



Australian Government

A Shared Vision for Tourism in Kakadu National Park

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

MARCH 2006

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A Shared Vision for Tourism in Kakadu National Park

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Australian Government is pleased to formally respond to the report *A Shared Vision for Tourism in Kakadu National Park*. The Government strongly supports the report's recommendations and has already implemented a number of them. Other recommendations are woven into the Kakadu Draft Management Plan, which was released on 15 February 2006 for a public comment period that closes on 19 April 2006.

Since the launch of the tourism vision, the Government has invested more than \$2 million in progressing many of the report's recommendations, including:

- improving the park entrance;
- upgrading the northern information bay, with paintings by local artists telling the story of Kakadu;
- better access to mentoring and advice for Aboriginal owners interested in establishing tourism businesses;
- supporting the development of several new Indigenous businesses including partnerships with tour operators;
- completion of the first stage of the Kakadu Tourism Master Plan;
- online training for tour guides, to be launched shortly;
- upgrading of directional and interpretative signage at key visitor sites; and
- the appointment of a Tourism and Visitor Services Manager in the park and the establishment of a new Tourism and Visitor Services Unit.

To accelerate the implementation of key recommendations, the Government is making available an additional \$1.77 million this financial year for immediate action. This money will provide the Kakadu Board of Management and park management with the capacity to develop crucial products that will improve the range and quality of visitor experiences, present and promote the park more effectively, and provide more opportunities for potential indigenous tourism enterprises. The funds will also contribute to the joint promotion of Kakadu with the Northern Territory Government, and provide the capacity to immediately undertake a range of associated capital works.

Funding details

- \$150,000 to develop a destination brand for Kakadu in a national context
- \$150,000 to complete the Tourism Master Plan
- \$320,000 to carry out a thorough upgrading and replacement of directional and interpretative signs in the park
- \$500,000 for cooperative promotion and marketing of Kakadu with the Northern Territory Tourist Commission
- \$150,000 to plan the first suite of Kakadu experiences which meet market demand and attract new and profitable market niches
- \$500,000 to develop new visitor experiences in the Twin Falls area

The Government recognises that the principles and recommendations of the *Shared Vision* report have significant relevance and application beyond Kakadu National Park to the other World Heritage property managed by Parks Australia in the Northern Territory: Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. The Government believes that improved presentation and promotion of both iconic World Heritage Areas and parallel development of tourism infrastructure will reap economic dividends in the future. The Government is considering how these recommendations apply to Uluru and foreshadows that in the near future a further announcement will be made.

17 March 2005

DETAILED RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

1 The concept of a Shared Vision and the public response

The *Shared Vision* report was prepared by John Morse AM, John King and Jennifer Bartlett on behalf of the Kakadu National Park Board of Management, the Australian Government (through the Director of National Parks) and the Northern Territory Government.

The report contains 71 recommendations developed in consultation with traditional owners, the tourism industry and Kakadu National Park stakeholders.

Following the receipt of the report by the governments and the Board of Management in December 2004 the report was released for public comment. A summary of the comment received is shown in the Appendix. That comment was carefully considered in the development of this response.

There was strong support for the *Shared Vision* across the full spectrum of submissions. As would be expected, there was a range of opinion on many issues.

Response

1. The Australian Government welcomes the very positive public response to the Shared Vision report. The Government strongly supports the Shared Vision for Kakadu and looks forward to working with the key decision makers and stakeholders in developing and implementing the principles and programs detailed in the report.

The Government notes that the Kakadu National Park Board of Management has a statutory role in decision making relating to the management of Kakadu and in the preparation and implementation of the park's Management Plan. The Board has released its own positive response to the report and has incorporated relevant recommendations in the draft Plan of Management currently on public exhibition.

2 General considerations

Strategic planning for tourism is challenging, particularly in one of the world's great national parks. Kakadu is unique and its special features provide the foundation for how the park can be experienced and enjoyed by visitors:

- First and foremost the park is very large. At 20,000 square kilometres it is three and a half times bigger than Kosciuszko National Park. The area used for intensive tourism is, by comparison, quite small, generally confined to iconic landscape and art sites and camping grounds near main access routes.
- The park is the home to a number of Indigenous families and clan groups. The traditional owners of the land are the custodians of a rich living culture. In a contemporary land tenure sense the core park is freehold, owned by the traditional owners and leased back to the Australian Government. The lease requires the land to be managed as a national park

under a joint arrangement with the traditional owners, overseen by a Board of Management with majority traditional owner representation.

