6. Managing Business

Introduction

This section addresses the business of managing operational resources—including staff, funding and facilities—to support the implementation of actions identified in this plan. Other important management activities include the administration of permits and commercial operations, and stakeholder engagement.

Traditional Owners have so far gained little benefit from tourism or other commercial enterprise associated with the reserve. They see joint management as an opportunity to participate in management, commercial tourism and park service provision. They recognise that long-term institutional support and capacity building will be needed for these goals to be achieved. Bridging the gap between their aspirations and their capacity will require training, employment and enterprise development, all of which are addressed in this section. This section also addresses the need to assess management effectiveness and continuously improve the knowledge base that supports management decision-making. Administration of research, survey and monitoring activity is also addressed in this section.
Management, Resources and Operations for Joint Management

Aim
- To ensure the directions of this plan are achieved with adequate resources used efficiently.

Background
At the time of this plan’s preparation, the Devil’s Marbles Conservation Reserve is managed as part of the Parks and Wildlife Service Barkly district operations, based in Tennant Creek. Rangers are not resident on or near the reserve. In addition to this reserve, Barkly district operations support the Davenport Ranges National Park, Tennant Creek Telegraph Station, Barrow Creek Telegraph Station and Connell’s Lagoon Recreation Reserve. Resources for managing the reserve—including staff, funds and capital resources such as vehicles and firefighting equipment—are shared with these parks and reserves. Practically all funding to manage or develop this and every other reserve managed by the Parks and Wildlife Service is provided by the Northern Territory Government. How much funding is allocated to individual parks and reserves depends on the overall budget granted to the Service and priorities identified across all parks and reserves managed by the Service.

The Parks and Wildlife Service maintain a professional ranger work force. Staff will continue to participate in performance appraisal and career guidance programs as a means to monitoring staff satisfaction and identifying and meeting individual staff training needs. In addition, staff satisfaction and occupational health and safety will remain a key management concern.

The Barkly District currently has three permanent staff positions including an Aboriginal ranger recently graduated from a ranger traineeship.

The Devil’s Marbles is visited by rangers at least weekly during the cooler months when visitor activity is highest, and less frequently at other times. Operational capacity is also enhanced through contracted services that currently include campground maintenance.

Management Directions

6.1 Management Programs and Annual Action Plans – The joint management partners will plan and review management programs and annual action plans for the reserve through annual meetings of the Joint Management Committee. Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service will jointly implement management programs and annual action plans. Operational management will pay particular regard to:

- The vision, purpose, principles, key values, aims and directions of this Joint Management Plan.
- The partners’ roles and responsibilities.
- Regional priorities, available resources and cost-benefit analysis of proposals.
- Shared-decision making and Traditional Owner participation in on-ground programs.
- Listening and responding to Traditional Owners concerns.
- Linking management programs.
- Encouraging and supporting local business.
6.2 **Day-to-Day Management** – The Parks and Wildlife Service will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the reserve under the direction of the Joint Management Committee.

6.3 **Financing** – The Parks and Wildlife Service will finance and resource the reserve’s ongoing management including administrative functions, staff, infrastructure and services. External funds may be sought to address specific projects, in particular culturally-focussed projects that are primarily of Traditional Owners’ interest.

6.4 **Professional Development** – Professional standards and staff competencies will be supported by ongoing training in all aspects of park management with special emphasis on cross-cultural training and joint management governance.

‘*Need to get more young people to meetings, especially when we talk about work ... participate you know ... they need to come*’ *Kirda and Kurdungurla*
Indigenous Training, Employment and Enterprise Development

Our Aims

- To provide casual and flexible work experience and training opportunities for Aboriginal people in management programs on the reserve.
- To support the uptake of concessions and contracts by local Aboriginal organisations.
- To encourage Aboriginal tourism enterprises using the reserve.
- To support full-time employment of Traditional Owners in the Parks and Wildlife Service.

Background

Training and Employment

Joint management of Karlu Karlu will promote opportunities for employment and business for Traditional Owners. ‘Benefiting both the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve and the wider community’, is a legislated objective of joint management.

