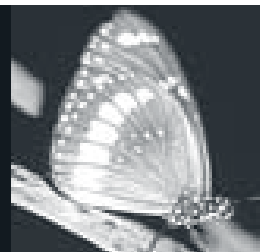


4 Corporate overview



The Minister and Assistant Minister

The Director of National Parks

Functions

Other responsibilities

The Minister and Assistant Minister

Ministerial responsibility for Commonwealth protected areas transferred from Senator the Hon Ian Campbell to the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP on 30 January 2007. The Hon John Cobb MP was appointed Assistant Minister for the Environment and Water Resources on 30 January 2007.

Mr Cobb has ministerial responsibility on behalf of Mr Turnbull for overseeing portfolio activities for the seven land based Commonwealth reserves managed by the Director of National Parks.



The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources (left) and Assistant Minister the Hon John Cobb MP

Ministerial responsibilities in relation to the Director include 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 approval of Commonwealth reserve use fees and other charges.

Mr Turnbull retains responsibility for Commonwealth marine reserves and overall responsibility for the appointment, remuneration and performance aspects of the position of Director of National Parks.

In this report reference to the Minister includes the Assistant Minister.

The Director of National Parks

The Director of National Parks is a corporation sole under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (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 Government policies 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 reserve' 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. 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 Water Resources. In 2006–07, under delegation from the Director, staff of the Australian Antarctic Division of the Department managed the Heard Island and McDonald Islands Marine Reserve while staff of the Marine and Biodiversity Division managed 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 contribute to the protection, conservation and management of biodiversity and heritage in areas outside 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 current Director has been delegated functions and powers by the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources and the Secretary of the Department of the Environment and Water Resources for programmes that complement the Director's statutory functions. Parks Australia staff administer these programmes.

Under these delegations, the Director administers the National Reserve System Programme, a Natural Heritage Trust programme 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 Water Resources. 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.

5 Planning, reporting and performance



Director of National Parks strategic planning and performance assessment framework

Portfolio Budget Statements

Department of the Environment and Water Resources strategic plan and corporate plan

Parks Australia Divisional Plan

Management plans

Management plan implementation

Management plan prescriptions not to be implemented

Performance indicators

Table 8: Portfolio Budget Statements sub-outcome: Conservation and appreciation of Commonwealth reserves

Director of National Parks strategic planning and performance assessment framework

This annual report is one element in the Director of National Parks strategic planning and performance assessment framework. Other framework elements are described in this chapter.

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 outcomes and outputs for the year under review. The Director of National Parks is included in the Portfolio Budget Statements for the Environment and Water Resources 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 8 reports against performance information for Output 1.1 identified in the Portfolio Budget Statements.

Detailed performance information for individual Commonwealth reserves is included in the State of the Parks chapter of this report.

Department of the Environment and Water Resources strategic plan and corporate plan

The annual strategic plan outlines the key strategic issues for the Department. It identifies agency priorities to achieve the objectives outlined in the Department's three-year corporate plan. Both plans 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, applies only to the three jointly managed reserves—Uluru–Kata Tjuta, Kakadu and Booderee National Parks. The State of the Parks chapter of this report provides performance information only on the key result areas that apply to individual reserves.

Strategies to achieve the outcomes in the Department's strategic and corporate plans are detailed 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 2007, the Director was responsible for the management of 21 Commonwealth reserves, 17 of which had management plans in place. New plans are being prepared for Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park and Norfolk Island National Park and Botanic Garden. The management plan for Mermaid Reef Marine National Nature Reserve expired on 16 May 2007. A new draft plan is being prepared and will be released for public comment in 2007–08. The Cod Grounds Commonwealth Marine Reserve was declared on 10 May 2007 and work has commenced on the management plan.



