

**CONFIDENTIAL**  
**CABINET DECISION**

No.....5638.....

Submission No.: 4861

Title: PRIORITIES FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY : 1988-1993

Cabinet -

- (a) noted the paper "Priorities for Park Development in the Northern Territory : 1988-1993";
- (b) approved as priorities for park development:
  - (i) Priority 1 be given to the Top End and the Centre for enhanced access and facilities in:
    - . the "Wetland" Parks east of Darwin,
    - . the Berry Springs Wildlife Park,
    - . Litchfield Park and the Batchelor loop road,
    - . Katherine Gorge National Park including Edith Falls,
    - . the Upper Roper Park at Mataranka,
    - . Yulara, Kings Canyon and the proposed scenic loop linking Wallara with the West Macdonnell Ranges and Alice Springs,
    - . increased park areas, enhanced access and facilities in the West Macdonnells area;
  - (ii) Priority 2 be assigned to park initiatives associated with major tourist routes (the Stuart, Barkly and Vistoria Highways) to cater for the needs of the travelling public by effecting:
    - . improvements to the Devils Marbles, and
    - . developments in Gregory National Park;



.../2

A. G. MORRIS  
Secretary to Cabinet.

7 June 1988

**CONFIDENTIAL**  
**CABINET DECISION**

No. .... 5638 .....

2.

Submission No.: 4861

Title: PRIORITIES FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTHERN  
TERRITORY : 1988-1993

- (iii) Priority 3 be assigned to park initiatives which provide for tourist outback adventure including proposals for managed 4WD access, basic facilities and some new parks in areas such as:
- . Gurig National Park and Cobourg Marine Park,
  - . the Gulf and Barkly Tablelands,
  - . east and north east of Alice Springs including the East Macdonnell Ranges and the Dulcie Ranges,
  - . the Tanami and Simpson Deserts, and
  - . joint management arrangements with landowners;
- (c) noted that a further discussion paper will be brought forward indicating a timetable and cost estimates over three years;
- (d) noted that separate and detailed Cabinet Submissions will be prepared, where appropriate, to obtain approval for the management and development of areas included in the above priorities based on the Northern Territory Development policies including multiple land-use;
- (e) noted that other areas under the care, control and management of the Commission not specifically mentioned have no particular development priority and will be maintained at the present level of development; and
- (f) directed the Conservation Commission to bring forward, in a further Submission, the results of its Resource Assessment work currently in progress.


A. G. MORRIS  
Secretary to Cabinet.

7 June 1988

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

Copy No: .....1.....

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FOR CABINET

SUBMISSION No: .....4861.....

Title: PRIORITIES FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY: 1988-1993

Minister: Hon. D.W. Manzie, M.L.A.

Purpose: To provide a justifiable set of priorities for the development of parks over the next 5 years

Relation to existing policy: In accordance with Cabinet Decision No. 5051 of 11/12 February 1987

Timing/legislative priority: Urgent

Announcement of decision, tabling, etc: Not required immediately

Action required before announcement:

Staffing implications, numbers and costs, etc: Employment and funding considerations will be addressed in connection with the individual projects as they arise over the next five years

Total cost:

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Department/~~Authority~~..... **INDUSTRIES AND DEVELOPMENT**

**COMMENT ON CABINET SUBMISSION No.** .....

**TITLE:** ..... **PRIORITIES FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTHERN**  
..... **TERRITORY : 1988 - 1993**  
.....

**COMMENTS:** .....

This Department supports the Submission.

*C. J. Fuller*  
SIGNED: C J FULLER

DESIGNATION: SECRETARY

DATE: 24 June, 1988

**CONFIDENTIAL**

CONFIDENTIAL

Department/Authority ..... LAW

COMMENT ON CABINET SUBMISSION No. ....

TITLE: ..... PRIORITIES FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT  
..... IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY: 1988-1993

COMMENTS:

There appear to be no constitutional or legal barriers to the proposal.

