

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

Question No: 208
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Programme: Director of National Parks (DNP)
Topic: Visitor numbers to Commonwealth National Parks
Hansard Page:
Question Date:
Question Type: Written

Senator Urquhart asked:

Can you tell me what are the current trends in visitor numbers to the Commonwealth National Parks, with specific reference to Kakadu and Uluru-Kata Tjuta? What are the reasons for these trends? What are the remedies for these trends? Does the Kakadu National Park Management Plan address these trends? How?

Answer:

Visitor Numbers

- Visitor numbers in Kakadu increased by 1 per cent in 2014 compared to 2013 whilst Uluru visitor numbers increased by 7 per cent in 2014 compared to 2013.

Visitor Numbers - 2014 Calendar Year			
Park	Visitors	+ / - visitors compared to previous year	+ / -%
1. Kakadu	190,159	+2,706	+1
2. Uluru-Kata Tjuta	279,461	+19,126	+7

Current trends

- The increase in visitor numbers in 2014 follows a previous period of decline in visitor numbers caused by the flow on effects from the global financial crisis and the high value of the Australian dollar. This resulted in a decline in the Northern Territory's key traditional international markets of the UK, France, Germany and the USA. At the same time, the high Australian dollar and confidence in the Australian economy led to a record number of Australians taking outbound overseas holidays leading to a drop in domestic visitors to the Northern Territory.
- The improved global economic outlook, especially the sustained economic recovery in Australia's traditional inbound source markets, the depreciating Australian dollar as well as the more positive outlook for inbound aviation capacity to Australia indicates a forecast growth of around 4.5 per cent for international arrivals into Australia. Forecast growth of domestic overnight travel remains moderate (Tourism Forecasts Autumn 2014, Tourism Research Australia).

- Tourism NT reports that for the year ending September 2014, there was an increase in holiday visitors to the Northern Territory of 5.7 per cent as interstate visitation and intra-territory visitation were stronger (both up 5.7 per cent). International holiday visitation also increased 5.7 per cent on the back of increases from the United Kingdom (up 16 per cent), France (up 13 per cent), Germany (up 11 per cent) and the United States (up 1.6 per cent).

Kakadu National Park Management Plan

- Yes. The draft Kakadu plan of management released for public comment on 4 December 2014 requires the development of strategies to increase annual visitor numbers to the park and the spread of visitor numbers in Kakadu across the seasons, particularly aimed at improving visitation during the annual wet season.