



Australian Government  
Parks Australia



**kakadu**<sup>®</sup>  
NATIONAL PARK

## Gurrung Season

TOURISM INDUSTRY UPDATE # 4

24 September 2014



### HOT WEATHER TIME IS HERE

With the heat starting to rise, the birds of Kakadu are beginning to crowd around the shrinking waterways and billabongs. A great time to celebrate Kakadu Bird Week this week!

Main visitor sites should remain open for some time yet. However, bushfires and the extreme heat can become a great risk. Please exercise caution, and be sun smart, when you and your clients visit Kakadu.

The Gu-ngarre walk has recently reopened, and due to the shady surroundings, this is usually a good walk for a hot day. Consider starting the longer and more strenuous walks early in the day, then relax in a cool area during the afternoon.

Sign up to our road report to receive up-to-date information on site access and road conditions:  
<http://kakaduroadreport.wordpress.com/>



For more information about Kakadu National Park contact Bowali Visitor Centre on (08) 89 381120 or visit our websites:  
[www.parksaustralia.gov.au/kakadu](http://www.parksaustralia.gov.au/kakadu) for visitor information or [www.environment.gov.au/resource/tourism-operators](http://www.environment.gov.au/resource/tourism-operators) for useful forms and info

## 2014 Rock Art Conservation Exchange Workshop (Southern Africa – Australia)



In August, it was Kakadu's turn to host the Southern Africa–Australia Rock Art Conservation Exchange Workshop, organised by the Getty Conservation Institute. Delegates from across Australia and South Africa spent 10 days in the park to discuss rock art conservation and management strategies in an attempt to raise the profile of rock art across the globe. The forum's overall objective is to develop a set of future strategic directions that address a set of agreed key issues for the future of rock art conservation in Australia and Southern Africa.

This year, the focus of discussion centred around:

- consolidating opinions and ideas of the people involved in rock art conservation
- developing the most effective methods to produce significant outcomes for rock art conservation
- providing some guidance to influence future practice
- directly informing and shaping collaboration opportunities and funding proposals and
- providing a strategic program for actions.

Forum members are currently drafting an outcomes paper of the workshop, which is to be completed in the coming months.

### Early Closure of Twin Falls and road upgrades



As part of a capital project in the park, the 4WD sections of some of our roads are being upgraded. Work is to stabilise the creek crossing, the track and drainage to assist with earlier access in the future. To do this we need to bring in heavy machinery and complete these jobs before the next wet season starts.

Twin Falls - Works on this section of road are planned to commence Monday 6 October 2014, which will be the closing date for this site. Access will still be available to Jim Jim Falls at this time. Operators currently permitted to visit Twin Falls have been notified.

Jim Jim Falls – Further work will commence on the Jim Jim Road from Tuesday 30 September 2014 – there should be minimal disruption to visitors. Jim Jim Falls will stay open until 4 pm Sunday 9 November 2014 pending weather conditions – after that it will close for the season.



Maguk – Road upgrades will continue until 30 September 2014. Work will be from the highway to the first creek crossing – please be advised minor traffic delays may occur.

2 Mile Hole & 4 Mile Hole – Road upgrades have recently been completed.

We look forward to showing you some post wet season photos of the improvements made.

### **Director of National Parks Visit to Kakadu**

The recently appointed Director of National Parks, Sally Barnes, has been in the park to attend the quarterly board meeting. During her visit, Sally also managed to take time out of her schedule to host a morning tea with a group of our industry colleagues. The informal meet and greet was open to all Kakadu tour operators, and gave an opportunity to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of operating in a World Heritage national park, as well as any possible future endeavours.



### **Do you need a permit for that?**

This dry season has been another great year to show off what the park has to offer. It has also been an excellent opportunity for Kakadu's tour operators to impress their clients with their tours. While most of Kakadu's tour operators work hard to ensure their permit details are up to date, things can occasionally be forgotten or overlooked. Therefore, we encourage all tour operators to double check that everybody has the appropriate permit for the activities they are conducting within the park, and that any new/updated information, such as renewed PLI insurance policies, and details of accredited guides and vehicles used to conduct commercial activities, has been passed on to the park.

If you have any questions/queries relating to your permit, please feel free to contact the Permits Officer on 8938 1176 or email [Kakadu.permits@environment.gov.au](mailto:Kakadu.permits@environment.gov.au).