The Traditional Owners of Karlu Karlu want employment for their families. They look forward to new opportunities, especially for their young people, and see joint management as a way for them to develop their skills and confidence to enter the work force.

The Parks and Wildlife Service currently have three permanent ranger positions for Barkly district operations which include management of Karlu Karlu. One of these positions is occupied by an Aboriginal ranger traineeship graduate. The Parks and Wildlife Service intend to increase recruitment and retention of Aboriginal people in the agency and to deliberately foster Aboriginal employees’ career progression. While the number of full-time ranger positions in the organisation is relatively small, interested and committed local Aboriginal people will be actively encouraged to apply when positions become vacant and will be supported in preparing their applications.

Aboriginal ranger traineeships will continue as a means to increase opportunities for local people to become rangers. In addition, Indigenous community-based ranger groups, volunteers and interest groups can all offer valuable services to support reserve management programs. The Parks and Wildlife Service will continue to offer flexible or periodic casual employment to Traditional Owners, their families and local Aboriginal people. Flexible employment provides work experience and skills exchange, builds positive working relationships between rangers and Traditional Owners and can pave the way for employment of Aboriginal people in permanent ranger positions.

Enterprise Development

The lease agreement provides for preference to be given to local Aboriginal people and businesses for contract work. Managing Karlu Karlu remotely from Tennant Creek is costly. Joint management presents opportunities to create new management efficiencies that at the same time contribute to local economies. In time, it is hoped that a significant amount of work relating to the reserve’s management, visitor services in particular, can be partially or fully contracted to Aboriginal businesses.

Karlu Karlu receives approximately 100,000 visitors each year and has significant potential for tourism. During planning discussions, Traditional Owners identified several enterprise ideas including: campground accommodation on adjacent Aboriginal lands; a facility to sell artefacts; crafts and art; guided cultural walks and tours; and a venue for traditional dance performance.
The joint management partners recognise the need for business advice, support and capital to start and sustain viable businesses. Efforts will be made to access other agency support and industry partners to help develop Aboriginal enterprises.

**Management Directions**

6.5 **Training, Employment and Enterprise Development** – Training, employment and business outcomes for Traditional Owners will be actively pursued. Opportunities for direct and flexible employment, contracts and enterprise development will be reviewed annually, together with Traditional Owners’ interests and capacity. Agreed, achievable plans will be determined. Where the Parks and Wildlife Service cannot directly assist, it will work with other agencies to see that training and business development opportunities are acted upon.

6.6 **Paid Participation** – Opportunities for paid participation of Traditional Owners in park management programs will be maximised. This may include on-the-job and accredited training activities carried out by training organisations.

6.7 **Contract Services** – Contract services relating to the reserve will be procured with respect to NT government processes and principles. Traditional Owners and Aboriginal organisations they support will be preferred contract service providers. Preference will also be given to other contractors providing training and employment to local Aboriginal people.

6.8 **Cultural Advice** – Traditional Owners will be paid for specialist cultural advice and supervision when required.

6.9 **Indigenous Employment Opportunities in the Parks and Wildlife Service** – The Parks and Wildlife Service will continue to provide opportunities for direct employment and training for Aboriginal people. Where appropriate aptitude and competency is demonstrated, preference will be given to people with local affiliations.

6.10 **Community-Based Indigenous Rangers and Special Interest Groups** – Local Indigenous community-based rangers, community volunteers, and sponsored training and employment programs will be encouraged and, where possible, invited to assist with reserve management.

6.11 **Other Aboriginal Rangers Working on the Reserve** – Aboriginal rangers from other areas will be introduced to the Joint Management Committee or a delegated Traditional Owner advisory group before working at Karlu Karlu.

‘Increase training in young people ... we want to arrange things for our young people but they don’t get the opportunity ... we need to go back there on the country’

‘Involvement ... young people and family being involved’

‘Looking towards the future, working together for enterprise development.’

‘All the country, our country, but none of the money. That’s wrong.’

*Kirda and Kurdungurlu*
Permits and Commercial Activity

Our Aim

• To encourage community economic benefit from the reserve.

• To ensure specially permitted events and activities do not compromise the reserve’s key values.

