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← In 2009 the Christmas Island Yellow Crazy Ant Team's work paid off with ant count data showing a decline in numbers over 99 per cent within four weeks of baiting. The aerial baiting program also had minimal impact on the island's important red and robber crab (pictured) populations. Aerial baiting is one way Christmas Island National Park is tackling one of its biggest threats. Photo Director of National Parks

Director of National Parks strategic planning and performance assessment

This annual report is one element in the strategic planning and performance assessment framework for the Director of National Parks. Other framework elements are described in this chapter, which includes a summary of performance for 2009–10.

Portfolio Budget Statements 2009–10

These documents detail Budget initiatives and appropriations against specific outcomes and outputs. The annual report completes the budget cycle by reporting on achievements for those outcomes and outputs in the year under review. The Director of National Parks is included in the Portfolio Budget Statements for the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts portfolio and contributes to the achievement of Outcome 1:

The conservation and protection of Australia's terrestrial and marine biodiversity and ecosystems through supporting research, developing information, supporting natural resource management, regulating matters of national environmental significance and managing Commonwealth protected areas.

The Director contributes to meeting this outcome through:

Conservation and appreciation of Commonwealth reserves through the provision of safe visitor access, the control of invasive species and working with stakeholders and neighbours.

A summary of performance for Program 1.1 Parks and Reserves as identified in the Portfolio Budget Statements follows. Detailed performance information for individual Commonwealth reserves is included in the State of the Parks report (see www.environment.gov.au/parks/publications/annual/09-10).

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts strategic plan and corporate plan

The department's strategic plan outlines the key strategic issues and priorities at the departmental level. It identifies agency priorities to achieve the objectives outlined in the department's corporate plan. Both plans provide the direction, context and purpose for the department's activities and programs.

Parks Australia Divisional Plan

This plan sets down the long-term outcomes and shorter-term outputs for the Director of National Parks against seven key result areas (KRAs), as follows:

- KRA1: Natural heritage management
- KRA2: Cultural heritage management
- KRA3: Joint management and working with Indigenous communities
- KRA4: Use and appreciation of protected areas
- KRA5: Stakeholders and partnerships
- KRA6: Business management
- KRA7: Biodiversity science, knowledge management and use.

Not all key result areas are equally relevant to all reserves. For example, KRA3, joint management and working with Indigenous communities, applies largely to the three jointly managed reserves: Uluru–Kata Tjuta, Kakadu and Booderee National Parks.

Strategies to achieve the outcomes in the Parks Australia Divisional Plan and the department's strategic and corporate plans are detailed in Parks Australia branch, section, work team and individual work plans and in management plan implementation schedules.

Detailed information on performance against key result areas for individual reserves is in the State of the Parks report at www.environment.gov.au/parks/publications/annual/09-10.

Management plans

Section 366 of the EPBC Act requires the Director (or in the case of a jointly managed park, the Director and the relevant board of management) to prepare management plans for Commonwealth reserves. Management plans provide for the reserve's protection and conservation. They must state how the reserve is to be managed and how the reserve's features are to be protected and conserved.

As at 30 June 2010, the Director was responsible for the management of seven Commonwealth terrestrial and 26 Commonwealth marine reserves. Four terrestrial reserve management plans* are in place. Draft management plans are being prepared for Booderee and Christmas Island National Parks and the Australian National Botanic Gardens.

Management plans are in place for three marine reserves: Elizabeth and Middleton Reefs Marine National Nature Reserve, the Great Australian Bight Marine Park (Commonwealth Waters) and Heard Island and McDonald Islands Marine Reserve and Conservation Zone.

Marine bioregional plans are being developed for Australia's marine jurisdiction and will identify new networks of Commonwealth marine reserves that will incorporate existing marine reserves. The management plans for other existing marine reserves have expired and the reserves are

* Norfolk Island National Park and Norfolk Island Botanic Garden are effectively managed as one reserve and the two reserve management plans are incorporated in a single document

being managed under interim arrangements in accordance with the intent of their previous management plans. Interim management arrangements will remain in place for these reserves until the new reserve networks are created and network management plans are adopted.

