**Vision and guiding principles**

The vision for Kakadu National Park is that it is a place where the traditional Aboriginal owners and Parks Australia manage the land together to the highest possible standard, to:

- respect the interests of traditional Aboriginal owners
- conserve the natural and cultural heritage of the park, which is of regional, national and international significance
- encourage visitors to appreciate, enjoy and understand the Park.

The guiding principles determine how the Park should be managed. They are based on the legal obligations of the Director of National Parks, as set out in the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and the lease agreements for Aboriginal land in the Park.

**Bininj interests**

Over half of Kakadu is owned by Aboriginal people and most of the remaining area is under land claim. Parks Australia consults with Aboriginal people in relation to the management of the entire park area, not just those parts of the Park that are legally Aboriginal land. The Aboriginal people of Kakadu have legal rights, including the right to hunt and forage. They also have economic and community-development aspirations and need to honour obligations imposed on them by Aboriginal tradition. These rights and aspirations will be supported as much as possible.

**Caring for country**

Conserving the Park’s special natural and cultural heritage is fundamental. Any use of Kakadu’s natural resources should be ecologically sustainable and should not adversely affect biodiversity conservation in the Park.

Kakadu is a cultural landscape as well as a conservation area. It is a place where Aboriginal people have maintained a lifestyle that has been closely linked to the land for many generations—this long, continuing occupation has shaped the landscape as we know it today. Traditional owners maintain a customary responsibility to care for country and to continue their close association with the land.

The Australian Government has joint responsibility with the traditional Aboriginal owners to conserve and monitor the integrity of the Park’s World Heritage attributes and the internationally significant wetlands in the Park.

Research and monitoring play an important role in making sure country is cared for as well as possible.

**Tourism**

Kakadu is an important place for tourism and recreation. The traditional owners are proud to share parts of their country with visitors, particularly visitors who are interested in learning about their culture and the land. They are keen for visitors to appreciate and enjoy the Park and to develop a special sense of what Kakadu is and means to traditional owners. They are also keen for visitors to take that special understanding home with them. Although people will be encouraged to appreciate and enjoy the Park, tourism will not become a higher management priority than caring for country and supporting Aboriginal rights and aspirations.

**Telling people about the Park**

It is important that visitors to Kakadu can learn about the Park’s natural and cultural features. Traditional owners want visitors to learn about the Park and Aboriginal culture. Promoting a program to communicate the Park’s heritage and values to visitors and the broader community is integral to management.