Background

Commercial operations have an important role in visitor enjoyment and reserve management. Commercial activities carried out in the reserve to date include: tour operations, commercial filming, cleaning and maintenance contracts and sales. Commercial activities on Northern Territory Parks and reserves require a permit under By-law 13 of the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws. Permits ensure that safety standards are adhered to, and preserve the values of the reserve.

By-law 13 also provides for concession operations. These are commercial activities involving special access or use of the reserve. Operational agreements set out the rights and obligations of the concessionaire. Additionally, where a secure form of land tenure is needed for the occupation or specific use of an area, a licence or sub-lease may be issued. Any licence or sub-lease must be consistent with the provisions set under the Lease Agreement between Traditional Owners and the Northern Territory Government and the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act.

Joint management agreements provide for preference to be given to local Aboriginal people and businesses. In granting permits to operate concessions, preference will also be given to local Aboriginal operations and businesses that offer employment and training opportunities to Traditional Owners. Traditional Owners have a number of business development ideas they would like to pursue, including cultural tours and sales of refreshments, arts and crafts.

Tour operators have a strong influence on visitors’ experience of the reserve. Approximately 20% of all visitors experience the reserve with tour operators. Tour companies visiting any Northern Territory park or reserve require a permit under the Tour Operator Permit System, introduced in April 2006. The Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service want information given by tour operators to be accurate and appropriate. The Tour Operator Permit System provides a means for the joint management partners to better liaise with tour operators, and to monitor the activities and impacts of tour groups.

Management Directions

6.12 Routine Commercial Tours – Permits for tour businesses making normal use of the reserve will continue to be issued through the Tour Operator Permit System. Information from this system will be used for the better management of the reserve, including improved communication with operators.

6.13 Permit Guidelines and Procedures – As a priority, the joint management partners will establish guidelines and procedures by which proposals requiring permits under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws will be considered.

Pending development of agreed guidelines and procedures the Central Land Council will consult with Traditional Owners in relation to permit applications that request any access or activity that would not normally be allowed to visitors to the reserve.
Guidelines agreed by the partners will:

- Consider the interests of Traditional Owners, the community, the tourism industry and existing Parks and Wildlife Service policy.
- Include requirements to minimise impact on the reserve’s values.
- Explicitly state when proposed activity will, and will not require consultation with Traditional Owners.

Approval procedures agreed by the partners will provide for:

- Timely processing of permit applications.
- Parks and Wildlife Service approving permit applications without consulting Traditional Owners when the proposal is clearly consistent with guidelines agreed by the partners.
- PWS refusing permits applications without consulting Traditional Owners when the proposal is clearly inconsistent with guidelines agreed by the partners.
- Consideration of permit applications by the full Traditional Owner group, the Joint Management Committee or a Traditional Owner advisory group, depending on the impact of the proposal when the proposal involves access or activity that would not ordinarily be allowed to visitors on the reserve or when proposal is a part of a major commercial project (for example, a concert).

The Joint Management Committee may revise permit approval guidelines and procedures as appropriate.

6.14 Concession Permits – Concession permits will be issued by the Parks and Wildlife Service with the approval of the Joint Management Committee.
Reserve Promotion, Commercial Film and Photography

Our Aim
- To ensure that public messages and images of the reserve are accurate, appropriate and consistent with the values of the reserve.

Background
Promoting the reserve plays an important role in protecting Karlu Karlu. Images of the Devil’s Marbles feature in film, advertising, books and calendars as symbols of Australia’s outback, the Northern Territory and the Barkly region. These representations contribute to the Barkly region’s tourism profile, help build visitor expectations and help maintain public support for the reserve’s management.

The joint management partners want to promote the reserve to tourists and to the wider community. However, information and images distributed to visitors is occasionally inaccurate or inappropriate. Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service want commercial use of information and images to accurately reflect the reserve’s values. Some sites on the reserve are culturally significant and Traditional Owners do not want images taken of them.

Commercial filming and photography requires permits to be issued in accordance with the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws. Parks and Wildlife Service policy and procedures relating to commercial filming and photography provide for individual parks and reserves to have supplementary commercial filming and photography policies, guidelines and fee schedules.