- The park possesses outstanding features of world significance. It is inscribed on the World Heritage List for both cultural and natural values. The cultural values relate to the spiritual associations connected to living traditional practices and beliefs. The natural values include the role of the area as an outstanding example of natural processes, superlative natural phenomena and exceptional beauty and the outstanding universal value of its habitats. Kakadu is also inscribed on the list of internationally important wetlands (under the Ramsar Convention). The park is important in the maintenance of key habitat necessary for the protection of migratory species that are subject to several international agreements and treaties. Uniquely in the world, the park protects an entire tropical river system and its catchment (the South Alligator River).
- The management of the Kakadu region has been a matter for robust national and international debate. Kakadu is within the Alligator River Region, a world-class mineral province for uraninite (uranium oxide). Three mineral leases within the region pre-date the proclamation of the park. An approach to a tourism vision for Kakadu must recognise that the infrastructure established for mining also provides access to and services for park visitors.
- Since 1997 park visitor use levelled at around 200,000 visitors per year. It declined to 170,000 visitors in 2003, matching a drop in international visitor numbers as a response to world political and health crisis events. Visitor numbers are greatest during the dry season months of June to September (approximately 33,000 people visit in July) and lowest during the wet season months (approximately 7,000 people visit in January). The Northern Territory Government expects that the number of visitors to the Territory could reach 2.8 million in ten years time, more than one million higher than current levels. Historically approximately half the visitors to Kakadu are international visitors. In world national park terms, the numbers of visitors to Kakadu are modest, particularly for a park of this size.

Response

2. Kakadu National Park is very large and current visitor levels are modest by world standards. The features of Kakadu are of world significance on a number of criteria. Kakadu is the home of many Indigenous Australians. The management challenge for Kakadu is:

- *striking a balance between respecting the privacy and cultural life of its owners whilst protecting the natural environment and providing facilities and services for increasing numbers of visitors;*
- *improving economic opportunities for current and future generations of traditional owners; and*
- *contributing to the economic well being of regional Australia.*

3 The report *A Shared Vision for Tourism in Kakadu National Park*

3.1 Respect for country and people

The *Shared Vision* was built on key principles:

1. Kakadu is first and foremost home to Bininj/Mungguy. They will influence, manage, encourage and participate in the development of tourism from which they gain economic and social benefit, at a pace and level they determine.
2. Bininj/Mungguy have leased their land to the Australian Government to be jointly managed as a national park to protect and manage its priceless natural and cultural heritage.
3. All parties will recognise and enhance the protection of Kakadu's diverse landscapes, internationally important wetlands and spectacular plants and wildlife.
4. Tourism should not be 'boss of country'. The progress and development of tourism will be undertaken in accordance with the wishes of the traditional owners and at a pace, which is consistent with their own values and aspirations.
5. All parties will respect the wish of Bininj/Mungguy that tourism develop at an agreed pace and level which harms neither nature or culture.
6. Respect for customary law and traditions will underpin all tourism decisions
7. All parties will respect the need for Bininj/Mungguy to retain their privacy, to use their land for hunting, fishing and ceremony and to protect and hold private their sacred stories and sites.
8. Aboriginal culture and the land on which it is based will be protected and promoted through well-managed tourism practices and appropriate interpretation.
9. The travel and tourism industry will have security of tenure, profitable investment and the opportunity to provide authentic and memorable visitor experiences, within the context of a commitment to respecting culture and country.
10. Kakadu National Park will be recognised as one of the most significant natural and cultural World Heritage areas, offering visitors a range of enriching and memorable experiences

Response

3.1(i) The Government accepts the Shared Vision 'key principles' as a guide to balancing the primary importance of Kakadu's cultural values with the development of a strategic approach to tourism. The Government notes that these principles have been reflected in the draft Management Plan.

3.1(ii) By its very nature, the Shared Vision did not address park conservation management. These values are protected and managed through the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. A tourism strategy for Kakadu can only proceed within this statutory framework, including conformity with the park Management Plan. However, the government's commitment is clear and absolute – management of Kakadu's natural resources is a paramount pre-requisite for tourism and Indigenous development.

