

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND WILDLIFE STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2014-17



The Government has created a department that is dedicated to working with the community in conserving Western Australia's unique plants and animals, and world-class network of terrestrial and marine parks and reserves.

Hon Albert Jacob MLA
Minister for Environment



Department of
Parks and Wildlife





WHERE WE'VE COME FROM

For 40,000-60,000 years before the arrival of Europeans, Aboriginal people lived in balance with Western Australia's plants, animals and climatic seasonality, and formed a deep, intrinsic and unbreakable attachment to country.

European settlement and subsequent development displaced Aboriginal land management practices over time with statute-based approaches to conservation.

Legislation to protect the state's native animals began with the Kangaroo Ordinance of 1853. Major legislation to conserve native wildlife was enacted in 1950. Further legislation in 1984 enabled the ongoing identification and vesting of natural areas for management of conservation and recreation values.

John Forrest National Park, named after the state's first Premier, is one of the oldest national parks in the world. It was proclaimed a national park in 1900, just 28 years after the world's first national park was created at Yellowstone in the United States.

Western Australia's early parks and nature reserves were managed by independent boards, then State Government boards and agencies. The first State forest was established in 1919 and managed by the then Forests Department.

Today, there are 100 national parks and 13 marine parks in Western Australia. These parks are recognised as the cornerstone of wildlife and landscape conservation; places where Aboriginal people can maintain their cultural values. They are hugely important for tourism and recreation, and sustain and enrich the lives of all Western Australians.

The Department of Parks and Wildlife was created on 1 July 2013 to bring a new focus to the conservation and promotion of Western Australia's parks across the State's lands and waters. Our priorities in the first year of operations were to:

- implement government policies and commitments including plans for new terrestrial and marine parks and development of a modern Biodiversity Conservation Act to strengthen conservation of Western Australia's world-renowned plants and animals
- review priorities and programs to identify management successes and those that needed refocus
- set new directions to ensure staff and resources were focused on delivering high value outcomes
- improve business practices to create a vibrant, energetic and respected modern department, positively engaged with and responsive to stakeholders.



Fitzgerald River National Park



WHAT WE'VE DONE

In our first year we have:

- continued to implement the Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy, a State Government initiative that will protect Australia's last great natural wilderness
- made significant progress towards marine and national parks at Horizontal Falls and further marine parks at Roebuck Bay and North Kimberley under the Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy
- signed the first joint management agreement for any marine park in Western Australia with the Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation, for the Lalang-garram/ Camden Sound Marine Park
- completed a \$40million upgrade of Fitzgerald River National Park to boost tourism along Western Australia's south coast and stimulate local businesses
- commenced our Parks for People initiative, which will establish about 450 new camp and caravan sites over the next four years, along with new and improved visitor facilities and services, such as roads and lookouts
- removed sheep and almost all goats under the Dirk Hartog Island National Park ecological restoration project, funded through the Gorgon Barrow Island Net Conservation Benefits (NCB) program as part of an ambitious project to restore the island to its former state
- continued the successful Operation Rangelands Restoration project at Matuwa (Lorna Glen), with effective cat control and monitoring reintroduced populations of bilby, brushtail possum, mala, golden bandicoot, boodie and djoongari. The golden bandicoots and boodies translocated from Barrow Island to the introduced predator free enclosure have increased about three-fold and are now able to supply animals for proposed translocations outside the enclosure where feral cats are being controlled.
- completed the preparation of the *Forest Management Plan 2014-2023* and commenced the implementation process.
- halved the amount of country burnt by destructive late dry season fires from 36 per cent to 17 per cent and improved habitat for wildlife through better management of fire under the Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy.

These and our many other achievements build on a proud history of creative and innovative responses to complex challenges.



WHERE WE'RE HEADING

The overarching theme of these Strategic Directions is to focus our investment and resources on those programs that result in tangible improvements to on-ground animal and plant conservation, improve recreation and tourism facilities, and enhance local and landscape scale management outcomes.

Conservation and park management is a big challenge in Western Australia, a vast state that covers about a third of the country and yet has only a tenth of the population. This equation means we face a huge task and must continue to build innovative programs to successfully multiply our efforts through volunteer (10,650 registered volunteers), community and business partnerships.

The Department of Parks and Wildlife works across a state with Australia's only internationally recognised terrestrial biodiversity hotspot, one of the world's 18 tropical marine hotspots, eight of the 15 nationally recognised terrestrial hotspots and three natural World Heritage areas. The Department manages a conservation estate larger than the size of Victoria, including landscapes, coastlines and tropical reefs recognised and valued around the world.

