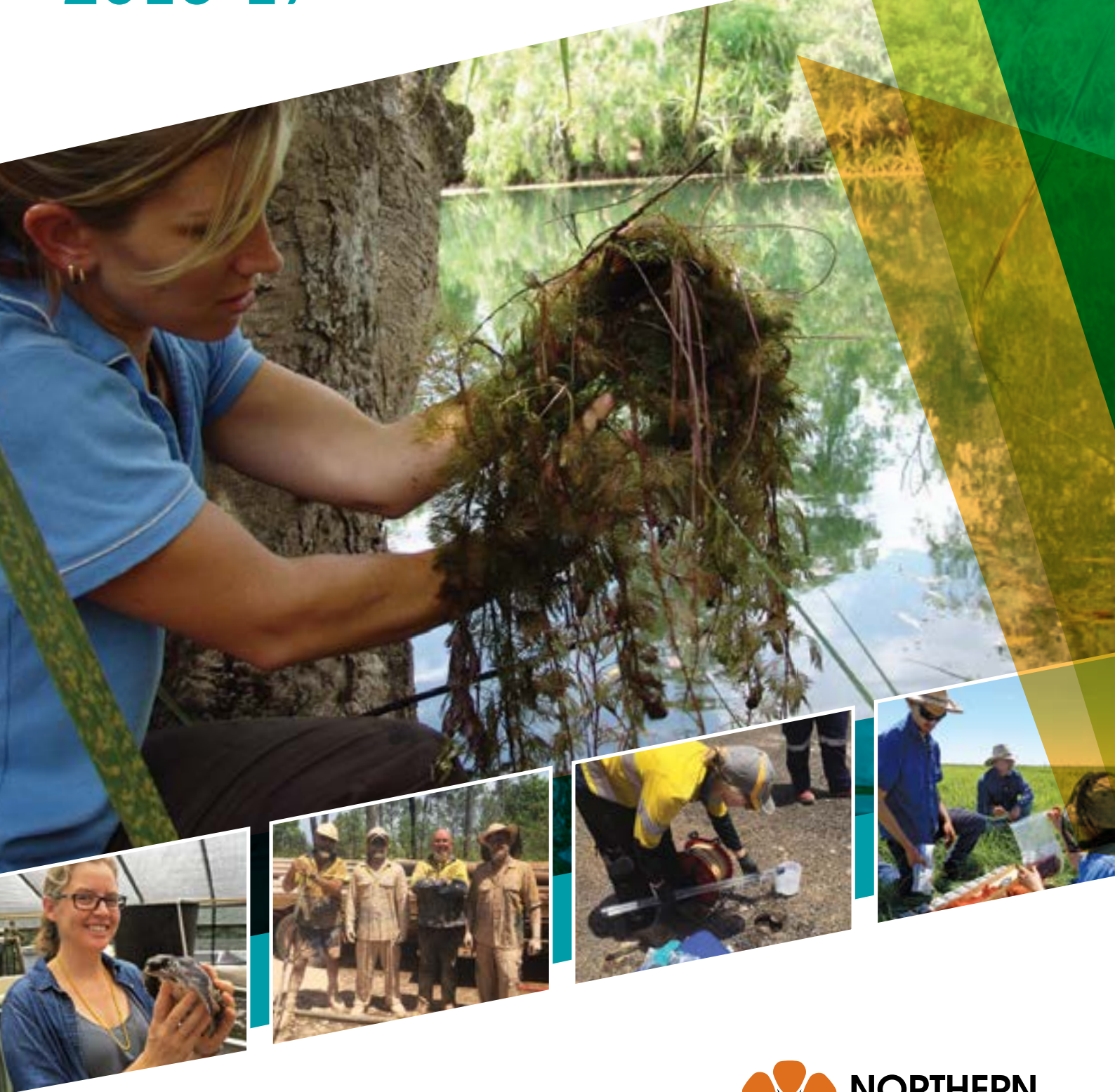


DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

ANNUAL REPORT

2016-17



www.nt.gov.au



LETTER TO THE MINISTER

The Hon. Lauren Moss MLA
Minister for Environment and Natural Resources
Parliament House
State Square, Darwin NT 0800

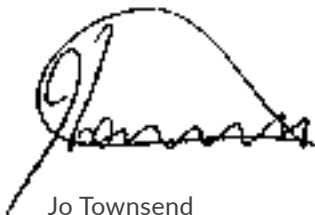
Dear Minister

I am delighted to present you with the 2016–17 annual report of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, which has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of section 28 of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act* and section 12 of the *Financial Management Act*.

Pursuant to my responsibilities as the Accountable Officer under the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act*, the *Financial Management Act* and the *Information Act*, I advise that to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- Proper records of all transactions affecting the Department of Environment and Natural Resources are kept, and all employees under my control observe the provisions of the *Financial Management Act*, its regulations and applicable Treasurer's Directions.
- Procedures in the department afford proper internal control, and these procedures are recorded in the Accounting and Property Manual, which has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Financial Management Act*.
- There is no indication of fraud, malpractice, major breach of legislation or delegation, major error in, or omission from, the accounts and records.
- In accordance with section 15 of the *Financial Management Act*, the internal audit capacity was adequate and the results of all internal audit matters were reported to me.
- The financial statements included in this annual report have been prepared from proper accounts and records and are in accordance with the Treasurer's Directions.
- All Employment Instructions issued by the Commissioner for Public Employment have been satisfied.
- In respect to my responsibilities pursuant to section 131 of the *Information Act*, processes have been implemented to achieve compliance with the archives and records management provisions prescribed in Part 9 of the *Information Act*.

Yours sincerely



Jo Townsend
Acting Chief Executive Officer
30 September 2017

PURPOSE

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources annual report provides a record of the department's functions and performance for 2016–17 and progress against the department's strategic goals and priorities.

The 2016–17 annual report for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources complies with annual reporting requirements in the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act*, the *Financial Management Act* and the *Information Act*.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The annual report provides information about the department's activities and achievements for the 2016–17 financial year. It is tabled by the Minister in the Northern Territory Parliament, as an accounting and reporting mechanism for the department's income and financial expenditure for the year ending 30 June 2017.

The report gives other government agencies, and the public, information about the department's range, purpose and outcomes during the year. It also formally acknowledges our employees' achievements.

REPORT STRUCTURE

The report has a Chief Executive's Officer's overview and six key sections:

- **Our department:** the organisation's purpose, primary functions and objectives.
- **Our achievements:** the department's output performance in 2016–17 and results against measures published in Budget Paper No. 3.
- **Our people:** an overview of the department's people, human resource management and legislative requirements and formal acknowledgement of our employees' achievements.
- **Corporate governance:** the department's corporate governance model and performance.
- **Engagement:** an overview of the department's sustainability and environmental performance, including community engagement and support.
- **Financial reports:** the department's financial statements and related notes.

The annual report is published online at www.denr.nt.gov.au

CONTENTS

Letter to the Minister.....	i
Purpose	ii
Target Audience	ii
Report Structure	ii
Chief Executive Officer's Overview	v
OUR DEPARTMENT	1
Overview.....	3
Our Regions.....	4
Legislation Administered.....	5
Strategic Plan 2017-2020.....	6
OUR STRUCTURE.....	8
Governance Board	9
Looking Forward - Our Budget Priorities for 2017-18.....	11
OUR ACHIEVEMENTS.....	13
Overview.....	15
Financial Snapshot	16
Legislative Changes in 2016-17	17
Future Legislative Priorities.....	19
Strategic Plan 2013-2017 - Report Card for 2016-17	20
What We Achieved By Output	28
OUR PEOPLE	45
Overview.....	47
Workforce Profile	48
Developing Our Workforce Capacity and Capability	51
Employment Programs	54
Capability Building	56
Staff Recognition and Reward Scheme	57
Staff Achievements	58
Wellbeing.....	60
Workplace Health and Safety	60
Legislative Compliance.....	62

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE.....	65
Governance Framework	66
Executive Committees	67
Statutory Committees and Bodies	69
Corporate Planning Framework	71
Departmental Communications.....	72
Corporate Governance Accountabilities	73
Internal Controls.....	73
Information Management.....	73
Monitoring Through Audits and Reviews	75
Insurable Risk	76
ENGAGEMENT	77
Consultation	84
Grant Programs.....	86
Partnerships	86
Sponsorships	86
FINANCIALS	87
The Department Financial Statement Overview.....	88
Comprehensive Operating Statement - Summary	89
Income	90
Expenses	91
Balance Sheet - Summary	93
Statement Of Changes In Equity - Summary	94
Cash Flow Statement - Summary	95
Financial Statements.....	96
APPENDIX 1	132
Department Board and Committees - Membership	132
APPENDIX 2	134
Statutory Boards and Committees – Membership	134
APPENDIX 3	137
Grants	137
CONTACTS	139

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S OVERVIEW

I am pleased to present my first Annual Report for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for the year ended 30 June 2017. The report provides an account of the department's functions and performance against approved budgets and resources for the 2016-17 financial year.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources was formed on 12 September 2016, comprising the former Department of Land Resource Management outputs with those of the Environment group in the former Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment.

In establishing the new department, a shared service hub for the delivery of corporate services (servicing four former departments) was unwound, resulting in 42 corporate staff being transferred to the Department of Tourism and Culture. In June, the department published the *Department of Environment and Natural Resources 2017-20 Strategic Plan*, after a process of consultation and consolidated input from senior staff across the agency. The Plan will be in effect for the next three years and is the basis of our business planning, and in turn our performance planning.

The department provides critical natural resource assessment, monitoring and land management advice and services to ensure the conservation, and sustainable use, of those resources across the Northern Territory. The department also delivers services and programs to mitigate threats posed by wildfire, pests and weeds.

As the Territory grows, these functions ensure the development of the Northern Territory is based on the effective allocation of natural resources with ongoing land management and conservation practices and programs which in turn fosters sustainability of resources and industry as communities and lifestyle in the long term.

The department also advises on environmental policy as well as environmental approvals. It undertakes environmental impact assessment and compliance activities and provides services to the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority to meet its statutory responsibilities. It has an important assessment role in proposed developments and ensures that developments can proceed with appropriate environmental mitigation.

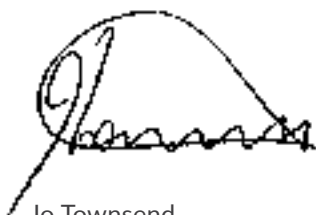
As an agency with responsibility for administering legislation covered in 18 Acts and 11 pieces of subordinate legislation, transparency in decision making within the agency is held to a high standard. All decisions relating to water licensing, environmental approvals and development advice are published on the department's website or through dedicated information portals. In May, the department launched the Water Licence Decision Portal which co-located water extraction licence decisions, information about water allocations and water planning and available research and resources into a single public portal.

The department and its staff have a strong foundation in science and are committed to evidenced-based decision-making. It is also recognised that community values, needs and priorities are an important input to effective resource management and sound decision-making. It is on this basis that water allocation planning has recommenced in the Ooloo, Katherine, Alice Springs, Rapid Creek, Darwin Harbour, Ti Tree, Howard, Mataranka-Daly Waters and Western Davenport regions to advise on water planning and management in those catchments and regions. Revised statutory weed management plans on specific weed threats and management were approved for athel pine and grader grass, while revised plans for gamba grass, bellyache bush and mimosa are currently being developed. The department is also developing regional bushfire management plans, to support bushfire mitigation and management across the Northern Territory.

I would like to acknowledge the significant time and genuine efforts of members of committees and advisory groups which actively contribute and advise on management plans declared by the Minister. The work of the department is also reliant on dedicated and hardworking volunteer bushfire brigades who give up their own time to help landowners to fight wildfire threats.

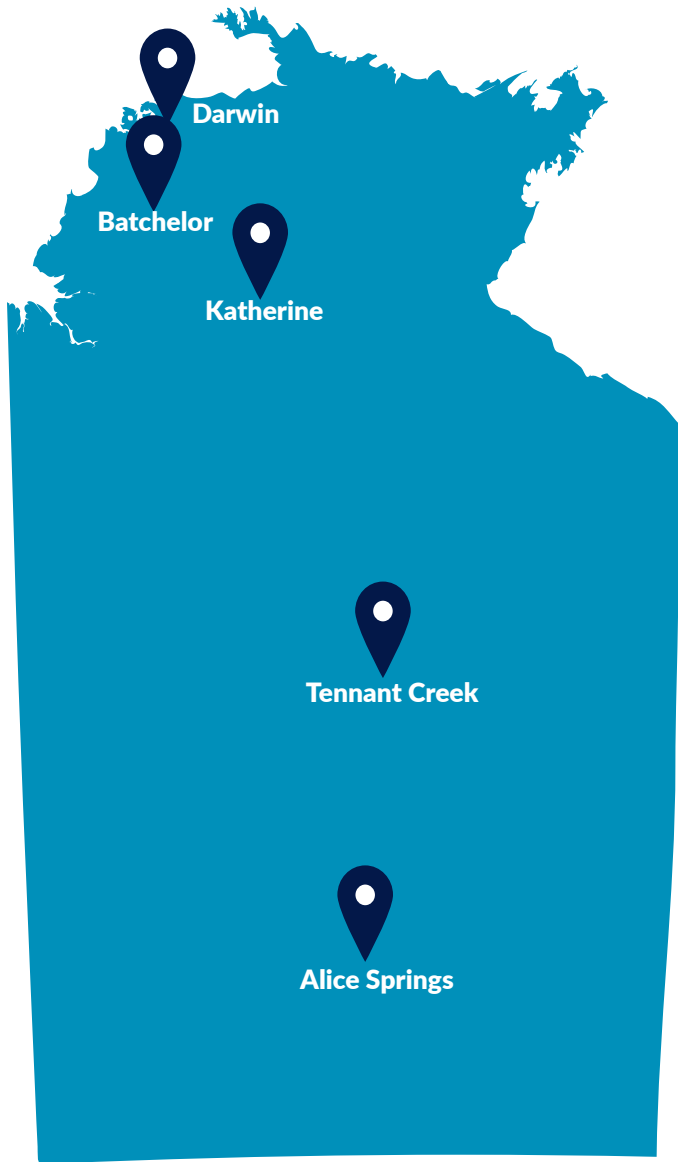
There are many other great examples of community and stakeholder partnerships and collaboration across the agency over the last 12 months, including the co design of program guidelines for the Aboriginal Ranger Capital Items and Land Conservation and Management Grants Program; engagement and stakeholder consultation on the Coastal and Marine Management Strategy and the delivery of the Sea Ranger Program operating in Darwin Harbour.

Over the coming year, the department will continue work closely with Government agencies and the community, to share our expertise, and to develop processes to streamline its regulatory and advisory responsibilities. Work on core responsibilities to soil, water and biodiversity assessments and commitments announced on the Economic Development Framework will continue, resulting in outcomes such as policy on Strategic Aboriginal (Water) Reserves, new water allocation and trade policies, and commencement of the four year Mapping the Future Program, providing new resource inventories across land, water and biodiversity in key areas of prospectivity. We will also be undertaking major reform through the development of new environmental approval and management legislation for consideration by government and amending the *Water Act* and the *Pastoral Land Act*.



Jo Townsend
Acting Chief Executive Officer
30 September 2017

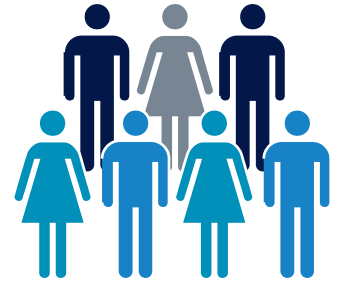
OUR DEPARTMENT



*Department of Environment
and Natural Resources
Regional office locations*

Budget priorities:

*Support
creating jobs*



*Empowering
the bush*



*Building
safer, fairer
and stronger
communities*



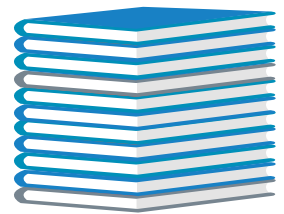
*DENR formed on
12 September 2016.*



18 Acts



**11 pieces
subordinate
legislation**





OUR DEPARTMENT

OVERVIEW

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources provides natural resource monitoring, management and advice, including scientific assessment of flora, fauna, land and water assets, and the allocation and management of these resources to enable their sustainable use.

The agency provides assessment, monitoring and compliance support and services on behalf of the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority to support environmentally sustainable development.

To be effective, we need a strong partnership approach. It is through partnerships with landholders, across government and among our external stakeholders, that we will meet our priorities in managing our natural resources sustainably for the benefit of all Territorians.

OUR REGIONS

The department operates from offices in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Batchelor and Darwin to provide natural resource management extension services and advice to landholders across the 1 349 129 square kilometres of the Northern Territory.

Our presence in the regions allows us to maintain strong connections with the rural and remote

community and deliver effective frontline services. It ensures policy and planning is undertaken considering the community's views and expectations through face-to-face access to our team. Working in regional areas, the Katherine, Tennant Creek, Batchelor and Alice Springs teams appreciate the value of partnerships with local stakeholders and are proud of the relationships they have established with our many stakeholders.

Katherine region

Our regional office in Katherine hosts 17 positions in Water Resources, Bushfires NT and Rangelands divisions. The Katherine region covers some 370 000 square kilometres and is mainly comprised of pastoral and Aboriginal land, with freehold, local government and vacant Crown land tenures mostly around township areas.

2016–17 highlights include:

- The Katherine Water Resources team was integral in the successful reinstatement of the Ooloo, Katherine and Mataranka-Daly Waters water advisory committees. Members of the Ooloo Water Advisory Committee briefed the Minister on the water allocation planning process, key considerations and their progress to date when she attended an advisory committee meeting in May 2017.
- The Katherine team's excellent knowledge of the location of gamba grass in their region was instrumental in the development of an enforcement and compliance program for gamba grass. With evidence of increasing spread in the Katherine region, the Weed Management Branch partnered with Bushfires NT and the Jawoyn Rangers to undertake a 3 500 square kilometre aerial survey in May 2017. The survey included rural areas around Katherine and Edith Farms, Moline Mine and the Jawoyn and Barnjarn Aboriginal land trusts and revealed a significant rate of spread. The data will inform planning and operations to help protect Katherine from the threat of gamba grass spreading.
- For the first time, Bushfires NT and the Weed Management Branch partnered to inspect firebreaks around Katherine—a valuable opportunity for the divisions to share knowledge and compare enforcement and compliance procedures. Weed distribution data was collected during the inspections to make the most of the investment of time and resources. More than 100 properties were found to be non-compliant with legislated fire break requirements.

Central Australia/Southern Region

Our regional office in Alice Springs hosts 35 positions in the Flora and Fauna, Water Resources, Bushfires NT and Rangelands divisions and our regional office in Tennant Creek hosts four positions in the Bushfires NT and Rangelands divisions.

2016–17 highlights include:

- Significant development in water resource planning, with new plans under development for the Western Davenport and Ti Tree areas, both of which, for the first time, explicitly address the needs of groundwater dependent ecosystems in the allocation process.
- Bushfires NT travelled throughout the Barkly Region delivering wildfire awareness and fire-fighting training to 45 stakeholders and eight new volunteers and constructed strategic mineral earth firebreaks on Mt Drummond Station and the Warumungu and the Wampaya Aboriginal Land Trusts. Bushfires NT also completed 29 hours of aerial planned burning across the Alice Springs Fire Management Zone, in collaboration with landowners. This was the first time since the early 2000s that Bushfires NT have led an aerial planned burn program of this scale in Central Australia. The program complements existing strategic bushfire mitigation programs implemented by landowners to reduce the number and intensity of bushfires.
- As a result of several years of innovative work with ranger groups to restore important wetlands for cultural and ecological outcomes, Ilpili (two vital springs within the Ehrenberg ranges of Central Australia) are flowing again and as a result, native animals are returning, including bustards, dingoes, euros and macropods.
- The Herbarium in Alice Springs hosted the 2016 Australasian Systematic Botany Society. Held over three days, 70 delegates from across Australia, New Zealand and Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew presented a diverse array of topics from students, academics and other herbarium botanists on the latest research

being conducted in the Southern Hemisphere. The conference field trip was a day trip to the West Macdonnell Ranges where a number of unique habitats and endemic species were showcased to the visitors.

- Flora and Fauna Division completed the first round of biodiversity surveys in the three highest conservation-value national parks in Central Australia and commenced the second round. These surveys address values identified in Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory (PWCNT) Integrated Conservation Strategies for the parks.

- Work with PWCNT is ongoing to manage feral cats that are threatening central rock-rats in the West MacDonnell Ranges. Trials of strategic baiting have provided encouraging results and habitat management through control burning is planned for next year.

LEGISLATION ADMINISTERED

The department is responsible for administering 29 pieces of legislation, including 18 Acts and 11 pieces of subordinate legislation.

This legislation provides an overriding direction for many department functions and is the foundation of a number of output groups. A review process ensures the legislation remains contemporary and relevant to the department's functions and incorporates best practice in the areas it administers.

Bushfires Management Act

- Bushfires Management (General) Regulations
- Bushfires (Volunteer Bushfire Brigades) Regulations

Environmental Assessment Act

- Environmental Assessment Administrative Procedures

Environment Protection (Beverage Container and Plastic Bags) Act

- Environment Protection (Beverage Container and Plastic Bags) Regulations

Environmental Offences and Penalties Act

- Environmental Offences and Penalties Regulations

Lake Eyre Basin Intergovernmental Agreement Act

Litter Act

Marine Pollution Act

- Marine Pollution Regulations

National Environment Protection Council (Northern Territory) Act

Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority Act

Nuclear Waste Transport, Storage and Disposal (Prohibition) Act

Pastoral Land Act (except provisions about Aboriginal community living areas)

- Pastoral Land Regulations

Soil Conservation and Land Utilisation Act

Waste Management and Pollution Control Act

- Waste Management and Pollution Control (Administration) Regulations
- Environment Protection (National Pollutant Inventory) Objective

Water Act

- Water Regulations

Water Efficiency Labelling Standards (National Uniform Legislation) Act

Weeds Management Act

- Weeds Management Regulations

Planning Act

Land clearing approvals on un-zoned land (under delegation from the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics.)

Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act Part IV, Divisions 1–5

STRATEGIC PLAN 2017–2020

Our Vision

The Northern Territory's land and water resources are managed sustainably for the benefit of all Territorians, informed by the best available science.

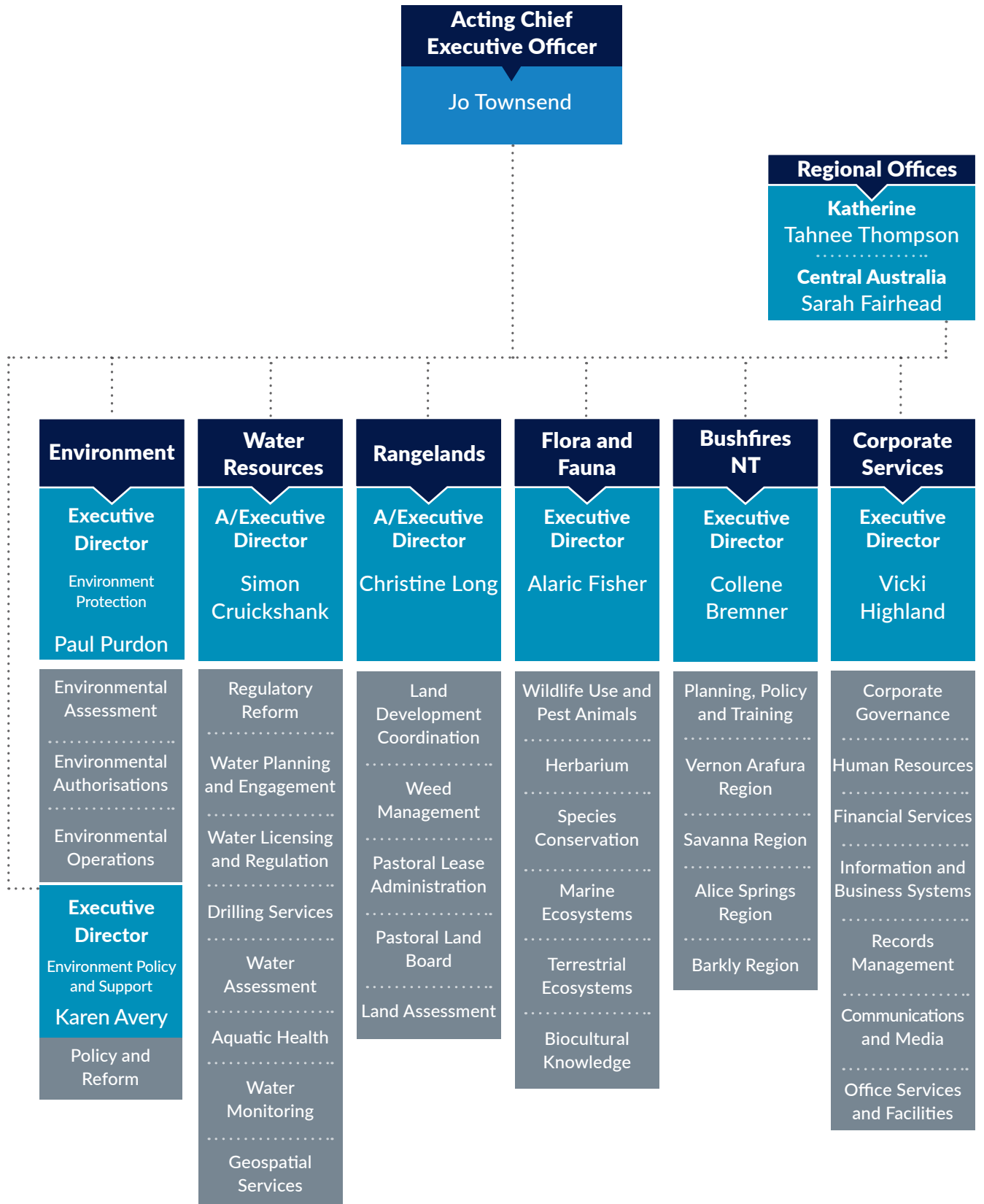
Our Purpose

Provide advice and support for the sustainable development of the Northern Territory's land and water and conservation of its unique native flora and fauna.

GOALS		STRATEGIES
1	Strategically improve scientific and community knowledge and understanding of water, soils, landscapes and biodiversity to better inform adaptive and responsive management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake strategic integrated assessments of ground and surface water systems, land resources and biodiversity values to inform management and de-risk investment in regional development, including through the Mapping the Future project. • Implement robust monitoring systems to track and report on the health of the Territory's biodiversity, the condition of the Territory's rangelands, the health of Darwin Harbour and inland waterways and the quality of the Darwin airshed. • Develop and implement an online information strategy to improve community understanding of the Territory's natural resources.
2	Advise on the effective planning, allocation, conservation and use of the Northern Territory's natural resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Water Allocation Planning in conjunction with water policy reform. • Ensure that outputs from the Mapping the Future project inform natural resource allocation decisions. • Provide the best available information on the Territory's natural resources to support the Economic Development Framework. • Develop and maintain integrated information systems for natural resource data and information, accessible to internal and external clients. • Support the sustainable development of the pastoral estate through contemporary pastoral legislation.
3	Develop and deliver robust and transparent assessment and regulation that balance the development of the Northern Territory with effective protection of the Northern Territory's unique environmental assets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reform, streamline and increase transparency of environmental regulatory systems in the Territory, including revision of environmental assessment and approvals legislation, and new environmental protection legislation. • Ensure that robust, evidence-based advice relating to natural resources informs all environmental impact assessments and approvals. • Support the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority to manage the regulatory framework to reduce the impacts of waste and pollution on the Territory's environment. • Ensure mining and petroleum activities are subject to the <i>Water Act</i>.

4	<p>Foster and sustain community participation from all regions of the Territory in sustainable natural resource use and management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain engagement and partnerships with stakeholders and the community to leverage knowledge and better manage the Territory's natural resources. • Support Aboriginal rangers and communities to protect the environment and create jobs. • Establish an Aboriginal Carbon Unit to deliver carbon abatement and economic development on aboriginal land. • Implement a Strategic Aboriginal Reserves policy and methodology to provide Aboriginal landholders with increased opportunity to access water resources for economic development. • Increase the focus on water allocation planning and community consultation through the re-establishment of water allocation committees. • Develop digital information products to better inform community around contentious natural resource management issues. • Develop a Coastal and Marine Strategy that protects our valued coast and marine environments while encouraging sustainable development and ongoing use by Territorians. • Establish the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee.
5	<p>Manage and mitigate threats to regional communities and our natural ecosystems and native flora and fauna through shared responsibilities and partnerships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support land managers to reduce the impacts of fire, feral animals and weeds on productive and natural systems. • Progress a strategic approach to manage the increased risk of bushfire in the rural urban interface caused by the proliferation of grassy weeds. • Build community understanding of, and capacity to mitigate the negative impacts of wildfire, weeds and feral animals. • Provide flood monitoring and advice in consultation with other agencies for major 'at risk' communities.
6	<p>Maintain an organisation with the capacity and capability to deliver effective services and that nurtures its human resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspire and support a workplace culture that is collaborative, respectful and accountable. • Build and enhance strategic leadership across the agency. • Implement targeted development programs to 'grow our own' with an emphasis on succession planning. • Provide a safe working environment and promote safe practices in both office and field operations. • Continue to improve business processes and streamline key internal systems.

OUR STRUCTURE



GOVERNANCE BOARD

The Governance Board is the department's principal planning and decision-making body on corporate governance matters.

The Governance Board includes representatives from all the department's output groups and the regions.

Governance Board membership:

Jo Townsend

Acting Chief Executive Officer

Jo has been acting Chief Executive Officer since December 2016. Jo joined the department in September 2015 as the Executive Director, Water Resources Division. Jo has more than 22 years of experience in the Northern Territory Public Sector, including 13 years in executive leadership roles. Jo has a Bachelor of Arts and a Graduate Diploma in Applied Psychology.



Vicki Highland

**Executive Director,
Corporate Services**

Vicki joined the Northern Territory Public Service 14 years ago and has held a number of leadership roles across government, including Chief Financial Officer, Senior Director Business Services and Financial Controller. Vicki joined the department 21 November 2016.

She is a Chartered Accountant, a certified member of Governance Institute Australia and has a Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting and Business Law.



Alaric Fisher

**Executive Director,
Flora and Fauna**

Alaric provides strategic leadership and policy advice on matters relating to flora and fauna, wildlife use and feral animals. Alaric holds a PhD from Charles Darwin University and has worked as a conservation biologist in the Northern Territory for more than 25 years. In that time, he has covered broad-ranging fields including wildlife inventory, biodiversity monitoring, conservation planning and environmental impact assessment.



Christine Long

**Acting Executive Director,
Rangelands**

Christine joined the department in March 2017 for seven months. She has a Bachelor Degree in agricultural science, a Masters in Public Sector Leadership and postgraduate qualifications in IT and economics. Christine has lived in Darwin since 1988 and worked for the CSIRO as a horticultural scientist and then the NT Government, primarily in pastoral and land administration, strategic land use planning and primary industries.



Collene Bremner

**Executive Director,
Bushfires NT**

Collene joined the department as the Acting Executive Director in Bushfires NT in December 2016 and was appointed as the Executive Director in July 2017. Collene was previously the Director of Security and Emergency Recovery in the Department of the Chief Minister. She has more than 10 years of experience working in a leadership role in emergency management for the Northern Territory Government. Collene has a Graduate Diploma of Public Sector Executive Management.



Simon Cruickshank

**Acting Executive Director,
Water Resources**

Simon joined the NT public service in 2001 as the Hydrographic Manager having previously trained as a Cadet Hydrographer in NSW where he gained a Bachelor of Technology Management. He was appointed as Snr Manager Water Monitoring in 2010 gaining extensive experience in designing and managing water monitoring and flood forecasting systems. He has been acting Executive Director Water Resources since June 2017.



Paul Purdon

**Executive Director,
Environment Protection**

Paul has been the Executive Director, Environment Protection since October 2016, where he provides leadership to the department's environmental assessment and regulation functions, including support for the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority. Paul has 13 years of experience in the Northern Territory environment department in a range of policy, environmental assessment and regulatory positions. Prior to moving to the Northern Territory, Paul spent four years working on environmental policy with the Australian Environment Department and the Australian Greenhouse Office. Paul has a Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Laws (Honours) and Bachelor of Letters (Environmental Studies).



Stephanie Jungfer

**Executive Officer,
Executive Services**

Stephanie joined the department in February 2016, initially within the then Water Directorate, having previously worked within the Utilities Commission of the Northern Territory and Department of Treasury and Finance in a policy capacity. Stephanie has a Bachelor of Economics and a background in banking and finance.



Sarah Fairhead

Regional Director, South

Sarah manages the department's functions and activities in the southern region, ensuring an integrated approach across programs. She also helps develop high-level policy to deal with emerging issues. Sarah has more than a decade of experience in public policy and project management roles in the Northern Territory and South Australian public services. She has a Bachelor of Arts (First Class Honours) and six years of postgraduate research experience at the University of Adelaide.



Karen Avery

**Executive Director,
Environment Policy and Support**

Karen has worked in government at state/Territory and federal levels for over 30 years and holds a Bachelor of Business. The majority of her time in the NT has been spent working in complex regulatory policy areas of drugs, gambling and liquor. In addition to directing legislative reform in these areas, Karen was also the regulator of these and many other areas regulating industries of around \$16 billion turnover per year across 27 Acts and 40 sets of regulations. She joined the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in November 2016 and heads up the Environmental Policy and Support area of the department.



Tahnee Thompson

Manager, Katherine region

Tahnee is the department's senior representative in the Katherine region. She builds effective networks across agencies and stakeholder groups to ensure the integration of departmental planning, policies and programs. Tahnee has extensive experience in delivering remote area services to a broad range of stakeholders and holds a Bachelor of Environmental Science.



LOOKING FORWARD – OUR BUDGET PRIORITIES FOR 2017–18

STRATEGIC ISSUES

Creating jobs

- Establishing an Aboriginal Carbon Unit to help develop carbon farming projects on Aboriginal land and promote economic development and employment opportunities in remote areas.
- Facilitating new land resource development through water allocation planning, informed by best practice modelling and monitoring, and community consultation.
- Promoting economic opportunities through the sustainable use of wildlife, particularly saltwater crocodiles.
- Providing developers and users of the Territory's natural resources with consistent scientific advice that promotes economic development without compromising the overall health of the Territory's resources.

Empowering the bush

- Supporting Aboriginal rangers and promoting environmental, economic and social outcomes through a land management and conservation fund and one-off capital grants for equipment.
- Working with Aboriginal elders and communities to preserve and use Aboriginal biocultural knowledge to conserve the Territory's flora and fauna.
- Identifying opportunities for agricultural expansion through the strategic assessment and identification of land with suitable soils and sufficient water.
- Supporting the economic viability of the pastoral industry through contemporary land

management practices and ongoing diversification of the pastoral estate.

- Finalising an appropriate, sustainable and transparent process for rental of the Territory's estate for pastoral purposes.
- Implementing a Strategic Aboriginal (Water) Reserves policy and methodology to give Aboriginal landholders increased opportunity to access water resources for economic development.

Building safer, fairer and stronger communities

- Delivering policy, strategy and management advice relating to the conservation of the Territory's unique wildlife and ecosystems for the ongoing sustainable development of the Territory.
- Facilitating the strategic control of declared weeds to mitigate their impacts on the Territory's natural environment, cultural values and economy.
- Reforming the *Weeds Management Act* to meet emerging incursions of weeds affecting the Territory's natural systems.
- Developing a Coastal and Marine Management Strategy that protects our valued coast and marine environments while encouraging sustainable development and ongoing use by Territorians.
- Implementing monitoring systems to track the condition of the Territory's rangelands, terrestrial and marine biodiversity, major Top End rivers and Darwin Harbour.

- Monitoring major rivers to give early warnings of flood risk to communities and infrastructure assets, and developing flood risk mapping to assist communities.
- Improving the transparency of water licence allocations and decisions by making licence information publicly available online.
- Increasing the focus on water allocation planning and community consultation through re-establishing water allocation committees.
- Amending legislation to ensure mining and petroleum activities are subject to the *Water Act*.
- Supporting the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority in assessing and regulating the environmental impacts of development.
- Improving the Territory's environmental management, including delivering a leading practice regulatory framework for environmental impact assessments and environmental approvals.
- Building community resilience to bushfires through increasing community involvement in fire awareness and mitigation programs, sharing responsibility, and improving compliance with fire prevention and mitigation legislation by landholders, including through gamba grass reduction strategies.
- Progressing a strategic approach to managing increased risk of bushfire and bushfire intensity, including support and assistance for volunteer brigades outside the Territory's urban centres.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Creating jobs

- \$9.9 million over five years from 2017–18 to accelerate land resource mapping activities through a soil, water and biodiversity assessment.
- \$2.4 million for the final year of a four-year program for land and water assessments to determine new agricultural precincts throughout the Territory.
- \$1.5 million over three years from 2017–18 to establish an Aboriginal Carbon Unit to advise and support ranger groups and Aboriginal landholders seeking to create sustainable enterprise through carbon abatement and sequestration.

Empowering the bush

- \$6 million over three years from 2017–18 to establish a Land Management and Conservation Fund to improve conservation practices on Aboriginal lands and seas, and support Aboriginal ranger groups.
- \$4.1 million over two years from 2017–18 for capital grants for Aboriginal ranger groups to assist with the purchase of essential items.

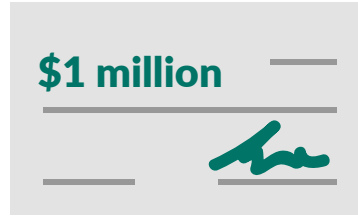
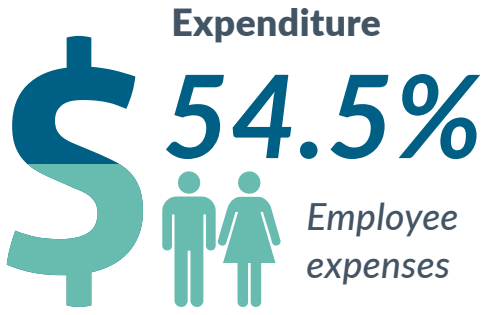
Building safer, fairer and stronger communities

- \$1.2 million Australian Government funding over four years from 2015–16 to establish pest and weed management in respect of wild dogs, acacia and mimosa.
- \$1 million Australian Government funding for a Territory irrigation feasibility study to investigate managed aquifer recharge.
- \$0.6 million for an intensified cabomba eradication program in Darwin River.
- \$0.3 million to reduce the high fire risk associated with gamba grass infestation.
- \$0.25 million for the Arid Lands Environment Centre, Environmental Defenders Office and Environment Centre of the Northern Territory to employ policy officers to proactively engage with government policy committees, community liaison, development and innovation.
- \$0.2 million Australian Government funding for compliance and enforcement systems for water management.
- \$0.2 million from Ichthys liquefied natural gas (LNG) Pty Ltd for an ambient air-quality station in Darwin central business district to improve understanding of air quality in the Darwin CBD and monitor wind direction and speed, rainfall, temperature, humidity and solar radiation.



Photo: Cabomba eradication program.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS



\$1 million environmental grants to promote ecologically sustainable practices



2.45M

spatial biodiversity records for the Territory



Legislative changes

Bushfires Management Act

Water Act

Environmental Protections (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Legislation Amendment Act

679

soil profile sites described and tested for and suitability assessment and mapping

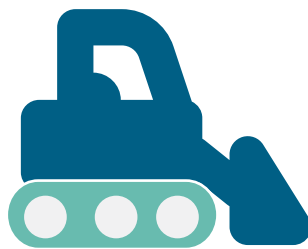


363

container deposit scheme approvals

33

land clearing applications assessed



491

wildfire incidents attended by staff and/or volunteers



4 Water assessment projects completed



Photo: Sagittaria team - (L-R) Michelle Franklin, Roni Opden and Tom Price

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

This section reports on the department's performance in delivering outputs by business lines. It covers our achievements in key projects and our performance against the priorities identified in last year's annual report.

Our performance against the output key deliverables published in Budget Paper No. 3 is reported in the performance measure tables. Where actual performance differs from the budget, an explanation is provided.

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

Income

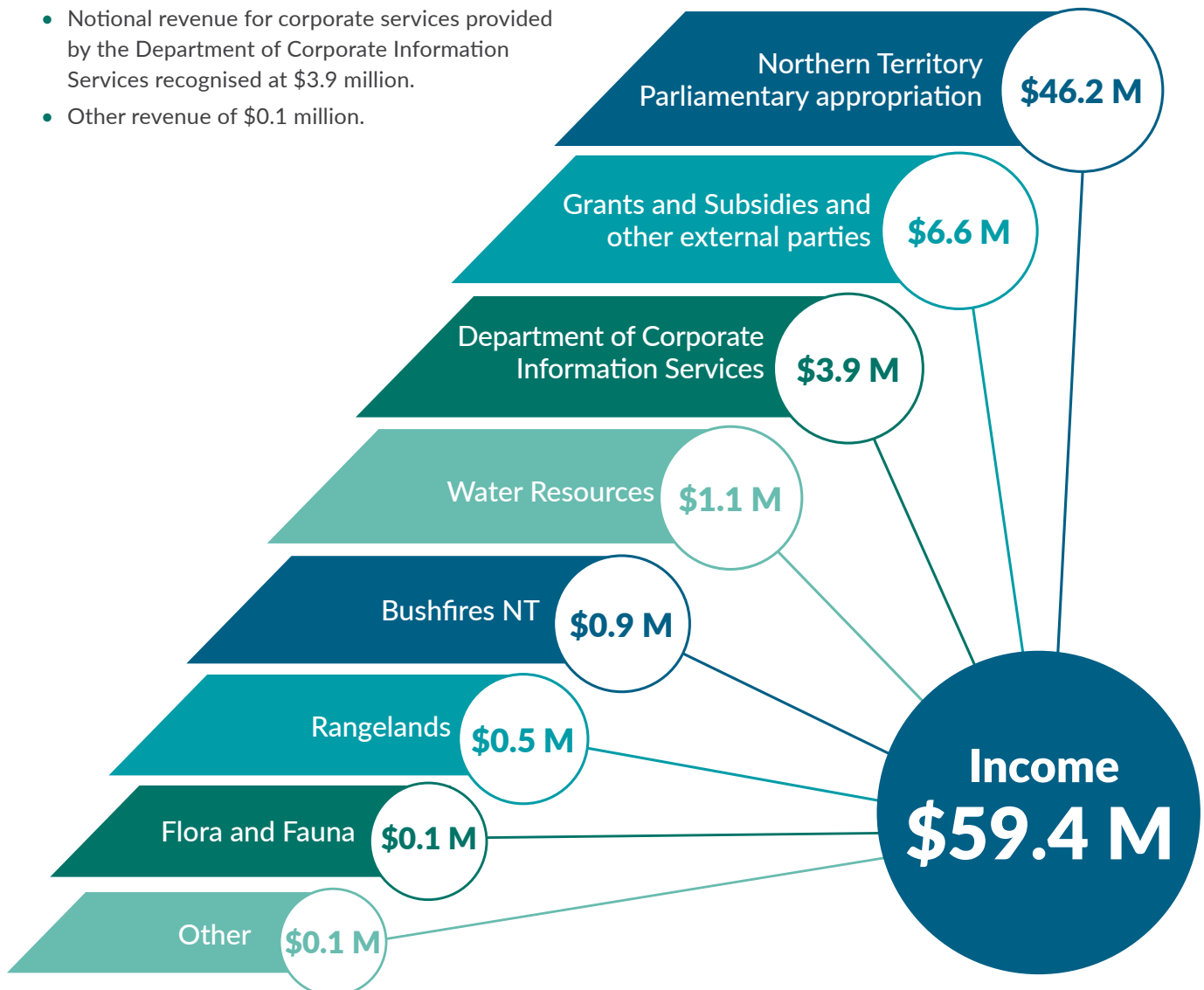
In 2016-17, the department received income of \$59.4 million against a budget of \$59.9 million noting:

- \$46.2 million in Northern Territory parliamentary appropriation being the main source of income.
- Goods and services income dropped due to service level arrangements ceasing with three other departments and a government business division for the provision of corporate services as a result of the Administrative Arrangements Order of 12 September 2016.
- Other goods and services revenue consisted of works performed by the department's Water Resources (\$1.1 million); Bushfires NT (\$0.9 million); Rangelands (\$0.5 million); and Flora and Fauna (\$0.1 million) divisions.
- Grants and subsidies received from the Australian Government and other external parties totalled \$6.6 million.
- Notional revenue for corporate services provided by the Department of Corporate Information Services recognised at \$3.9 million.
- Other revenue of \$0.1 million.

