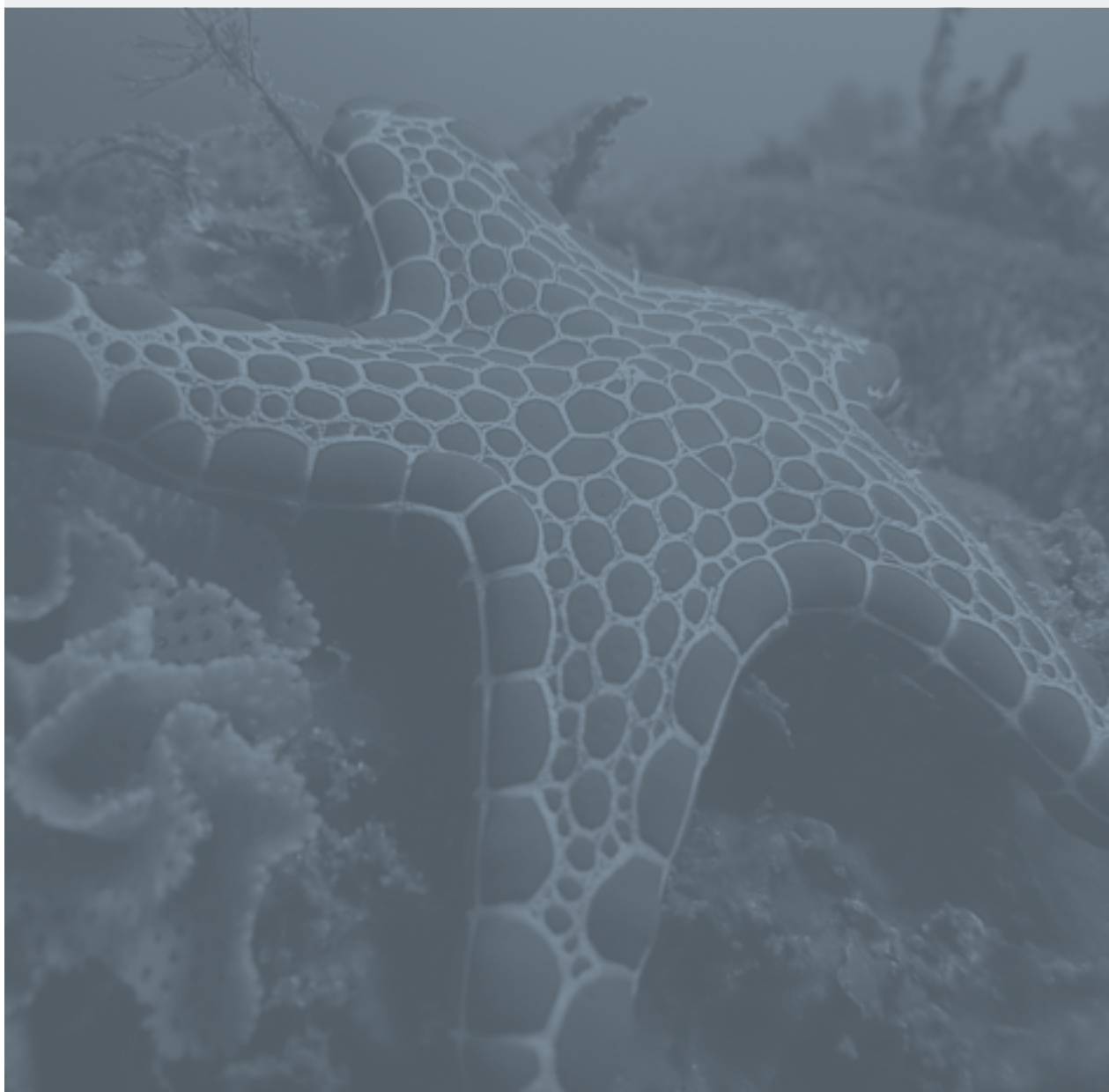


## 1 Director's review



# Director's review

It is a great privilege to be the Director of National Parks in the federal environment portfolio. I follow the wonderful and passionate Peter Cochrane and only hope to do the job as well as he did in his 14 years in the role.

The majority of area we manage is Aboriginal land, leased to me to manage jointly with the traditional owners. I thank the traditional owners and the Boards of Management for their warm welcome and ongoing trust in our management and staff.

In my first few months I have met many of our other partners—the scientists, tourism experts, volunteers, neighbours, photographers, policy makers and friends' groups, who are just as passionate about the places we manage as we are. They are keen to help us be the best park managers we possibly can be and I thank them for their ongoing interest and support.

This annual report shows the depth and complexity of conservation issues that Parks Australia manages. It also highlights major achievements.

Some of our key achievements in 2013–14 include the delivery of the first network wide management plan for the South-east Marine Reserves Network; the management of worldwide media coverage of the visit by their Royal Highnesses, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge to Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park; and the opening of the Red Centre Garden at the Australian National Botanic Gardens. Kakadu National Park entered into 32 five-year commercial licence agreements with tour operators and introduced a new Indigenous business model for visitor interpretation with the Djabulukgu Association to provide tourism services on their own country.

I thank all Parks Australia staff for their efforts over the last 12 months and for their professionalism and enthusiasm. I value their passion for protecting the natural and cultural values of the areas we manage, for making sure visitors are welcome and where appropriate, that people can sustainably use our conservation areas.

Later this year we will see people from across the globe come to the World Parks Congress in Sydney. The theme of the Congress is 'Parks, people, planet: inspiring solutions'. I expect to see people from a wide range of backgrounds—not only leaders in the parks and protected areas field, but also business, government, young people and health professionals. We will be working together to plan how to better manage parks and protected areas and promote the special places we care for as the natural solution to global challenges such as climate change, food and water security, health and a green economy.

Over the coming year we will work closely with the newly appointed Threatened Species Commissioner to implement strategies to halt the decline of species loss in areas such as Kakadu National Park and to improve the viability of populations of threatened species at risk across our conservation areas.

The next 12 months will also be very busy for us in the marine management space. Following the Australian Government's review of Commonwealth Marine Reserves we will be developing management arrangements for our new marine parks that ensure we support economic, social and environmental outcomes.

Lastly as we head towards the 30th anniversary of the lease arrangements in Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in October 2015, it is a very good time to have a dialogue with traditional owners about their contemporary aspirations and ambitions for joint management programmes.

As Director of National Parks, I am excited by the opportunities to continue our fine work in conservation and tourism management. I am looking forward to working with Parks Australia staff, with traditional owners, communities and an ever-widening range of stakeholders to respond to the changing needs and expectations of the broader Australian and international community.

## Certification

This annual report was prepared in accordance with the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*, the Finance Minister's Orders under that Act and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The Director of National Parks' review and the rest of this annual report, except the financial statements for the Australian National Parks Fund and the Auditor-General's report on those financial statements, constitute the Director of National Parks' report of operations for 2013–14.

The holder of the office of the Director of National Parks is responsible under section 9 of the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997* for the preparation and content of the report of operations in accordance with the Finance Minister's Orders.



Sally Barnes  
Director of National Parks