Management Directions
6.15 Permit Guidelines and Procedures – As a priority, the joint management partners will establish commercial film and photography guidelines and procedures by which proposals requiring permits under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws will be considered.

Pending development of agreed guidelines and procedures the Central Land Council will consult with Traditional Owners in relation to permit applications that request any access, image or activity that would not normally be allowed to visitors to the reserve.

The Joint Management Committee may revise permit approval guidelines and procedures as appropriate.

Guidelines agreed by the partners will:
- Consider the interests of Traditional Owners, the community, the tourism industry and existing Parks and Wildlife Service policy.
- Include requirements to minimise impact on the reserve’s values.
- Explicitly state when proposed filming or photography will, and will not require consultation with Traditional Owners.
- Require that permit applications must state the intended use of the images and images may only be used for the purposes stated on the permit.
- Provide for Traditional Owners to supervise or participate in filming or photography activities and be paid appropriately.
- Provide for fees as appropriate.
Approval procedures agreed by the partners will provide for:

- Timely processing of permit applications.
- Parks and Wildlife Service approving permit applications without consulting Traditional Owners when the proposal is clearly consistent with guidelines agreed by the partners.
- Parks and Wildlife Service refusing permits applications without consulting Traditional Owners when the proposal is clearly inconsistent with guidelines agreed.
- Consideration of permit applications by the full Traditional Owner group, the Joint Management Committee or a Traditional Owner advisory group depending on the impact of the proposal, particularly when the proposal involves special access, images or activity, when the expected audience for the product is very large or proposed filming or photography represents a major commercial project, such as a feature film.

6.16 **Notification** – The Parks and Wildlife Service will inform the CLC of every permit application. The Traditional Owners will be notified by the CLC when promotional activities, commercial filming or photography permits are granted.

6.17 **News and Current Affairs** – Capture of images of the reserve for news and current affairs reporting will not require a commercial filming and photography permit.

6.18 **Promotion** – The joint management partners will continue to work with the regional tourism association and Tourism NT to ensure that pre-visit information and promotion of the reserve is accurate, reinforces the reserve’s values and presents Karlu Karlu in ways that are acceptable to Traditional Owners.

*Photo: Tourism NT*
Relations with Stakeholders

Our Aim

• To foster a supportive regional community and productive relations with others who have an interest in the reserve’s management.

Background

The reserve is a public asset and the partners are jointly accountable to the community. It is appropriate that others with interests in the reserve’s management have a role in decision-making.

The small size of the reserve reinforces the importance of working closely with neighbours and other stakeholders. Karlu Karlu lies within the Mungkarta Aboriginal Land Trust, which has outstations at Wakurlpu, Junkaji and Mungkarta. From time to time the reserve will benefit from including Traditional Owners of neighbouring lands in land management decisions. Where efforts will meet the interests of both Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service, joint management may facilitate management of cross-boundary issues.

The joint management partners will be proactive in liaising with the tourism industry. The Parks and Wildlife Service will represent the partners’ interests through established forums and organisations such as the Barkly Tourism Association and Tourism NT, particularly on matters surrounding the development and promotion of tourism opportunities. Wauchope Hotel and Wycliffe Well Roadhouse are recognised as important neighbours with an interest in tourism and enterprise development opportunities.

The wider community and conservation groups such as the Threatened Species Network and Greening Australia have interests in the reserve’s wildlife. From time to time, other government agencies may have reason to access the reserve, seek information or give management advice.

Management Directions

6.19 Local Community Education – Where possible the reserve’s community education and interpretation program will include local Aboriginal people, particularly young people.

6.20 Community Involvement – Any community involvement initiatives that assist in achieving this plan’s aims will be actively supported. The joint management partners will keep the community and stakeholders informed about significant issues and proposed developments.

6.21 Tourism Liaison – The joint management partners will be proactive in liaising with the tourism industry through established forums and organisations such as the regional tourism association, Tourism Central Australia.