Expenditure

In 2016-17, the department's expenditure totalled \$60.3 million against a budget of \$61.7 million for:

- Employee expenses that represented 54.5 percent of the total expenditure or \$32.9 million.
- Goods and services expenditure of \$15.3 million.
- Repairs and maintenance of assets of \$1.8 million including \$1.4 million spent on the Mary River Saltwater Intrusion Program.
- Grants and subsidies payments totalling \$5.3 million including \$1.2 million to support Bushfire Brigades and \$1.3 million for the West Arnhem Fire Management Agreement.
- Non-cash expenses totalling \$5 million including depreciation charged on the department's asset portfolio and the matching notional expenses charged by the Department of Corporate Information Services.



LEGISLATIVE CHANGES IN 2016–17

Bushfires Management Act

Bushfire is a natural part of the Northern Territory landscape and environment, and like most natural events, it must be managed to prevent impacts on property, industry and, in extreme cases, human life.

The *Bushfires Management Act* received assent on 7 June 2016 and commenced on 1 November 2016. The Bushfires Management (Volunteer Bushfire Brigades) Regulations commenced on the same day. These Regulations provide the model constitution that must be adopted by each volunteer bushfire brigade.

The Bushfires Management (General) Regulations were signed by the Administrator of the Northern Territory on 15 May 2017 and appeared in the Government Gazette on 24 May 2017. These Regulations provide for an offence against the Act to be dealt with by the issuing of an infringement notice.

Public consultation on the new act and regulations generated submissions from a wide range of stakeholders. The main underlying principle of the previous legislation was retained: landowners are responsible for managing bushfires on their land. However, some significant changes did occur. The *Bushfires Management Act* now:

- clarifies the role of Bushfires NT
- provides greater protection and recognition of volunteer fire fighters
- establishes a new planning framework for bushfire management based on bushfire risk and the preparation of regional bushfire management plans in consultation with land-owners and other stakeholders
- continues to focus on fire management rather than fire exclusion
- clearly defines the roles of various stakeholders, including government, in bushfire management and strengthens the relationship between government and volunteer bushfire brigades
- retains the Bushfires Council and Regional Bushfires Committees and clarifies their roles through provision of terms of reference
- establishes a new capacity to prescribe bushfire management arrangements for an individual property where a bushfire risk assessment identifies that conditions on that property present a bushfire risk to neighbouring properties.

Water Act

On 6 July 2016, a new Declaration of Exemptions under the *Water Act* was introduced. The new declaration revoked the exemption from licensing requirements under the Act, for bores pumping 15 litres per second or less in the Darwin Rural Water Control District.

Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Legislation Amendment Act

The *Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Legislation Amendment Act 2014* introduced amendments to improve and streamline the operation of the container deposit scheme. Following a period of implementation, the final amendments to the scheme commenced on 1 January 2017.

GAMBA GRASS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM 2016–17

Gamba grass (*Andropogon gayanus*) was introduced to the Northern Territory in the 1930s as a pasture grass. It has since proven to create high fuel loads that can lead to hot, intense fires that can put people and property at risk. Under the *Weeds Management Act*, property owners and occupiers are now required to manage or eradicate gamba grass on their property according to their property's location. The weed management plan for gamba grass explains what property owners are required to do to manage it.

Gamba grass was declared a weed in the Northern Territory in November 2008, and the first statutory weed management plan was gazetted in 2010. Under legislation, all landholders must meet management obligations.

The government's Gamba Grass Assistance Program started in 2010. It provides free herbicide and spray equipment loans to help private landholders comply with the legislation, reduce fuel loads and limit further spread of gamba grass.

In 2016, the program was rebranded as the Gamba Action Program (GAP) putting a greater emphasis on 'action' rather than 'assistance'. Many people spotted "GAV", the gamba action vehicle, out and about in Darwin and Katherine spreading the message 'Your gamba, your property, your risk'. The program was very successful in engaging landholders, with participant numbers rising to a record 2 202 during the 2016–17 control season.

To support the efforts of participating landowners, in 2016–17 the Weed Management Branch also rolled out a compliance and enforcement program that focusses on the highest-risk, non-compliant areas. More than 60 properties had compliance attention, and

final inspections were being completed at year end.

Landowners can be issued with an order to control their gamba grass. They are given time to comply with the requirements to avoid being fined. In those six weeks, they can access free herbicide, equipment and management advice through the GAP.

Issuing infringement notices or starting legal proceedings is government's last resort. The process is about taking the threat of gamba grass seriously and protecting the community, especially those who are already investing in gamba grass control and management.

Gamba grass is best treated when it is actively growing between November and April.

When gamba grass is not managed by landowners, increased loads of dry and highly flammable material remain the following dry season. All rural residents affected by gamba grass, including NT Government employees, were invited to access free herbicide and equipment through the GAP.

With this year's big improvements in the compliance target areas, Weeds Officers will be expanding compliance and enforcement activities in the 2017-18 wet season.



Photo: Gamba grass in the rural area.



Photo: The Gamba Action Vehicle (GAV).



Photo: A demonstration showing the correct life stage to spray gamba grass.



Photo: (L-R) Roni Opden, Michelle Franklin, Weeds Management Branch.

FUTURE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Pastoral Land Act

Review of the *Pastoral Land Act* and Regulations with proposed amendments to:

- promote diversification through subleasing for horticulture, agriculture, aquaculture or forestry purposes
- provide a new methodology for calculating pastoral lease rents based on a new baseline of the capacity of the land to support livestock (carrying capacity) as opposed to the current method, which relies on unimproved capital value.

Environmental regulatory reform

The NT Government has committed to improving the environmental regulatory framework and has established an environmental reform program to achieve this.

The program will:

- deliver comprehensive reforms to the environmental regulatory system
- reform the *Environmental Assessment Act*
- create a fully functioning *Environment Protection Act* building on the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act* and including environmental provisions from other acts such as the *Mining Management Act*
- amend the *Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority Act* to clarify the role, functions and powers of the NT Environment Protection Authority

(NT EPA) and to improve its accountability to government and the community.

The program will be delivered in two stages:

- Stage 1 will reform the environmental impact assessment process and introduce a new environmental approval, which will be issued for those projects that have undergone impact assessment
- Stage 2 will address the development of a fully functioning *Environment Protection Act* building on the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act* and including environmental provisions from other Acts such as the *Mining Management Act*.

In May 2017, a discussion paper was released that consolidated information received by stakeholders and outlined how government intends to approach the development of its new environmental assessment and approval framework. The paper also sought feedback on a number of areas to further inform the reform program. Feedback on the paper was requested by 28 June 2017.

Water Act

Amendment of the *Water Act* to implement the NT Government's decision to ensure mining and petroleum activities are subject to the *Water Act* including the requirement to obtain water licences and permits in water control districts.



Photo: Attendees of the February 2017 annual business planning.

BUSHFIRES NT – PREPARING FOR THE 2017 SEASON

The early wet season in 2016 and record rainfalls across the Territory provided an opportunity for all Bushfires NT staff to come together in Palmerston for two days in February 2017 for their annual business planning and to prepare for the fire season ahead.

For some staff, it was the first opportunity to put faces to names and build a cohesive team in readiness for a busy season with high fuel loads across the Territory.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2013–2017 REPORT CARD FOR 2016–17

STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 1

The capacity and capability of the Northern Territory's natural resource assets are assessed and outcomes of use and management monitored.

Strategy	Achievements
<p><i>Increase the knowledge and understanding of ground and surface water systems, land resources and native flora and fauna.</i></p>	<p>Finalised broad scale land type mapping across 210 000 km² of pastoral and Aboriginal land in the Barkly, Tennant Creek and Sturt Plateau pastoral districts.</p> <p>Developed a water resource model for the Western Davenport region that recognises physical land characteristics and incorporates water monitoring and climatic data. The model will improve knowledge of natural recharge processes, groundwater flow systems and predict the effect of pumping scenarios across the region.</p> <p>Completed a major project (funded through the Ichthys Project Voluntary Offsets Agreement) which assessed the conservation status of all species of coastal dolphins in NT waters and identified critical marine habitat areas.</p> <p>Completed a draft, fine-scale vegetation map for Groote Eylandt.</p> <p>Completed surveys of threatened animal and plant species on Koolpinyah Station.</p> <p>Undertook flora surveys in the Bradshaw Field Training Area and at Kiwirrkurra, as part of the national Bush Blitz program.</p>
<p><i>Implement robust monitoring systems to track the health of the Territory's biodiversity.</i></p>	<p>Continued research into fish movement in the Roper River.</p> <p>Commenced research on pig-nosed turtle environmental flow requirements in the Daly River as part of a collaborative National Environmental Science Program project.</p> <p>Reviewed and redesigned (in conjunction with University of Melbourne) the 'Top End Ecological Monitoring Program' to incorporate new remote camera technology, increase sampling power for rare mammals and include more Top End parks.</p> <p>Undertook systematic biodiversity monitoring in Northern Territory parks to inform their Integrated Conservation Strategies, including Finke, Nitmiluk, Judbarra (Gregory) and Garig Gunak Barlu (Cobourg Peninsula) National Parks.</p> <p>Continued monitoring dolphin populations in Darwin Harbour and adjacent waters.</p> <p>Continued monitoring programs for high priority threatened species, such as the red cabbage palm and central rock-rat.</p>

Strategy	Achievements
Address the decline of small mammals.	<p>Continued to implement research projects to clarify the factors causing small mammal decline, particularly the role of feral cats and unfavorable fire regimes, and management actions to address these. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring fenced areas where predators were excluded in Kakadu National Park • Implementing trial aerial baiting for feral cats in selected areas of the most rugged parts of the West MacDonnell Ranges • Surveys for threatened mammals and feral cats on Groote Eylandt, as well as a study of the potential risk from cat bats to native fauna • Working with Kakadu National Park to test the biodiversity benefits of enhanced fire and feral animal management • Undertaken systematic surveys of native mammals and feral cats (and other feral mammals) using robust camera trapping in conjunction with conventional trapping methods, at around 300 sites in the Top End • Devised robust methods for estimating feral cat density and have undertaken this at several locations across the Top End.
Work with Aboriginal elders and custodians to conserve biocultural knowledge of the Territory's flora and fauna and promote its application in natural resource management.	<p>Continued to work with Aboriginal elders and communities to document and preserve their biocultural knowledge in the Elliott, Roper/Gulf, and Daly regions.</p>
Monitor and report on the health of Darwin Harbour and inland waterways as part of their continued or expanded use.	<p>Published the 2016 Darwin Harbour Report Card. Re-established the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee. Expanded water quality monitoring in Darwin Harbour through the Ichthys Project Voluntary Offsets Agreement. Monitored dolphin populations in Darwin Harbour, Shoal Bay and Bynoe Harbour through the Ichthys Project Voluntary Offsets Agreement. Released the findings of the 2016 groundwater quality survey for the Darwin region. Published a report on water quality of the Roper River. Continued collection of water quality monitoring data in water allocation plan areas. Commenced collaboration with Roper River Land Care Aboriginal ranger group to improve water quality monitoring frequency. Continued extensive groundwater and surface water monitoring programs in water control districts.</p>
Monitor condition of the Territory's rangelands.	<p>Conducted an on-ground rangeland monitoring program on 53 pastoral leases, with 324 monitoring sites assessed for the Pastoral Land Board under the <i>Pastoral Land Act</i>. Provided the Pastoral Land Board with improved information about the condition of the Northern Territory's pastoral estate facilitating its 2015-16 Annual Report reporting to the Minister on the condition and use of pastoral land.</p>

STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 2

Enable economic growth through the allocation of natural resource assets for best and sustainable use.

Strategy	Achievements
<p><i>Develop a Northern Territory strategy to address the use, allocation and management of water.</i></p>	<p>Established, re-established or expansion of water advisory committees for Howard; Ooloo; Katherine; Mataranka-Daly Waters; Ti Tree; Alice Springs and Rapid Creek.</p> <p>Throughout the year the Minister declared the Berry Springs Water Allocation Plan and the department progressed the development of the Ooloo; Howard; and Western Davenport water allocation plans.</p>
<p><i>Manage competing demands for water and land resources for sustainable development.</i></p>	<p>Assessed 33 native vegetation clearing proposals to support sustainable development under the <i>Pastoral Land Act</i> and <i>Planning Act</i>.</p> <p>Provided written advice on 685 development proposals for various Northern Territory Government agencies and authorities.</p> <p>Finalised the Berry Springs Water Allocation Plan and significantly progressed three draft plans. Development of these plans includes detailed resource assessment and broad stakeholder engagement to ensure the goal of sustainable regional development is supported.</p> <p>Implemented strategies designed to protect existing water users in the Darwin rural area and the sustainability of the resource, including promoting awareness through the Groundwater Watch education campaign; introducing limitations on new bore construction permits and monitoring and regulating use through new water extraction licensing arrangements.</p>
<p><i>Determine potential for agricultural development through the collection and assessment of land, soil, vegetation and water information.</i></p>	<p>Finalised soil and land suitability assessments for irrigated agriculture in the Ali Curung, Ti Tree, Gunn Point, Tennant Creek west and Wildman River areas, and on Kurnturlpara and part of Warumungu Aboriginal land trusts in the Barkly region. These studies identified 118 576 hectares of arable land on Aboriginal, pastoral and Crown land.</p> <p>Completed agricultural land suitability fieldwork on pastoral and Aboriginal land at Orange Creek, Dunmarra and Wadeye.</p> <p>Commenced planning or undertook integrated or agricultural land suitability fieldwork in the Roper River Valley, East Arnhem, lower Keep River Plain, central Barkly and northern Victoria River regions.</p> <p>Undertook a groundwater assessment in the Tennant Creek north region to evaluate the viability of resources for horticultural development.</p> <p>Conducted a water resource assessment of the Wildman River region to inform the nature and distribution of groundwater resources and the interaction with surface water features such as springs and creek systems. This provides a basis for assessing the impact of future irrigated horticulture in this region.</p>

Strategy	Achievements
Ensure that impacts on the natural resources are within acceptable limits in the allocation and use of land for development purposes.	Undertook a study of the impact of agricultural development on the underlying groundwater system in the Rocky Hill area (south east of Alice Springs). This work has quantified the drainage characteristics of the upper soil profile to enable the prediction of the longer-term effects of irrigation drainage.
Identify and promote economic opportunities through the sustainable use of wildlife.	Revised the five-year Management Program for the Saltwater Crocodile (<i>Crocodylus porosus</i>) in the Northern Territory of Australia, 2016-2020, which was approved by the Administrator on 29 June 2017.
Support the pastoral estate through contemporary pastoral legislation to drive economic growth.	<p>Facilitated 21 ownership transfers of pastoral leases under the <i>Pastoral Land Act</i>, supporting the economic development of the Northern Territory pastoral estate and northern Australia. This number of sales of pastoral leases continues a trend over the last three years that has seen a significant increase in sales, indicating continued investment and confidence in the Northern Territory pastoral industry.</p> <p>Provided support to the Pastoral Land Board, which approved two non-pastoral use applications under the <i>Pastoral Land Act</i>. This included permits for tourism in the Darwin and Katherine pastoral district.</p> <p>Developed proposed amendments to the <i>Pastoral Land Act</i> and Regulations for consideration by government including to contemporise sections of the legislation, including enabling sub-leases for non-pastoral purposes to support diversification and investment in the pastoral estate.</p>

NATIONALLY THREATENED BRUSH-TAILED RABBIT-RAT THRIVING ON GROOTE

In April and August 2016, the Flora and Fauna team launched a project to understand the distribution of threatened mammals on Groote Eylandt in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Groote Eylandt is a stronghold for native fauna because it is free from many of the threats that contribute to the decline of species on the mainland, including frequent fire, cane toads, large exotic herbivores and pigs. To better understand the distribution of small mammals on Groote Eylandt, the department's team deployed motion-sensor cameras at 112 sites across the island.

After the arduous task of processing 500 000 camera trap photos, they were rewarded with the discovery of a new local population of the

nationally threatened brush-tailed rabbit-rat *Conilurus penicillatus*. It is a small native rodent that was once found across large areas of northern Australia but is now almost extinct on the mainland.

Historically, this species was considered to have a very limited distribution on Groote Eylandt, having been recorded at only seven sites in the last 50 years. Our team detected this species at an extra 19 sites, making Groote Eylandt home to one of the largest populations of the brush-tailed rabbit-rat.



Photo: brush-tailed rabbit-rat *Conilurus penicillatus*.

As a step towards developing effective management strategies, the team is now determining what drives the species distribution and identifying the potential threats posed to this species on Groote Eylandt.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 3

Threats to natural resources and regional communities are managed through shared responsibilities and partnerships.

Strategy	Achievements
<p><i>Provide extension services to assist landholders in the sustainable use of the natural resources.</i></p>	<p>Provided extension services to landholders for native vegetation clearing applications.</p> <p>Provided assessment on erosion sediment control plans within 14 days of receipt. Increased the number of site visits undertaken in the Northern Territory, resulting in a decrease in the number of complaints received from developers on sediment runoff from civil and building sites.</p> <p>Provided weed management extension services through visits to Crown, pastoral, Aboriginal and freehold land managers responsible for 250 000 square kilometres of country.</p> <p>Implemented the 'Groundwater Watch' education campaign to promote awareness of groundwater risks arising from poor wet seasons in the Darwin rural area and promoting more careful water use and longer term management actions.</p> <p>In collaboration with Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics and the Alice Springs Flood Mitigation Advisory Committee, produced the Alice Springs Flood Mitigation Report. This documents the overarching strategy for the mitigation of flood risk and the impact of flood events in the Alice Springs region.</p>
<p><i>Facilitate greater industry capacity and action to mitigate impacts at development sites.</i></p>	<p>Completed the delivery of \$1.4M repairs and maintenance works on engineered designed barrages around the Mary River Shady Camp area that will assist to slow the natural progression of salt water into the freshwater systems of the river and its floodplains.</p> <p>Continued to work with industry to promote the adoption of consistent standards for erosion and sediment control planning and management across the Northern Territory.</p> <p>Continued to work with proponents and environmental consultants to improve data quality and risk assessment for significant fauna and flora.</p> <p>Provided technical and strategic input into the draft Uniform Subdivision Guidelines to clarify erosion and sediment control planning and implementation requirements for subdivisions in the Northern Territory.</p>

Strategy	Achievements
Manage the impacts of feral animals and weeds on productive and natural systems.	<p>In collaboration with the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics commenced a project to provide a robust evidence base to support the development of best practice guidelines for assessing and managing the impacts of wild dogs across the Northern Territory.</p> <p>Supported the Central Land Council with continued aerial culling of feral camels and horses on Aboriginal land in Central Australia.</p>
Build community capacity to mitigate the negative impacts of wildfire, weeds and feral animals.	<p>Delivered the Gamba Action Program in the Top End for the seventh consecutive year, with 2 002 individual landholders participating and 24 190 litres of herbicide and spray equipment provided for gamba grass control across the Top End.</p> <p>Established a Territory-wide whole-of-community fire management network.</p> <p>Collaborated with other jurisdictions and the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council in sharing processes and products.</p> <p>Increased the number of pre- and post-season planning forums across the Northern Territory to increase community resilience through improving capacity to plan and implement fire mitigation strategies.</p> <p>Completed Northern Territory Action Plans for priority threatened species, which outline management actions and provide targets for the next 10 years, to assist Territory land managers to reduce key threats to these species.</p> <p>Commenced the implementation of the Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program, including the development of comprehensive Guidelines to support the first call for applications in August 2017.</p>
Progress a strategic approach to manage the increased risk of bushfire in the rural urban interface caused by the proliferation of grassy weeds.	<p>Continued facilitation of strategic, cross tenure approaches to gamba grass management in Class B core infestation areas to mitigate fire risk and prevent further weed spread.</p> <p>Weeds Management Branch participated on joint property inspections with Bushfires NT.</p> <p>Established a Bushfire Management Planning Framework , which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing multi-scale planning templates (regional and property plans) • implementing extensive mitigation measures, including fuel reduction, both ground and aerial, construction and maintenance of strategic fire access trails, and property-level fire planning with landowners, to improve land management outcomes and reduce bushfire risk.
Promote partnerships between government agencies to develop threat management plans.	<p>Liaised with the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics to discuss ongoing contract performance and monitoring for weed and fire management on Crown land.</p> <p>Collaborated with Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics Transport Services to develop road reserve planned burn plans across the Vernon/Arafura, Savannas and Alice Springs Fire Control Region with on ground burning completed by Volunteer Bushfire Brigades.</p> <p>Worked with government, industry, science, environment and community stakeholders to progress the Northern Territory's Coastal and Marine Management Strategy.</p>
Provision of flood advice in consultation with other agencies for major 'at risk' communities.	<p>Undertook flood monitoring in major river systems for identified at-risk communities resulting in 76 minor, 12 moderate and three major flood warnings being generated by the Bureau of Meteorology.</p> <p>Undertook monitoring and provided 31 river level alerts to Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics related to at-risk infrastructure.</p> <p>In collaboration with Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics, produced storm surge and flood mapping for nine remote towns and communities along the Northern Territory west coast, Tiwi Islands and Arnhem Coast.</p>

STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 4

An organisation with the capacity and capability to deliver effective services.