*Meredith Harrison*

SIGNED: M. Harrison  
DESIGNATION: Acting Secretary, Department of Law  
DATE: 3 June 1988

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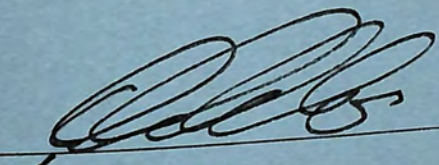
Department/Authority.....NORTHERN TERRITORY TREASURY.....

COMMENT ON CABINET SUBMISSION No.

TITLE: .....PRIORITIES FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT.....

COMMENTS:

Treasury supports the Submission. However, it is strongly recommended that it is further developed into an ongoing programme with dates and dollar amounts provided.



SIGNED: F N R CONN  
DESIGNATION: UNDER TREASURER

DATE: 6 JUNE 1988 **CONFIDENTIAL**

Department/~~XXXXX~~.....OF THE CHIEF MINISTER.....

COMMENT ON CABINET SUBMISSION No.

TITLE: ..... PRIORITIES FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT  
.....  
..... IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY - 1988-1993  
.....

COMMENTS:

The Submission is supported.

*Margaret P. Lyons*

SIGNED: MARGARET P LYONS

DESIGNATION: DEPUTY SECRETARY

DATE: 6/6/88

**CONFIDENTIAL**

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Department/Authority ..... MINES AND ENERGY

COMMENT ON CABINET SUBMISSION No.

TITLE: PRIORITIES FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY  
1988 - 1993

COMMENTS:

It is not possible to provide detailed comments due to the short time frame provided to assess the Submission.

It is imperative that officer-level negotiations occur early in the planning stage of such proposals, which will enhance the development, and quality of advice provided for visitors.

Any public statement made regarding NT Parks and Reserves should include a reference to the NT Government Policy for multiple land use, including the provision for exploration and mining, under appropriate controls.

*E K Campbell* 6/6/88

SIGNED: E K Campbell  
DESIGNATION: Secretary  
DATE:

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Department/Authority ..... LABOUR & ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

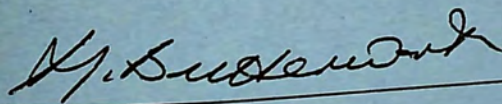
DOCUMENT ON CABINET SUBMISSION No.

TITLE: ..... PRIORITIES FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

1988-1993

REMARKS:

No objections.



SIGNED: S.J. BUTTERWORTH

SIGNATURE: A/SECRETARY

DATE: 3.6.88

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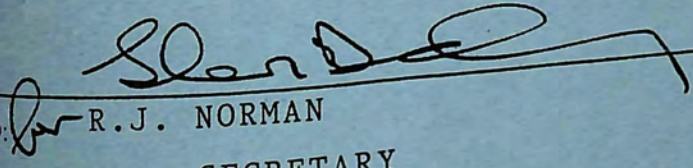
Department/Authority ..... HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES .....

COMMENT ON CABINET SUBMISSION No.

TITLE: ..... PRIORITIES FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY .....  
..... 1988 - 1993 .....

COMMENTS:

This Department has no objections to the recommendations.

SIGNED:  .....

DESIGNATION: SECRETARY

2 JUNE 1988

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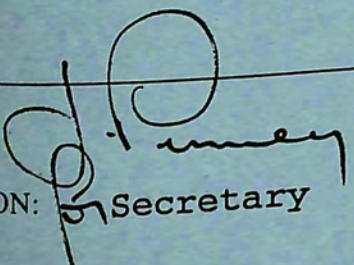
Department/Authority ..... **LANDS AND HOUSING**

COMMENT ON CABINET SUBMISSION No. ....

TITLE: ..... **PRIORITIES FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT IN THE N.T. 1988 - 93**

COMMENTS:

This Department has no objection to the submission.

SIGNED:  **3/6/88**  
DESIGNATION: **Secretary**  
DATE:

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Northern Territory  
Tourist Commission

In Reply  
Please Quote  
P5/28:DR05

3 June 1988

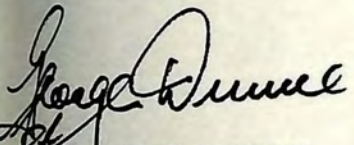
The Director  
Conservation Commission of the NT  
PO Box 496  
PALMERSTON NT 0831

DRAFT CABINET SUBMISSION: PRIORITIES FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY - 1988-1993

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above Cabinet  
Submission.

