

Park management

"It's only recently that visitors and the Park have been here. But we have always looked after this place, this place of great Tjukurpa."

Nellie Patterson, traditional owner

Anangu have always been taught land management practices by their parents and grandparents. Today the Anangu Traditional Owners of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park jointly manage the Park with Parks Australia. Joint management arrangements allow Anangu to continue to meet traditional land management obligations and to keep their culture strong.

Handback and Lease Agreement

After the Handback of the land to the Traditional Owners on 26 October 1985, it was immediately leased back to the Director of National Parks for 99 years.

The lease ensures that the national park service (Parks Australia):

- encourages the maintenance of Anangu tradition through protection of sacred sites and other areas of significance;
- maximises Anangu involvement in Park administration and management, and provides necessary training;
- maximises Anangu employment in the Park by accommodating Anangu needs and cultural obligations with flexible working conditions;
- uses Anangu traditional skills in Park management;
- actively supports the delivery of cross-cultural training by Anangu to Park staff, local residents and Park visitors;
- consults regularly with Anangu;
- encourages Anangu commercial activities in the Park. The lease agreement includes an indexed rental agreement of 25% of Park revenue.

Board of Management

Anangu manage the Park through a Board of Management made up of six members nominated by Anangu and originally four, now five, non-Anangu members. The Board prepares Plans of Management, makes



policy and management decisions, monitors management programs, and provides advice to the Federal Minister for the Environment.

Tjukurpa and Management

Tjukurpa (Law) guides the development of Park policy, as set out in the Plan of Management. Plans of Management are developed in consultation with Anangu and a wide range of individuals and organisations associated with the Park. Park management programs are all guided by Tjukurpa. (See Plan of Management on www.ea.gov.au/parks/publications/Uluru-pom)

Parks Australia

Parks Australia, part of the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage, plays a major role in the coordination of conservation planning, management and monitoring of issues of national and international significance. It facilitates cooperation and coordination of conservation issues among the various tiers of government. Parks Australia has management responsibilities for protected areas at Norfolk Island, Ningaloo Marine Park, Booderee National Park, Cartier and Ashmore Islands, Mermaid Marine National Nature Reserve, the Coral Seas Islands Territory and Elizabeth and Middleton Reefs National Nature Reserve.

In the Northern Territory, Parks Australia leases two National Parks from Aboriginal traditional landowners, Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park and Kakadu National Park. Other parks in the Northern Territory are managed by the Parks & Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory.

Staff

The Park Manager is responsible for the day to day implementation of the Plan of Management. The four sections of the Park are Administration and Training, Park Operations (rangers, maintenance, entry station), Public Communications (Cultural Centre, media, interpretation, education, public relations) and Natural and Cultural Resources. Anangu are consulted about all Park programs and employed as consultants, rangers and contractors. The lease provides for the employment of a Community Liaison Officer by the Mutitjulu Community funded by Parks Australia.

Mutitjulu Community

The Mutitjulu Community, on the north-eastern side of Uluru, is home for many Anangu families who have a long association with Uluru and Kata Tjuta. It has an elected Council responsible for community activities and development. It also participates in decisions regarding Park management and liaison with the tourism industry.

Approximately 250 Anangu live in the Community along with some non-Anangu workers. The community has a primary school, child-care centre, disabled care, health clinic, general store, church, recreation hall, football oval, Council office, mechanical workshop, adult education centre and women's council.

Traditional Owners also live in communities outside the Park to the north, south-east and west. Anangu frequently travel between communities and to homelands and outstations according to family and social needs and other cultural responsibilities.

Conventions and Agreements

Uluru - Kata Tjuta National Park is ranked as one of the world's most significant arid land ecosystems. In January 1997, it was accepted as a Biosphere Reserve under the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Program, joining 11 other reserves in Australia and an international network aiming to preserve the world's major ecosystem types.

In 1987 the Park was listed as a World Heritage area for its natural values and again in 1994 was listed for its cultural values. The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* protects such properties by prohibiting activities such as mining, building, road construction and tree removal, unless carried out under a plan of management.

The Park is also registered as part of the National Estate. Under the *Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975*, no such activities shall be undertaken unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative.

Award for Land Management

Many countries are now recognising the importance, and appropriateness of the role of Indigenous people in the management of National Parks on traditional lands. In April 1995 the Board of Management of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park and Environment Australia were awarded the UNESCO Picasso Gold Medal for land management. The award was presented in recognition of the "outstanding management and conservation of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park with the participation of Traditional Owners of the Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage site".

