



**PARKS AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION  
OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**



Our ref M13-099PW

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Mr Warren Entsch  
Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Entsch

I write in response to your request for submissions for the inquiry into the development of Northern Australia. The Minister for Parks and Wildlife has requested that I respond on her behalf.

The Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory ('the Commission') supports the sustainable development of Northern Australia, recognising the valuable economic and social outcomes that this will provide for the Northern Territory. We recognise the importance of sustainable development to ensure the natural values of the environment are protected so they can be enjoyed and utilised into the future.

National Parks and Reserves play an important role in tourism and recreation. Current estimates indicate that over 60% of visitors to the Northern Territory visit one or several of our National Parks, illustrating the important role that Parks and Reserves play in tourism. There is great potential to grow nature-based tourism in the north and the Commission is working with commercial operators and industry to increase tourism to our Parks by implementing unique and innovative experiences for visitors.

In addition, in the Northern Territory, Parks and Reserves play a significant role in supporting recreation and the outdoor lifestyle that is part of the social fabric of Northern Australia. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that local Territorians are using Parks and Reserves more and more frequently for recreational pursuits. Furthermore, there is a growing diversification in the recreational pursuits of Territorians in Parks and Reserves, with the community requesting opportunities for new activities on the Parks estate, such as four-wheel driving, hunting, mountain bike riding and cycling. The Commission will continue to work with the community to introduce innovative events and activities for local people, with the view to increasing visitation of Parks and Reserves, while also supporting the outdoor lifestyle that is so important to the Northern Territory.

With the growing use of Parks and Reserves, coupled with population growth in northern Australia, the Commission recognises that there will be a need for infrastructure and facilities to support this outdoor lifestyle.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to this inquiry. The Commission would welcome the opportunity to provide specific comment on options / submissions received through this inquiry to ensure congruence between tourism and recreation growth and sustainable development opportunities in the north.

Yours sincerely

ANDREW BRIDGES

29 February 2014