Management plan implementation schedules

Implementation schedules are part of the planning and performance assessment framework for terrestrial reserves. The schedules contain all the prescriptions (policies and actions) identified in a management plan. Each action-based prescription is broken down into projects, tasks and timeframes. Four terrestrial reserve implementation schedules are in place.

Management plan prescriptions not implemented

During the life of a management plan some prescriptions may not be implemented due to redundancy, impracticality or a lack of resources.

A technical audit of the Australian National Botanic Gardens conducted in 2009–10 identified a number of prescriptions that were not implemented over the life of the second plan, which expired in January 2009. Resource limitations and staff turnover impeded the ability to fully implement some prescriptions relating to new developments, field collections, marketing, philanthropic approaches and new policy development.



Uluru rangers and Mutitjulu community members surveyed murtja (mulgara) this year, part of an annual trapping project to check the health and breeding condition of these threatened marsupials.

Summary of performance

The following summary for 2009–10 uses key result areas, outcomes and indicators identified in the Parks Australia Divisional Plan and key performance indicators and deliverables identified in the 2009–10 Portfolio Budget Statements (marked 'PBS'). Additional information on performance against key result areas is in the State of the Parks report at www.environment.gov.au/parks/publications/annual/09-10.

KRA1: Natural heritage management

Objective

- The Commonwealth protected area estate contributes to the long-term viability of Australia's biodiversity

Actions

- Undertake monitoring, research and conservation activities which maintain or improve the status of natural values for which Commonwealth reserves were declared and/or recognised^{PBS}
- Minimise the impacts of threats to natural values of Commonwealth reserves^{PBS}

2009–10 results

Reserve management

- All Commonwealth reserves were managed in accordance with the requirements of the relevant Australian IUCN reserve management principles set out in the EPBC Regulations.
- Management plans for reserves continued to be developed and implemented in line with EPBC Act requirements. The Minister approved a new plan for Uluru–Kata Tjuta. New draft plans for Booderee, Christmas Island and the Australian National Botanic Gardens are being finalised.
- The Booderee National Park Climate Change Strategy 2010–2015 was finalised and adopted.
- The Christmas Island Expert Working Group, established in 2009 to advise on the ecological condition of the island, provided an interim report in June 2009 which was publicly released in 2009–10. Its final report was made public on 8 September 2010.
- With support from the Director, the Australasian Bat Society attempted to capture pipistrelle bats (*Pipistrellus murrayi*) on Christmas Island to establish a captive breeding colony. Despite considerable efforts the attempt was unsuccessful and the pipistrelle is now considered likely to be extinct.

- A collaborative project with the Northern Territory Government on two species of coastal dolphins, the Indo-Pacific humpback (*Sousa chinensis*) and Australian snubfin (*Orcaella heinsohni*), in the East and South Alligator rivers was completed. It is proposed to extend the project for a further 12 months to survey the West Alligator and Wildman rivers.
- A major three-year collaborative project with the Northern Territory Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts was completed. This project involved targeted surveys of threatened species in recognised biodiversity hotspots in the park, largely in the Arnhem Land Plateau. All surveys involved park staff (including trainees and school-based apprentices), Northern Territory Government staff, neighbouring Indigenous ranger groups and traditional owners from Arnhem Land.

Botanic gardens management

- A pipeline for non-potable water supply was installed between Canberra's Lake Burley Griffin and the Australian National Botanic Gardens and works were commenced to distribute this water through the Gardens' irrigation system. The works will secure a more reliable and sustainable water supply for irrigating the living collection and release around 170 megalitres per year of drinking water for Canberra.
- A program for *ex situ* alpine plant conservation supported by a three-year partnership between the Gardens, Australian National University, University of Queensland and the Friends of the Gardens continued. Eight field trips to the Mount Kosciuszko area were undertaken and 94 seed samples were collected. The program studies how climate change will affect the reproductive ecology and demography of Australian alpine flora.
- The old Gardens nursery site was rehabilitated to prepare for a new living collection display.
- Management of morning glory (*Ipomea cairica* and *I. indica*) at the Norfolk Island Botanic Garden continued with the assistance of students from the Norfolk Island Central School.