The NT Tourist Commission endorses the Cabinet Submission as  
propsoed.

Nil attachment was included with the Submission to clarify  
Point 6(3) but I note that under Priority (iii) Gurig National  
Park and Cobourg Marine Park has been deleted. Will this  
decision affect the activity base for the Coral Bay Wilderness  
Resort planned to open in 1990?

  
ROBERT S DOYLE  
Chairman

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1

RECOMMENDATION

1. It is recommended that Cabinet:-

(a) note the paper "Priorities for Park Development in the Northern Territory: 1988-1993";

(b) approve as priorities for park development:

(i) Priority 1 be given to the Top End and the Centre for enhanced access and facilities in:

- . the "Wetland" Parks east of Darwin,
- . the Berry Springs Wildlife Park,
- . Litchfield Park and the Batchelor loop road,
- . Katherine Gorge National Park including Edith Falls,
- . the Upper Roper Park at Mataranka
- . Yulara, Kings Canyon and the proposed scenic loop linking Wallara with the West Macdonnell Ranges and Alice Springs
- . increased park areas, enhanced access and facilities in the West

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Macdonnells area.

(ii) Priority 2 be assigned to park initiatives associated with major tourist routes (the Stuart, Barkly and Victoria Highways) to cater for the needs of the travelling public by effecting:

- improvements to the Devils Marbles, and
- developments in Gregory National Park.

(iii) Priority 3 be assigned to park initiatives which provide for tourist outback adventure including proposals for managed 4WD access, basic facilities and some new parks in areas such as :

- Gurig National Park and Cobourg Marine Park
- the Gulf and Barkly Tablelands,
- east and north east of Alice Springs including the East Macdonnell Ranges and the Dulcie Ranges,
- the Tanami and Simpson Deserts, and
- joint management arrangements with landowners.

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- (c) note that a further discussion paper will be brought forward indicating a timetable and cost estimates over three years.
- (d) note that separate and detailed Cabinet Submissions will be prepared, where appropriate to obtain approval for the management and development of areas included in the above priorities based on the Northern Territory Development policies including multiple land-use.
- (e) note that other areas under the care, control and management of the Commission not specifically mentioned have no particular development priority and will be maintained at the present level of development.

BACKGROUND

2. In response to Cabinet Decision No. 5051 (11/12 February 1987) the Conservation Commission has proposed Priorities for Park Development in the Northern Territory (1988-1993) for further consideration by Cabinet. (See Attachment 'A').

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CONSIDERATION OF THE ISSUES

3. The purpose of this Submission is to provide a justifiable set of priorities for the development of parks over the next five years. These proposals will form the basis for wealth generation in the tourist industry and should have positive employment implications. The proposals have been based on the "Towards 2000 Tourism Study" and the draft road development strategy and, as such, should facilitate other resource development within the Territory.
4. Improved road access via the Stuart Highway, effective tourist promotion and improved accommodation facilities have contributed to a dramatic increase in tourist numbers visiting parks and reserves since 1985. Northern Territory parks and reserves, especially those in key areas, will require a major increase in resources to keep pace with tourist expectations over the next 5 years.

OPTIONS

5. There are two basic options:
  - a) approve of the Priorities for Park Development in the Northern Territory as proposed in Attachment 'A'.

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- b) Reject the Park Development Priorities.
6. Option 5(b) is not recommended. The urgency of developing access, services and facilities is too great, especially now that tourism is emerging as one of the major areas of economic development for the Northern Territory.
7. Option 5(a) is the recommended option. The Park Development Priorities identifies specific tourist destinations at which the Conservation Commission intends to concentrate capital expenditure over the next 5 years and requires Cabinet support to implement the Program.