We will therefore seek to pursue two core programs. First, a 30 year projection of likely natural resource challenges, such as invasive species and climate change. Second, enhancement of programs to engage Indigenous youth in natural resource and tourism management, such as junior ranger or park management training.

3.2 Tourism management challenges

The *Shared Vision* analysed visitor management strengths and weaknesses. The key policy areas are:

Cultural issues – limited Indigenous involvement in management and a lack of cross-cultural understanding and interest among visitors.

Strategic issues – overemphasis on geography *vis a vis* a cultural experience and a lack of presentation for seasons other than ‘the dry’ (thus failing to interpret the significant world heritage values).

Information – lack of strategic promotion, both within the park and on a Territory and national scale.

Response

3.2 Whilst the report identified many management strengths, this response focuses on improvements. The Government considers that the most significant tourism management challenges are:

- *to ensure cultural values and Indigenous involvement are still comprehensively and appropriately incorporated in planning, presentation and management.*
- *to provide a range of visitor facilities, services and information that presents the natural and cultural features of Kakadu through its six seasons.*
- *to ensure the visitor experience, from promotion to satisfaction, is based on professional marketing, presentation of information and quality interpretation services befitting a world class cultural and nature-based tourism asset.*
- *to ensure programs relating to the marketing of Kakadu are the result of careful integration of the aspirations of the Australian and Northern Territory Governments, the Kakadu Board of Management, the Park’s traditional owners and the tourism industry at a national and regional level*

3.3 A new structure to allow increased focus on park management and tourism (Recommendations 1-14)

In summary, the recommendations proposed:

- Include a tourism management unit in Park administration
- Embrace tourism as a core park asset and a tool to provide improved services, Indigenous management and enterprise involvement and more resources for park management.
- Establish a Jabiru resource centre to facilitate Indigenous enterprise involvement providing training and business advice backed by a park management culture that supports that skills and development engagement and facilitates mentoring and leadership training.
- Develop a *Tourism Master Plan* in support of the Management Plan, framework, setting out the framework for visitor experience development and resultant access and facilities and services.
- Develop a specific Aboriginal employment strategy.
- Design strategies to focus on quality experiences, higher yield and improved economic and social returns for stakeholders rather than numbers of visitors.
- In the medium to long term develop visitor servicing, park interpretation and guiding within the park on a private enterprise franchised basis.
- Develop a strategic communications strategy as a priority to inform all players of park management issues.

Response

3.3(i) The Government considers that the delivery of high quality visitor experiences and best practice tourism management is best achieved through a balance of publicly funded services and private sector partnerships. Such partnerships should set out to facilitate private investment in the provision of visitor facilities and services, and help build local indigenous capacity to participate in, and benefit from, tourism enterprises. Elements would include:

- *maximising the advantage that business exclusivity in a national park provides;*

- ensuring lease/licence terms and conditions are tailored to provide an attractive investment opportunity (recognising mortgageability, on-selling of a developed business and an adequate return period on investments);
- ensuring lease/licence terms and conditions are used effectively as a tool for the provision of visitor services as a primary policy objective; and
- ensuring lease/licence terms and conditions support the engagement of Indigenous persons in acquiring management and business skills and the development of opportunities for them to enter the market place.

Steps taken so far to facilitate the new partnership approach include: the establishment of a tourism and Visitor Services unit, with the appointment of a Tourism and Visitor Services Manager and dedicated staff; the commencement of a Tourism Master Plan; upgrades to park entrances; and the first new directional and interpretative signage (including at Twin Falls).

3.3(ii) The Government agrees that professional tourism management skills must be incorporated into the park management structure. Senior tourism management officers have been appointed not only in the park, but also in Parks Australia's Darwin office. The officers are responsible for liaison with the tourism industry and their representatives at the local and Territory level.

The Government believes that this level of interaction should extend through all levels of administration. Accordingly, a formal Interdepartmental Tourism Liaison Committee has been established at First Assistant Secretary level between the Department of Industry Tourism and Resources (DITR) and the Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH).

3.3(iii) The Government regards the development of the Tourism Master Plan for Kakadu as the most pressing priority. The Kakadu Board of Management has placed a high priority on this as well. Following the release of the Shared Vision report, the Australian Government's Department of Industry Tourism and Resources, as part of the tourism and conservation partnerships program, funded the development of a Notional Tourism Master Plan study for Kakadu. This report has been completed and considered by the Board in the preparation of the new Management Plan for the park. The draft Management Plan prescribes the preparation of the Master Plan. \$150K in funding has been committed to develop the Tourism Master Plan as a priority.