Management plan implementation

Implementation schedules are part of the planning and performance assessment framework for terrestrial reserves. The schedules contain all the prescriptions (policy and action) identified in a management plan. Each action based prescription can be broken down in the schedule into projects and tasks and given a timeframe. These projects and tasks can be assigned to staff and incorporated into individual performance agreements.

A database has been developed to support the implementation schedules. The database is already in use at Booderee National Park and is being introduced in Kakadu National Park following completion of the new management plan. The database will be used in the other terrestrial parks when new management plans come into effect.

During 2006–07 the performance and risk database for Commonwealth marine reserves was improved. It will be used to track and report on the implementation of marine reserve management plans.

Management plan prescriptions not to be implemented

During the life of a management plan some prescriptions may not be implemented because, for example, they have become redundant, impractical or there is a lack of resources. No such prescriptions were identified in 2006–07.

Performance indicators

Use of performance indicators by the Director of National Parks continues to evolve. An initial set of performance indicators first used in 2005–06 was further developed. This year, the indicators have been used in reporting against outcomes for terrestrial reserves (see Table 8). Specific indicators for marine reserves are being developed.

The outcomes and performance indicators in Table 8 are derived from a wider set of outcomes contained in the Portfolio Budget Statements and reflected in the Parks Australia Divisional Plan.



Table 8: Portfolio Budget Statements sub-outcome: Conservation and appreciation of Commonwealth reserves

KRA1: Natural heritage management	
Outcomes	Results for 2006–07
<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"> • 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 • Management plans for reserves continue to be developed and implemented in line with the EPBC Act requirements • Fire, weed and feral animal plans were reviewed and implemented as part of routine reserve management activities • Regionally focused recovery plans are being prepared for Norfolk Island National Park and Botanic Garden and Christmas Island National Park • Regular targeted monitoring of key values and threats was undertaken. Inventories of species recorded in the terrestrial and marine reserves, including those listed under the EPBC Act, continued to be updated (see species information in the State of the Parks report) • Flora and fauna surveys included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the 15th Uluru fauna survey which indicated that fauna species at Uluru are in good shape, with increased populations of key threatened species and a growing population of the recently reintroduced mala (rufous hare-wallaby) - a new aerial survey technique for bitou bush trialled at Booderee; the results indicate a reduction in heavy infestations of bitou bush due to a sustained control effort over the past three years - detailed biodiversity surveys on Christmas Island and at Booderee National Park • The ANBG grows 6,673 out of an estimated 20,000 plants that comprise the potential taxonomic, ecological and horticultural themes
<p>KRA1 Performance indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular targeted monitoring of key values and threats 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	
Outcomes	Results for 2006–07
<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"> • A heritage strategy for Commonwealth heritage (including cultural heritage) for which the Director is responsible was prepared in line with EPBC Act requirements and accepted by the Australian Heritage Council • At Uluru, oral history programmes continued, rock art inspections were conducted, a specialist conservator made conservation assessments of all public sites and produced site management plans and work continued on the Cultural Sites Management System and <i>Ara Irititja</i> databases • At Kakadu, oral history recordings, the development of a cultural heritage sites register and rock art maintenance at public sites continued with the support and involvement of traditional owners and relevant Aboriginal people
<p>KRA2 Performance indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequacy and currency 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>Outcomes</p> <p>3.1 Joint management has been 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 	<p>Results for 2006–07</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • The fifth Kakadu management plan was completed and came into effect after more than three years work by the Kakadu National Park Board of Management and numerous detailed consultations with traditional owners and stakeholders. Work commenced on the new plan for Uluru • Across the three jointly managed parks 54 Indigenous staff were employed in ongoing and non-ongoing positions. In addition the parks employed Indigenous people as casual staff, through contractors and Indigenous enterprises that provide services to the parks. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At Booderee, Wreck Bay Enterprises Ltd provided jobs for up to 30 permanent and 12 casual Indigenous workers • A wide range of employment opportunities were filled in jointly managed parks, through contracts to Indigenous business enterprises, and in full-time, part-time and casual positions in the parks • A wide range of on-the-job and formal training was provided for and undertaken by traditional owners and relevant Indigenous people including staff, contractors and community people • 15 Indigenous enterprises are now operating in the jointly managed parks
<p>KRA3 Performance indicators</p> <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 	



