

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment and Energy portfolio

Question No: 313
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: Agency
Program: Director of National Parks
Topic: Impact of the current fire regime
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Question Date: 14 March 2017
Question Type: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

The scientific literature describes many ways in which the current fire regime in Kakadu is not meeting recommended targets for fire frequency, intensity or areas of unburnt land. The impacts on ecology are such that the IUCN has rated Kakadu as of “Significant Concern” in its four-tiered assessment of all World Heritage properties. What is your opinion of the impact of the current fire regime on species loss or other ecological impacts in Kakadu, and what is Parks doing to respond to these concerns of the IUCN?

Answer:

Under the Kakadu National Park Threatened Species Strategy released at the end of 2014, Parks Australia has commenced an intensive ongoing program to work with Traditional Owners and scientists and better manage the fire regime in Kakadu National Park.

A new dedicated Fire officer commenced work in Kakadu in 2016. The Officer undertook extensive aerial burning throughout the early dry period and coordinated on-country fire walks with Bininj/Mungguy to improve localised and targeted burns. As a result, in 2015/16 approximately 30 per cent of the Park burnt compared to 70 per cent in 2014/15. Ongoing planning with Traditional Owners, local ranger groups, scientists and ecologists will help reduce the negative impacts of fire over time, improve the ecology and cultural values of the Park and reduce the extent of late season hot fires.

To facilitate employment and better fire management Parks Australia has also registered two Carbon Projects within the Park. Parks will continue to work with Traditional Owners to expand the current project area and generate further revenue and employment for Bininj/Mungguy.