3.3(iv) The Government endorses the proposed framework for increased Aboriginal employment and notes that an Indigenous Employment Policy has been endorsed by the Board of Management.

3.4 Brand development and promotion (Recommendations 15-24)

In summary, the recommendations proposed:

- An intergovernmental – tertiary institution MoU to undertake tourism research
- A Kakadu brand and related logo to refocus parks perception and image.
- A brand use manual and related brand related market opportunities
- An intergovernmental/industry advertising and promotion campaign to relaunch Kakadu in Australia and internationally.
- A joint review of image libraries to ensure brand and cultural compatibility.

- A park management audit process to ensure brand compatibility of services.

Response

3.4(i) The government considers that the key challenges underlying the presentation and re-branding of Kakadu include: diversifying visitor experiences across the six seasons; visitor access to new areas in the park; and improving economic returns to the tourism industry and the traditional owners.

3.4(ii) The Government accepts the 'Kakadu Brand' recommendations. Implementation will focus on developing 'new experiences' associated with World Heritage values, thereby creating a fundamental reorientation of the image of what Kakadu offers to the tourism market place.

3.4(iii) The Government notes the growing relationship between the park and Charles Darwin University in visitor use and economic research programs and would welcome any formal relationship between the institution and the Australian and NT Governments.

3.4 (iv) The Government looks forward to contributing to a joint marketing campaign with the NT Government. We consider that the most effective timing for such a program will be following brand redevelopment and as the new experiences framework is developed.

The Government considers the brand recommendations to be a high priority and is now providing \$150K in funding to allow the Kakadu destination brand to be developed in a national context. The Government will also provide \$500K in matched funding to the Northern Territory Tourist Commission to market the new Brand, in cooperation with the Kakadu Board of Management.

3.5 Increased Aboriginal involvement (Recommendations 25-33)

In summary, the recommendations proposed:

- Provide for a range of engagement – business ownership, joint ventures, employment in park management, casual employment.
- Improve cross-cultural awareness re acknowledgement of occupation and traditional use.
- Provide opportunities for mentor access to other Indigenous operators and events such as the Indigenous Tourism Forum
- Introduce an 'Understanding Tourism' course in local school curriculum.
- Develop tourism learning and participation programs, such as the Junior Ranger Program)
- Make tourism education available in local language.
- Possibly involve Western Arnhem Land in Kakadu tourism.
- Secure Government support for resolution of outstanding land claim resolution.

Response

3.5 (i) The Government believes that Kakadu National Park should not be considered a living museum showcasing a snapshot of an ancient culture. It is the home to a society of contemporary Australians, with a long and proud history and association with their lands, who have the same aspirations of health, education, prosperity and happiness as other Australians. The Government has recently enacted national heritage legislation that, for the first time, places our Indigenous heritage shoulder to shoulder with the other outstanding elements of our nation's natural and cultural heritage. This amalgam is what makes our nation distinctive. Kakadu provides the

opportunity to present that rich diversity in a way that responds to the expectations and well being of those presenting and sharing their rich heritage.

3.5(ii) The Government is aware of the interest of various Indigenous groups in business development. Since the tourism vision was launched in 2005, the Government has funded Indigenous tourism business mentors in the Kakadu region.

In addition, several new Indigenous businesses have either been launched or are in the early stages of development. These include: a safari camp at Hawk Dreaming; a cultural camp and overnight camp at Patonga Homestead; a culture camp at Muirella Park; and proposals for new accommodation or activities at Nourlangie camp, the northern entrance precinct, and at Mary River Roadhouse in the south of the park. These cases are examples of initiatives that will underpin wider involvement of Bininj in business development and employment opportunities.

3.5 (iii) Long term leasing of land for tourism purposes (infrastructure development) and business opportunities (including Indigenous joint ventures with tourism companies) are currently hampered by the uncertain status of much of Kakadu still subject to Aboriginal land claim. The government will work with the Northern Territory Government and land claimants to facilitate resolution of outstanding land claims.