PUBLIC IMPACT OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

8. Because of recent promotions of the Territory outback, visitors are seeking and expecting a high standard of human comforts at base sites whilst desiring to safely explore and learn more about the surrounding natural environment.
9. Planned development will enhance the tourists experience, protect the environment and encourage visitors to stay longer and will directly support private investment in the tourist industry.

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FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

10. Additional funding is not being sought in this submission but it will be required for projects as they arise over the next 5 years.

REGULATORY IMPACT

11. There are no regulatory impacts in this submission.

EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

12. Employment considerations will be raised when the individual projects are developed.

COMMONWEALTH, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

13. No implications in this submission.

CONSULTATION AND CO-ORDINATION

14. This submission has been circulated to the Departments of the Chief Minister, Law, Lands and Housing, Treasury, Mines and Energy, Industries and Development, Health and Community Services, Transport and Works, Labour and Administrative Services, the Northern Territory Tourist Commission and the Co-ordination Committee.

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LEGISLATION

15. No implications in this submission.

PUBLICITY

16. A joint Ministerial statement may be issued at the appropriate time.

PROPOSITES FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT IN THE  
NORTHERN TERRITORY: 1988-1993

TIMING

17. Urgent

*[Faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page]*

*Daylong*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Minister for Conservation

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PRIORITIES FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT IN THE  
NORTHERN TERRITORY: 1988-1993

**PRIORITIES FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT IN THE  
NORTHERN TERRITORY: 1988-1993**

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**PRIORITIES FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT IN THE  
NORTHERN TERRITORY : 1988-1993.**

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1. Introduction

This paper develops the rationale on which the Conservation Commission will base its park development initiatives over the next 5 years (Sections 2 - 5). Actual park development priorities are identified in Section 6. Sections 7 - 9 outline some of the factors necessary to ensure delivery of a quality product in line with community and industry needs.

This Proposal provides a broad framework for park development over the next five years. Separate and detailed proposals will be prepared, where appropriate, to obtain approval for the management and development of the concepts and areas identified in this document.

2. Background

The purpose of the Conservation Commission is to manage and protect the environment for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Thus the Conservation Commission is committed to the principles embodied in the National Conservation Strategy, including the concept of integrated conservation and development.

Consequently, this "PARK DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL" draws on the initial findings of the draft Towards 2000 Tourism Study and the Northern Territory Roads Strategy and highlights those park related proposals which are essential to integrated development.

The Park Development Proposal will be used to :

- direct appropriate park development so as to provide for conservation and to address the needs of the community and tourists,
- facilitate inter-agency co-ordination, and
- cement links with the tourist industry,

by ensuring the timely development of the Northern Territory's park estate.

### 3. A Conservation Overview

The Conservation Commission is responsible to promote the conservation and protection of the natural environment of the Territory and to establish and manage parks, reserves and sanctuaries to ensure the sustained use and enjoyment of the Territory's outstanding natural and cultural values. To date, only a fraction of these values have been protected adequately within the Territory's park estate, or by appropriate management arrangements with landowners.

To rectify this situation, the Commission has embarked on a major program aimed at identifying all significant landscapes, rare and endangered plants and animals, and important breeding areas and habitats.

The Commission intends to make this information available to relevant Government Agencies so as to facilitate wise land use allocation and encourage sound resource management practices. It is the Commission's goal to ensure that all the Territory's significant natural and cultural values can be conserved and enjoyed irrespective of land ownership.

4. The Challenges facing Park Management in the Northern Territory

The Territory's natural and cultural values are important assets which require careful stewardship if their continued use and enjoyment is to be sustained. The value of these assets to the Northern Territory in 1986-87 is reflected in:

- the tourist visitation figures (709,000),
- the economic importance of tourism (\$ 285 million),
- and
- in the fact that tourism created major employment opportunities for Territorians.

The current growth in tourism (about 18% per annum to most parks, refer Map 1) can only be maintained through management and planned development of these outstanding assets.

To neglect management and appropriate development of these assets is to put at risk the very foundation of the Territory's tourist industry, and place in jeopardy the natural and cultural heritage of the Territory.