6.22 Land Management Liaison – Traditional Owner representatives of the Joint Management Committee and Central Land Council will liaise with Traditional Owners of neighbouring lands on matters of mutual interest.
Research, Survey and Monitoring

Our Aim

- To encourage research, survey and monitoring activities which benefit the reserve and its management.

Background

Effective management is very much about review and continuous improvement. Good management planning and operational decisions need good information about the reserve’s values, visitor use, environmental trends and the effectiveness of management actions.

Most research, survey and monitoring programs are carried out as internal projects by the Parks and Wildlife Service. Research or surveys undertaken by external organisations require permits issued under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws.

Traditional Owners may have knowledge of the reserve that can contribute to research outcomes. It is important that they be consulted and invited to participate in research, survey and monitoring projects and, where possible, employed in related work. Research and survey projects must protect the intellectual property rights of Traditional Owners.

Data on visitor numbers, demographics, activities and satisfaction is useful to guide many aspects of visitor management, including planning and design of facilities and interpretation programs. Traffic counters have been maintained at the reserve for many years. Visitor surveys have been conducted from time to time.

Joint management agreements require joint management to be subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation. A partnership program with the Charles Darwin University is expected to identify indicators and processes for gauging successful joint management as a means to continuous improvement. It is expected this program will be implemented early in the life of this Plan.

Joint management success will be measured against achievement of the aims in this plan and the satisfaction of the joint management partners. Selected performance indicators will provide an additional guide to managers in monitoring management performance.

Management Directions

6.23 Internal Research, Survey and Monitoring – Programs will be described in operational plans and be subject to annual review by the joint management partners.

6.24 External Research - External research will be encouraged where resulting knowledge is expected to contribute to improved management of the Territory’s natural and cultural values, in particular the values of Karlu Karlu.

6.25 Permit Guidelines and Procedures – As a priority, the joint management partners will establish guidelines and procedures by which proposals for external research requiring permits under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws will be considered. Pending development of agreed guidelines and procedures the Central Land Council will consult with Traditional Owners in relation to permit applications that request any access or activity that would not normally be allowed to visitors to the reserve.

The Joint Management Committee may revise permit approval guidelines and procedures as appropriate.
Guidelines agreed by the partners will include the following:

- Consideration of the interests of Traditional Owners, the community, the tourism industry and Parks and Wildlife Service policy.
- Requirements to minimise impact on the reserve’s values.
- Explicitly state when proposed research will, and will not require consultation with Traditional Owners.
- Protection of cultural and intellectual property rights (in accordance with agreed policy).
- Requirement for permit applications to state the intended uses of research outcomes and benefit sharing arrangements (if any) with the joint management partners.
- Provision for Traditional Owners to supervise or participate in proposed activities, for their knowledge to be incorporated into project objectives and outcomes where appropriate and for them to be paid when appropriate.
- A fee structure.
- Provision for reports on research outcomes to be given to the PWS and the CLC in hard copy and electronic copy, including plain English summaries.
- Provision for the CLC to review study reports prior to publication where protection of intellectual property may be concerned in relation to cultural information.

Approval procedures agreed by the partners will provide for:

- Timely processing of permit applications.
- Parks and Wildlife Service approving permit applications without consulting Traditional Owners when the proposal is clearly consistent with guidelines agreed by the partners.
- Parks and Wildlife Service refusing permits applications without consulting Traditional Owners when the proposal is clearly inconsistent with guidelines agreed by the partners.
- Consideration of permit applications by the full Traditional Owner group, the Joint Management Committee or a Traditional Owner advisory group depending on the impact of proposed research activities.

6.26 Performance Monitoring – A joint management monitoring and evaluation program will be developed and implemented as a high priority. See Management Direction 2.7

6.27 Visitor Monitoring – Visitor numbers will be continuously counted through well-maintained traffic counters and/or other means. Surveys to obtain other visitor data on will be conducted in accordance with the Parks and Wildlife Service visitor monitoring program and results used by the Joint Management Committee for planning and decision-making.

6.28 Traditional Owner Participation – Participation by Traditional Owners and employment in research, survey and monitoring projects will be maximised. Aboriginal knowledge will be incorporated in project objectives and outcomes where appropriate.