Strategy	Achievements
<i>Inspire and support a workplace culture that is collaborative, respectful and accountable.</i>	<p>Employed and developed an environmental undergraduate through the Northern Territory Government's 12-month Graduate Development program.</p> <p>Continued to support Information and Communications Technology (ICT) governance and build capability and capacity across the agency for ICT project management.</p> <p>Implemented a corporate training calendar outlining upcoming training available. The corporate training calendar included specifically requested training as well as training needs identified from the People Matters Survey.</p> <p>Continued to build capacity and capability across the department through the delivery of training such as the Combat Bullying program, change management workshops and cross-cultural training.</p> <p>Managed the recognition of employees through the department's recognition and reward scheme.</p> <p>In 2016-17 the department developed, implemented and completed the internal and external audit program with a focus on Official Travel, Cabinet Information Security Measures, ICT purchases and Repetitive Tier 1 purchases.</p> <p>Following the NTPS People Matters Survey, met with staff across all divisions and regions of the department to present the results of the NTPS People Matters Survey in more detail and to give staff an opportunity to provide feedback on how to improve the identified areas for their specific division and region.</p>
<i>Build and enhance our strategic leadership across the agency.</i>	<p>Provided expert corporate advice and guidance to support the development and delivery of government initiatives and priorities.</p> <p>Coordinated a two day Senior Leaders Forum in 2017. The forum focussed on the theme of 'unity and partnerships' and presented an opportunity for staff AO7 and above from all regions to collaborate and share their achievements and to focus on the challenges for the year ahead.</p> <p>Developed the new Strategic Plan 2017-2020. The Strategic Plan sets the department's strategic priorities, aligned with government priorities, policy, strategic issues and the agency highlights reported in the budget papers.</p>
<i>Deliver an effective shared corporate service.</i>	<p>Delivered quality shared services in line with agreements and transitioned successfully through machinery of government change.</p>
<i>Provide a safe working environment and use of safe practices in both office and field operations.</i>	<p>Provided a safe working environment for staff through the identification and assessment of workplace hazards and ensuring necessary actions are undertaken to control exposure to injury, loss or damage and ensure that the department is managed in accordance with relevant Work Health and Safety legislation.</p> <p>Revised and implemented the Operational Firearms Policy to define the obligations and responsibilities of employees and the department in the proper issue, use, acquisition, maintenance and storage of firearms to ensure the safe work environment for employees.</p> <p>Implemented the Field Operations Policy to provide direction for field based staff of the Rangelands Division in regard to the implementation of measures to minimise the range of risks inherent in field work operations across the Northern Territory.</p>

Strategy	Achievements
<i>Continue to improve business processes and streamline key internal systems.</i>	<p>Continued implementing the Rangeland Monitoring System to manage ground-based data from monitoring sites, remote sensing and existing Tier 1 data and site information.</p> <p>Developed a business systems catalogue and a knowledge management portfolio, which were identified as key outcomes of the department's ICT Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Established an Application, Support and Maintenance Agreement for effective management and improved reporting on key agency business applications.</p> <p>Held a two day staff forum with all regional Bushfires NT staff in February 2017 to undertake strategic planning and develop a shared understanding of changes to new legislation.</p> <p>In 2016-17 the department developed, implemented and completed the internal audit program to improve travel practices that provide staff with a clear process.</p> <p>Implemented the electronic <i>Water Act</i> Licensing and Permit System (WALAPS), which tracks workflow relating to water licences, bore permits and driller licence applications through the approvals process.</p> <p>Commenced planning for the new Bushfires Emergency Management System to be developed during 2017.</p>
<i>Develop an integrated NT Natural Resource Management information system that is accessible to internal and external clients.</i>	<p>Developed the online Water Licence Decision Portal, a government election commitment to make water licensing information more accessible and licence decisions more transparent.</p> <p>Completed the web-based Groundwater Watch tool to show past, current and predicted groundwater levels in the Darwin rural area.</p> <p>Established the department's Web Map Service (WMS) for access to natural resource spatial layers.</p> <p>Developed a prototype ArcGIS Online version of NR Maps to assess potential as a future department web mapping system.</p> <p>Developed a Sensitive Species Policy to manage public access to sensitive flora and fauna location data.</p>
<i>Ensure legislation and policy is contemporary and adequate to deal with the challenges of delivering sustainable development.</i>	<p>Conducted public consultation and commenced review of the gamba grass, mimosa and bellyache bush management plans.</p> <p>Revoked the exemption from licensing under the <i>Water Act</i> that applied to bores pumping 15 litres per second or less in the Darwin Rural Water Control District. Groundwater extraction for uses other than rural stock and domestic purposes now require a licence and metering, which will assist in sustainable management of groundwater resources in the region.</p> <p>Granted government approval to amend the <i>Water Act</i> so that required permits for mining and petroleum activities, including surface water extraction and storage, groundwater extraction and water bore drilling, are accommodated under the <i>Water Act</i> from 2018.</p> <p>Commenced the <i>Bushfires Management Act</i> and associated Regulations. By June 2017, more than 300 volunteers and fire wardens had been authorised under the new arrangements. Volunteers now have the protection from liability for fire management actions undertaken in good faith.</p> <p>Established a new Bushfires Council and five regional committees were selected and appointed. All members received training in governance and an overview of the new <i>Bushfires Management Act</i>.</p>

WHAT WE ACHIEVED BY OUTPUT

Under the Northern Territory's Financial Management Framework, each government department is funded by output, as stated in the annual Budget Papers.

The department's outputs and performance achievements against each output are detailed below.

NT Government Election Commitments are highlighted with the symbol ✳.

OUTPUT: FLORA AND FAUNA

Provides scientific assessment and monitoring of the Territory's native flora and fauna and delivery of policy advice and support relating to the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife and management of feral animals.

This output is responsible for:

- assessing and monitoring the Territory's native flora and fauna
- assisting landowners to manage the threats to our unique flora and fauna
- supporting and managing the sustainable use of wildlife
- providing robust, evidence-based advice to government, industry and the community relating to the biodiversity of the Northern Territory.

Services are provided from Darwin and Alice Springs.

Key deliverables	2015-16 Actual	2016-17 Budget	2016-17 Actual	2017-18 Budget
Number of spatial biodiversity records for the Territory ¹	1.89M	2.01M	2.45M	2.6M
Number of biodiversity information requests met	2 400	2 400	2 400	2 400
Number of active inventory, monitoring and applied research programs	34	34	34	34
Number of management programs in place for sustainable wildlife use	6	7	6	8

¹ The increase reflects higher external activity and new biodiversity assessment and monitoring projects.

Performance achievements in 2016-17

Completed

- ✳ Provided \$200,000 to Charles Darwin University for urgent research on mangrove dieback in the Gulf of Carpentaria.
- ✳ Established an Aboriginal Land Management Advisory Group to assist with the implementation of the Aboriginal Ranger Grants program.
- ✳ Established a Coastal and Marine Management Partnership Group, to provide external stakeholder input into the development of the Coastal and Marine Management Strategy.
- Revised the 5-year Management Program for the Saltwater Crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) in the Northern Territory of Australia, 2016-2020, which was approved by the Administrator on 29 June 2017.
- Provided advice on biodiversity values and risks associated with around 400 development proposals and applications, including working with proponents and environmental consultants to improve data quality and risk assessment for significant fauna and flora.

FERAL CAT CONTROL IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA



Photo: A feral cat with fat-tailed antechinus (*Pseudantechinus macdonnellensis*) in Tjoritja National Park.

During the year, Flora and Fauna Division staff in Alice Springs worked to achieve a first for Central Australia: effective landscape-scale control of feral cats.

The MacDonnell Ranges west of Alice Springs are a hotspot for rare and threatened mammals, including the endangered central rock-rat. The distribution of this species has shrunk by more than 95 percent since European colonisation, and feral cats are the key threat. Based on our cat diet research, we know that a single cat is likely to eat up to 150 central rock-rats in a year.

Tjoritja (West MacDonnell) National Park supports the larger of the two remaining central rock-rat populations. With funding from the Australian Government, department scientists and wildlife rangers carried out the first of two poison bait drops in the park in August 2016.

The baits, known as 'Eradicat', are poison-laced meat sausages, manufactured to smell and taste appealing to cats. Using a helicopter, the department's team dropped 3 500 baits over an 80-square kilometre area of the park, centred on central rock-rat habitat.

They left an equivalent nearby area unbaited as a 'control' site to help measure baiting effectiveness and off-target impacts. Early results were promising: our motion-detecting camera traps showed that cat numbers were down across the study area after baiting.

Before the next baiting program in early 2017–18, we will return to the site to check on both the central rock-rat and cat populations. While baiting feral cats will never lead to complete eradication, hopefully it buys these threatened species time as more effective control strategies are developed.

- Completed the Marine Megafauna Strategic Plan 2017-21, which identifies the threats impacting marine megafauna, and management principles and actions to mitigate these threats.
- Completed a major project (funded through the Ichthys Project Voluntary Offsets Agreement) which assessed the conservation status of all species of coastal dolphins in Northern Territory waters and identified critical marine habitat areas. A workshop with Aboriginal sea ranger groups was held to share the results from this project.
- Reviewed and redesigned (in conjunction with University of Melbourne) the 'Top End Ecological Monitoring Program' to incorporate new remote camera technology, increase sampling power for rare mammals and include more Top End parks.
- Undertook systematic biodiversity monitoring in Northern Territory parks to inform their Integrated Conservation Strategies, including Finke, Nitmiluk, Judbarra (Gregory) and Garig Gunak Barlu (Cobourg Peninsula) National Parks.
- Completed surveys for threatened mammals and feral cats on Groote Eylandt, as well as a study of the potential risk from cat bats to native fauna.
- Undertook flora surveys in the Bradshaw Field Training Area and at Kiwirrkurra, as part of the national Bush Blitz program.
- Completed Northern Territory action plans for priority threatened species, which outline management actions and provide targets for the next 10 years, to assist Territory land managers to protect these species.
- Completed the *Marri Amu and Marri Tjevin plants and animals* book. This book contains the Marri Amu and Marri Tjevin names and uses of 686 plants and animals. It was jointly published with Wadey Aboriginal Languages Centre and Batchelor Institute Press. It involved our scientists undertaking cross-cultural research with 32 Aboriginal elders over a 13 year period.

In Progress

- ✳ Worked with government, industry, science, environment and community stakeholders to develop an initial draft of the Northern Territory's Coastal and Marine Management Strategy. After further development this will be released for public comment in late 2017, and delivered in 2018.
- ✳ Commenced the implementation of the Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program, including the development of comprehensive Guidelines to support the first call for applications in August 2017.
- Undertook a comprehensive aerial survey of magpie geese and nest numbers across Top End floodplains in May 2017, in order to develop recommendations to the Minister about sustainable harvest levels for the 2017 hunting season and pest mitigation permits.
- Continued major projects (funded through the Ichthys Project Voluntary Offsets Agreement), to map marine habitats in Darwin and Bynoe Harbours; monitor dolphin populations in Darwin Harbour and adjacent coastal waters; and monitor dugong populations around the Territory coastline.
- Commenced a review of the conservation status of plant and animal species listed as threatened under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*. Following an agreement between Australian jurisdictions to apply a common assessment method, the focus of the review will be species endemic to the Territory and to align the conservation status under Territory and Commonwealth legislation.
- Completed a draft, fine-scale vegetation map for Groote Eylandt (with funding from the Anindilyakwa Land Council), which will be finalised following additional field validation in 2017-18.
- Continued to work with Aboriginal elders and communities to document and preserve their biocultural knowledge, with work in 2016-17 in the Elliott, Roper/Gulf, and Daly regions.
- In collaboration with Department of Primary Industry and Resources, commenced a project to provide a robust evidence base to support the development of best practice guidelines for assessing and managing the impacts of wild dogs across the Northern Territory.
- Continued to work with traditional owners and Aboriginal rangers to restore important central Australian waterholes for ecological and cultural outcomes. Work at Ilpili Springs has seen increased water flows, resprouting of vegetation and return of some animal species.
- Implemented aerial baiting for feral cats in selected areas of the most rugged parts of the West MacDonnell Ranges to improve their value as refuges for central rock-rat and other threatened mammals. Ongoing monitoring of native mammal and cat populations will test whether this has been successful.
- Continued a set of projects to clarify the factors causing small mammal decline, particularly the role of feral cats and unfavorable fire regimes, and management actions to address these.
- Managing the very large biodiversity datasets collated by the division. The datasets are the primary information resource about the distribution and status of flora and fauna in the Northern Territory. Work is ongoing to improve data management standards and make all data publicly discoverable, including through NR Maps NT, and the Atlas of Living Australia.
- Undertaking systematic annual surveys of wildlife populations as required by formal Management Programs, including for saltwater crocodiles and magpie geese.

Future priorities

- ✳ Complete the Northern Territory's Coastal and Marine Management Strategy.
- ✳ Roll out the Aboriginal Ranger Grant program, including capital grants for Aboriginal ranger groups to assist with the purchase of essential items and projects under the Land Management and Conservation Fund to improve conservation practices on Aboriginal lands and seas.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of the Mapping the Future Program, including assessing biodiversity values and environmental risks in potential new development areas.
- Progress a strategic and proactive approach to assessing and managing risks to biodiversity in the greater Darwin region.
- Complete a Threatened Species Management Plan for Groote Eylandt, and assisting the Land Council and Rangers to implement the plan.
- Initiate a new project (with funding from the Australian Department of Agriculture and Water Resources) to develop and trial a technique to control foxes that does not also harm dogs/dingoes.

Ongoing

- Curating the Northern Territory herbaria (Darwin and Alice Springs) as the authoritative collection of Northern Territory plant specimens, providing plant identification services and maintaining and updating the FloraNT web portal, which provides public access to the collection and associated databases.

NT Government Election Commitments are highlighted with the symbol ✳.



Photo: bottlenose dolphins at Caledon Bay.



Photo: Darwin Harbour dolphins.

SEA RANGER WORKSHOP

In March 2017, Crab Claw Island hosted the Territory's first ever Sea Ranger Workshop, coordinated by the department.

The two-day workshop was the final part of the Conservation Status of Coastal Dolphins in the Northern Territory project.

The project is part of an offset program developed by the Northern Territory Government through the department's Flora and Fauna Division, with funding from the Ichthys LNG project.

The workshop brought together 13 sea ranger groups, senior traditional owners, Parks and Wildlife Commission rangers and several department staff from across the Territory.



Photo: (L-R) Dr Carol Palmer with dolphin observer and data collector Emma Withers at Nhulunbuy airport.

The department's marine mammals senior scientist, Dr Carol Palmer, said the workshop plan was to present cultural and scientific information on marine megafauna—dolphins, sea turtles and dugongs—and identify issues and priorities and plan how to best work towards managing marine animals in the Territory.

'The Territory has some of the most unique and pristine marine environments in the world, inhabited by majestic dolphins, dugongs and sea turtles.

'It's vital we protect these magnificent megafauna from

human-induced threats such as fishing lines, ghost nets, rubbish and boats', she said.

'This workshop brought together many Territorians with an interest and who are stakeholders in managing our marine environments to be enjoyed by present and future generations.

'It is important to combine science with cultural information and to communicate song lines and language names to promote a better understanding of management practices and issues faced by each stakeholder.'

WHAT WE ACHIEVED BY OUTPUT

OUTPUT: RANGELANDS

Provides scientific assessment and monitoring of the Territory's land and delivery of extension services, policy advice and regulation of use and threats to the land resource.

This output is responsible for:

- assessing and monitoring the Territory's land resource
- assisting landholders in managing the threat and impact of weeds.

Services are provided from Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs.

Key deliverables	2015-16 Actual	2016-17 Budget	2016-17 Actual	2017-18 Budget
Percentage of pastoral estate monitored in the year	24	24%	24%	25%
Land clearing applications assessed ¹	26	20	33	20
Area of land receiving weed extension services ('000 km ²) ²	400	400	250	250
Land development proposals assessed ³	846	900	685	550
Soil profile sites described and tested for and suitability assessment and mapping ⁴	953	500	679	600

¹ The variation in 2016-17 reflects strong growth and investment in the agricultural and horticultural industries.

² The decrease mainly reflects changed resourcing and training arrangements that will service multiple stations.

³ The decrease reflects historical trends, industry knowledge, and number of development proposals received.

⁴ The increase is due to additional funding.

Performance achievements in 2016-17

Completed

- Processed 21 requests for consent to transfer pastoral leases continuing a trend over the last three years that has seen a significant increase in sales and indicating continued investment and confidence in the Northern Territory pastoral industry.
- Assessed 10 native vegetation clearing proposals to support sustainable development under the *Pastoral Land Act*.
- Assessed 23 applications to clear native vegetation that were lodged under the *Planning Act*.
- Commenced proposed amendments to the *Pastoral Land Act* and Regulations for consideration by government to contemporise sections of the legislation, including enabling subleases for non-pastoral purposes to support diversification and investment in the pastoral estate.
- Published soil and land suitability mapping, including technical reports for the Ali Curung, Ti Tree, Gunn Point, Tennant Creek west and Wildman River areas, and on Kurnturlpara and part of Warumungu Aboriginal land trusts in the Barkly region. These studies identified 118 576 ha of arable land on Aboriginal, pastoral and Crown land. Water resource assessments or water allocation planning reviews are underway in a number of these study areas.
- Published broadscale land type mapping across 210 000 km² of pastoral and Aboriginal land in the Barkly, Tennant Creek and Sturt Plateau pastoral districts.
- Carried out rangeland monitoring activities on 53 pastoral leases; in total 324 monitoring sites established were assessed under the provisions of the *Pastoral Land Act*.
- Provided written advice on 685 development proposals for various Northern Territory Government agencies and authorities.

- Co-ordinated \$1.4M of repairs and maintenance works to engineer designed barrages in the vicinity of Shady Camp barrage on the Mary River. The works are designed to slow the natural progression of salt water into the freshwater systems of the river and its floodplains.
- Obtained approval from the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority to apply Shark™ Aquatic Herbicide to treat cabomba in a flowing water body. This was the first time in Australia that this herbicide has been approved for use in a relatively large flowing water body. Since the first application of Shark™ in October 2016, intensive monitoring carried out post-treatment has not detected or identified any adverse environmental impacts in the immediate vicinity or downstream of the treated area.
- Entered into a partnership and memorandum of understanding with Territory Natural Resource Management and Aboriginal rangers for delivery of the 'Working Towards the Eradication of Prickly Acacia in the Barkly' program, which is providing assistance with on-property management of prickly acacia.
- The athel pine and grader grass weed management plans were finalised and declared.

In progress

- Completed aerial survey of gamba grass over 3 500 km² in the Katherine and Edith Farms rural areas and Jawoyn land. The data acquired has provided essential information for understanding gamba grass distribution in the Katherine region to inform planning and compliance activity.
- Issued infringement notices under the *Weeds Management Act* for: selling a declared weed (*sagittaria*); failing to comply with an order to control gamba grass; and a breach of the cabomba quarantine area, amongst other offences.
- To progress the gamba management program, 490 roadside assessments were undertaken in the Darwin rural gamba grass hot-spot area. This resulted in 84 on-site inspections and 38 orders being issued to control gamba grass. Two infringement notices were issued to landowners who failed to meet the requirements of the orders.

Ongoing

- A framework has been developed to ensure weeds are managed to a standard that ensures compliance with legislative obligations at a national and local level.
- Compliance plans to be developed for athel pine, mesquite and prickly acacia.
- A five-year compliance plan focussed on high-priority weed species in the Katherine region has been formulated.
- Revised statutory management plans for gamba grass, bellyache bush and mimosa are nearing finalisation.

Future priorities

- Continue to reduce red tape for pastoral lessees through improving systems to streamline processes for lodging applications online for land clearing, non-pastoral use, subdivision and pastoral lease transfers.
- Continue to support development of northern Australia through facilitating the economic development of the pastoral estate and the provision of administration services to the Pastoral Land Board.
- Finalise agricultural soil and land suitability investigations across a part of Orange Creek Station and Wadeye, Dunmarra, central Barkly and the Roper River valley regions.
- Undertake agricultural soil and land suitability fieldwork on the Keep River Plain and East Arnhem regions.
- Publish soil and vegetation mapping for Auvergne Station in the northern Victoria River District.
- Further develop and refine the rangeland monitoring program across the pastoral estate using on-ground and remote sensing methodologies.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of the Mapping the Future Program, including undertaking soil assessment studies in potential new development areas.

UNEARTHING RICHES FOR REGIONS

In February 2017, the department released two new reports in a series that identifies soils suitable for agriculture across the Territory.

The department's Land Assessment Branch Director, Jason Hill, said the two reports—covering the Tennant Creek West and Ali Curung areas—identified more than 90 000 hectares of land suitable for agricultural development on Aboriginal and pastoral land in those areas.

The release followed extensive field work in 2015 and 2016, in parallel with the department's Water Resources Division.