Monitoring and research

- Park managers nominated 35 species across six terrestrial reserves to determine whether viable populations of selected significant species have been maintained in those reserves. Of the selected species, the populations of five are increasing; 13 are remaining steady; eight are decreasing; one may be extinct; and for eight species population data are deficient. Further information on species monitoring is provided in the State of the Parks report at www.environment.gov.au/parks/publications/annual/09-10.^{PBS}
- Species monitored at Booderee included the eastern bristlebird (*Dasyornis brachypterus*), hooded plover (*Thinornis rubricollis*), sooty oystercatcher (*Haematopus fuliginosus*) and little penguin (*Eudyptula minor*). Research into the ecology of the rare eastern chestnut mouse (*Pseudomys gracilicaudatus*) indicates relatively high abundance but whether this is due to suitable habitat becoming available following fire or to intensive fox control is not clear. Wildlife monitoring also continued to focus on the effectiveness of regular fox baiting and long-term impacts of the 2003 Windermere and 2007 Cave Beach fires, particularly on long-nosed bandicoots (*Perameles nasuta*) and eastern bristlebirds.

- Ongoing native reptile monitoring on Christmas Island indicated that reptiles are undergoing a rapid population decline. However, populations of Lister's gecko (*Lepidodactylus listeri*), last found in 1987, and an individual pink blind snake (*Ramphotyphlops exocoeti*), last found in 1985, were re-discovered.
- Monitoring and control programs continued at Kakadu for introduced plants including *Mimosa pigra*, mission grass (*Pennisetum polystachion*), olive hymenachne (*Hymenachne amplexicaulis*), salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*) at Yellow Water and gamba grass (*Andropogon gayanus*). Of these, salvinia and mission grass continue to be major challenges for the park. Two relatively new weed species were also targeted: snakeweed (*Stachytarphetta*) and knobweed (*Hyptis capitata*).
- Argentine ants (*Linepithema humile*) have been identified on Norfolk Island. Parks Australia staff conduct monthly surveys for Argentine ants at all visitor areas and around the periphery of the park, particularly focusing on areas near known infestations. At 30 June 2010, Argentine ants had not been detected in the park or botanic garden.
- Monitoring of invasive yellow crazy ants (*Anoplolepis gracilipes*) at Pulu Keeling shows that colonies are widespread and some are reaching 'supercolony' density.
- Populations of the red-footed booby (*Sula sula*) and the Cocos buff-banded rail (*Gallirallus philippensis andrewsi*) at Pulu Keeling are steady.
- The thirteenth annual *tjakura* or great desert skink (*Egernia kintorei*) survey at Uluru–Kata Tjuta documented a record number (234) of breeding burrows, with 95 burrows containing juveniles and 65 containing sub-adults. This number of breeding burrows exceeds by far the previous highest number recorded since monitoring began.
- An environmental monitoring program was established to identify and assess any short-term or long-term damage associated with an oil and gas spill from the Montara wellhead platform off the northern Western Australian coast. The plan was agreed between the department and the company responsible for the platform, PTTEP Australasia, and includes monitoring of the Ashmore Reef and Cartier Island marine reserves. Studies are continuing and, when available, results will be released on the department's website.
- In May 2010, results were published of a study into the foraging range and behaviour of the Australian sea lion (*Neophoca cinerea*), its interactions with commercial fishing vessels, and how the risks of injury resulting from those interactions can be minimised (see <http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mpa/gab/sea-lion.html>).
- The results of a baseline biodiversity survey in the Cod Grounds Commonwealth Marine Reserve showed that the reserve encloses an area of high conservation value, not only because it contains a significant grey nurse shark (*Carcharias taurus*) aggregation site but also because it is a productive area that supports a large biomass of fishes including many exploited species.

