk Island National Parks. The draft fifth plan for Kakadu National Park was released for public comment in February 2006 and is expected to come into effect late in 2006.



Management plan implementation schedules

Parks Australia routinely prepares management plan implementation schedules to identify how and when each of the prescriptions in a management plan will be implemented. As such, implementation schedules contribute to determining the annual work plans for individual reserves.

At 30 June 2006, 18 implementation schedules were in effect.

The template for implementation schedules was further developed and refined during the year.

Management plan prescriptions not to be implemented

During the life of a management plan it may become clear that some of its prescriptions cannot be implemented because, for example, they have become redundant or impractical. No such prescriptions were identified in 2005–06.

Performance indicators

During 2004–2005, performance indicators were developed to facilitate reporting, from 2005–06 onwards, against the key result areas and outcomes set down in the Parks Australia Divisional Plan. Details of the indicators are shown in Table 11.

Use of performance indicators by the Director of National Parks is at an early stage and reporting methodology requires further development and improvement. Nevertheless, this year, the indicators have been used to provide more detailed performance reporting against identified outcomes. As in previous years, brief reports on performance against key result areas and outcomes listed in the Parks Australia Divisional Plan are shown in the State of the Parks section of this report. More detailed performance information is available on the websites for individual reserves.

Table 10: Portfolio Budget Statements sub-outcome: Conservation and appreciation of Commonwealth reserves

Performance measures	Results for 2005–06
Natural values for which Commonwealth reserves were declared and/or recognised have been maintained	Management of all Commonwealth reserves was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the relevant Australian IUCN reserve management principles set out in the EPBC Regulations
Populations of species listed in the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> and their habitats have been conserved	Inventories of species recorded in the terrestrial reserves, including those listed under the EPBC Act, continued to be refined. Similar inventories were prepared for the marine reserves. The updated information collated as a result of this work is reflected in the species information listed in the State of the Parks section of this report. The inventories will assist in establishing more rigorous management and research priorities for Commonwealth reserves
<p>Management of Commonwealth reserves is based on best practice principles, measured through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of park profiles completed and updated annually • all fire management plans in place and implemented for relevant reserves • all weed management plans in place and implemented • feral species management plans in place and implemented • weed and feral species management plans reviewed 	<p>The Director and Parks Australia continued to strive to meet best practice standards in the management of Commonwealth reserves.</p> <p>Park profiles were updated twice during the year and 19 of the 20 reserves had current management plans during the year. Fire, weed and feral control plans were in place and implemented in all reserves needing such plans. Major revisions are being finalised for fire management at Uluru and feral control at Kakadu</p>
<p>Cultural heritage is protected, measured through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completion and implementation of cultural heritage management plans • completion of inventories of cultural places • establishment of keeping places • recording of oral histories • inclusion of appropriate questions relating to cultural heritage in visitor satisfaction surveys 	<p>Cultural heritage was effectively protected through implementation of measures in management plans</p> <p>A draft heritage strategy for Commonwealth heritage (including cultural heritage) for which the Director is responsible was prepared in line with EPBC Act requirements and submitted to the Australian Heritage Council for consideration. Following amendments requested by the council, the strategy is expected to be resubmitted for approval in October 2006</p> <p>Recording of oral histories continued at Uluru and Kakadu</p>



Performance measures	Results for 2005–06
<p>Indigenous land ownership, and Indigenous knowledge and conservation are successfully integrated into Commonwealth reserves management, measured through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing Indigenous park enterprises and Indigenous employment in Commonwealth reserves on Indigenous lands • consultation mechanisms, eg direct consultation and industry consultative committees, are effective in involving stakeholders in developing and implementing Commonwealth reserve plans of management • visitors to Commonwealth reserves enjoy a satisfying and safe experience 	<p>The Director, boards of management and Parks Australia staff continued to work closely with traditional owners to increase traditional owner participation in the control and administration of jointly managed national parks</p> <p>Arrangements with Indigenous park enterprises were enhanced and consultations with traditional owners regarding development and implementation of management plans proceeded effectively</p> <p>Plans were advanced for collection, in 2006–2007, of qualitative data from visitors to the larger reserves</p> <p>Recorded injuries to visitors (145 incidents) were marginally up (2%) on the previous year (see table 13)</p> <p>An estimated 1.43 million people visited Commonwealth reserves</p> <p>New Indigenous tourism enterprises were established in Kakadu</p> <p>A wide range of employment opportunities were filled in jointly managed parks, through contracts to Indigenous business enterprises, and full-time, part-time and casual positions in the parks</p>



