Managing Tourism in Kakadu

The following are the aims of tourism management in Kakadu:

- to provide for visitors to use the Park appropriately and safely and to have an enriching experience, while ensuring that the Park environment is protected
- to provide for Bininj to benefit from tourism.

A range of facilities and services is provided for visitors, including:

- the Bowali Visitor Centre, with habitat-based displays, an information counter that is staffed 365 days a year, videos, a café and a gallery shop
- the Warradjan Aboriginal Cultural Centre, with displays, videos and a gallery shop;
- walkways, viewing platforms and information signs at three major art sites
- five camping areas with solar powered showers and flushing toilets
- fourteen bush camping areas
- many walking tracks
- boat launching ramps
- picnic areas
- lookouts, wildlife viewing platforms and bird hides.

Maintaining visitor services and facilities is a large part of the work of rangers in Kakadu National Park and uses more than a third of the Park’s staff and financial resources.

An important aspect of tourism management in Kakadu is implementing site-hardening or visitor control measures at sensitive sites or sites where visitation is increasing, to prevent adverse environmental impacts. These measures are developed and implemented through the management plan, area plans and the Park’s Capital Works and Maintenance programs.

Visitor safety is a key concern and is managed by providing safety signs and information to visitors and tour guides, constructing visitor facilities to safe standards, and, when necessary, closing road access to areas where public safety would be endangered, such as areas that are flooded or inhabited by estuarine crocodiles.
Monitoring visitor numbers, experiences and impacts is necessary so that appropriate services and facilities can be provided in the future. Visitor surveys and environmental impact monitoring are conducted regularly for this purpose.

The management aim in relation to commercial tour operations is to encourage appropriate tourism activities of a high standard while taking into account the views and economic aspirations of traditional owners and protecting the natural and cultural heritage of the Park.

Measures taken to achieve this aim include regular liaison with tourism industry representatives through the Kakadu Board of Management and the Tourism Consultative Committee, maintaining and regularly reviewing the commercial tour permit system, and allocating some commercial tourism opportunities to enterprises that involve or directly benefit Bininj/Munnguy.

Tourism industry seminars are currently held twice a year to help tour operators provide high-quality information to clients on tours in the Park. There are plans to develop a training and accreditation system to further help the tourism industry conduct tourism activities of a high standard in the Park in the future.

Kakadu staff prepare a newsletter called 'Gunwok' three times per year to assist in keeping tour operators up to date with information about the Park.