We are an enterprise in a State in which the exploration and discovery of the natural world constantly enriches our human experience – discovery of new species, new knowledge, new ways of managing, and simply discovering new places to see and visit. To succeed in our discovery, protection and management we need to set clear and achievable priorities and enhance our resources through innovation, collaboration and partnerships, together with traditional owners, to meet the expectations of our very informed, engaged and supportive public.

Highly motivated, enthusiastic and customer-oriented staff are central to our ongoing success. We will continue to value and develop staff who are committed to outcomes and who pursue creative and innovative approaches to complex challenges.

Focus on priorities, such as the Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy, our Parks for People campaign and the renewal of the Western Shield program, will help us build on the solid work of our first year. Corporate directions and goals will be adapted into divisional, regional and branch works programs with clear accountabilities.

This document sets out overarching Strategic Directions for 2014 to 2017 with specific goals for the next year, to be updated annually.

Jim Sharp
Director General
Department of Parks and Wildlife



VISION

Western Australia's natural assets are conserved and valued by all.

PURPOSE

Working with the community to ensure that the nature of Western Australia is conserved, for its intrinsic values and to sustain and enrich people's lives.

WHAT WE DO

Western Australia's Department of Parks and Wildlife manages national parks, marine parks, State forests and other reserves, conserves our world-renowned native animals and plants, supports Aboriginal people in protecting their culture and heritage on parks and reserves, and supports access to, managed use and enjoyment of the State's wildlife and natural areas.

Together with other government agencies, the Department also has broader responsibilities to engage in emergency and incident management, biosecurity, climate-related mitigation and adaptation strategies, contribute to the state's economic growth, implement government policies and provide advice to support government decision-making.

OUR VALUES

In all of our work we will be open, accountable, creative, responsive, innovative, outcome-focused, and collaborative; and we will always act with the highest integrity.

We are a highly-motivated and creative, can-do agency that is regionally-focused and science-based. We will build respectful and supportive relationships with our neighbours, visitors, volunteers, partners, the individuals and organisations who do business with us, and the communities in which we work.

OUR GOALS

The Department's goals in the following key areas are to work effectively with other agencies, our partners and the community to:



Community rehabilitation work, Great Western Woodlands



PARKS

Establish and effectively manage the State's national parks, marine parks, State forest and other reserves, to conserve wildlife and for people's enjoyment.



WILDLIFE

Conserve and manage the State's native plants and animals and achieve habitat, ecosystem and landscape-scale conservation and protection based on best-practice science.



FIRE

Manage lands under our care to protect communities, visitors and built and natural assets from bushfire damage, and also use planned fire to achieve other land, forest and wildlife management objectives.



MANAGED USE

Manage the State's plants and animals and the lands and waters under our care for tourism, water and wood production, and other approved uses.



PEOPLE

Inspire, engage, collaborate and work with people individually, in communities and in organisations.



OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2014 - 17

The following strategic priorities will frame our management response to achieve our goals over the three year timeframe of this plan.

PARKS

Parks and Wildlife, in partnership with the community and volunteers, will actively work to connect Western Australians with the parks and areas it manages, both terrestrial and marine, to ensure that our natural heritage is valued, visited and appreciated. We will attract more visitors to these destinations by the diversification of experiences, and improved accessibility and desirability through infrastructure creation and programs under the Parks for People initiative. We will improve representation of marine and terrestrial bioregions in the State's parks system.

WILDLIFE

Parks and Wildlife will ensure that our plants and animals are conserved and protected by approved legislation and emphasise actions to protect our rare and threatened plant and animal species by focusing science and conservation programs to deliver on-ground conservation outcomes. Working in partnership with the community, other organisations and traditional owners, we will undertake landscape-scale restoration and reintroduction programs. We will mitigate threats to our plants and animals from diseases, feral animals and weeds.

FIRE

Community protection and land, forest and wildlife management outcomes will be enhanced by continual improvement of the prescribed burning program. Risk management principles will guide the application of prescribed burning and response to bushfires, with resources focused on mitigating the priority risks.

MANAGED USE

Parks and Wildlife will work to ensure the community derives the greatest benefit from the lands and waters that we care for consistent with conserving the State's unique plants, animals and landscapes.