'Between both soil and land suitability projects, 682 soils were cored, described, laboratory tested and mapped in detail', he said.

'Working closely with local landholders and Centrefarm of the Central Land Council, the Ali Curung project investigated 47 610 hectares and identified more than 43 840 hectares of land suitable for a range of irrigated agricultural crops.

'With agriculture already established in the Ali Curung area, this new information will support the expansion of this fledging precinct.

'The Tennant Creek project investigated 57 855 hectares — 30 to 65 kilometres west of Tennant Creek - with 54 520 hectares found suitable for irrigated agriculture.

'Watermelons, hay, chia, grapes, citrus, mangoes, stone fruit, asparagus, garlic, onions and potatoes are among the many types of irrigated crops that could be grown in these soils in both study areas', he said.



Photo: department soil scientists Nick McGrath, Jon Burgess and Kaitlyn Andrews describe and sample a soil under irrigation in the Ali Curung area.

The department worked closely with the Central Land Council and Centrefarm, Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, NT Farmers, the Department of Primary Industry and Resources and landholders and land managers to make the studies possible.

The identification of an additional 90 000 hectares of suitable land comes on top of the 40 000

hectares already identified in the Larrimah, Wildman, Barkly and Bathurst Island vicinities. This total will increase significantly given similar projects are currently being finalised for Wadeye, Gunn Point, Ti Tree, Dunmarra and Orange Creek.

Planning is also underway for investigations in the western Barkly, East Arnhem, Roper Valley and Keep River Plains.

OUTPUT: WATER RESOURCES

Provides scientific monitoring and assessment of the Territory's water resources, allocation of these resources for sustainable use and delivery of flood forecasting services.

This output is responsible for:

- Monitoring and assessing the Territory's water resources
- Water planning and policy functions to meet the requirements of the environment whilst also supporting water based development
- Water licensing and regulatory activities in compliance with the *Water Act* and regulations
- Bore drilling services
- Natural resource mapping and spatial data information services.

Services are provided from Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs.

Key deliverables	2015-16 Actual	2016-17 Budget	2016-17 Actual	2017-18 Budget
Number of water assessment projects completed	3	4	4	4
Proportion of water allocation plans covered by annual water monitoring programs	100%	85%	100%	100%
River, coastal regions and communities covered by flood risk mapping ¹	28	39	35	40
Annual report cards on aquatic health of Darwin Harbour published	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Four delayed and expected to be released in 2017-18

WATER LICENCE DECISION PORTAL

The Northern Territory Government is improving the transparency of water licence allocations and decisions by making licence information available to the public on a **Water Licence Decision Portal**.

The department's Water Resources Division developed the online portal to allow public access to water licensing decisions for all current water allocation licences.

The Water Licence Decision Portal:

- is accessible from the department's website and from nt.gov.au
- includes spatial navigation tools that display the location of licences in relation to water control districts, water allocation plan boundaries and management zones
- displays the volume of water allocated and categorises water users within water allocation plan areas
- provides access to all documentation relevant to the issuing of any granted licence



- contains links to information on nt.gov.au relating to water management principles, water allocation planning and water advisory committees, licensing processes and the licence appeal process.

The portal allows users to access all relevant legislative and administrative information, assessment investigations, planning information, current licence details and documentation in relation to each current and advertised water extraction licence.

The public can also comment on and appeal licence applications as prescribed in the *Water Act* through the portal.

Performance achievements in 2016–17

Completed

- ✳ Resumed a consultative approach to water planning and water advisory committees through the establishment, re-establishment or expansion of water advisory committees for Howard; Ooloo; Katherine; Mataranka-Daly Waters; Ti Tree; Alice Springs and Rapid Creek.
- ✳ Re-established the Darwin Harbour Water Advisory Committee.
- Re-established the Drillers Qualification Advisory Committee.
- Declared the Berry Springs Water Allocation Plan.
- Continued implementation of the Katherine Tindall and Alice Springs water allocation plans.
- ✳ Improved transparency of water licence allocations and decisions via an online Water Licence Decision Portal.
- Revoked the exemption from licensing under the *Water Act* that applied to bores pumping 15-litres per second or less in the Darwin Rural Water Control District.
- Facilitated an information campaign to landholders in the Darwin rural area about their bores, the groundwater resource and longer-term management actions including: delivering public meetings in Berry Springs and Humpty Doo; roadside signage; regular ground water level reporting in the local newspaper and online; and the expansion of Bore Central to provide property specific advice on water risks and bore characteristics. Over 200 people visited Bore Central between July and December 2016.
- Published the 2016 Darwin Harbour Region Report Card.
- Expanded water quality monitoring in Darwin Harbour through the Ichthys Project Voluntary Offsets Agreement.
- Coordinated the implementation of the Darwin Harbour Aboriginal Marine Ranger program in collaboration with Larrakia Nation.
- Released the findings of the 2016 groundwater quality survey for the Darwin region.
- Published a report on water quality of the Roper River.
- Conducted flood modelling and mapping to assist land planning decisions and disaster management planning.
- Undertook a study of the impact of agricultural development on the underlying groundwater system in the Rocky Hill area to enable the prediction of the longer-term effects of irrigation drainage.
- Developed the Alice Springs Flood Mitigation Report in collaboration with the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics and the Alice Springs Flood Mitigation Advisory Committee.
- Completed the interactive web application Darwin Rural Area Groundwater Watch to provide an overview of historical, current and predicted groundwater levels.
- Contributed to the independent review of licences by; responding to 43 individual requests for information, facilitating access to all electronic records and business directories, preparing and providing file records for 57 individual licence decisions (resulting in the collation of over 4000 pages of documentation) and participating in an initial week of face to face interviews with the review team and subsequent follow-up meetings required for further clarification.
- In collaboration with Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics, produced storm surge and flood mapping for nine remote towns and communities along the Northern Territory West Coast, Tiwi Islands and Arnhem Coast.

NT Government Election Commitments are highlighted with the symbol ✳.

In progress

- Undertake innovative imagery analyses to identify potential Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems in the Western Davenport Water plan area, this methodology will also be used for planning in Ti Tree.
- Provide extensive technical and scientific advice to the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory.
- Progressing changes to the *Water Act* to ensure mining and petroleum activities are considered in the same way as other activities, including the requirement to obtain a water licence.
- Work with the Rapid Creek Water Advisory Committee on the development of a Water Management Plan for the Rapid Creek catchment.
- Five water allocation plans in development/under review: Mataranka Daly Waters, Ooloo Dolostone Aquifer, Howard, Ti Tree and Western Davenport.
- Continue research into fish movement in the Roper River.
- Continue research on pig-nosed turtle environmental flow requirements in the Daly River.
- Develop Strategic Aboriginal (Water) Reserves policy to give Aboriginal landowners increased opportunity to access water resources for economic development.
- Progress the Northern Territory Irrigation Feasibility Study for Managed Aquifer Recharge in key sites of the Northern Territory.
- Publish detailed water assessment work undertaken by the department including the reports on the Georgina Basin Groundwater Assessment - Daly Waters to Tennant Creek and the Preliminary Investigation on Surface Water Flooding and Water Resources Issues within Beetaloo Catchment.

Ongoing

- Establish the department's Web Map Service (WMS) for web-serving natural resources spatial layers on compatible mobile, desktop and web applications.
- Develop an ArcGIS Online prototype of NR Maps to be considered as an option for upgrading the department's web mapping system.
- Undertake a groundwater assessment in the Tennant Creek north region to evaluate the viability of resources for horticultural development.
- Conduct a water resource assessment of the Wildman River region to provide a basis for assessing the impact of any irrigated horticulture in this region.
- Water advisory committees continue to advise on the development of water allocation plans within a defined plan area.

Future priorities

- Progress and deliver community engagement work, particularly in relation to Darwin rural area groundwater use.
- Undertake the feasibility study for Ord Stage 3 – Land and Water Investigation, funded by the Australian Government through the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund – Feasibility Component.
- Progress new policies on Water Allocations; Management of Unused Water Entitlements; and Trade in Water Allocation Plan areas.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of the Mapping the Future Program, including undertaking water assessments in potential new development areas.
- Declaration of a new a water control district for Adelaide River.

OUTPUT: BUSHFIRES NT

Provides support to landholders in the management and mitigation of wildfire and assists volunteer brigades in fire management and suppression outside the Territory's urban centres.

This output is responsible for:

- supporting landholders in the management and mitigation of wildfire
- providing support and training to volunteer bushfire brigades across the Territory.

Services are provided from Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Batchelor.

Key deliverables	2015-16 Actual	2016-17 Budget	2016-17 Actual	2017-18 Budget
Number of wildfire incidents attended by staff and/or volunteers ¹	405	300	491	400
Number of extension visits to properties	266	150	174	200
Number of stakeholders trained ²	372	400	226	400
Number of Authorised Bushfire Volunteers and volunteer Fire Wardens ³	574	550	316	550
Number of enforcement actions relating to the <i>Bushfires Management Act</i> and associated regulations, including firebreak compliance inspections ⁴	1 422	5 000	2 950	5 000

¹ Number of wildfire incidents attended by staff and / or volunteers increased to the budget due to higher than expected fuel loads, weather conditions, and incidents of arson.

² This includes all NTG staff members, Bushfires NT volunteers and other stakeholders who participated in bushfire management training delivered by Bushfires NT. The criteria for this category have changed as it previously included participation in training provided by external training providers.

³ This category has changed to reflect changes in volunteer arrangements under the new Bushfires Management Act which commenced in November 2016. Previously the category included all volunteers who had undertaken fire fighting training, and it included many who were no longer actively involved. The new legislation requires volunteers to be formally authorised, and includes a requirement for periodic review of that authorisation. The category now reflects an accurate count of volunteers trained and available for fire fighting operations.

⁴ The 2016-17 actual enforcement actions were affected as the wet season had near record rainfalls over the Territory which meant in many areas it was too wet for landowners to install or maintain fire breaks until late May or early June.

Performance achievements in 2016-17

Completed

- Commenced the *Bushfires Management Act* and associated Regulations. By June 2017, more than 300 authorised volunteers and fire wardens had been authorised under the new arrangements. Volunteers now have the protection from liability for fire management actions undertaken in good faith.
- In February 2017, all Bushfires NT staff from across the Territory undertook a two-day planning forum to prepare for the upcoming bushfire season.
- Following the passing of the new Act, a new Bushfires Council and five regional committees were selected and appointed. All members received training in governance and an overview of the new Act.
- Established a Bushfire Management Planning Framework.
- Developed multi-scale planning templates (regional and property plans).
- Established a Territory-wide, whole-of-community fire management network.
- Collaborated with other jurisdictions and Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) in sharing processes and products.
- Increased the number of pre and post-season planning forums across the NT to increase community resilience through improving capacity to plan and implement mitigation.
- Implemented extensive mitigation measures, including fuel reduction, to improve land management outcomes and reduce bushfire risk.
- Mitigation measures included fuel reduction (both ground and aerial), construction and maintenance of strategic fire access trails, and property-level fire planning with landowners.

NT Government Election Commitments are highlighted with the symbol ✳.

In progress

- Regional bushfire plans for the five regional bushfire committees will be finalised during 2017–18.
- Commenced the Kenbi Fire Resilience Project – a partnership between Bushfires NT the Northern Land Council and traditional owners to develop the Kenbi Area Bushfire Management Plan on the Kenbi Aboriginal Land Trust.

Ongoing

- The number of authorised bushfire volunteers has steadily increased since January 2017 as volunteer brigades and Bushfires NT implement changes from the new *Bushfires Management Act*. This work will continue as new volunteers join and apply for an Authorised Bushfire Volunteer status.
- Work commenced in early 2017 with the Bushfires Council and regional committees on moving to risk-based decision processes, such as identifying land use, scale, risk and mitigation measures.

Future priorities

- ✳ Bushfires NT will establish an Aboriginal Carbon Unit to support the development of carbon abatement projects and associated economic development on Aboriginal land.
- ✳ Development of an Aboriginal Carbon Strategy.
- A new Bushfires Emergency Management System will be developed during 2017, with the first phase of the project being trialled by Bushfires NT staff across the Territory. The second phase of the project is to develop and trial the system with the volunteer brigades. The benefits of moving from a manual reporting system will provide greater oversight and management of incidents and improved efficiency and reporting capability.
- Complete the trial of the new Northern Territory Bushfires Management Planning Framework, which will include the:
 - development of multi-scale fire management plans
 - development and incorporation of fire planning information into spatial systems.
- Increase the level of consultation, engagement and recognition of volunteer brigades and volunteers.

NEW BUSHFIRES MANAGEMENT ACT COMMENCED IN NOVEMBER 2016



Photo: Aerial burning demonstration.

Bushfires NT celebrated the launch of the new *Bushfires Management Act* in November 2016.

Changes to land use and fire management methods and the significant expansion of rural residential development have increased the risk of bushfire.

The new legislation recognises that fire is best managed through planning and mitigation and that it is easier, safer and less expensive to prevent a fire than it is to fight it.

Regional bushfire management plans will be prepared in consultation with landowners and other stakeholders. The new legislation also recognises the crucial contribution of volunteer firefighters to successful fire management.



Photo: Controlled burning operations at Hidden Valley.

OUTPUT: ENVIRONMENT

The environment is protected through identification, management and mitigation of risks from human activities.

This output is responsible for:

- providing services that support the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA)
- advising government on NT EPA assessment reports
- managing the regulatory framework to reduce the impacts of waste and pollution on the Territory's environment
- developing and implementing strategic policy to ensure environmentally sustainable practices and behavior.

Services are provided from Darwin.

Key deliverables	2015-16 Actual	2016-17 Budget	2016-17 Actual	2017-18 Budget
Environmental assessment reports provided to the Minister	2	5	3	6
Environment protection approvals and licences issued	26	30	25	
Decision on whether Environmental Impact Assessment required ¹		30	26	30
Assessment terms of reference and assessment reports issued within statutory or agreed timeframes ¹		100%	100%	100%
Waste and pollution approvals and licences ¹		180	171	200
Container deposit scheme approvals ¹		255	363	270
Compliance audits conducted ¹		85	102	110
Responses to pollution incidents ^{1,2}		950	879	1100
Environment grants to promote ecologically sustainable practices ¹		\$1M	\$1M	\$1M

¹ New Measure - 2016-17 published estimate used for comparison.

² Responses to pollution incidents decrease due to less incident reports being received.

³ Increased number of applications as a result of promotion of the scheme.

Performance achievements in 2016-17

Completed

- ✳ Signed five-year funding agreements with the Arid Lands Environment Centre, Environment Centre Northern Territory and the Environmental Defenders Office. The Arid Lands Environment Centre and the Environment Centre Northern Territory have received the first year payment of \$100 000. The Environmental Defenders Office has received \$50 000.
- Supported the NT EPA in its environmental impact assessment of major development projects in the Northern Territory by managing the environmental impact assessment process and preparing draft assessment reports for the Jemena Northern Gas Pipeline project, the Project Sea Dragon Stage 1 Legume Grow-out Facility and the Project Sea Dragon Core Breeding Centre and Broodstock Maturation Centre.
- Supported the NT EPA in issuing 25 environment protection approvals and environment protection licences under the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act*.
- Issued 31 licences for the discharge of waste water under the *Water Act*.
- Supported the NT EPA in implementing reforms to the container deposit scheme to streamline processes for collection depot operators.
- Coordinated and prepared briefings for seven meetings of the NT EPA and provided 73 out-of-session briefing papers to the NT EPA.
- Investigated the illegal disposal of waste that led to the NT EPA successfully prosecuting Breakthrough Pty Ltd for offences under the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act*.

NT Government Election Commitments are highlighted with the symbol ✳.

- Established a new air quality monitoring station in the Darwin central business district with financial support from INPEX.
- Administered the 2016–17 round of the Environment Grants program that provided \$992 169 to organisations for projects that reduce environmental harm and promote sustainable behaviour.
- Responded to the NT EPA's Roadmap for a Modern Environmental Regulatory Framework for the Northern Territory.
- ✳ Released the Environmental Reform Discussion Paper.

In progress

- ✳ Reform of environmental legislation that will strengthen the protection of the environment including a new environmental assessment act is under way.
- ✳ Implement administrative reforms to the environmental assessment process under the direction of the NT EPA, including increasing the transparency of decision-making by making all NT EPA decisions on notices of intent available to the public.
- ✳ Restructure the Environment Division to provide a clearer separation between operational activities, including regulatory support to the NT EPA and the Controller of Water Resources, and the policy and regulatory reform activities of government.

Ongoing

- Lead the Northern Territory response to per-and poly-fluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS) contamination by co-chairing the NT PFAS Interagency Working Group on behalf of the NT EPA.
- Contribute to the Northern Territory's environmental protection by responding to pollution incidents and other environmental concerns reported through the pollution hotline and online reporting.

Future priorities

- ✳ Continue to develop regulatory reform proposals to improve the Northern Territory's environmental protection and management framework in consultation with industry, community and government stakeholders.
- Continue to support the NT EPA in assessing the potential environmental impacts of development proposals and regulating activities under the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act*, including an environment protection licence for the operation of the Ichthys Liquefied Natural Gas plant at Bladin Point.
- Further advance process improvements for environmental assessment of development proposals and develop regulatory guidance under direction of the NT EPA, including finalising the NT EPA's Recommended Land Use Separation Distances Guideline and Noise Guideline.
- Prepare a draft Seabed Mining Report for the NT EPA that provides advice on the potential impacts of seabed mining in the Northern Territory and how those impacts can be managed.
- Review the Northern Territory container deposit scheme as required by the *Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Act*.
- Maintain a key role in leading the Northern Territory response to PFAS contamination.

OUTPUT: CORPORATE AND GOVERNANCE

Provides executive leadership and management to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

This output is responsible for:

- providing a wide range of corporate support services.

Services are provided from Darwin.

Performance achievements in 2016–17

Completed

- Launched the department's 2017–2022 procurement plan.
- Coordinated a two day Senior Leaders Forum in 2017. The forum focussed on the theme of 'unity and partnerships' and presented an opportunity for staff AO7 and above from all regions to collaborate and share their achievements and to focus on the challenges for the year ahead.
- Organised 12 People Matters Workshops with staff across all divisions and regions of the department to go through the results of the NTPS People Matters Survey in more detail and to give staff an opportunity to provide feedback on how to improve the identified areas for their specific division and region.
- Delivered quality shared services in line with agreements and transitioned successfully through machinery of government change. Launched the department's social media accounts for the department and Bushfires NT. The department's social media presence allows sharing of information or updates on department initiatives and programs. It also promotes community consultation and distributes important messages about weed alerts and bushfire management.
- Implemented a corporate training calendar outlining upcoming training available. The corporate training calendar included specifically requested training as well as training needs identified from the People Matters Survey.
- In 2016-17 the department developed, implemented and completed the internal and external audit program with a focus on Official Travel, Cabinet Information Security Measures, ICT purchases and Repetitive Tier 1 purchases.

In progress

- Initiated the Business Application System server migration project to move applications and data currently held on department owned equipment to a fully hosted environment offsite. This project will meet the changing demands on department information and services and support business operations across the department.
- Development of a Grants framework.
- Review of the performance management process for staff to move to a paper based system. The department will commence the review cycle in September to accommodate peak operational periods and training will be rolled out across the department including a coaching model for performance discussions.
- Commenced the DENR intranet usability and refresh project.

- Review of accounting and property manual.
- A new position, Executive Officer – Committees was created to centrally coordinate and drive outcomes for a number of existing committees which report through different divisions of the department.

Ongoing

- Development and implementation of the business planning toolkit and management and tracking of the quarterly reporting framework.
- Quarterly financial reporting.
- ICT intranet and mailbox usage and trend reporting.
- Review and amendment of policies and procedures.
- Defining the 2017–18 Audit Program.

Future priorities

- Improve internal communication and internal processes through the development of a new intranet incorporating online forms, knowledge bases and staff contacts.
- Implementing new performance management system.
- Implement business planning toolkit and quarterly reporting framework.
- Implement a Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and other related procedures.

RESPONSE TO SAGITTARIA



Photo: Roni Opden cleaning a pond of sagittaria.

The Weeds Management Branch was very busy in the early part of 2017 surveying properties in Darwin's rural area as part of its sagittaria emergency response.

The department was aiming to stop the invasive water weed *Sagittaria* from establishing in the Territory. Twenty-eight plants were wrongly identified, labelled and sold as melon sword by Northern Territory sellers in 2016.

A publicity campaign to assist the recovery of sagittaria was launched in September 2016. The campaign resulted in multiple radio and television interviews and news items, newspaper articles and social media publicity.

Thanks to a significant public recall, fewer than 10 plants remained unaccounted for as at 30 June 2017.

As part of the response, two historical pond plantings of sagittaria were found because of the recall, both of which were successfully treated.



Photo: *Sagittaria (sagittaria platyphylla)*.

WEED ALERT

Have you seen this plant
on your property?

Sagittaria has been found in the Darwin rural area
 Sagittaria is declared a Class A (to be eradicated) aquatic weed under the *Weeds Management Act* and is also a Weed of National Significance (WoNS) because of its invasiveness, potential for spread and economic and environmental impacts.

Report immediately if found - 8999 4567

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Photo: Sagittaria flyer.



Photo: (L-R) Water Resources Drillers Ben Hoffman-Spence, Jesse Fox, Greg Stephens and Jesse McPhillips.

WILDMAN RIVER WATER RESOURCE INVESTIGATION

The NT Government has long recognised the potential of the Wildman River region for development. Water resource investigations began in the 1980s, concentrating on an area near the Twin Sisters Lagoons. Substantial groundwater and interconnected surface water resources identified the area as having crop-growing potential.

During 2016–17, the department's Water Resources Division investigated a wider area to define the full extent of the aquifers. The work involves mapping of springs, measuring stream baseflows to establish the connectivity with the underlying groundwater system and a substantial groundwater investigation program.