In addition, alternatives to existing parks need to be developed if quality outback adventure experiences are to be obtained away from crowds of people, e.g. private facilities on pastoral properties or new parks.

In some circumstances this may involve jointly planned use of private land (including Aboriginal land) for tourism and conservation purposes.

5. The Guidelines Adopted to Formulate this Proposal

As far as conservation is concerned, this Park Development Proposal gives priority to :

- the protection and restoration of significant conservation values put at risk by changing land use or other threats.
- the creation of new parks which include significant values, landscapes or representative samples of



ecosystems which are not included in the existing Northern Territory Park Estate.

As far as tourism is concerned, this Park Development Proposal gives priority to :

- park proposals associated with the Darwin, Jabiru and Katherine tourist triangle and link roads.
- park proposals associated with Alice Springs, Yulara and Kings Canyon and proposed link roads,
- parks associated with major tourist routes, especially the north/south and east/west highways.

#### 6. Priorities for Park Development

This park development proposal addresses the "tourist hot spots" identified in the Towards 2000 Tourism Study. These major park initiatives are designed to utilise the full potential of key parks, and to compliment them where gaps in the park estate have been identified (refer Map 2).

The aim is to ensure that tourists have a choice as to the attractions they might wish to see and the activities they might wish to enjoy as part of their visit to the park estate.

This park development proposal will also meet the immediate need to extend conservation management over significant land

and water ecosystems as yet unrepresented within the park estate.

6.1 Highest priority will be given to park initiatives associated with :

- the Top End, focussed on Darwin, Jabiru, Katherine and the associated road linkages. This will include specific proposals for enhanced access and facilities in:
  - . the "Wetland" Parks east of Darwin,
  - . the Berry Springs Wildlife Park,
  - . Litchfield Park and the Batchelor loop road,
  - . Katherine Gorge National Park including Edith Falls, and
  - . the Upper Roper Park at Mataranka
- the Centre, focussed on Alice Springs, Yulara and Kings Canyon and the proposed scenic loop linking Wallara and the West Macdonnell Ranges. This will include specific proposals for increased park areas, enhanced access and facilities in the West Macdonnells area.

6.2 Second priority will be awarded to those park initiatives associated with major tourist routes such as the Stuart, Barkly and Victoria River Highways. The aim will be to cater for the needs of the travelling public and to provide opportunities to break their journey and experience outback Australia

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MPP-NTU3 (VER 7 : 26/5/88)  
DRAFT FOR INTERNAL DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

in relative safety. Specific proposals will include :

- improvements to the Devils Marbles, and
- developments in Gregory National Park.

6.3 Third priority will be assigned to park initiatives which provide for tourist outback adventure destinations and experiences. This will include proposals for managed 4WD access, basic facilities and some new parks in areas such as :

- Gurig National Park,
- Cobourg Marine Park,
- the Gulf and Barkly Tablelands,
- east and north east of Alice Springs including the East Macdonnell Ranges and the Dulcie Ranges,
- the Tanami and Simpson Deserts, and
- joint management arrangements with landowners.

## 7. Development and Management

Subject to the availability of resources, park development and management is carried out in accordance with a Plan of Management prepared after public consultation and approval by Government. The objective is to conserve and protect the natural and cultural values of the park and to make available opportunities for public utilization and enjoyment.

Measures commonly used to achieve these objectives include the provision of road access and visitor facilities

appropriate to the zoning plan for the park, and the interpretation of the purposes and values of the park to visitors. Visitor safety, conservation of wildlife and cultural resources and the control of pollution form part of the work of the Commission staff in protecting the park values.

Wherever possible, the Commission will assess the feasibility of co-operating with private enterprise to provide or manage facilities and services in appropriate locations within and/or adjacent to parks.

To assist with the funding of proposed developments, the Commission has adopted the "user pays" principle and has commissioned consultants to consider options for revenue raising. In many areas, private entrepreneurs can enter into concession agreements with the Commission for the provision of services and facilities needed by park visitors.