PEOPLE

Parks and Wildlife will build its human capital by inspiring and motivating our staff and the people we work with. We will set clear goals and expectations and create a culture that values discovery, innovation, creative achievement, responsibility and accountability. We will continue to work with Aboriginal people in ensuring connection to country, heritage protection and customary use. We will continue to develop, build, maintain and strengthen our relationships and partnerships with the community and business partners. We will be an outcome-focused, customer-oriented, highly responsive government enterprise.





William Bay National Park



Kalbarri National Park

In Year 1, 2014-15, the Department will focus on the following strategies to help meet our goals:

PARKS

WHAT	HOW	OUTCOME
Parks for People program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage people to experience camping and spending time in nature with family and friends (e.g. partnerships with Nature Play WA, Outdoors WA) and through the campground host program. • Expand and improve campground and park facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and reserves are valued community, social and health assets.
Establish the Kimberley wilderness parks, the State's largest interconnected system of marine and national parks covering more than five million hectares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue management planning for the parks in partnership with traditional owners. • Continue to develop Indigenous land use and joint management agreements with traditional owners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of the Kimberley's outstanding natural and cultural values, including some of the Kimberley's most significant islands. • Joint management with traditional owners and Aboriginal employment in park management. • Developing more capacity and providing resources for traditional owners to look after country.
Enable joint vesting of parks and reserves with traditional owners by amending legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support progress through Parliament. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation to enable joint vesting of national parks, nature reserves and conservation parks with traditional owners.
Major visitor infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelop new facilities at key high-visitation national parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully developed facility within 3 years with high visitor satisfaction.
Refurbished and renewed visitor facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade at least one major high use area each year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redeveloped facilities with high visitor satisfaction.
Visitor risk management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to improve visitor risk management consistent with international standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The risks to visitors on lands managed by Parks and Wildlife are as low as reasonably practical.
Improved management access to islands and coastal conservation lands and waters in the north Kimberley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition of a vessel to service the north Kimberley marine parks and adjoining islands and lands of outstanding conservation significance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better joint management of interconnected marine and terrestrial areas of outstanding conservation significance in the Kimberley and improved access to country for traditional owners.



WILDLIFE

WHAT	HOW	OUTCOME
New Biodiversity Conservation legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support progress through Parliament. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contemporary legislation to support the protection, conservation and management of marine and terrestrial native animals, plants and other biodiversity elements across State lands and waters.
Integrated science and nature conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus conservation science on management priorities. • Ensure conservation management is based on best practice science. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear focus on outcomes in delivering highest priority science and conservation projects.
A reinvigorated Western Shield program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the review of Western Shield and commence implementation of revised approach. • Relaunch the Western Shield program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinstatement of Western Shield as the Department's signature fauna conservation program with strong public and corporate recognition and support.
Effective science, conservation and ecosystem health programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise a review of science, conservation and ecosystem management programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritised investment in science and conservation programs to benefit conservation outcomes in the State's lands and waters.
Protection of threatened animals in partnership with other organisations, traditional owners and the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a captive western ground parrot breeding facility in collaboration with the Perth Zoo. • Support the critically endangered woylie and numbat at Perup Sanctuary and establish new wild populations as appropriate. • Protect the bilby, boodie, golden bandicoot, mala, brushtail possum and djoongari through <i>Operation Rangelands Restoration</i> at Matuwa (Lorna Glen). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved conservation security of key threatened animals, particularly the western ground parrot, woylie, numbat, bilby, boodie, golden bandicoot, mala, brushtail possum and djoongari.



WHAT	HOW	OUTCOME
Protection of our internationally significant threatened plant species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translocate at least 15 critically endangered flora species to establish new populations in the wild or augment existing translocated populations. • Bank seeds of another 50 threatened plant species at the Threatened Flora Seed Centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant species continue to thrive in the wild. • Ex-situ plant collections to provide insurance against impacts on wild populations.
Implementation of the north Kimberley Landscape Conservation Initiative, the largest conservation project ever undertaken in Western Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage fire and the impacts of feral animals and weeds over 6.5 million hectares of the remote north Kimberley. • Continue the landscape-scale monitoring program to evaluate and improve land management activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention and enhancement of the high biodiversity and landscape values of the north Kimberley.
Restoration of WA's largest island, Dirk Hartog Island National Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue feral cat eradication program. • Continue final stage of goat eradication program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With external partnerships, restore the original suite of native fauna to Dirk Hartog Island National Park.
Conservation and management of important areas of native plants and animals on private land through partnerships with the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register properties with Land for Wildlife or establish voluntary nature conservation covenants on private property. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community is engaged in conserving and managing our native plants, animals and ecosystems.
Effective management of feral animals, weeds and plant diseases to protect native plants, animals and ecosystems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and manage priority animal pests, weeds and plant diseases, using an evidence-based approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Populations of priority feral animals and weeds are effectively managed. • Dieback hygiene practices are more effective. • Resources are focused on highest priority ecosystem health actions.