3.5(iv) The Government is committed to increased Aboriginal involvement in the management of its national parks. The three mainland Commonwealth national parks are jointly managed with traditional owners in formal relationships that, in some cases, date back over 20 years. The relationship between the Government and the traditional owners continues to evolve in the three parks. The Shared Vision's recommendations will contribute to strengthening these long-standing relationships.

3.6 Information and interpretation (Recommendations 34-41)

In summary, the recommendations proposed:

- A visitor information and interpretation strategy involving a range of media and Indigenous participation including enterprise involvement.
- A directional and interpretive signage review (current and potential signage).
- Provision of Kakadu information in Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs.
- A tourism operator training and accreditation system.
- Accredited guides to accompany non-accredited coach tour operators.
- Cross cultural training for park staff.
- A cultural centre in the south of the park in areas such as 'Old Goodparla'.

Response

3.6 (i) The Government considers that a sound visitor information and interpretation strategy is fundamental to the success of the Shared Vision. The Board of Management is implementing the accreditation recommendations. Online entry level tour guide training will shortly be available and will become compulsory within two years. The balance of the recommendations will be implemented through the Management Plan when it is finalised later this year.

3.6(ii) *The Government is also pleased to announce that \$320K in funding has been allocated to help refresh the presentation of the park, and particularly to upgrade and replace its directional and interpretative signs.*

3.7 Development of experiences, seasonal opportunities and access (Recommendations 42-55)

In summary, the recommendations proposed:

- Focus on destination development for *Kakadu brand* visitor experiences rather than attractions - both refreshment of existing and development of new.
- Investigate potential new products
 - night wildlife tours;
 - evening dining with Aboriginal storytelling of the night sky;
 - school camps / education programs providing cross cultural opportunities;
 - extended walking tracks with cabin accommodation (eg an iconic three to four day walk such as the Milford Track);
 - culture camps (traditional art/craft and sharing of culture);
 - enhanced wildlife and landscape tours presented through 'Aboriginal eyes';
 - bird watching tours;
 - luxury, low impact eco-camps;
 - bush tucker tours;
 - Twin Falls small tourism centre – guided walking, hunting or fishing tours.
- Establish a Foundation (such as Uluru Mutitjulu Foundation) where visitors' contributions could facilitate school camps or other projects
- Incorporate Indigenous culture and adopt the custom of Aboriginal storytelling when developing and presenting Kakadu's interpretive experiences.
- Develop and promote signature or *iconic experiences* that broaden the existing focus on landscape and sites.
- Develop a range of accommodation for different market segments.
- Develop an annual or biennial cultural festival (eg Arnhem Land Garma festival).
- Ensure that Tourism Master Plan focuses on significant recreation experiences (eg fishing and bushwalking).
- Extend seasonal visits to Kakadu by generating new experiences that attract different people during the six different annual seasons.
- Investigate better access during the wet season and what infrastructure needs to be provided.
- Open up new areas suitable for tourism, (eg in the South Alligator area).

Response

3.7(i) *The Government accepts the need for additional physical and cultural experiences. The decision as to what experiences will be pursued is a matter for the Kakadu Board of Management. However, the Government fully supports appropriately sited and managed concepts such as:*

- *night wildlife tours;*
- *evening dining with Aboriginal storytelling of the night sky;*
- *school camps / education programs providing cross cultural opportunities;*
- *extended walking tracks with cabin accommodation. (eg an iconic three to four day walk such as the Milford Track);*
- *culture camps (traditional art/craft and sharing of culture);*
- *enhanced wildlife and landscape tours presented through 'Aboriginal eyes';*
- *bird watching tours;*
- *luxury, low impact eco-camps;*
- *bush tucker tours;*
- *Twin Falls small tourism centre – guided walking, hunting or fishing tours.*

3.7(ii) To accelerate the implementation of these recommendations, the Government is pleased to announce immediate funding of \$150,000 to complete the Tourism Master Plan, and a further \$150,000 to plan the first suite of Kakadu experiences which meet market demand and attract new and profitable market niches. An additional \$500,000 is allocated towards the development of new visitor experiences in the Twin Falls area.

