

Introduction

Nitmiluk National Park is Jawoyn Aboriginal land that is leased to the Northern Territory Government to manage as a national park to protect its natural and cultural values. The Jawoyn traditional owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service of the Northern Territory (PWSNT) work together to look after the Park through a Board of Management.

The public image of Nitmiluk National Park is important to the Jawoyn traditional owners and PWSNT. They wish to promote an understanding of and respect for the natural values of the Park, Jawoyn culture and how the Park is jointly managed by PWSNT and the Jawoyn traditional owners.

Park owners and managers consider it vital that public information about the Park is accurate, appropriate and in accord with their wishes. They would like visitors to:

- understand the importance of preserving the natural features and values of Nitmiluk for future generations
- appreciate Nitmiluk National Park as an Aboriginal place steeped in Jawoyn culture
- understand that the Park is owned and actively managed by Jawoyn people alongside PWSNT
- receive accurate and appropriate information about Nitmiluk's cultural and natural values during tours within the Park.

The purpose of the Nitmiluk National Park Tour Guide Handbook is to ensure that people working in the Park have access to the required information. The target audience for this Handbook is the launch tour guides who spend the most time with visitors in Nitmiluk, while also being available to other guides, particularly those operating other concessionaire tours within the Park. This handbook aims to:

- make tour guides aware of the messages and information that the Jawoyn people and PWSNT would like delivered to visitors to Nitmiluk National Park
- provide tour guides with the information that they need to conduct tours within the Park.
- encourage an interpretive style of tour guiding that leaves visitors with a lasting impression of Nitmiluk as a cultural landscape
- be a handy reference for all those who deal with the public in Nitmiluk National Park.

Visitors to Nitmiluk

About 250,000 people visit Nitmiluk each year.

Most visitors come between May and September, stay a short time and only see the lower sections of the gorge.

About 100,000 visitors see Nitmiluk from launch (boat) tours each year.

Leliyn (Edith Falls) attracts over 100,000 visitors a year.

Your passengers

Visitor surveys show that people are interested in learning more about Jawoyn culture.

Surveys indicate that opportunities to see and learn about animals are important to most visitors.

Visitors are from many different countries as well as Australia.

Many visitors only speak English as a second language and appreciate you speaking slowly and clearly and avoiding slang.



The nine sections of this Handbook

Section 1 Tour guiding in Nitmiluk National Park

Outlines the messages and information Jawoyn owners and PWSNT would like to get across to visitors and suggestions for how it can be done.

Section 2 History of Nitmiluk and surrounds

Details the exploration and settlement history of the area and the establishment of Nitmiluk National Park.

Section 3 Jawoyn culture

Provides detailed information about Jawoyn people and their history and culture.

Section 4 Natural values of Nitmiluk

Contains detailed information about the natural features and values of the Park.

Section 5 Managing Nitmiluk National Park

Introduces park management issues and explains how Nitmiluk National Park is jointly managed by PWSNT and Jawoyn through the Board of Management.

Section 6 Visitor safety

Outlines the responsibilities of those conducting tours and providing advice to visitors and describes the safety facilities in the Park.

Section 7 Visitor information

Describes the facilities, services and activities provided for visitors in Nitmiluk National Park.

Section 8 Dealing with other cultures

Provides advice on how to deal with people from other countries.

Section 9 Tour guide assessment

Explains the assessment process and includes the Assessment Form for launch (boat) tour guides to complete as the first part of their assessment.

The margins

In the margins throughout this handbook are boxes containing questions for you to think about as you read the text beside them.

Further reading lists are supplied in boxes near the end of each section.

Tips and helpful information

Shaded boxes through the handbook contain tips for interpreting Nitmiluk National Park, definitions and other helpful information.

Launch tours (river cruises)

An annual Authority to Operate is issued to tour guides operating launch (boat) tours on the gorge. It is made up of a Temporary Permit to Serve, Master Class V, and an Authority to Conduct Tours within Nitmiluk National Park.



Temporary Permit to Serve

To operate the tourist vessels on the Gorge, you must hold a Master Class V, or a Temporary Permit to Serve Master Class V, issued by the Department of Transport and Infrastructure Marine Branch. The Temporary Permit is issued upon successful completion of a practical test on the gorge with a representative from the Marine Branch. You must have a current Senior First Aid Certificate for the permit to be valid.

Authority to conduct tours

To obtain an Authority to Conduct Tours in Nitmiluk, you must complete a two-part assessment to demonstrate your knowledge and ability to conduct launch (boat) tours.

Stage 1

The first part is a written assessment that guides can work on during the course of their training.

Stage 2

Once the written assessment is satisfactorily completed, the PWSNT Interpretation Officer will go on tour with the guide to assess their tour. This is the practical assessment.

Written assessment

At the end of each section of this handbook are the assessment questions for launch tour guides. The answers are in the same section - you just need to look for them.

Please answer the questions in your own words, rather than copy text directly from this handbook, then submit them to:

Interpretation Officer
Parks & Wildlife Service of the NT
32 Giles Street
PO Box 344
KATHERINE NT 0851
Fax: (08) 8973 8899

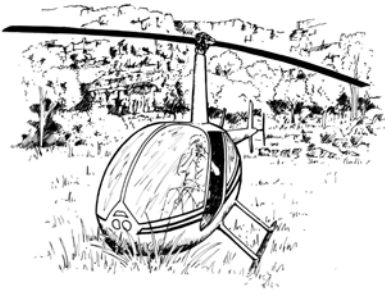
Contact the Interpretation Officer on (08) 8973 8859 with any questions.

What tour guides need to know

In a shaded box at the start of each section is a list of questions that launch tour guides should be able to answer.

Launch tour guide assessment checklist

1. Senior First Aid Certificate
2. Temporary Permit to Serve Master V
3. Authority to Conduct Tours:
 - a) Written assessment
 - b) Practical assessment



Other tours

Concessionaire tours

Tour guides operating other concessionaire tours must also have an annual Authority to Conduct Tours. Guides, such as helicopter pilots, are also required to undergo an assessment and are encouraged to use this handbook as a reference, although they are not required to have the same depth of knowledge as the launch guides.

PWSNT will brief guides on their assessment requirements during their PWSNT induction.

Other tours

Tour guides visiting Nitmiluk as part of a wider tour are encouraged to use this handbook as a reference but are not required to undergo an assessment.