KRA4: Visitor management and park use

Outcomes

- 4.1 Visitors to Commonwealth reserves enjoy inspirational, satisfying and safe experiences
- 4.2 Visitor impacts (on reserve management, values, the environment and other visitors) are within acceptable levels
- 4.3 Public awareness and appreciation of the values of Commonwealth reserves have been enhanced
- 4.4 Commercial operators provide a high quality service to park visitors

Results for 2006–07

- An estimated 1.4 million people visited Commonwealth reserves with increased numbers at Booderee and Kakadu National Parks and the Australian National Botanic Gardens
- Booderee National Park and Norfolk Island National Park and Botanic Garden visitor surveys identified a high level of visitor satisfaction
- The cessation of visitor survey data collection for the Northern Territory parks in 2005–06 triggered development of new survey arrangements to measure visitor satisfaction which will commence in 2007–08

KRA4 Performance indicators

- 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

KRA5: Stakeholders and partnerships

Outcomes

- 5.1 Volunteers contribute to area management based on clearly defined roles
- 5.2 Stakeholders, e.g. neighbours, state agencies and park user groups, are involved in and contribute effectively to park management activities
- 5.3 Commercial partnership opportunities are encouraged and evaluated

Results for 2006–07

- Effective engagement and consultation with stakeholders, including national and regional tourism organisations, industry groups, universities, park agencies, non-government organisations and community groups
- The National Landscapes partnership with Tourism Australia was formally launched and six candidate areas nominated for the programme
- Partnerships with research organisations continued, including scientists in the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service, CSIRO, the Australian Institute of Marine Science, James Cook University, the Australian National University, Charles Darwin University and the University of Queensland
- Constructive partnerships continued with relevant state agencies and the Australian Customs Service in managing marine reserves

KRA5 Performance indicators

- Annual contribution to active partnership effort
- Consultation with stakeholders and partners
- Level of satisfaction of the Minister and the Assistant Minister



KRA6: Business management	
Outcomes	Results for 2006–07
<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"> • The divisional plan was reviewed and updated • Risk watch lists for each park or business unit were regularly reviewed in accordance with the Director’s Risk Management Policy • Management plans for reserves continue to be developed and implemented in line with EPBC Act requirements • Recorded injuries to visitors were significantly down (18.6%) on 2005–06. Total recorded incidents were down (13%) compared with the previous two years • The Auditor-General issued an unqualified audit report for the 2006–07 financial statements of the Director of National Parks • Two ‘B’ findings from the ANAO report in 2005–06 were resolved • The Director and Parks Australia continued to strive to meet best practice standards in the management of Commonwealth reserves • Expenditure did not exceed income • The business continuity plan was reviewed and updated and successfully tested during extraordinary weather events in Canberra and the Northern Territory
KRA6 Performance indicators	
<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 	
KRA7: Biodiversity knowledge management	
Outcomes	Results for 2006–07
<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> <p>7.2 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"> • Information is available in hard copy and electronically about each reserve • Highlights for the year included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the publication of a pictorial essay on Pulu Keeling - upgraded interpretive signage around the base of Uluru - the Parks Australia website received a daily average of almost 100,000 hits with Kakadu and Uluru being the primary entry points into the Department’s website - the ANBG website received a daily average of 45,000 hits in addition to the above - Australia’s Virtual Herbarium project met its milestones. Management will be transferred from Parks Australia to the Council of Heads of Australasian Herbaria in 2007–08
KRA7 Performance indicators	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of biodiversity information publications and resources provided 	





Lotus flowers provide brilliant hues of pink to the otherwise lush green wetlands of Kakadu National Park