3.8 Tour Operations (Recommendations 56-63)

In summary, the recommendations proposed:

- Extend tour operator permits to a minimum period of five years (or longer on a rolling basis), subject to satisfactory performance standards.
- Introduce a tour operator accreditation and associated tour guide certification system.
- Provide accreditation incentives.
- Permits that remain inactive for 12 months should automatically lapse.
- In the development of an accreditation and permit program, work with the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission to achieve common conditions and standards in all parks in the Northern Territory.
- Permits for exclusive or limited access tours and experiences be premium priced.
- Encourage tour operators to enter joint venture partnerships or employ Bininj in the development and guiding of tours and experiences.
- Require all tourism operators to provide an environmental management plan.

Response

3.8 The Government notes the considerable progress that the Board of Management has made on implementation of an accreditation and tour guide training policy. The Government supports the use of leasing and licence terms and conditions as a mechanism to encourage private sector engagement, including five year terms for tour operator permits and 20 year leases. Whilst the balance of the recommendations will be incorporated in the Tourism Master Plan and the Management Plan, the Government will strongly support mechanisms that assist Bininj/Mungguy participation in business partnerships.

3.9 Future of Jabiru (Recommendation 64)

In summary, the recommendation proposed that Jabiru be developed as a tourism centre to ensure its ongoing viability in the event of mine closure. Included in its increased tourism role could be:

- an arts and cultural centre with a particular focus on indigenous culture ;
- a tourism school / college;
- a base for the development of day or night tours;
- a hub for wider travel in the region.

Response

3.9 The Government notes that planning for the future of Jabiru is a complex issue involving traditional owners, the mining industry, the Northern Territory Government, the tourism industry and the Director of National Parks. The recommendations in the 'Shared Vision' will be considered as part of that discussion.

3.10 Local Awareness and Support (Recommendation 65)

In summary, the recommendation proposed a public awareness campaign in the Northern Territory to encourage greater use of the park by Northern Territory residents.

Response

3.10 The Australian Government recognises the importance of engaging with the broader Northern Territory community about Kakadu, its place in the Northern Territory economy and social landscape, and its management. It is in this context that the Government abolished park entry fees and supplemented the park budget to maintain visitor related programs. A public awareness campaign will be an important part of any promotional program. The Board of Management is proposing to initiate and promote a 'visit Kakadu' weekend in May for Top End residents to encourage them to visit the park.

3.11 Kakadu National Park as part of the region

The Shared Vision recognises (Recommendation 32) the possible role of the people of Western Arnhem Land in park management through relationships with traditional owners.

Response

3.11 The Government recognises that Kakadu does not stand in social and geographic isolation. The Government notes that there has been a long history of regional-level cooperation between the park and its neighbours and Territory agencies on issues such as fire management and weed control. In a similar vein, the Government would support initiatives by traditional owners to include other Indigenous parties in programs associated with visitor management in Kakadu. The Government also considers that this is only one part of a wider role for Kakadu. The Government would welcome any regional approach that included the role of Kakadu in the wider economic and social development of the region, whether that approach be associated with visitor facilities and services on private property, pastoral leases or on Aboriginal land. In particular the Government would welcome enhanced cooperation and integration with the Northern Territory parks agency or with other tourism management and conservation programs in regional lands.

3.12 Responsibility for implementation (Recommendations 66 -71)

In summary, the recommendations proposed:

- The Kakadu Board of Management should be responsible for implementation with the strong support of both Australian and Territory Governments. A priority list of actions needs to be developed as a first step.
- The Australian and Northern Territory governments develop a clear and joint statement committing to the future of tourism in Kakadu National Park.
- The Australian and Northern Territory governments to give priority to initiatives that support both community development and tourism, particularly where the initiatives involve streamlining of processes and policy.
- Implementation over time, with the agreement of traditional owners and in consultation with the tourism industry and other stakeholders.
- Investigation on how costs can spread over a number of years and opportunities for financial realignment with existing programs.
- An annual stakeholder review of the *Shared Vision* in to assess progress and future opportunities.

Response

3.12 The Government notes that under Australian Government legislation the Kakadu National Park Board of Management has a statutory role in making decisions relating to the management of Kakadu, and the preparation and monitoring of the implementation of Management Plans . It is thus the Board's role to consider and make decisions about the 'Shared Vision' that relate to management of the park.

The Government looks forward to closely working with the Northern Territory Government on implementing the Shared Vision in cooperation with the Board of Management.

