

INQUIRY INTO OPPORTUNITIES AND METHODS FOR STIMULATING THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL PARK SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO OPPORTUNITIES AND METHODS FOR STIMULATING THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION FOR ULURU-KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK

Context

Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park (UKTNP) is Aboriginal land leased to the Director of National Parks (DNP) until 2084. UKTNP is jointly managed by its traditional Aboriginal owners and the Director of National Parks/Parks Australia, in accordance with a management plan and by a Board of Management comprising a majority of traditional owners.

UKTNP is listed under the World Heritage Convention for its cultural and natural heritage attributes and values, meeting four criteria under the Convention. UKTNP's values also include habitat for threatened and/or ecologically and culturally significant species, particularly the threatened rufous hare wallaby and great desert skink.

UKTNP is one of the world's most iconic visitor destinations, providing exceptional world class visitor experiences based on the parks natural and cultural attractions and significantly supporting Australia's visitor economy. Over 300,000 people visit UKTNP each year and this number is expected to rise over coming years.

Key challenges

- The park provides the attractions that underpins the (tourism) economy in the region. Ensuring tourism associated with UKTNP also delivers livelihoods and other benefits for traditional owners is a major challenge. Doing this, however, will not only provide socio-economic benefits for traditional owners, but can also provide a suite of tourism products for visitors, that showcase the park's and regions cultural attractions.
- Effectively presenting and showcasing UKTNPs world class attractions is vital for developing and sustaining rewarding visitor experiences and, therefore, the economic activities the park supports. However, some park infrastructure needs upgrading (e.g. Cultural Centre, walking tracks, Uluru precinct roads/access, essential services) to cater for existing and future market segments and increasing visitor numbers, to ensure UKTNP remains an international destination of choice for future generations.

Key Priorities

- Upgrading existing park visitor infrastructure, particularly:
 - Preparing and implementing the Cultural Centre master plan, to provide visitors with immersive cultural experiences and benefits for traditional owners, through

opportunities to showcase the park's cultural and natural attractions. The master plan will be prepared in 2017-18, although its implementation will require significant Capital funding (of several million) from 2018-19 onwards.

- Upgrading of UKTNPs iconic walking tracks into world class walking tracks is planned for 2017-18 and 2018-19.
- Prepare an Uluru precinct master plan to enhance and develop new visitor experiences and address traffic management issues, while providing opportunities for traditional owners to benefit from increased tourism activity. Significant Capital funding would be required to implement the plan. It is envisaged the planning process would be conducted in parallel with the preparation of a new park management plan (2020-30).
- Continuing to facilitate and develop commercial tourism opportunities and activities in the park, to enhance visitor experiences, provide benefits for traditional owners and support the management of the park.
- Developing the capacity and capability of traditional owners and the tourism industry to effectively engage with each other in the tourism economy. Building on the existing links between Ayers Rock Resort, the park and traditional owners, as well as other key stakeholders in the region, will be critical.
- Working in collaboration with stakeholders (i.e. Mutitjulu community, Ayers Rock Resort and Northern Territory Government) to adopt regional approaches to destination planning and essential service delivery. This can be partly achieved through mutual engagement in master planning processes being conducted by Mutitjulu community, Ayers Rock Resort and Parks Australia (i.e. the new park management plan and Cultural Centre master plan).