

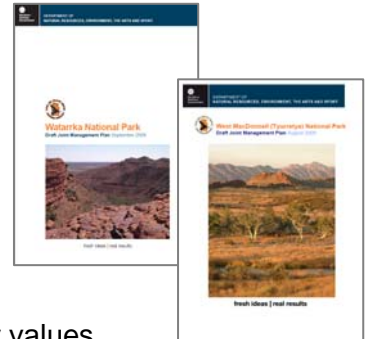
Watarrka and West MacDonnell National Parks Draft Joint Management Plans

WHAT IS A JOINT MANAGEMENT PLAN?

Joint Management Plans set the direction for the management of a park or reserve, documenting how the interests of conservation, the wider community and Aboriginal Traditional Owners will be served. The plans describe the natural, recreational and cultural values of the park and how the joint management partners will ensure these values are properly protected.

They are also an opportunity for the public to learn about each park and their values.

Joint Management Plans are statutory documents that come into effect once passed by the Legislative Assembly. They remain in effect until replaced by a new plan, probably in about ten year's time.



WHAT IS JOINT MANAGEMENT?

Joint management is about Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service working together in partnership to manage a Park. It is about the partners sharing their knowledge, values and interests, along with the values and interests of the wider community, to jointly make decisions in relation to all aspects of park management. Both Draft Plans reflect new joint management arrangements.



HOW WERE THEY PREPARED?

Both Draft Plans were prepared by Parks and Wildlife in collaboration with Traditional Owners, supported by the Central Land Council. Sectors of the NT tourism industry have been consulted through workshops held for each park.

WHAT DO THE PLANS SUGGEST? Neither Plan proposes radical changes to how these parks are currently managed.

To promote and protect some of Central Australia's most important tourist destinations - Each year Watarrka and the West MacDonnell National Parks welcome around 215,000 and 128,000 visitors respectively. Protection of each Park's character and aesthetic values will be afforded the highest priority. Visitor management strategies will aim to ensure safe, informative and enjoyable experiences. Visitors will have opportunities for a wider range of activities, with particular focus on authentic cultural experiences. Visitor information services will reflect changing visitor interests and communication technologies. Infrastructure improvements will include new and upgraded access and facilities. Public-private partnerships will be encouraged.



WHAT DO THE PLANS SUGGEST? (cont.)



To protect and manage internationally significant conservation areas - Conservation of each Park's biodiversity will be a major focus. Ongoing survey and monitoring of the Park's biological resources including Indigenous ecological knowledge will not only increase the knowledge base; these activities also aid understanding of the impacts of feral animals, weeds and fire and are integral to developing strategies to reduce these impacts. Both Draft Plans propose the declaration of Mining Reserves (Reserves from Occupation) to protect the parks' outstanding natural and cultural values.

To respect Aboriginal culture - The Park's cultural assets will also be afforded high management priority. Traditional Owner involvement in all aspects of Park management, especially cultural heritage management will be encouraged and supported. The West MacDonnells Draft Plan also proposes consideration of a park name change to include Tyurretye (choor-it-ja) to reflect Aboriginal interests in that park.



To develop job opportunities for Aboriginal people - Both Plans emphasise developing equitable joint management partnerships, the participation of Traditional Owners in park management and training, employment and economic opportunities for Aboriginal people. As

joint managers of the Park, the Parks and Wildlife Service will support and facilitate training, employment and commercial enterprise development for Traditional Owners with the support of the Northern Territory tourism industry and Central Land Council.

To provide public access - Free public access for normal activities is guaranteed. It is standard for public access for some activities to be managed for safety, environmental or cultural reasons in most national parks. Both Draft Plans propose that visitor activity and access may be regulated if warranted by impact on natural or cultural values, or visitor experience or safety. The Watarrka Draft Plan proposes that the Garden of Eden be closed to swimming.



HOW DO WE HAVE OUR SAY?

Your views and input is important for the future of these Parks. Please take a look at these draft plans and consider what Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife are proposing for the management of these important areas. The Draft Plans and submission forms are available online at www.nt.gov.au/nretas/consult/ Every submission is important but those that give reasons for concern with supporting information and constructive suggestions are most useful. Include your name, contact details and area of interest and be clear what parts of the draft Plan you disagree with, as well as what you especially support. Refer to sections and page numbers.