The Government implemented a list of priority actions following the launch of the Shared Vision: the support of new tourism staff, tour guide training, Indigenous business mentoring, development of a Tourism Master Plan and upgraded entrances and signage. The funding priorities identified in this response establish a clear roadmap for the future.,

APPENDIX

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

General

- Overall, recommendations are excellent
- Traditional owners (TOs), Parks Australia (PA) and tourism now have a chance to move forward to promote tourism in Kakadu due to the report
- Report gives a lot of encouragement to the future of joint partnership between TOs, PA and tourism industry
- Supports tourism industry, especially geared to environmental and cultural sensitivity
- Supports appropriate expansion of tourism access and facilities
- Highest emphasis of park management should be on environmental/cultural protection
- Broader community should be included as partners in the vision and reaching agreement about it
- Recommends strong consultation process around vision within 5th Management Plan and how it is incorporated in the plan
- Overall report is excellent – provides a way forward for working with TOs
- The vision represents World's Best Practice for developing a partnership approach and offers an opportunity to put sustainable tourism planning into practice
- Provides a framework for new business opportunities and investment security as well as enhanced economic development opportunities for TOs
- Australian and Northern Territory Governments should give priority to initiatives for culturally appropriate community development and tourism - whole-of-government approach critical

Development of new market niches

- Experiences should be a major selling point for tours
- Seasonal access needed to develop iconic experiences
- South of park has outstanding potential for extended bushwalks
- Supports development of high yield low impact tourism
- Concerned that high yield, low volume access developments signify exclusive access will be given to tour operators dealing with richer part of tourism industry. Backpacker market may be excluded.
- Recommends that vision take backpacker sector into account, as it is a major source of income to tourism.
- Recommends vision should consider adventure tourism
- Seeking permission to set up an African type safari camp
- Adoption of the high yield/low volume approach welcomed as it reflects Bininj input

Branding and promotion

- Australian clients are interested in Aboriginal culture – relates to brand development
- Cooperation needed on brand development and promotion
- Federal Government could take on funding responsibility for promotion

- Brand should be develop towards high yield, long stay, low impact type of tourism evidently preferred by TOs
- Cooperative promotional campaigns should be formally advanced with a small and effective group comprising Northern Territory Tourist Commission, and Parks Australia, and other local experts
- Re: public awareness campaign to address local negativity - concern at the suggestion that Darwin residents 'own' Kakadu
- Kakadu story should be story about people, with ambitious marketing to Australia

Seasonality

- Seasonality of tourism an issue. Weather reporting in southern states is misleading.
- Need a marketing icon for the wet season with guaranteed access
- Tour operators need advanced warning of closure of access to sites during the Wet for planning itineraries
- Infrastructure needed for wet season access eg bridge over Magela and viewing Jim Jim in the wet
- Considering opportunities for better access during wet season should not be considered until there have been some proven successes that will give Bininj/Mungguy confidence to embrace an extended tourism season

Resource allocation

- Concerned about commitment of Australian Government to allocating sufficient resources
- Vision will require significant funding to become reality
- Tourism industry prepared to play a role in a funding partnership but public sector funding will need to be significant
- Pleased that Government has committed to budget supplementation package
- Vision report raises expectations of TOs and tourism industry – need to address issue of funding for implementation

Park/tourism management structure

- Supports a better tourism management structure
- Apparent disconnect between Director National Parks (DNP) and Kakadu Board of Management (BoM) in structure chart
- Concerned that the proposed management structure will result in natural and cultural objectives being compromised by tourism
- Opposed to separating tourism management from park management
- No direct link between DNP and Kakadu BoM - inconsistent with management plan, EPBC Act & spirit of joint management

Tourism planning

- Processes and protocols for developing a tourism Master plan should be built into 5th Management Plan
- Focus on commercial tourism should not exclude conservation of natural and cultural values
- Current and future social impact on Aboriginal residents should be considered and resources allocated to monitor effects
- The legal relationship between tourism master plan and management plan must be clearly outlined and understood

- The Master Plan should start from a consideration of the parameters within which TOs will support and participate in the tourism industry, rather than TOs being forced into adopting a position or accepting a development due to its apparent inevitability