Cool prescribed burn



Hot bushfire



FIRE

WHAT	HOW	OUTCOME
Best practice prescribed burning program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply principles of risk management and continual improvement throughout the prescribed burning program. • Enhance quality assurance processes for the program at all levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The risk to the community from bushfires on Department managed lands is as low as reasonably practical.
Succession planning for fire management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance and expand the Fire Management Development Program. • Recruit, train and develop staff (from all Department functional areas) to have the skills and knowledge required to fulfill the Department's fire management goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sustainable level of capability equal to that required to effectively and efficiently deliver the fire management program.
New performance measures for the existing prescribed burning program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a range of performance measures that enable better understanding of the Department's prescribed burning achievements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The prescribed burning program is better understood and appreciated for both its community protection and biodiversity outcomes.

MANAGED USE

WHAT	HOW	OUTCOME
Tourism and recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress further significant tourism and recreation investments, through leases, licences and other partnerships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased opportunities for safe and enjoyable activities.
Implementation of the Forest Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete silviculture and other guidance documents, finalise protocols for key performance indicators and commence collecting data to support future reporting. Maintain oversight of the forest products industry, including monitoring of hygiene, silviculture, and log utilisation related to allowable harvest levels. Complete and formalise working arrangements with the Forest Products Commission and complete an indicative 3-year harvest plan for 2015-2017. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key Forest Management Plan requirements met.
Integrated forest and ecosystem management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus resources on highest priority ecosystem management requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved ecosystem protection and health.

Volunteer campground hosts



PEOPLE

Kalumburu bushrangers



WHAT	HOW	OUTCOME
Volunteer and community engagement program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance structural support for volunteer program. Partner with other agency volunteer arrangements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued, cohesive, efficient volunteer program that is sustainable and fully integrated into business delivery structures.
Private sector partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop sponsorship packages that are attractive and mutually beneficial to private sector partners and support the Department's goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved parks facilities and wildlife outcomes.
Increased Aboriginal employment and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase employment of Aboriginal people in all roles and divisions. Designate specific roles to be filled by Aboriginal people. Pursue partnerships that will lead to Aboriginal employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the percentage of Aboriginal people employed in Parks and Wildlife. Provide Aboriginal employment opportunities via partnerships.
Refocused workplace safety and health program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure agency commitment to a cohesive, contemporary workplace safety program including consistent staff training and induction requirements. Staff resources are allocated at the workplace level to safety and health issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved staff health, wellbeing and awareness. Reduced lost time injury, medical treatment injury and workers compensation claims.
Staff training and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target training and development programs on key business activities with an emphasis on creating resilience, customer service, responsiveness and on-ground achievement. Focus training and development on identified high priority areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly motivated staff delivering agency goals with exceptional customer orientation.

CORPORATE

WHAT	HOW	OUTCOME
Amalgamate with the Swan River Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalise new agency structures, administrative arrangements and accommodation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A division with a focus on the highest priorities in river science, protection, conservation and management.
Change management and a review of functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint a senior change management leader to provide strategic leadership and assist with resource identification and allocation. Review of identified functions and work areas to help inform future directions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A successful internal reform process.
Administrative efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review functional units to focus on outcomes. Reduce administration. Review and rationalise fleet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamlined administration and resources redirected to agency goals.
Departmental structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise agency structures and appoint senior staff. Ensure consistency in divisional structural arrangements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An executive, senior staff and management that is team-oriented, energised, responsive and outcome-focused.
New investment in public information and digital information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade network capacity. Use new technology to creatively engage and inform the community and our partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved communication with our partners and the public. Improved data links between locations within the Department. Improved internal and external access to data and information. The community and our partners understand, value and support the work we do and why we do it.
New Bunbury headquarters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a business case or project definition plan to support funding for the new Parks and Wildlife headquarters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved construction funding.