Table 11: Performance indicators for reporting against outcomes in the Parks Australia Divisional Plan

Key result area / outcome	Performance indicator
KRA1: Natural heritage management	
<p>1.1 Natural values for which Commonwealth reserves were declared and/or recognised have been maintained</p> <p>1.2 The impacts of threats to natural values have been minimised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Regular targeted monitoring of key values and threats is undertaken · Number of taxa in cultivation in botanic gardens as proportion of total number of species in taxonomic; ecological and geographic; and horticultural themes in the collection policy
KRA2: Cultural heritage management	
<p>2.1 Cultural heritage values, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, for which parks were declared or are recognised have been protected and conserved</p> <p>2.2 Living cultural traditions are being maintained</p> <p>2.3 The impacts of threats to cultural values have been minimised</p> <p>2.4 Wide awareness and appreciation that parks are managed and presented as living cultural landscapes and seascapes has been achieved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Adequacy and recency of inventories of cultural sites · Level and nature of support provided by park management to maintain and promote traditional cultural values · Histories, prehistories and knowledge recorded (oral, written and pictorial) where culturally appropriate
KRA3: Joint management	
<p>3.1 Joint management is being practised through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · implementation of lease provisions and prescriptions contained in management plans · implementation of relevant decisions made by boards of management · growing capacity and increasing participation of traditional owners in park management · positive, harmonious relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Number of traditional owners and relevant Aboriginal people employed directly and indirectly · Training provided for and undertaken by traditional owners and relevant Aboriginal people (staff, contractors and community people) · Contribution of Aboriginal enterprises operating in parks · Proportion of board of management actions addressed within agreed timelines



Table 11: continued

Key result area / outcome	Performance indicator
<p>KRA4: Visitor management and park use</p> <p>4.1 Visitors to Commonwealth reserves enjoy inspirational, satisfying and safe experiences</p> <p>4.2 Visitor impacts (on reserve management, values, the environment and other visitors) are within acceptable levels</p> <p>4.3 Public awareness and appreciation of the values of Commonwealth reserves have been enhanced</p> <p>4.4 Commercial operators provide a high quality service to park visitors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Annual numbers, types and demographics of park visitors · Annual numbers and demographics of people participating in educational, interpretive and other programmes · Levels of satisfaction of park users
<p>KRA5: Stakeholders and partnerships</p> <p>5.1 Volunteers contribute to area management based on clearly defined roles</p> <p>5.2 Stakeholders, eg neighbours, state agencies and park user groups, are involved in and contribute effectively to park management activities</p> <p>5.3 Commercial partnership opportunities are encouraged and evaluated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Annual contribution to active partnership effort · Consultation with stakeholders and partners · Level of satisfaction of the Minister and the Parliamentary Secretary
<p>KRA6: Business management</p> <p>6.1 Planning and decision-making are based on best available information, legislative obligations, Parks Australia policy, and social justice principles</p> <p>6.2 Financial and business management are based on better practice and Government requirements</p> <p>6.3 High levels of staff expertise and performance are recognised and valued</p> <p>6.4 Obligations under the EPBC Act and Regulations relating to management of Commonwealth reserves are complied with</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Extent to which management plans are implemented · Annual number of reportable incidents involving staff and park users · No 'A' or 'B' findings from the annual ANAO audit of Director of National Parks financial statements · Expenditure does not exceed budget · Successful operation of business continuity plan

Table 11: continued

Key result area / outcome	Performance indicator
KRA7: Biodiversity knowledge management	
<p>7.1 High quality, comprehensive and current information is available to the Australian community to facilitate and foster understanding, appreciation, sound conservation and appropriate use of Australian biodiversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Number and value of biodiversity research grants and contracts funded per annum against strategic priorities · Number of biodiversity information publications and online taxonomic tools and resources produced
<p>7.3 Taxonomic, biogeographic and conservation biology research and biological collections management capacity in relevant sections of the Australian community are enhanced</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Number of studentships supported for biodiversity knowledge management · Number of taxa documented, revised or newly described

Note: The above outcomes are derived from a wider set of outcomes contained in the Parks Australia Divisional Plan and the numbers allocated to them are those in the plan. Some of the outcomes in the plan relate to functions delegated to the Director that are additional to the Director’s statutory functions and therefore have been excluded from this table.