All proposed park developments will be in accordance with the requirements of the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, the Environmental Impact Assessment Act, and the Aboriginal Sacred Site Act.

These development and management plans are prepared on the basis of the attributes and values of each park and its capacity to meet the needs of visitors for recreation and

enjoyment. The capital works and operational requirements are to be prepared on a park-by-park basis for consideration as individual proposals to contribute to the achievement of the overall goals and priorities identified in this proposal.

8. Delivery of a Quality Park Experience

The successful implementation of this strategy will depend on adequate resources to plan, develop and manage the park estate necessary to support a major tourist industry. The existing park estate is currently under threat from such things as high visitor numbers, soil erosion, feral animals, weeds and inappropriate use. This Park Development Proposal will increase the capacity of the park estate to handle these pressures.

In order to ensure that visitors to the park estate are aware of the choices available to them, a concentrated effort will be made to improve the full range of visitor information services available to the public.

This Park Development Proposal has addressed the main issues associated with current tourism hot spots. There is a critical need to acquire more information on the conservation and recreational values of the land and marine resources of the NT so that future planning and development will not jeopardise these resources.

To this end, the Conservation Commission has established a Conservation and Recreation Values Register, a Coastal Resources Register, and is in the process of compiling the Territory's first accurate vegetation map.

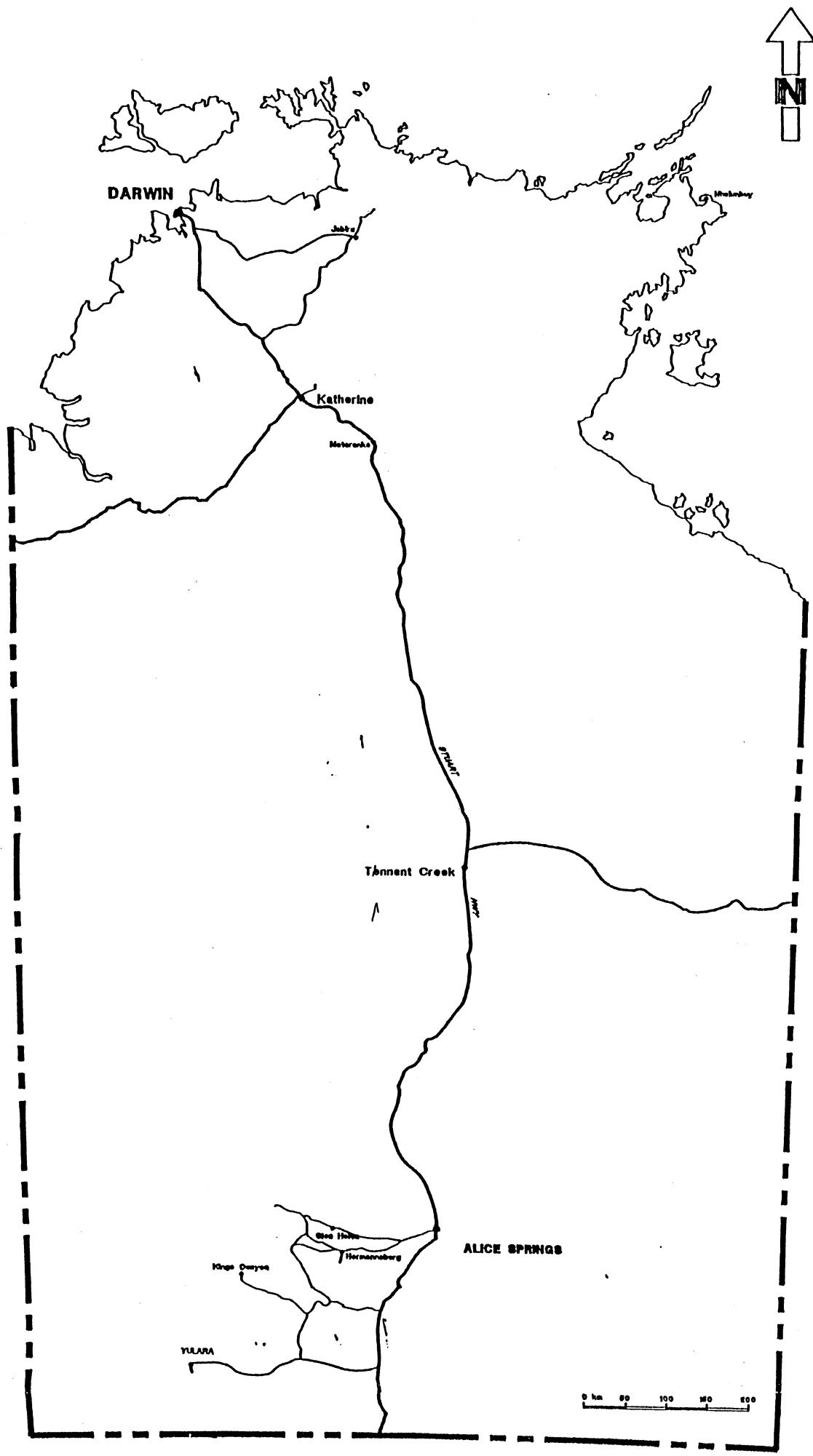
The Commission also plans to obtain access to a fully integrated computerised geographic information system in 1988-89. The geographic information system is essential to the efficient storing, evaluation and sharing of resource data with other agencies. This information is vital for the effective management of the Territory's natural resources, particularly those resources on the park estate.