Invasive species management

- Park managers nominated 20 significant invasive species across six terrestrial reserves and are monitoring changes in their overall distribution and abundance. Of the selected species, the populations of five are increasing; three are remaining steady; four are decreasing; and for eight species population data are deficient. Further information on monitoring of significant invasive species is provided in the State of the Parks report at www.environment.gov.au/parks/publications/annual/09-10.^{PBS}
- Approximately 500 hectares of bitou bush at Booderee National Park was sprayed in June 2010. Booderee's aerial spraying program has resulted in a 90 per cent reduction in the area of high density infestation and a 75 per cent reduction in the area of medium density infestation between 2004 and 2010.
- Aerial baiting of 784 hectares of yellow crazy ant supercolonies at Christmas Island was successfully completed and a monitoring project to detect off-target impacts of baiting commenced.
- Weed control programs in Norfolk Island National Park were completed in six of the 19 coups identified in the park's weed control strategy.
- An island-wide survey to provide baseline data on the distribution and abundance of exotic species in Pulu Keeling was completed.
- The Buffel Grass Management Strategy for Uluru–Kata Tjuta was completed. Identified activities include continuing the Conservation Volunteers Australia program around the base of Uluru and removing buffel grass from roads and tracks throughout the rest of the park.

KRA2: Cultural heritage management

Objective

- Australia's cultural heritage is conserved and effectively communicated to the public

Actions

- Identify, protect and conserve cultural heritage values for which the parks were declared/recognised^{PBS}
- Minimise threats to cultural values
- Work with traditional owners to assess and maintain key cultural sites^{PBS}
- Provide assistance to traditional owners in recording and maintaining living cultural traditions
- Assist in the facilitation of on-country activities to encourage intergenerational transfer of knowledge
- Provide appropriate interpretive material to the public to communicate the cultural heritage of Commonwealth reserves

2009–10 results

Identification and conservation of cultural sites

- All key sites at Kakadu and Uluru–Kata Tjuta were inspected as agreed with traditional owners. Various treatments were undertaken as required. An inspection and treatment program is not yet in place at Booderee.^{PBS}
- The rock art protection program at Uluru–Kata Tjuta continued with field visits from rock art conservators to men's, women's and public rock art sites at the base of Uluru. A rock art protection training workshop for Indigenous Protected Area ranger groups based at Docker River, Sandy Bore and lands in Western Australia was also conducted.^{PBS}
- At Uluru–Kata Tjuta, discussions continued with the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority and Northern Land Council about a register of sites of significance and access protocols. Rock art management programs were continued with the involvement of relevant Bininj. A review of historic (non-Aboriginal) cultural heritage sites was also completed.^{PBS}

Maintenance and promotion of traditional cultural values

- At Booderee, over 140 cultural interpretation sessions for visiting school groups and special interest groups were held as part of the spring, summer and autumn school holiday programs. The education shelter at the Booderee Botanic Gardens was completed and significant progress made on the pond features in the Koori Gardens section.
- A cultural heritage workshop involving traditional owners from the Mutitjulu Community and other communities was organised by Uluru–Kata Tjuta staff to revise the Cultural Heritage Action Plan.
- The register of oral history audio and video material at Kakadu was continued along with the recording of history from identified informants, in particular key traditional owners.

Histories, prehistories and knowledge recording

- At Kakadu the following major oral history projects were completed: the history of Mudginberri abattoir, particularly the role that Bininj played in the buffalo industry; recording landscape change from the records of Dave Lindner, a long-term resident of the Kakadu region; and traditional uses of the South Alligator floodplain. Similar work is planned for Anlarr (Nourlangie Camp), the old Jim Jim pub and Munmalary in 2010–11.
- Approved audio and video materials from Kakadu were transferred for long-term storage and protection in accordance with the partnership agreement between the National Archives of Australia and the Director.

