

Media Release:

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## Environmental, Lifestyle and Community Value of NT Parks

A new publication, *The Value of Parks*, which focuses on the value of urban parks, protected areas and private land trusts, was launched across Australia this week following its international launch in New Zealand recently.

The Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service Executive Director Graham Phelps said the publication, compiled by the Parks Forum sets out to identify the role of parks in supporting a healthy environment, a healthy lifestyle and vibrant communities with strong cultural and economic foundations.

The Parks Forum is a collaboration of Australia's and New Zealand's peak body for parks organisations, in partnership with IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and The People and Parks Foundation

"While parks are seen as 'nice to have' by the wider community the value and benefits they provide to the community actually go across a whole spectrum of social, economic, environmental and cultural considerations," Mr Phelps said.

"This publication is aimed at the decision makers, opinion leaders and advocates in the parks industry and community to try and get these audiences involved and informed about parks."

The booklet examines challenges and opportunities for parks of Australia and New Zealand, with messages of hope for the future of parks across both countries and states: *We are already witnessing unprecedented loss of biodiversity and failing of the natural systems that support life on Earth, parks protect and conserve biodiversity and play a vital role in keeping our air and water clean.*

"The Northern Territory has some of the most spectacular wilderness in the world, with our 87 parks and reserves, including Litchfield National Park, Watarrka National Park, West MacDonnell National Park and Nitmiluk National Park recording approximately three million visitors each year," Mr Phelps said.

"Parks in the Northern Territory are fundamental to our Tourism industry, and are one of the driving forces behind attracting tourists to the Territory - and ultimately injecting money into the Territory economy.

"The importance of parks to our economy and wellbeing cannot be overstated, as not only are these beautiful, pristine environments to visit, but they also help to protect native and threatened species through recovery programs.

"Parks provide protection of significant geological, geographical and cultural features, which are often national icons and major tourist attractions.

"They are also the central focus of our nations' tourism industries, with nature and culture based tourism the fastest growing sector in the Australian tourism market, as well as places that reflect our culture and provide inspiration for our future."

The booklet states: *Parks offer places of adventure, challenge, exercise, peace and quite, recreation, gathering and relaxation, in them we find a sense of enjoyment, strong community spirit and wonder in nature and offer a range of recreation activities to bring families and friends together in appealing places.*

To view *The Value of Parks* publication go to [www.nt.gov.au/valueofparks](http://www.nt.gov.au/valueofparks) or [www.parksforum.org](http://www.parksforum.org) Ends

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