9. Revision of this Proposal

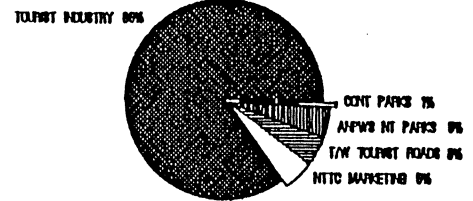
Any proposal anticipating future needs must be responsive to changes in the social, political and economic climate, changes in the demands of the tourist market, and new information concerning the capacity and sensitivity of natural and cultural values.

Consequently, it is envisaged that this proposal will be fine tuned at least annually as part of the budget cycle, and a major review will take place as soon as circumstances change significantly or by 1991.

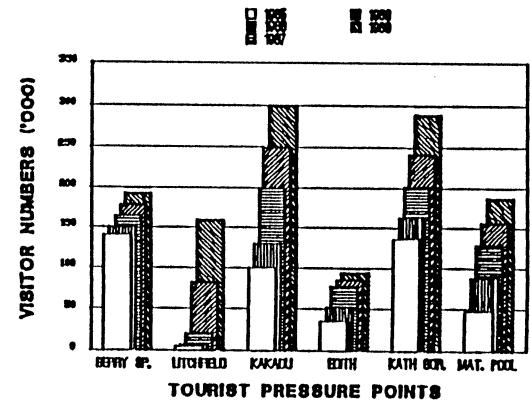
# MAP 1: MAJOR TOURIST CENTRES AND TRAVEL ROUTES RESULTING IN PARK PRESSURE POINTS



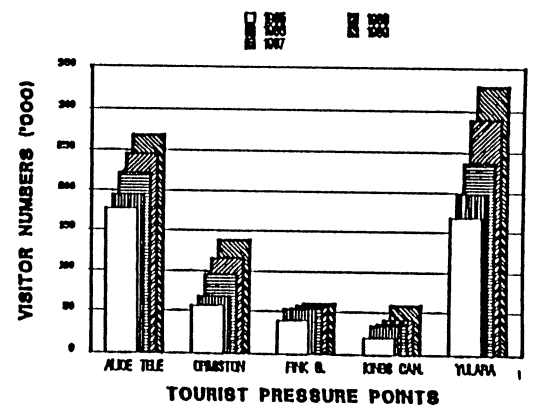
**TOURISM INVESTMENT BY SECTOR 1987-88**



**TOURIST PRESSURE POINTS : VISITATIONS 1985-1989**



**TOURIST PRESSURE POINTS : VISITATIONS 1985-1989**



## MAP 2: A PARK DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE NORTHERN TERRITORY 1988-1993