KRA3: Joint management and working with Indigenous communities

Objectives

- Indigenous communities benefit from and play a lead role in the Australian Government's protected area management program
- Activities and investments contribute to meeting Closing the Gap targets

Actions

- Enable effective participation of traditional owners and Indigenous communities in park management^{PBS}
- Engage Indigenous staff and/or contractors to provide park services^{PBS}
- Provide opportunities for the establishment of Indigenous owned enterprises, including those which provide an Indigenous cultural experience to visitors
- Work together with boards of management, land councils and service delivery agencies to assist in meeting Closing the Gap targets

2009–10 results

Indigenous staffing and contractors

- Overall the number of directly employed Indigenous staff throughout the year remained steady in the jointly managed parks.^{PBS}
- The number of Indigenous staff (including intermittent and irregular employees) and contractors indirectly engaged to provide services at Kakadu and Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Parks increased by 33 per cent. The increase at Uluru–Kata Tjuta was partly due to the engagement of two externally funded workforce development coordinators. Ninety-seven Indigenous workers were employed under a memorandum of understanding with the Mutitjulu Community Aboriginal Corporation.^{PBS}
- Anangu participation in the Mutitjulu Community Ranger Program increased significantly with 12 Anangu from the Mutitjulu Community employed regularly at Uluru–Kata Tjuta.
- Parks Australia continued to support the agreement between the Mutitjulu Community and the park in employing Anangu at Uluru–Kata Tjuta, including acknowledging and recompensing senior Anangu for their traditional knowledge and skills.

Training

- Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park employed four Indigenous trainees and Kakadu National Park has one Indigenous trainee position. Kakadu employed two Indigenous school-based apprentices.
- At Booderee, a broad range of training was provided to Wreck Bay Enterprises Ltd, the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community and park staff in accordance with the training strategy.
- The Junior Ranger program at Kakadu was continued. Jabiru and Gunbalanya area schools were involved in the program.
- At Kakadu, Bininj staff continued certificate level studies, numeracy and workplace English language and literacy training.

Contribution of Aboriginal enterprises

- Wreck Bay Enterprises Ltd (the enterprise arm of the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community Council) provided \$1.9 million of cleaning, road maintenance and entry station services to Booderee National Park.
- The Director and Wreck Bay Enterprises Ltd completed the agreement on the second round of outsourcing at Booderee, including management of the visitor centre, grounds maintenance and building services. Both parties agreed to delay final implementation until restructures were completed.^{PBS}
- Tourism experts were engaged to identify potential new tourism opportunities and provide support to Anangu in developing new tourism businesses at Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park.
- Bininj were engaged in delivering interpretive and environmental programs at Kakadu and as part of the Kakadu Indigenous Ranger Program.

Boards of management

- At Booderee, the board met eight times and substantially completed a draft second management plan. The management plan sub-committee, made up of representatives of the board, park and community, met six times to assist the board in drafting the plan. Only minor amendments are required before the draft plan is released for public comment.
- The Kakadu National Park Board of Management met three times. Nominations for new board members were agreed.
- One regular and four special meetings of the Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park Board of Management and seven meetings of the board’s consultative committees were held.
- Through the Central Land Council traditional owners were involved in finalising the fifth Uluru–Kata Tjuta management plan and in other significant projects.

KRA4: Use and appreciation of protected areas

Objectives

- Commonwealth reserves are valued for providing broader benefits to society such as a greater appreciation and understanding of Australia’s biodiversity, unique habitats and landscapes
- Australia’s protected areas are recognised as significant contributors to tourism

Actions

- Provide inspirational, satisfying and safe experiences to visitors to Commonwealth reserves^{PBS}
- Ensure visitor monitoring and reporting methods are consistent across the Commonwealth reserve estate
- Minimise visitor impacts on natural and cultural values
- Improve tourism and conservation partnerships
- Facilitate National Landscape experience development strategies that promote sustainable and appropriate tourism in protected areas

2009–10 results

Visitor numbers and satisfaction

- Visitor surveys were undertaken at Kakadu, Uluru–Kata Tjuta and Norfolk Island National Parks. All reserves recorded satisfaction from greater than 80 per cent of park users (Uluru 96 per cent, Kakadu 94 per cent, Norfolk Island 97 per cent).^{PBS}
- An estimated 1.45 million people visited Commonwealth terrestrial reserves, a 2.5 per cent increase from 2008–09. Increases in visitor numbers were recorded at the Australian National Botanic Gardens (3.8 per cent), Booderee (2 per cent) and Uluru–Kata Tjuta (10 per cent), while numbers were steady at Christmas Island and Pulu Keeling and decreased at Norfolk Island (10 per cent) and Kakadu (9 per cent).