The Northern and Southern Region drilling teams worked together to ensure the drilling program was completed before the wet season.

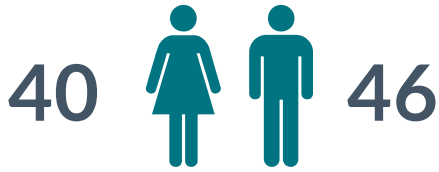
Important findings were that there are two major aquifers: the Koolpinyah Dolostone and a younger

sand aquifer that overlies it. The dolostone is similar to the aquifer in the Darwin rural area but is less extensive. Several springs in the Mary River National Park and adjacent area are fed by discharge from this aquifer.

The sand aquifer is at the base of a system of buried valleys (palaeovalleys) that flowed eastwards. Thick clay layers between the two aquifers limit the connection between them.

This aquifer has the best potential for irrigation water supplies.

SNAPSHOT



The average age of staff is 43



41 of our staff work part-time hours

10+ years

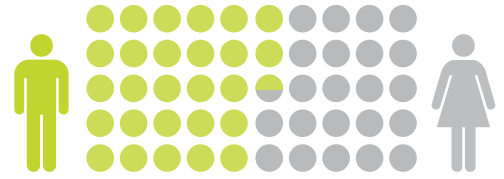
38% of our staff have more than 10 years of service with the NTPS



80% of our staff are ongoing (permanent) employees.

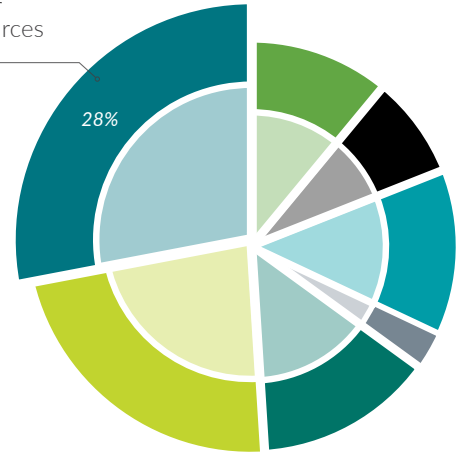


60% of our staff are employed in the professional (31%) or technical (29%) streams



55% of staff are male

Water Resources



Water Resources is our largest division, employing 28% of our staff

Our full-time equivalent staff numbers were

296.5

Our headcount of staff was

328

Our separation rate excluding machinery of government transfers is

25%



OUR PEOPLE

Staff commitment and satisfaction are critical ingredients supporting our department's strategic goals and objectives. An engaged, motivated workforce translates to productivity and ideas that help the department achieve its goals, so it is essential that we support and nurture our people.

The department's Human Resource (HR) Services unit is dedicated to delivering best practice in HR management for all employees. We work alongside senior managers to support and encourage a positive workplace culture, which we achieve through a consistent advisory service and our suite of programs, policies and procedures.

WORKFORCE PROFILE

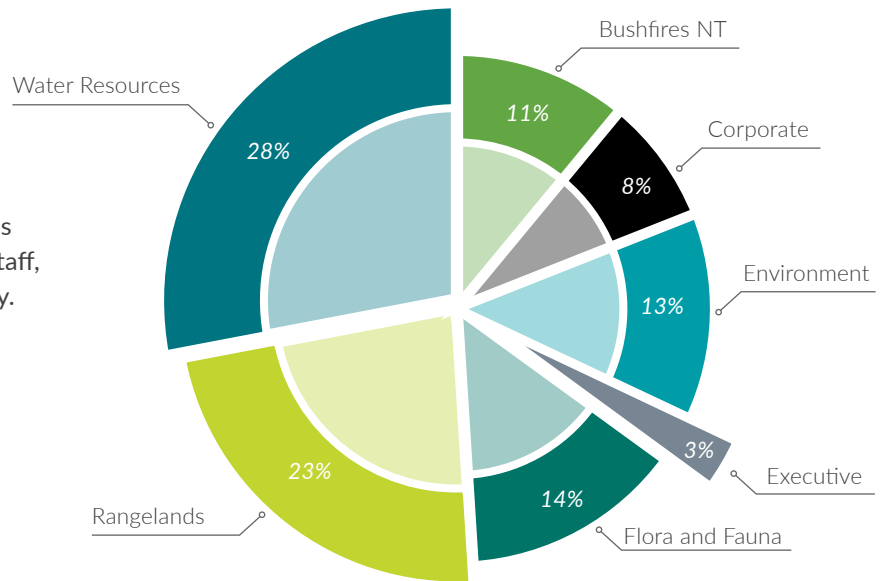
Our staff are highly enthusiastic and dedicated people. There is a strong technical and professional commitment and a culture of tenure and stability. This includes a high proportion of experienced staff with more than 25 years of service.

At year end, the department employed 328 people throughout the Territory, in the major centres of Alice Springs, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Darwin and at remote locations in Batchelor and Maningrida.

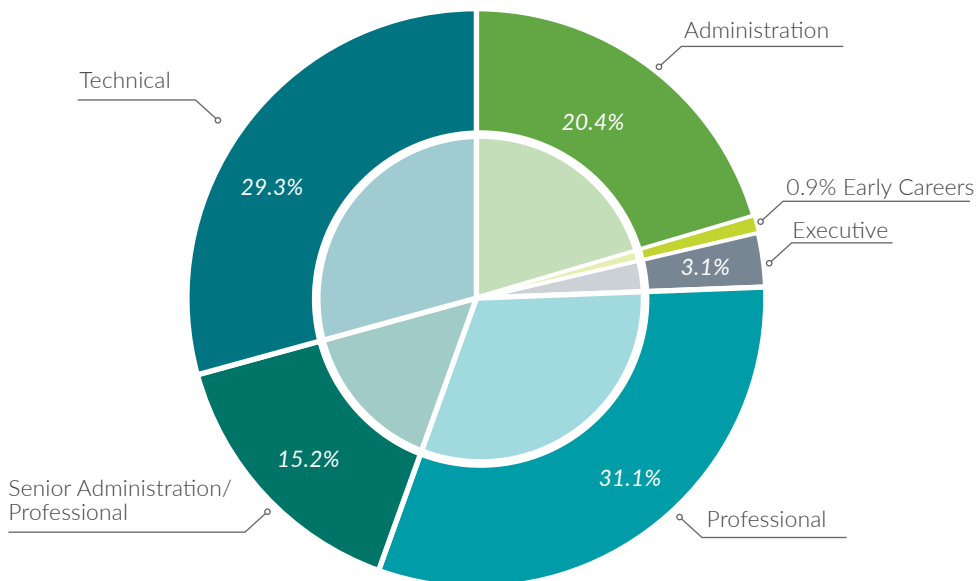
In 2016-17, machinery of government changes saw the departure of some of our corporate services team and the transfer in of environment staff. Since implementing the machinery of government changes, the staffing number has increased slightly by four people.

Employees by division

The Water Resources and Rangelands divisions make up 51% of our total staff, employing 28% and 23% respectively.



Employees by Stream

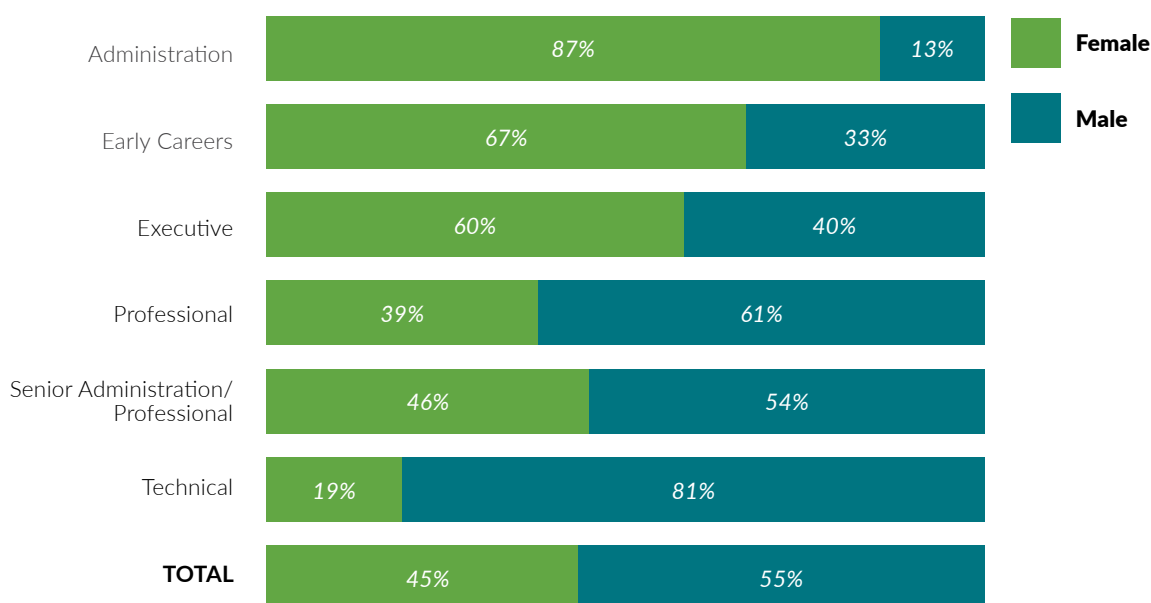


Gender comparison

The department's overall gender comparison rose slightly for males, increasing from 54% in 2015-16 to 55% in 2016-17.

Gender	2015-16	2016-17	NTPS 2016-17
Female	46%	45%	63.6%
Male	54%	55%	36.4%

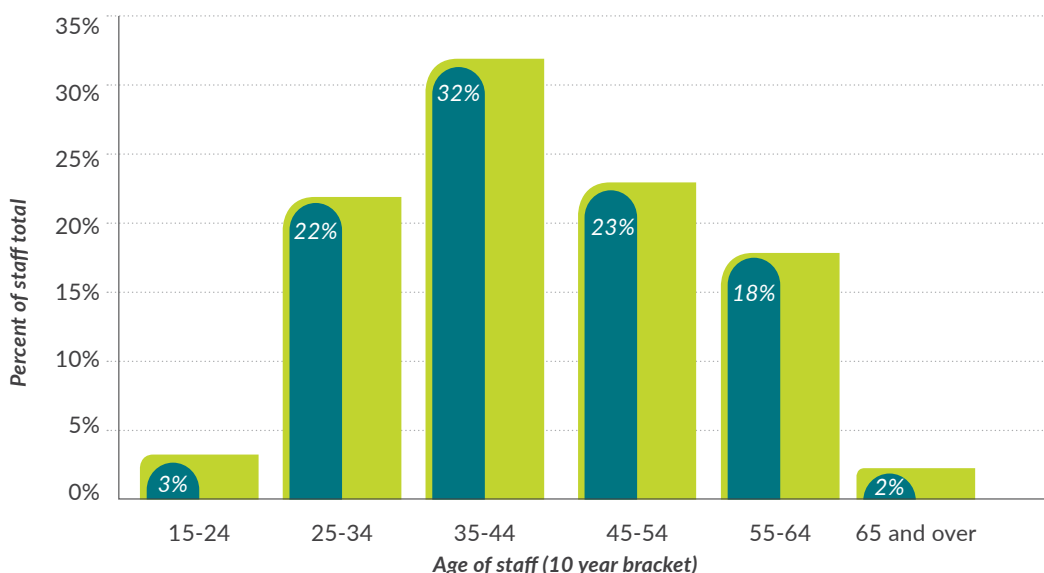
Gender comparison by employment stream



Employees by age and gender

At 30 June 2017, the department had a total of 147 female and 181 male employees. Considering staff age in 10-year brackets, 32 percent of staff are aged 35 to 44 years old, which is the largest proportion of employees of any age group. The rest of the staff are fairly evenly distributed across the 25-34, 45-54 and 55-64 age brackets, with 3 percent aged under 24 and 2 percent aged over 65. The department employs more women in administration, early careers and executive roles. The average age of female employees is 40 and the average age of male employees is 46.

Age by gender comparison at 30 June 2017



Recruitment and retention

During 2016–17, 50 employees commenced employment with the department, and 50 staff left the public sector.

	2015–16	2016–17
Separations	39	50
Commencements	68	50

Source: Personnel Information Payroll System

Note: excludes board members, casual staff and those on long-term workers compensation.

During the reporting period the department had 134 new staff (either commencements in the NTPS or transfers into DENR from elsewhere in the NTPS) and 122 staff departed (either resignations or transfers out to other NTPS agencies). This includes a significant number of transfers which were due to agency structural changes following the 2016 election outcome. Excluding these transfers the department experienced a separation rate of 25 percent, which is slightly higher than the NTPS separation rate of 21.3 percent for ongoing and fixed period staff. Considering only separations from DENR (excluding all transfers out of the agency).

Separations of ongoing and fixed period staff across three employment streams

	Administrative	Professional	Technical
DENR separations	10.7%	13.5%	24.2%
NTPS separations 2015–16	19.9%	23.6%	12.1%

Source: PIPS and OCPE.

Note: excludes casuals and transfers.

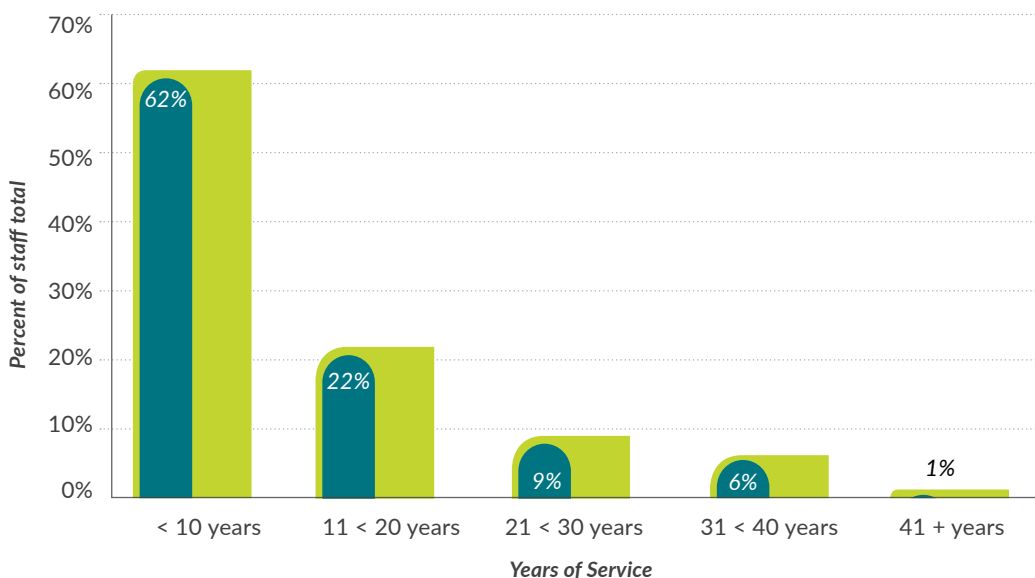
Recruitment

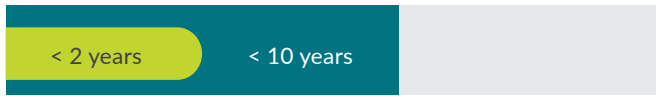
In 2016–17, the department advertised 77 positions, with 11 subsequently cancelled and 54 finalised during that period. The average time from the close of advertising to the selection process being complete was 48 days, which is just outside the NTPS’s ideal timeframe of 42 days.

Retention

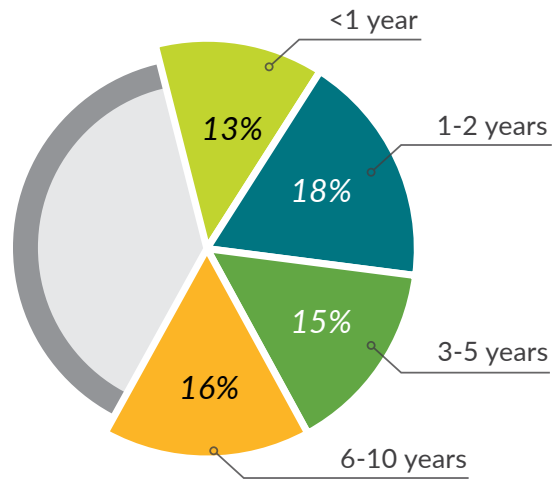
38 percent of our staff have more than 10 years of service within the NTPS.

Years of Service





Of the 62 percent of staff who have less than 10 years of service, half of these people, have less than two years of service.



DEVELOPING OUR WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

Building a skilled and capable workforce that will meet the department’s needs as it matures and faces future challenges is important. We will achieve this by building programs and initiatives tailored to our business needs, now and into the future.

The department continues to support individual staff development needs through performance agreements. We promote our in-house training calendar, encourage staff to participate in early career programs and the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment's suite of targeted leadership programs.

Our culture

The department is committed to inspire and support a workplace culture that is collaborative, respectful and accountable. We achieve this by:

- Building our leadership capacity and capability across the agency
- Having targeted development programs to nurture and grow talent
- Providing a safe working environment and promoting safe practices in both office and field operations
- Making ongoing improvements to business processes and streamlining internal systems.

Diversity

The department is committed to the principles of inclusion, equity and diversity to ensure our workforce represents the broader Northern Territory community. We are committed to attracting new people from diverse backgrounds and building the capacity and capability of our existing people. We are committed to change as our priorities and our people progress.

We recognise our diversity and are proud that our people are from different backgrounds, circumstances and life stages.

Here is a glance at our equal employment opportunity profile.

	% of DENR employees	% of NTPS employees
Aboriginal people	6.0% (target was 6.7%)	10.5% (target was 11.8%)
People with a disability	1.8%	1.0%
Non-English-speaking background	4.2%	10.1%

Learning and professional development

● Learning Management System

The department has a learning management system (LMS) to improve the administration and management of our training programs. The system automates processes, such as promoting programs, nominations and registration workflows, participant onboarding and confirmation. The LMS also has a reporting function that generates flow-on benefits to end users across the department. The system allows for online/self-paced learning along with face-to-face internal corporate and external training programs.

In 2017-18, the department will work with the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE) to roll out the introduction of the proposed whole-of-government LMS system for OCPE programs.

The department's training expenditure comparison for this year and last year:

	\$ 2015-16	\$ 2016-17
Training, study and other*	337 054	348 026
Conferences	59 860	64 668
Total	396 914	412 694

*Other - includes Coaching, HECS, Professional Development Allowance

Senior Leaders Forum

The department hosted a Senior Leaders Forum in April 2017. The forum is an opportunity for staff AO7 and above from all regions to collaborate and share their achievements and current projects, participate in strategic planning and give feedback and advice to other divisions.

The 2017 forum focussed on the theme of 'unity and partnerships'. Presentations focused on how our divisions meet NT Government election commitments while working with the community and stakeholders in the areas of natural resources, such as water allocation planning, bushfire brigades and the co-delivery of ranger programs.

Forum discussions provided valuable input into the final stages of the department's strategic plan. The strategic plan will be in effect for the next three years and is the basis of our business and performance planning. The strategic plan sets the agenda for the new department.

● NTPS People Matters Survey

The NTPS People Matters Survey results for the department were positive, with a 66 percent response rate and a clear indication that our people enjoy working for the department.

The department's highest-rated areas were in the category of commitment to service, administrative management principles and role clarity. The greatest opportunities for improvement were in the areas of diversity, change management, feedback and the perception that the results of the survey would be communicated to staff and action taken to improve the survey results. Strategies to address the lowest-rated areas were submitted in the department response plan to OCPE, and at year end, divisions were working to improve in these areas.

The Human Resources unit delivered workshops across all divisions and regions to delve into the results in more detail and to give staff an opportunity to provide feedback on how to improve identified areas, for their specific division and region. All Executive Directors and senior

management groups received a summary of the feedback and recommendations.

Some changes have already been introduced as a direct response from the feedback received during these workshops such as: introduction of corporate visits/hot desking in order to strengthen relationships with division staff, cessation of an electronic performance management system and development of a paper based approach, and the inclusion of specific corporate training requested such as Combat Bullying, Dealing With The Tough Stuff and retirement planning.

To make it easy for staff to identify when activities are linked to People Matters Survey results, the Corporate Communications team have developed branding for each division to use when new initiatives are introduced as a result of the feedback and recommendation.

Below is a table of the when and where each People Matters workshop was delivered across all regions and divisions.

Date	Division	Region
18/01/2017	Corporate Services	Darwin
2/02/2017	Environment	Darwin
6/02/2017	Rangelands	Darwin
7/02/2017	Bushfires	Batchelor
7/02/2017	All Katherine divisions	Katherine
8/02/2017	Water Resources	Darwin (two workshops)
8/02/2017	Bushfires	Darwin
15/02/2017	Rangelands	Alice Springs (includes Tennant Creek staff)
15/02/2017	Water Resources	Alice Springs
16/02/2017	Bushfires	Alice Springs (includes Tennant Creek staff)
22/02/2017	Environment	Darwin
28/02/2017	Flora and Fauna	All regions captured in a planning day in Darwin

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

The department has continued to support early careers programs across all divisions. These programs are aimed at addressing succession planning and diversity in our workplace by increasing the number of employees living with a disability and people of Aboriginal descent. The programs include:

- **Graduate Development Program**

The department's graduate program offers a one or two-year placement and is aimed at developing graduates' skills, experience, knowledge and abilities to the level required for management positions. The program combines on-the-job training with professional and personal development opportunities.

One graduate completed the Graduate Development Program in early 2017, and the department employed one new graduate during the 2016–17 year.

- **Aboriginal Cadetship Support**

This program offers Aboriginal people an opportunity to take part in the Northern Territory Government's commitment to achieving greater Aboriginal representation across the NTPS.

The program enables Aboriginal students undertaking an undergraduate degree to gain the professional qualifications and work experience needed for a range of jobs in the NTPS.