Aboriginal involvement

- Supports more Aboriginal involvement in tourism esp. as guides
- Supports TOs being involved with group tours – marketing drawcard. Need consistency of attendance to deliver
- Supports TO involvement in managing campgrounds esp. interaction with visitors
- Welcomes need to build stronger cultural base and TO involvement in tourism
- Supports stronger cultural basis in presentation of park
- Potential for TOs to derive higher income from backpackers than high end of market.
- Supports joint ventures
- At present, no broad Aboriginal consensus exists for the vision, so there is actually no ‘shared’ vision, nor for the 71 ideas to make it happen
- Emphasis should not solely be on employment but on career development options and flexibility
- More productive to facilitate Aboriginal people contracting to Parks Australia, which retains the ‘obligation’ to provide services
- The flexible approach re involvement in tourism should be incorporated into the management plan
- Providing opportunities to experience other indigenous tourism products is welcomed
- Re participation in tourism by Aboriginal residents in West Arnhem Land - could be beneficial to the region, requires the informed consent of Kakadu’s TOs
- Re developing a cultural festival - Jabiru Mahbilil Festival already in place and developing

Interpretation

- Interactive displays at Bowali and Warradjan often not working – need better resourcing
- Support more interpretative centres in the park
- Re: developing a visitor information & interpretation strategy - Bininj/Mungguy will need reassurance that this idea is truly embraced by other stakeholders, note intellectual property considerations, i.e. they should derive benefit (or possess control) whether or not any commercial involvement
- Cultural/visitor centres should be subject to Area Management Plans, involving consultation with TOs about visitor and conservation issues, business development opportunities and direct financial benefit for TOs of each site of these commercial operations
- Recent past (150 years) and European heritage worthy of identification to complete visitor experience of Kakadu, portraying way Aboriginals were exploited and murdered

Concessions Policy

- Offering special or exclusive permits at a premium fee would disadvantage small operators
- Supports standard permit being issued for five years
- Recommends negotiating permission to an area with TOs thru a liaison officer. Limit to three proposals per operator per year
- Develop new tourism ventures with agreement of TOs preferably with involvement in owning/operating businesses

- Does not support higher fees for exclusive/special access as this will discriminate against small operators
- Referred to “A Natural Partnership” report re: private investment in visitor infrastructure in national parks
- Regarding privatising park interpretation/guiding - concern that the Government is abrogating its responsibilities by disowning core national park services
- Annual tour operator seminars are inadequate and are the bare minimum, and TOs should be part of regular review
- Should be government assistance for tour operators to provide environmental management plans rather than cost of each operator ‘re-inventing the wheel’

Land claims

- Recommends resolving outstanding land claims
- From the Aboriginal perspective, resolution of outstanding land claims, including a transfer of other blocks such as the three lots upon which Jabiru has been built to the same form of ownership, control and management as the balance of the Park, is fundamental to the achievement of this vision and all of its objectives

Mining

- Uranium mine site should be rehabilitated – no new mines allowed
- Recommend a study into a link between uranium mining and decline in tourism
- Supports tourism over extractive industries
- Report doesn’t recognise threats to natural and cultural values of the park posed by Ranger Uranium Mine. The impact of the mine affects TOs ability/capacity to engage in tourism effectively
- Recommends including all mining leases within the Park – except Ranger
- Recommends Australian and Northern Territory Governments develop a structural adjustment package with TOs for transition from mining to tourism based economy

Entrance fee

- Reinstate entrance fee
- Concerned about abolition of entry fees – adequate revenue stream for management needs to be ensured.

Jabiru

- Future of Jabiru should be decided through negotiation with Mirarr and Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation
- Introducing understanding tourism to school curriculum- extend to Jabiru CDU campus for mature age students
- Developing a tourism centre is contingent upon negotiations between Parks Australia, governments and Mirarr.

Specific park management issues

- Concerned about speed of motorboats in Yellow Water – consider limiting boats to very low horsepower motors.
- Behaviour of boats around crocs

- Steps on pathways kept natural and reduce height of steps for elderly.
- Swimming in secluded waterholes is an integral part of the experience esp. for long bushwalks
- Supports opening more areas including art sites to disperse visitors
- Swimming is vital to the Northern Territory holiday experience – need to ensure some areas are kept crocodile free
- Signage in park needs to be improved
- Regular updates from PAN to tour operators needed
- Concern that new photography guidelines will be less prescriptive than those in force at present
- The refocus away from swimming is welcomed

Accreditation

- Supports accreditation of tour operators
- Impractical to certify every guide. Seminars should be free and held in May
- Tour operators should be obliged to become accredited if permits are extended to five years.