Education/interpretation programs

- The Australian National Botanic Gardens hosted 9,520 school and tertiary students from 191 schools in education programs (59 per cent of students participated in Gardens-run programs and 41 per cent in programs run by their own teachers). Schools from every state and territory included the Gardens on their Canberra excursion itinerary.
- Booderee staff delivered 108 school holiday interpretation sessions, focusing on Aboriginal cultural values and conservation themes, with over 3,000 attendees. A further 60 interpretation sessions were delivered to primary schools, high schools, universities and special interest groups, with more than 2,500 attendees in total.
- Christmas Island staff held educational sessions on park and conservation management for students from the Christmas Island District High School, island residents and visiting tour groups including bird watching groups.
- Pulu Keeling staff continued educational activities with the Cocos (Keeling) Islands District School and community, specifically on invasive species but also incorporating other local conservation messages.
- Uluru–Kata Tjuta staff delivered free interpretive events to visitors including the daily ranger-guided Mala Walk at Uluru.

Tourism and visitor facilities

- At Kakadu, the Director supported Aboriginal enterprise development and involvement in tourism ventures such as the Goymarr Tourist Information Centre through financial support for Bininj to attend tourism industry events and in-kind assistance to produce collective promotional material.
- The Minister officially opened the new Uluru viewing facility, Talinguru Nyakunytjaku, in October 2009.
- New welcome, walking track and road directional signs were installed at Norfolk Island and all walking tracks in the park and botanic garden were resurfaced. New brochures were produced on the walking tracks and on the island's plants and birds.

Awards

- Booderee won the 2009 award in the 'best Indigenous experience' category and was commended in the 'best tourist attraction' category at the National Tourism Awards. The park won the New South Wales Tourism Award for best tourist attraction and two awards in the 2009 Keep Australia Beautiful Clean Beach Awards (for youth action and resource protection), giving further recognition to recycling, energy and water efficiency initiatives.

KRA5: Stakeholders and partnerships

Objective

- Parks Australia is recognised as a valued partner nationally and internationally in the conservation of biodiversity and collaborative research

Actions

- Effectively involve stakeholders and partners in park management activities^{PBS}
- Form new and effective partnerships with government agencies, neighbours and stakeholders
- Co-fund research projects with other agencies under equitable funding arrangements^{PBS}
- Play a leadership role in targeted collaborative biodiversity research, such as through Australia's Virtual Herbarium and the Australian Seed Bank Partnership

2009–10 results

- Constructive partnerships in managing Commonwealth reserves continued with state government parks agencies and other relevant departments; the Australian Government's Department of Defence, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Australian Customs and Border Protection Service; the Transport and Tourism Forum and Tourism Australia, industry groups, universities, non-government organisations and community groups.^{PBS}
- Research partnerships continued with a range of organisations including the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service, CSIRO, Australian Institute of Marine Science, James Cook University, Australian National University, University of Canberra, Charles Darwin University and the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute.^{PBS}
- The Australian National Botanic Gardens continued membership of technical working groups under the Global Biodiversity Information Facility and Taxonomic Databases Working Group.
- The close collaboration between the Australian National Botanic Gardens seedstore and Greening Australia continued, including joint field collecting, seed storage and management. The ANBG also provided Greening Australia with space and irrigation for seedling production.
- The Australian National Herbarium continued to play a driving and coordinating role on behalf of the department for projects undertaken by the Council of Heads of Australasian Herbaria. This included continued work with Australia's Virtual Herbarium, and the Australian Plant Census.