One student completed the Aboriginal Cadetship Support program with the Flora and Fauna Division in early 2017, after undertaking two years of study. This student then continued with their degree and moved on to seek employment in Victoria upon completion of the program.

- **Apprenticeship and School-Based Apprenticeship Program**

These programs combine employment with structured learning to develop workplace skills and provide a nationally recognised qualification. In 2016–17, the department supported four school-based apprentices who are undertaking Certificates II and III in Business and a Certificate III in Accounts Administration.

One of our Year 12 School Based Apprentices moved to a full-time contract, continuing with the agency's Corporate Services Division in 2017.

One of our full-time Apprentices moved to an ongoing contract, continuing with the agency's Bushfires Division in Katherine. All other Apprentices have gone on to find employment outside the NTPS or moved into further training.

Our current school-based apprentice is in Year 12 for 2017 and is expected to complete their studies by December 2017.

During 2016–17, the department also supported three full-time apprentices in the fields of conservation and land management and business.

Two of these apprentices graduated in December 2016 and January 2017 respectively. Our one current full-time apprentice is engaged in the School Leavers with a Disability initiative.

Successful full-time Apprentice completions	Successful School Based Apprentice completions	Current full time Apprentices	Current School Based Apprentices
2	3	1	1

Note: of the successful completion, two were Aboriginal. One was full time apprentice and the other was a School Based Apprentice.

- **Vacation employment**

The vacation employment program gives students currently undertaking degree studies for the first time at an Australian university an opportunity to gain valuable learning opportunities through paid placements during university breaks.

During 2016–17, the department supported four vacation employment students. Two students completed the program in early 2017; one in Water Resources and the other in Corporate Services. Two students started in June 2017 for the mid-year break in the Rangelands Division.

- **Aboriginal Employment Program**

This pre-employment program is specifically designed to attract Aboriginal jobseekers and is aimed at equipping trainees with foundation skills relevant to entry-level positions.

In 2016–17, we had one regional participant in Rangelands Division located in Katherine, who graduated in late 2016.

SHARK ATTACK ON CABOMBA INFESTATION

The biggest risk to Darwin's drinking water is the spread of cabomba, a weed that chokes waterways and that is currently found in a 1 km downstream section of the Darwin River. Darwin River Dam, which supplies 90 percent of Darwin's potable water, is just six kilometres upstream of the original infestation.

Cabomba (*Cabomba caroliniana*) is an aggressive and invasive aquatic weed. Originally introduced to Australia as an aquarium plant, it is recognised as one of the 32 worst weed species in Australia and as such is listed as a Weed of National Significance (WoNS).

Managing cabomba has proven challenging for the department due to the freshwater aquatic ecosystem's sensitivity and the potential for water flows to impair access, monitoring and control. Diving and underwater herbicide application isn't possible because of the possible presence of saltwater crocodile.

In October 2016, the department trialed a major application of the herbicide Shark™ on Cabomba. The results indicated a positive effect on the weed. The department chose this product because it breaks down rapidly, to the point that it was not even detectable in the water being discharged.

As part of the department's treatment program, a bund wall was constructed across Darwin River on the downstream side of the bridge on Cox Peninsula Road. The bund wall was a safety measure, designed to prevent any potential flow of the herbicide into Darwin Harbour before it broke down naturally and allowed for scientific monitoring of cabomba, the environment and water quality.

The department's Cabomba Eradication Program Manager, Chris Collins, said 'within seven days, we were able to see cabomba showing



Photo: Chris Collins testing water quality at Lok Landji Billabong.

signs of ill health. By three weeks we could see reduced infestation and density levels. The remaining cabomba plants were starting to lie flat and beginning to rot.

We extensively monitored through the treatment process, and so far, we have seen no impacts downstream of the treatment zone and very limited impacts on non-targeted plants, fish or animals at the application site', he said.

A Cabomba Eradication Program quarantine zone remains in place on the Darwin River between Cox Peninsula Road and Leonino Road crossings.

The quarantine order prohibits the movement of people and any object, including boats, vehicles and fishing equipment, into or out of this section of river and within the five metres of land adjacent to the water's edge.

The eradication team also developed a range of community awareness material to help spread the word on the serious risk of

cabomba to Top End waterways, including posters in the local community, fact sheets, information online, a television commercial and social media videos.

Due to the dedicated eradication program since 2004, the original 16 kilometre infestation was reduced to a one kilometre large billabong known as Lok Landji, part of the Darwin River system. Early monitoring results indicate that continued increases in herbicide application will be required to achieve eradication.

The 2017-18 Budget has allocated \$600 000 to implement an intensified cabomba eradication program in Darwin River, including \$300 000 for dedicated project officers and \$300 000 for operational costs.

More than 1 400 litres of Shark™ herbicide has been purchased to date. Additional herbicide treatments will commence within the Lok Landji billabong area in the second half of 2017.

NRM CHAMPIONS PROGRAM



Photo: Tahnee Thompson, the department's Katherine Regional Manager, overseeing weed management planning on station.

In March 2017, the department launched the Territory's first Natural Resource Management (NRM) Champions program.

The NRM Champions program is a sponsored training package for the pastoral industry with opportunities for two people to develop our skills and knowledge in NRM.

The program is managed by the department's Weeds Management Branch and funded by the Australian Government through its established Pest Animals and Weeds initiative, part of the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper that aims to develop our farmers and a stronger economy.

A trip to western Queensland to learn about the devastating impact of prickly acacia (*Vachellia nilotica*) on pastoral land is one of the many highlights of the program.

The NRM Champions program is an exciting initiative that will give participants a good understanding of NRM and skills and experience to support the sustainability of our pastoral industry.

CAPABILITY BUILDING

As part of the department's commitment to supporting and developing employees, a range of capability-building programs were offered to employees across the department including:

● Study assistance

The department supports employees gaining relevant professional and technical skills through higher education studies. Five employees applied for study assistance during 2016–17.

These employees were undertaking studies from certificates to professional doctorate degree programs. The financial assistance equates to an average of \$2 298 per employee.

Areas of study supported in 2016–17 included:

- Certificate IV in Accounting
- Diploma of Conservation and Land Management
- Bachelor of Business
- Graduate Certificate in Spatial Science
- Professional Doctorate Degree.

● Corporate training

The department offered the following corporate training courses in 2016–17:

Course	Number of participants
Corporate induction	52
Code of Conduct	12
Cross-cultural workshops	21
Simplified recruitment	21
Dealing with the Tough Stuff	11
HR hot topics	48
Procurement awareness	16
A guide to contract management	3
Retirement planning	
• Salary sacrifice	20
• Transition to retirement	
Writing workshops	10

STAFF RECOGNITION AND REWARD SCHEME

Our recognition and reward scheme recognises employees through an achievement award, individually or as part of a team, for outstanding contributions that support the department's values, strategic goals and objectives. The scheme is designed so that all staff in the department are able to submit nominations for their colleagues.

The rationale for the Recognition and Reward scheme is to:

- Positively reinforce excellence in behaviours and performance
- Foster staff engagement and increase job satisfaction
- Promote the work being achieved within the department
- Lead to higher retention rates of staff
- Build an environment where people are encouraged to explore innovative approaches to their work
- Support a culture of performance excellence.

Celebrate the achievements and milestones of staff. The scheme also recognises employee service milestones in the NTPS. This policy complements the NT Government Recognising Service Milestones Policy.

During 2016–17, 14 staff and six teams received a monthly staff achievement award through the scheme.



Staff achievement

Team achievement

Name	Date	Name	Date
Tamara Rolph	Jan 2017	Cabomba Eradication Team	Jan 2017
Roni Opden	Jan 2017	Rangeland Monitoring Branch	Jan 2017
Michelle Franklin	Jan 2017	Cartography Team	Apr 2017
Belinda Townend	Jan 2017	Water Licence Portal Team	May 2017
Athina Pascoe-Bell	Jan 2017	Water Monitoring Group	May 2017
Danny Low Choy	Jan 2017	Corporate Budgets Team	May 2017
Geraldine Lee	Jan 2017		
Christine Tylor	Jan 2017		
Dr Alana Mackay	Jan 2017		
Patrick Burley	Jan 2017		
Michael Carnavas	Jan 2017		
Marguerite Wall	Feb 2017		
Yu-chun Chou	Feb 2017		
Caroline Green	Mar 2017		

STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

Keith Saalfeld awarded the 2016 Chief Minister's Medal

Flora and Fauna Principal Scientist Keith Saalfeld was one of nine public servants to receive a Chief Minister's Medal in November 2016.

Keith has a long history of involvement in wildlife surveys and monitoring in the Northern Territory, particularly in relation to waterfowl and crocodiles.

He is deeply involved in the crocodile monitoring program, which underpins the sustainability of the Northern Territory industry.

Keith also provides the Minister with advice and recommendations on the length of the waterfowl hunting season and bag limits.

He does his work with a high degree of scientific and technical skill and is published in a number of scientific journals.

Keith is highly professional and a role model for the NT Public Service for getting the job done in a positive and objective way.



Photo: (L-R) DTC Parks and Wildlife Commission NT Wildlife Operations Director Brett Easton, DENR Flora and Fauna Principal Scientist Keith Saalfeld and DENR Flora and Fauna Executive Director Dr Alaric Fisher.



Photo: (L-R) Joshua Fischer Senior Fire Control Officer Alice Springs, Daniel Bacon A/Assistant Commissioner, Southern Operations, NT Police, Dylan Robinson Emergency Response Manager Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap.

Joshua Fischer

February 2017 Joshua Fischer, a Senior Fire Control Officer in Central Australia, was presented with an award for assisting with the development and management of an emergency management exercise in Alice Springs in November 2016.

The exercise, an annual joint initiative with NT Police and NT Emergency Services to ensure regions are prepared for emergencies, was designed around a maximum flood for Alice Springs it allowed participants to experience managing a large-scale severe weather event and to test parts of the emergency plans.

Meritorious Service Medal

Ray Nicholls was awarded the Bushfires NT Long and Meritorious Service Medal. Ray is captain of both the Cox Peninsula Volunteer Bushfire Brigade and the Training Brigade. Ray was presented the award in May 2017 for his many years of tireless effort and dedication as a volunteer at the department's stand at the Freds Pass Show.



Photo: (L-R) Collene Bremner Executive Director Bushfires NT, Rhonda Solien Cox Peninsula Volunteer Bushfire Brigade, Ray Nicholls Captain Cox Peninsula Volunteer Bushfire Brigade, Maree Bredhauer Litchfield Mayor.



Margo Brewin

In March 2017, Margo Brewin, Land Management Officer with Rangelands, received a scholarship to attend 'Science meets Parliament'.

This is an annual event organised by Science and Technology Australia, which brings together professionals in the fields of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) and encourages them to engage with the political process.

Milestone awards

In October 2016 people from across the NTPS were recognised for 30, 35 and 40 years of service at an event hosted by OCPE. Mohammed Dilshad from Water Resources Division attended the event and was recognised for his 30 years of service to the public service.

A further six employees from Corporate Services, Water Resources and Bushfires NT divisions will be recognised for achieving their milestones at an event to be held within DENR later in 2017.

NEW DETAILED LAND USE MAPS TO BENEFIT TERRITORIANS

A new mapping project will show how land is being used in the Northern Territory.

The Australian Government is funding the project in collaboration with the department, the Department of Primary Industry and Resources (DPIR) and the NT Farmers.

The department's Land Assessment Branch Director, Jason Hill, said the project represents the first major update to the Territory's land use maps in about 10 years and will contribute to a national land use picture of the NT's 1.4 million square kilometres.

'The new mapping will also build an up-to-date picture of new and expanding agricultural and horticultural land industries in the Territory' he said.

'Other states are also undertaking similar projects that will be combined to build a new national picture.'

Former DPIR Director of Plant Industries Development, Bob Williams, said this information is important to farmers, industry groups, developers and many others.

'You'll be able to see how much land and which areas are devoted to horticulture, urban areas, Aboriginal uses, forestry, animal industries and more. There are many uses for this data, including in biosecurity risk management and emergency disease preparedness.

'If there's a biosecurity incursion threatening a specific crop, for example, we can pinpoint all the paddocks where that crop is growing and respond quickly.

'Detailed mapping will also inform decisions about regional development, private and government investment and sustainable and efficient use of our soil and water.'

Greg Owens from NT Farmers said, 'these maps will show us a lot of useful detail, such as the area and location of crops including which are irrigated and which are not'.

'We'll also be able to add specific data, such as which variety of mango or which fodder crops are being produced in a region.

'This information can help our members make well-informed decisions about what to plant and where.'

When the project is finished, the maps will be available for free online.



Soil Scientist, Nick McGrath laying out a soil core for description and sampling at Ali Curung.

WELLBEING

Work life balance

The department offers flexible working options, recognised as a valuable tool in achieving greater productivity and supporting employees to improve their balance between work and personal commitments. These arrangements help staff return from parental leave, support carer responsibilities and transition to retirement, career breaks, part-time work, working from home and flexible working hours to meet work life balance commitments.

In 2016–17, the department supported 50 flexible working arrangements.

Employee Assistance Program

The department maintains its Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which gives employees and their families a confidential counselling service. EAP can help with personal, family and workplace issues that may affect employees' work performance, productivity and wellbeing. The EAP also provides support to managers and employees on specific workplace issues.

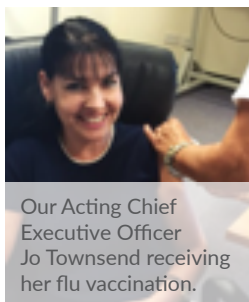
The department will maintain this program into 2017–18 to help our employees meet personal and professional challenges.

Employees who accessed the EAP program in 2016–17:

	2016-17
Employees or their family member who accessed the service	29
Number of visits	109

Flu vaccination program

As in previous years, the department again offered all staff corporately funded influenza (flu) vaccinations in 2016–17. A total of 98 staff had the vaccination in Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs.



Our Acting Chief Executive Officer Jo Townsend receiving her flu vaccination.

Christmas closedown

In 2016, the department participated in a Christmas closedown period in accordance with the NTPS 2013–2017 Enterprise Agreement. The closedown during the three-day period between Christmas and New Year gave employees an opportunity to take leave while the department was closed.

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

The department is committed to providing and maintaining safe and healthy workplaces. Since the department's establishment, considerable work has been undertaken to ensure compliance with the *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act* and the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act*.

Activities undertaken to implement the Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation have included:

- continual review of current policies, procedures and systems
- regular committee and workplace meetings
- staff trained for committees and fire warden duties
- actioning recommendations from the WHS review in 2015–16.

The Governance Board is the department's WHS approving body and is supported by a WHS committee for each division. Each division's committee is chaired by its respective Governance Board member.

Workplace incidents by mechanism

Mechanism	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Being Hit by Objects	3	5	4
Biological Factors	1	-	-
Body Stressing	1	5	3
Chemicals and Substances	-	4	3
Environmental Factors	1	3	3
Hazard	4	8	-
Hitting Objects	3	3	4
Mental Factors	1	-	1
Slips, Trips and Falls	6	2	7
Vehicle Incidents and Other	4	8	11
Totals	24	38	36



Photo: Measuring bore standing water level - Rodney Metcalfe, Water Resources Division.



Photo: Adjusting the Darwin Rural Groundwater Watch signs - Roger Farrow and Rob Chaffer, Water Resources Division.

GROUNDWATER FORECAST FOR THE DARWIN RURAL AREA

The department's Water Resources Division routinely monitors the groundwater of 96 bores across the Darwin rural area.

At the end of each wet season (and again on October 31 each year) a representative sample of these bores is measured to assess and report on groundwater levels and their recharge response and to predict groundwater levels at the end of the dry season across eight districts in the Darwin rural area.

The aquifers underlying the Darwin rural area do not have good storage capacity and rely on annual rain to recharge them. Because of this area's high demand on the resource, we have observed a gradual decline in groundwater levels.

The rural area's end of wet season groundwater levels were lower in 2016 than those recorded in the last 10 years as a result of back-to-back poor wet seasons. Predictions

were made based on use, and some properties in the Darwin rural area were predicted to experience water supply issues. The areas of greatest vulnerability were Howard Springs, Girraween, McMinns Lagoon, Herbert, Lambells Lagoon and Berry Springs.

Water Resources predicted the end of dry season groundwater levels and correlated them against bore screen height records to better quantify households likely to have been affected. This exercise involved matching individual bore records where the top of the bore screen was 10 metres or less above the end of dry season predicted groundwater surface level.

Rural residents were aware of the demand on the water resource and

the poor wet seasons. Education and management strategies were continually being rolled out to promote the following key messages:

- Know your bore
- Reduce your water use
- Diversify your water supply.

Water Resources published groundwater levels in rural newspapers each month and on roadside water level signage close to monitoring bores. They also tailored information on monitoring bore performance and maintenance, established a team to respond to queries and share information about water risk and availability per property.

LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

Employment Instructions

Under the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act (PSEMA)*, Employment Instructions provide direction to agencies on human resource management matters. The department's performance against each Employment Instruction is reported below.

Employment Instruction	Action
Number 1 – Filling Vacancies	<p>Recruitment and establishment procedures are available on the staff intranet. HR consultants provide advice to staff on recruitment and selection processes.</p> <p>Simplified recruitment training was offered online by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment throughout 2016–17.</p> <p>In 2016–17, the department advertised 77 (ongoing and fixed-period) positions, with 11 of these subsequently cancelled. The department had 134 staff commence/transfer in and 122 separations/transfers out, including machinery of government transfers. One promotion appeal was lodged for the period.</p>
Number 2 – Probation	<p>The department has a current Probation Policy and flowchart consistent with the PSEMA and relevant awards. New employees are advised of the probation process during induction and given information about their responsibilities.</p> <p>Probation is monitored on a regular basis and managers are advised of upcoming probation due dates to ensure timely compliance.</p>
Number 3 – Natural Justice	<p>The principles of natural justice are communicated to all employees. Natural justice is adhered to in all dealings with employees and reflected in internal policies and procedures.</p>
Number 4 – Employee Performance Management and Development Systems	<p>The department's performance management system, Personnel Evaluation System (PES), is under review to move away from the existing tool to a new and improved model that continues to align with the department's strategic plan.</p> <p>At the beginning of the PES cycle, HR holds training sessions to support managers and employees in conducting performance discussions.</p>
Number 5 – Medical Examinations	<p>Advice is provided to managers as required by HR consultants.</p> <p>There were no medical incapacity cases in 2016–17.</p>
Number 6 – Performance and Inability	<p>The performance and inability guidelines and procedures are available on the department's intranet.</p> <p>HR Services supports managers dealing with under-performance issues and helps managers and staff to improve performance.</p> <p>There was one performance process case in 2016–17.</p>
Number 7 – Discipline	<p>The Discipline Guidelines and Procedure are available on the department's intranet. HR consultants work closely with managers to ensure processes are followed correctly.</p> <p>There were no section 49 disciplinary actions in 2016–17.</p>
Number 8 – Internal Agency Complaints and section 59 Grievance Reviews	<p>The Grievance Policy and Procedure is available on the department's intranet. HR consultants work closely with managers to ensure processes are followed correctly.</p> <p>In 2016–17, two internal complaints were received and no section 59 Grievances were reported. One internal complaint was resolved with the other carrying over into the next reporting period.</p>
Number 9 – Employment Records	<p>The Department of Corporate and Information Services (DCIS) stores all employment records. The department complies with the DCIS policy regarding access to these files. Any requests to access employee records are made through the Director, Human Resources.</p> <p>No requests were lodged for employee information under the <i>Information Act</i> in 2016–17.</p>

Employment Instruction	Action
Number 10 – Equality of Employment Opportunity Programs	The department adheres to the principles of the NTPS Employability Strategy. The department has a Diversity Policy available on the staff intranet.
Number 11 – Occupational Health and Safety Standards Programs	The department has divisional Work Health and Safety (WHS) Committees to ensure WHS compliance. The details of the WHS activities are provided in the annual report. Current obligations, policies and procedures are available to all staff on the intranet.
Number 12 – Code of Conduct	The Code of Conduct is available on the department's intranet and is reinforced through the activities of HR consultants. The Code of Conduct is also covered through the corporate induction, which is mandatory for new staff. Two Code of Conduct workshops were held in 2016–17 with a total of 12 employees attending in Darwin and Alice Springs.
Number 13 – Appropriate Workplace Behaviour	The Bullying Policy and Procedure is available on the department's intranet. HR consultants provide advice to managers on addressing situations as required.
Number 14 – Redeployment and Redundancy Procedures	The department adheres to the current redeployment and redundancy provisions. No redeployees were made redundant.
Number 15 – Special Measures	The department does not have a special measures plan in place. However, the department has clear targets to increasing Aboriginal employment.

CRACKING THE CODE OF TOP END CYCADS

Botanists at the Northern Territory Herbarium teamed up with the University of Edinburgh and California Academy of Sciences to crack the code of Top End cycads in March 2017.

The department's senior botanist Nick Cuff said ongoing research has raised doubts about the identity and distribution of *Cycas armstrongii* in the Top End.

'It's possible there might be more cycad species than previously thought', he said.

Cycad samples taken from different populations across the Top End have been sent to the California Academy of Science for genetic sequencing using a range of sophisticated techniques that characterise large parts of the genome and allow wider comparisons to

be made between different populations or species.

These results will be processed by researchers from the University of Edinburgh using a high performance computing system that allows large amounts of data from multiple samples to be processed to pinpoint differences between them.

'The possibility exists that the plants we are familiar with from the Darwin region are in fact a different species to those elsewhere in the Territory, and we look forward to receiving the results in later in 2017.'



Photo: Cycad and NT Herbarium volunteer Marj King in Darwin's rural area.

IDENTIFYING LINKS BETWEEN FLOW AND RIVER ECOLOGY

Managing rivers sustainably in northern Australia relies on knowledge about the relationships between river flow and river ecology.