### **Mahbilil Festival**



The Mahbilil Festival was held in Jabiru on 6 September 2014. The annual festival is a one-day celebration of culture and community. Family activities during the day included Indigenous art exhibitions, weaving, a magpie goose cooking competition and bush foods, followed by an evening program of music and dance. This was a family and community event in the heart of a Jabiru township, which came together to put on another great show.

This year, Kakadu National Park's stall focussed on current research around threatened species to acknowledge National Threatened Species Day on Sunday 7 September. The stall included displays, videos and the opportunity to subscribe to the National Environmental Research Program (NERP) newsletter. The Threatened Species Commissioner, Gregory Andrews, was working in the park at the time, and gave a great talk from the Kakadu stall.



### **Call for Step-on Guides**

Kakadu is looking to update its step-on tour guide register. Step-on guides are used by companies and coach/charter services operating in the park who don't have their own tour guide with the Kakadu Knowledge for Tour Guides accreditation. If you have this accreditation, and you are looking to be included on the register in the future, please email

[Kakadu.permits@environment.gov.au](mailto:Kakadu.permits@environment.gov.au) with your name, contact details and seasonal availability.

Please note that by adding yourself to the step-on guide register you are giving Kakadu National Park permission to share your details with people/businesses seeking tour guide services.

# KNOW YOUR KAKADU

## FIRE MANAGEMENT IN KAKADU



Bininj/Mungguy have managed their country with fire for a long time. Fires were lit all year round and for many reasons, creating a patchwork of burnt and unburnt areas, promoting suitable habitats for a range of different plants and animals. Since proclamation of the park, Bininj/Mungguy and park managers have worked together to achieve the goals of fire management which you can read up on here:

[Kakadu National Park Fire Management Plan 2007](#)

### **Kakadu's Fire Program in six steps**

#### **1 – Tactical planning meeting (February/March)**

A lot of thought goes into planning the year's fire program, starting with the identification of strategic management zones based on safety, asset locations, and areas of critical biological importance or conservation value.

#### **2 – Wet season burning program (December to March)**

Each wet season monsoonal rains prompt rapid plant growth. In the fire-sensitive stone country, burning is used to reduce the amount of fuel along creeks. Firebreaks burnt around fire-sensitive communities such as monsoon forest, sandstone heath and mature paperbark forest help to protect the communities from later, hot wildfires.

#### **3 – Early season strategic burning (April to June)**

Firebreaks are burnt around art sites, buildings, camping areas and other permanent structures. Parts of the park boundary are burnt to reduce the risk of fires entering or leaving the park.

#### **4 – Mid season fire program (July to August)**

Traditional owners and park staff light many cool fires in the woodland areas, from the ground and the air. A patchwork of burnt and unburnt areas, helps prevent large, destructive wildfires later in the year. The mid season fire program concludes in early August before the weather heats up.

#### **5 – Late season fire program (August to November)**

Burning continues in the floodplains to reduce fuel loads. Bininj/Mungguy may also light hunting fires on the floodplains late in the dry season.

#### **6 – Fire program review (November)**

Park staff and Bininj meet to discuss any modifications to the fire plan on completion of the program.



## Help us stop wildfires!

The strong gusty winds of Gurrung have the potential to carry embers for several kilometres. One spark is enough to cause a devastating hot fire that may burn for weeks in Kakadu's sensitive escarpment country and may put people's lives at risk!

You can help:

- Drive with caution through smoke – turn your lights on and take care of wildlife
- Bin your butts! Don't throw out burning cigarettes
- Keep an eye on your camp fire and refrain from lighting large 'bonfires'
- Extinguish your fire and douse the coals before crawling into your swag or breaking camp
- Report any new fires you may come across to staff at Bowali on (08) 8938 1120

**In the past few weeks we have experienced issues with arson in the park. If you witness fires being lit in the park please report it to Jabiru Police on (08) 8979 2122 or the Bowali Visitor Centre (08) 8938 1120.**



Above: Kakadu staff clearing the road after a recent fire swept through the Gunlom Rd area.

Daily updates on access and road conditions are available on our website:  
<http://kakaduroadreport.wordpress.com/>



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for useful forms and info