- Christmas Island staff established an island-based stakeholder working group, which met three times, to assist with the preparation of the Christmas Island Regional Recovery Plan. Consultations were held with the community and other stakeholders.
- The cat control program on Christmas Island continued with partners including the Shire and Christmas Island Phosphates. The partners are also developing an island-wide cat and rat management plan.
- The 50th meeting of the Norfolk Island National Park Advisory Committee was held, a milestone of 25 years' participation by five of the community members. A review of the advisory committee's operating procedures was completed which will guide the committee's future direction.
- At Kakadu, the partnership between the Australian and Northern Territory governments continued, with joint funding and planning to advance tourism in the park. Park staff also continued to work cooperatively with the Northern Territory Bushfires Council and other Northern Territory Government agencies, West Arnhem Shire and the Northern Land Council.
- A new Kakadu Research Advisory Committee was appointed for a five-year term in line with the board of management's term. The new members reviewed the committee's operations and began developing a strategic framework for research in the park for the next five years.
- Uluru staff facilitated several meetings of the Tourism Consultative Committee, the Film and Photography Consultative Committee and the Cultural Heritage and Scientific Consultative Committee. Parks Australia staff formed the Uluru Regional Employment Group to ensure a regional approach to training and employment of Indigenous job seekers.

KRA6: Business management

Objectives

- Robust and accurate business systems are in place which promote health and safety, maintain park infrastructure integrity and ensure work is undertaken within budget constraints
- Parks Australia's ecological footprint is minimised through adaptive management and supporting business practices

Actions

- Base planning and decision-making on the best available information, legal obligations and government and agency policies^{PBS}
- Ensure expenditure does not exceed budget
- Minimise the number of 'A' or 'B' findings from the annual Australian National Audit Office audit of Director of National Parks financial statements
- Establish and implement robust and effective management plans for Commonwealth reserves
- Minimise risks and the number and severity of reportable occupational health and safety incidents involving staff, contractors, volunteers and park users^{PBS}

- Ensure that accessible assets and infrastructure are maintained in a safe condition
- Use adaptive management regimes which respond to new information about impacts of climate change and to availability of improved technologies^{PBS}
- Audit energy use, water use and waste in Commonwealth reserves and implement actions to provide efficiencies and improvements

2009–10 results

Management planning

- Management plans are in place for Uluru–Kata Tjuta, Norfolk Island, Pulu Keeling and Kakadu National Parks. Draft management plans are nearly finalised for Booderee and Christmas Island National Parks and the Australian National Botanic Gardens.^{PBS}
- Reserve implementation schedules are in place for Uluru–Kata Tjuta, Norfolk Island, Pulu Keeling and Kakadu National Parks. Implementation schedules are not in place for the reserves with expired management plans.^{PBS}
- A technical audit on the implementation of the Australian National Botanic Gardens Management Plan found that 65 per cent of management prescriptions were fully completed during the life of the plan, 23 per cent were partially completed and 12 per cent were not commenced.^{PBS}

Climate change

- Climate change strategies were completed for Kakadu and Booderee National Parks and the Australian National Botanic Gardens. Draft strategies were prepared for Uluru–Kata Tjuta and Norfolk Island National Parks. Policies and actions related to climate change monitoring, mitigation and adaptation are being incorporated into new management plans. The climate change strategies for each park address five key objectives:
 - understanding the implications of climate change
 - implementing adaptation measures to maximise the resilience of Commonwealth reserves
 - reducing each reserve’s carbon footprint
 - working with communities, industries and stakeholders to mitigate and adapt to climate change
 - communicating the implications of climate change and Parks Australia’s response.^{PBS}
- Greenhouse gas emissions associated with stationary and transport energy use were estimated to be 5,150 tonnes of carbon dioxide. This is a reduction of around 12 per cent compared with the average emissions over the past three years. Improvements in energy efficiency were largely related to stationary sources, including new solar panels at Kakadu, Norfolk Island and Booderee National Parks. The solar panels at Booderee have generated 4,088 kilowatt hours of electricity since November 2009. The closure of a glasshouse at the Australian National Botanic Gardens for renovations reduced energy use.^{PBS}
- Further information on greenhouse gas emissions is provided in the environmental sustainability report at Appendix B.

Financial and business management

- The Auditor-General issued an unqualified audit report for the 2009–10 financial statements of the Director of National Parks. There were no 'A' or 'B' findings from the Australian National Audit Office audit of the financial statements.
- Parks Australia recorded 189 occupational health and safety incidents over the year. This was higher than last year (165) but the second lowest over the past five years (139).^{PBS}
- Booderee National Park achieved a record revenue result from park use fees with an 8.7 per cent increase in camp fee revenue and a 5.8 per cent increase in entry fee revenue. Targeted camping and seasonal promotions, good weather and better compliance contributed to this best-ever result.
- Park use fees were re-introduced at Kakadu National Park in April 2010.

Risk and occupational health and safety

- There was a net reduction in the number of extreme and high risks in risk watch lists of 1 per cent from 2009–10.^{PBS}
- Staff sustained five major injuries (lacerations and fractures). Two park visitors died (one in Kakadu National Park and one undertaking the Uluru climb) and there were 15 major injuries to visitors.^{PBS}

KRA7: Biodiversity science, knowledge management and use

Objectives

- There is a comprehensive information base across Australia, including for the National Reserve System, that supports effective decision-making, spatial management and conservation
- Threatened native plant species occurring within Commonwealth parks and reserves are conserved in cooperation with national and international institutions

Actions

- Provide high quality, comprehensive and current information to the Australian community through publications and enhanced websites to facilitate and foster understanding of park values and Australia's natural and cultural heritage^{PBS}
- Undertake research designed to engage with end users and support evidence-based decision-making by environmental managers and policy makers^{PBS}
- Increase knowledge of Australia's biodiversity through research and training^{PBS}
- Make effective use of research investment in Commonwealth reserves
- Enhance *ex situ* conservation of Australia's rare and threatened biodiversity, through the activities of the Australian National Botanic Gardens and targeted projects

2009–10 results

Websites and publications

- The Parks Australia websites (environment.gov.au/parks and kakadu.com.au) received 25 per cent more visits than the previous year with 540,877 'unique' visits (an average of 1,481 per day). Use of online publications also increased with 105,181 'unique' views (an average of 288 per day).^{PBS}
- Estimates indicate a 20 per cent increase in use of the Australian National Botanic Gardens website (www.anbg.gov.au) since 2008–09.^{PBS}

Biodiversity knowledge

- The Australian National Botanic Gardens and Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research participated in national and international biodiversity information management and technical infrastructure projects including the Atlas of Living Australia, the Australian Faunal Directory, the Taxonomy Research and Information Network, the Australian Plant Census, Australia's Virtual Herbarium, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, the Encyclopedia of Life and the Taxonomic Databases Working Group.
- The Australian National Herbarium added data associated with 11,060 herbarium specimens. A total of 856,972 specimens are now recorded in the database and available to the public through the internet.
- Researchers associated with the Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research completed 21 scientific papers or publications resulting from research undertaken at the Australian National Herbarium. Areas of study included Australian Orchidaceae, Amaranthaceae, Rutaceae, Myrtaceae, Malvaceae, Portulacaceae, weeds, Mimosaceae, Santalaceae and bryophytes.
- The Australian National Botanic Gardens updated the Australian Plant Image Index to make 6,481 additional images accessible on the internet. The ANBG also contracted to collect, database and manage images of weeds and deliver them to the department's Weeds Australia website.
- The Australian National Botanic Gardens made significant progress on developing an agreed list of scientific names for Australia's flowering plants, through management of the Australian Plant Name Index and the national collaborative Australian Plant Census project. The project is endorsed by Australian Government and state and territory herbaria.
- The Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research was contracted by the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority to document and manage translocation and conservation of three orchid species threatened by the Bulahdelah bypass highway realignment.