During 2016–17, the department studied the migration behaviour of barramundi in the Roper River to understand the ecology for sustainably managing the Roper and other Top End rivers. We need to better understand the timing and nature of these migration behaviours in relation to the timing and volume of river flows to properly manage the impacts of anthropogenic changes in flow in the river.

The department used acoustic telemetry to track fish throughout the river system, that involved tagging fish with devices that transmit a coded signal that can be recorded by underwater receivers positioned at regular intervals along the river. The transmitters are small capsules (13 mm diameter) implanted in the fish's body. The data will build a picture of the movement patterns of individual fish over several years.

At year end, the project had tagged 138 barramundi and compiled a database of more than 2 million detections of tagged fish. The preliminary data highlighted the remarkable journeys individual fish can take. In the 2015–16 wet season, one tagged fish moved 106 kilometres upstream in 8.7 days at an average rate of 12.3 km/day. Another fish moved 173 kilometres downstream in 5.6 days at an average rate of 30.9 km/day. Most downstream movements coincide with a major flow event. However, there is much variability in the timing and pattern of movements. Some of our data from 2016–17 suggests that these movements can extend into the dry season.

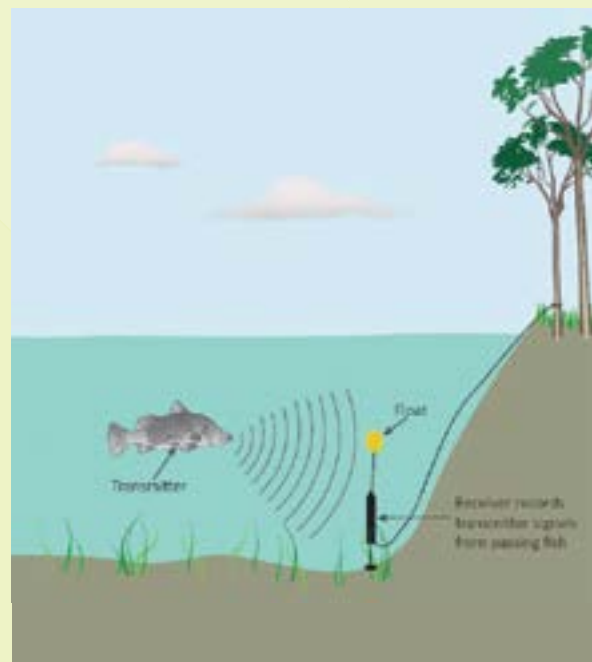


Figure 1: Barramundi are tracked using acoustic telemetry. Coded signals from implanted transmitters are recorded by underwater receivers positioned at regular intervals along the river.

The project is a partnership between the department, the Research Institute for the Environment and Livelihoods at Charles Darwin University, NT Fisheries and the Northern Land Council-managed Yugul Mangi Rangers.

Data collection will continue until at least the dry season of 2019 and will give a better understanding of the barramundi's environmental water requirements.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Governance holds the department and its people to account through defined responsibilities, policies, systems and processes. It is the system through which the department is controlled and operates to achieve its performance objectives and accountability.

The department's governance framework is based on the Australian Securities Exchange's principles of corporate governance, which have been reworked for a public sector environment.

The department is governed by the framework's nine principles, each of which has operational elements used to assess governance maturity level and identify opportunities for improvement.

Governance principles

1.	Government and public sector relationship	The department's relationship with the government is clear.
2.	Management and oversight	The department's management and oversight is accountable and has clearly defined responsibilities.
3.	Organisational structure	The department's structure serves its operations.
4.	Operations	The department plans its operations to achieve its goals.
5.	Ethics and integrity	Ethics and integrity are embedded in the department's values and operations.
6.	People	The department's leadership in people management contributes to individual and organisational achievements.
7.	Finance	The department safeguards financial integrity and accountability.
8.	Communication	The department communicates with all parties in a way that is accessible, open and responsive.
9.	Risk management	The department identifies and manages its risks.

Corporate governance and accountability framework model



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

The department's governance structure comprises a Governance Board and supporting committees focussed on important governance elements.

The board and committees oversee the allocation of resources across the department and the development and implementation of policies, plans and procedures that provide a foundation of good governance for the department's activities. The committees report to the Governance Board, except the Audit and Risk Management Committee, which reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer, as outlined in the diagram below.

Governance principles



Each committee's functions and performance for 2016–17 are outlined in this section. Membership as at 30 June 2017 is outlined at Appendix 1.

Governance Board

The Governance Board provides governance and leadership to several committees that support the department's objectives and purpose.

The Governance Board is the department's principal planning and decision-making body on corporate governance matters. The Chief Executive Officer is primarily responsible for providing strategic leadership and system development for the department.

The Governance Board includes representatives from all output groups of the department. Other department officers attend Governance Board meetings as required.

The responsibilities of the Governance Board are to:

- set the strategic direction for the department
- act as a consultative forum, providing advice on current and future direction for the agency
- provide advice and support on the planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting of the department's performance against its corporate responsibilities and objectives and to report against deliverables identified in the department's strategic plan through the annual report and budget papers
- provide a forum to consider issues arising from divisional activity that may be relevant to other Governance Board members
- act as a decision-making body that considers and determines responses to policies that impact on the wider community
- Maximise opportunities for partnerships, networking and information sharing
- Act as the decision-making body for department policies and systems including:
 - managing risk and assurance in relation to compliance with statutory requirements
 - strategic human resource and workforce planning and management
 - financial and budget management
 - information and records management and technology and telecommunications planning and management.

The Governance Board has the power to appoint committees as required.

2016–17 achievements:

- developed the 2017–2020 Strategic Plan
- monitored and reviewed department priorities and projects, critical and evolving issues, the legislative program, policy issues and organisational reviews and reports
- monitored department expenditure, employment levels, procurement, ICT management, travel and communication and media matters
- promoted the recommendations outlined from audit findings to the department
- endorsed updates to governance committees in June 2017
- sponsored the Senior Leaders Forum theme and agenda to achieve outcomes
- led and supported the whole-of-department People Matters Survey actions.

Audit and Risk Management Committee

The Audit and Risk Management Committee:

- monitors the department's strategic, corporate and operational risk management functions and activities and the adequacy of the internal controls established to manage identified risks
- monitors the internal audit function (including developing and implementing the annual internal audit program, review and monitoring of terms of reference, audit outcomes, management responses and implementing the audit recommendations)
- monitors the external audit program (including audit outcomes, the department's responses and implementation of the audit recommendations)

- reviews and comments on the state of organisational governance within the scope of the committee's terms of reference in the areas of the department's risk management framework, the internal controls framework and external accountability.

2016–17 achievements:

The Audit and Risk Management Committee met four times during the year: 30 September 2016; 10 November 2016; 6 March 2017; and 11 May 2017. Outcomes from the meetings included:

- appointed an external member to the committee
- reviewed the agency's 2016–17 Internal Audit Plan
- monitored the implementation of the department's 2016–17 Internal Audit Plan
- reviewed the department's audit reports and monitored management's implementation of audit recommendations conducted under the internal and external audit programs
- reviewed risk and audit policy framework documents, including the Internal Audit Manual and appendices and Strategic and Operational Risk Registers.

Divisional work health and safety committees

As part of the work health and safety (WHS) framework, committees are established in each division across the department. Each WHS committee is chaired by the relevant Governance Board member.

All divisional committees:

- act as a consultative forum that provides advice on safety matters
- keep informed about standards of health and safety

- recommend maintenance and monitoring of programs, measures and procedures relating to the health and safety of workers
- conduct regular workplace inspections, including, when requested, a workplace relocation/redesign or when an incident occurs
- consider and make recommendations about proposed workplace changes that may affect the health and safety of the workers
- review hazard and incident report trends and make recommendations as required.

In addition, the Bushfires NT WHS committee also:

- coordinates all WHS and risk management frameworks across Bushfires NT and volunteer bushfire brigades
- monitors and manages all WHS incidents
- reviews and manages all standard operating procedures, fire-ground practices and general occupational policies
- manages feedback links to staff and volunteers in relation to any WHS matter.

2016–17 achievements:

- monitored and reviewed the department's compliance with WHS legislation
- initiated a review of WHS strategic risks for the department
- managed training for committee members, with eight staff attending training
- co-ordinated free flu vaccinations to staff (98 staff were vaccinated)
- reviewed divisional risk registers and updated them quarterly
- reviewed the Workplace Hazard Inspection Checklist and undertook regular inspections.

Emergency Management Committee

The Emergency Management Committee:

- leads department activities before and during an event and reviews and evaluates activities after an event
- manage communication and emergency messaging for staff; and assist with coordination of messaging across government
- ensures the department has an emergency management plan in place
- assists in coordinating the department's cyclone plans and monitoring cyclone preparedness and preparations.

2016–17 achievements:

- implemented an SMS messaging system to communicate important messages during and in response to cyclone information
- updated department cyclone plans and procedures
- participated in whole-of-government counter disaster training and information sessions.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Governance Committee

The ICT Governance Committee:

- reviews and endorses the business cases and project plans for ICT initiatives and investment decisions
- oversees the delivery of ICT initiatives and performance review of project delivery
- oversees the development and monitoring of ICT strategic directions and policies
- periodically monitors the department's ICT environment to ensure risks and issues are identified and appropriately managed

- reviews and endorses submissions for major ICT investments or initiatives for approval by the Northern Territory Government ICT Governance Board.

2016–17 achievements:

- reviewed and updated the committee's terms of reference, which were endorsed by the Governance Board in November 2016
- reviewed internal business ICT approval process and reported to the committee
- monitored ICT projects, operations and usage
- reviewed business cases for ICT proposals
- monitored IT billing, costs and usage of services
- monitored machinery of government and environmental technology changes.

STATUTORY COMMITTEES AND BODIES

At 30 June 2017, the department was responsible for the following statutory committees and bodies. Membership details are at Appendix 2.

Water Advisory Committees

Water Advisory Committees are established under section 23 of the *Water Act* to provide advice and recommendations to the department on water management and allocations, including on developing and implementing water allocation plans. Committee members are appointed by the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources.

Northern Territory Catchments Advisory Committee

The Northern Territory Catchments Advisory Committee was retired in February 2017 due to the Government's commitment to reforming and supporting water advisory committees to provide advice on water allocation and water management at the local level.

Drillers Qualification Advisory Committee

The Drillers Qualification Advisory Committee is established under Section 54 of the *Water Act* and Regulation 12 to advise the Controller of Water Resources on matters relating to licensing drillers. Its members are appointed by the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources.

Water Resources Review Panel

The review panel established under Section 24 of the *Water Act* consists of a Chairman appointed by the Minister and a group of eight people with qualifications or experience in bore drilling, primary industry, secondary industry, Aboriginal affairs, public health, environmental management, fisheries and mining.

Bushfires Council of the Northern Territory

The Bushfires Council of the Northern Territory, established under section 21 of the *Bushfires Management Act*, recommends measures to the Minister for effective fire management on all Territory land apart from largely urban emergency response areas serviced by the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service. Its members are appointed by the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources.

Regional Bushfires Committees

Under the *Bushfires Management Act*, regional bushfires committees are established in the five regional fire management zones to recommend measures to mitigate, manage and suppress bushfires to the Bushfires Council in its fire management zone and endorse regional bushfire management plans prepared by Bushfires NT. Its members are appointed by the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources.

Pastoral Land Board

The Pastoral Land Board is established under the *Pastoral Land Act* and monitors the condition and use of pastoral land to ensure its sustainable use and economic viability. Its members are appointed by the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources.

Northern Territory Weed Advisory Committee

The Northern Territory Weed Advisory Committee was established as a weeds advisory committee under section 16 of the *Weeds Management Act*. It has a varied role including to advise the Minister on weed issues. Its members comprise government, industry and stakeholder groups with appropriate expertise and Territory-wide interests in weed management, including the Chairs of regional weed reference groups and are appointed by the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources.

Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA)

The NT EPA is an independent authority established under the *Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority Act* to protect the environment. It focuses on ecologically sustainable development, promoting effective waste management and minimisation strategies, and enhancing community and business confidence in the Territory's environment protection regime. Its members are appointed by the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources.

The NT EPA:

- assesses environmental impacts of developments
- administers the container deposit scheme under the *Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Act*
- manages waste and pollution on the environment through licensing
- undertakes compliance and enforcement activities in accordance with the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act*.

Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee

The Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee provides advice on an integrated research and monitoring plan to inform management of the Darwin Harbour and protect the aquatic environment and critical habitats at risk from climate change. Its members are appointed by the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources.

Aboriginal Land Management Advisory Group

The Aboriginal Land Management Advisory Group was established to provide input to the development of the Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program.

Coastal and Marine Management Partnership Group

The partnership group helps guide the department in the development of the Coastal and Marine Management Strategy.

The goals of the group are to:

- provide input into the development of a draft strategy
- encourage input from stakeholders during the strategy development and consultation phases
- provide a forum for focussed and sustained discussion with representatives of key stakeholder groups
- provide a conduit between the department and stakeholders on the issues that need to be addressed by the Coastal Marine Management Strategy.

CORPORATE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Organisation structure

The Chief Executive Officer is supported by the Governance Board through a clearly defined organisation structure. Following machinery of government changes on 12 September 2016, the organisation structure was updated and published on the intranet.

The department's organisation structure is shown on page 8.

Strategic Plan 2017–2020

This reporting period saw the finalisation of the next three-year strategic plan: 2017–2020 outlined on page 6. The final report card on the department's overall achievements against the 2013–2017 plan is outlined on page 20.

The strategic plan 2017–2020 sets out the department's strategic direction and priorities, including key priorities and deliverables set by the Minister and government. The plan provides a holistic view of the department's strategic priorities with a broader focus on themes rather than specific service lines. The six strategic priorities give stronger emphasis on the importance of us working in partnership with our stakeholders, the community and across the department.

Strategic Workforce Development Plan 2016–2020

The plan has actionable strategies to address current and future workforce challenges. Priorities outlined in the plan are leadership, diversity, culture and workforce planning for the future.

A key challenge for the department is to ensure our workforce has the capacity and capability to deliver against the strategic priorities set by government.

Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2016–2020

This strategy focusses on sourcing and developing the right people and ensuring they have a supportive, sensitive and appropriate workplace to grow and develop in.

The strategy aims to increase Aboriginal employment in the department in all occupations, levels of employment and locations; improve Aboriginal workforce capability; and grow the department into a mature and culturally competent workplace.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategic Plan 2015–2019

The ICT Strategic Plan recognises the critical role of ICT services in supporting the department's business and in providing ICT services to our clients and stakeholders—the government, the public and our departmental business partners.

Business plans

Business plans are developed for divisions and individual business units. They outline actions and projects aligned with the department's strategic plan and contributing to its objectives. Business plans are developed in consultation with staff, with tasks flowing through to executive contract and staff performance reviews.

Annual Strategic Risk Assessment

The ability to remain responsive to risk is a priority for the department.

The annual Strategic Risk Assessment was centered on the department's Risk Management Framework. This framework guided the assessment of identified risks within the current operating and internal control environment, with treatments identified for all new and emerging risks. Agreed risks and actions to treat risks were detailed in the department's Strategic Risk Register. The audit of controls in place for managing risks was considered when developing the department's Internal Audit Plan.

Throughout 2016–17, the Governance Board reviewed the department's strategic risks and considered any new and emerging risks. The Audit and Risk Management Committee reviewed the Strategic Risk Register every quarter to monitor the progress of identified risk treatments.

The Risk Management Framework is accessible to all department divisions to guide their management of risks specific to their operations.

Detailed work health and safety (WHS) risk registers for each division are managed by divisional WHS committees.

Future priorities

- develop and implement the reporting requirements for the strategic plan 2017–2020
- develop divisional business plans for 2017–18 and staff development plans
- complete quarterly reporting against business plans.

DEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS

Internal communications

A Chief Executive Officer newsletter on general department news is emailed to staff and published on the intranet. In 2016–17, newsletters were published in November 2016 and in January, February, March, April and May 2017. All staff contribute articles and information.

New topics were also published on the intranet. In 2016–17, 64 new items of this type were published on a range of topics.

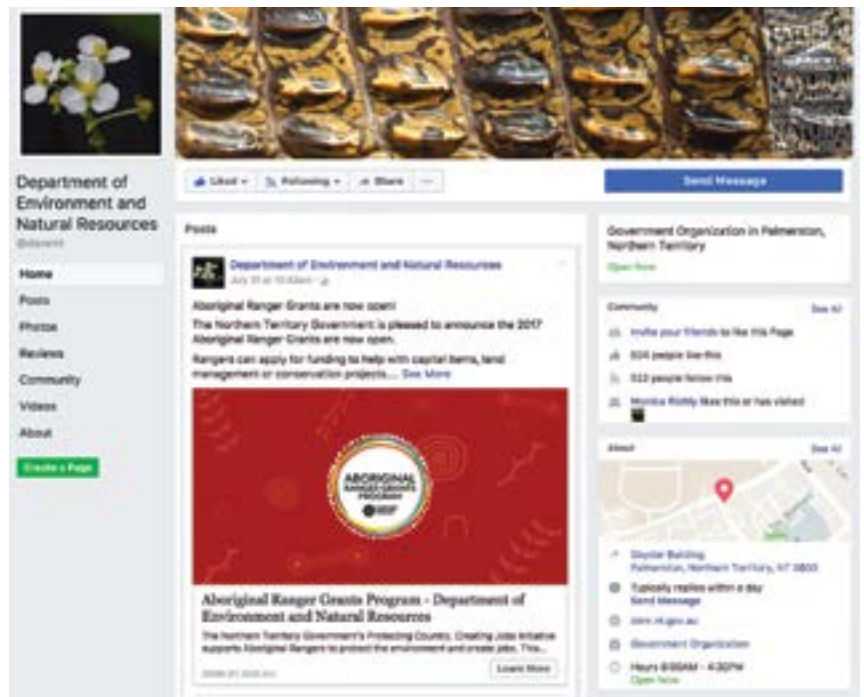
Other internal communication and information-sharing activities in the department included corporate communication emails to convey corporate information all department staff, Senior Leaders Forum in May 2017, planning days attended by staff across the department and divisional meetings.

Social media

The department has had a social media presence since January 2017. Facebook is being used as an informal avenue for engaging with the community and the department page has released 137 posts and has 545 people who like and follow the page.

Bushfires NT also has a Facebook page and provides emergency management and alerts information to the Secure NT Twitter account managed by the Department of the Chief Minister. The Bushfires NT page is also a means of communicating and engaging with volunteer brigades and landowners and managers. The Bushfires NT page has 1 974 followers and has released 310 posts.

These social media accounts allow sharing of updates on department initiatives and programs. It can also promote community consultation and distribute important messages about weed alerts and bushfire management.



Future priorities

- Align division business plans with the new strategic plan 2017–2020
- Modernise the department's intranet
- Ongoing provision of content for the department's website and nt.gov.au
- Review weeds management and water resources online information to ensure clients and landholders can access information efficiently and meet their legislative requirements
- Engage with the community via the department's social media accounts.

Information on community engagement activities and department programs that support the community, including the department's grant programs, are outlined at page 137.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITIES

Statutory accountability

The department is required to comply with the *Financial Management Act*, *Public Sector Employment and Management Act*, *Procurement Act* and other legislation, such as the *Anti-Discrimination Act* and the *Work Health and Safety Act*. The department's corporate governance framework and the relevant statutes are promoted to staff in many ways, including through the department's induction programs.

INTERNAL CONTROLS

The department has a number of internal control mechanisms in place to mitigate workplace risks.

Corporate delegations

The Chief Executive Officer delegates certain powers to other employees under the *Financial Management Act*, *Public Sector Employment and Management Act*, and the *Contracts Act and Procurement Act*. In 2016-17, the Chief Executive Officer approved and had in place the following delegations:

- financial delegations
- human resources delegations
- procurement delegations
- Instrument of Delegation - *Contracts Act*
- Instrument of Delegation - Guarantees and Indemnities.

Conflict of interest

Conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived, can erode confidence in the department's integrity. All

employees are responsible for declaring any conflicts. Employees, executive directors and branch managers must also take all reasonable steps to prevent involvement in the declared conflicts.

Whistle-blowers

Staff can report wrongdoing in accordance with the *Public Interest Disclosures Act*. The Executive Director, Corporate Services is the department's 'Protected Disclosure Officer'.

No public interest disclosures regarding the department's officers were lodged during the year.

Code of Conduct

Through internal training, such as the corporate induction program, staff are regularly reminded of their responsibility to act in accordance with the NTPS Code of Conduct. The department may begin disciplinary proceedings against any employee who acts in contravention of the Code of Conduct.

Freedom of Information and privacy

In accordance with the *Information Act*, a range of NT Government policies and procedures are in place to enable individuals to access records and information held by the department.

Accounting and Property Manual

In accordance with the *Financial Management Act*, the department has an Accounting and Property Manual that specifies finance procedures and internal control requirements. The Accounting and Property Manual was updated in 2016-17 and made available on the department's intranet.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Information requests

The Northern Territory *Information Act* came into effect on 1 July 2003, creating a general right of access to government information held by departments, limited only in those circumstances where the disclosure of certain information would be contrary to the public interest. The Act also protects the privacy of personal information held by the department.

The *Information Act* covers Freedom of Information (FOI) issues, privacy, records and archives management, and it affects how the department collects, uses and stores personal and government information.

The Act is designed to protect personal information, promote the free flow of government information, protect public interests and prevent public sector agencies from the unauthorised disclosure of information on individual, private and business interests held by public agencies.

The department is subject to the *Information Act* and is required to meet the obligations placed on it under that Act. Under the *Information Act*, members of the public can gain access to documents or records held by the department unless the document is within an exception or exemption category specified in the legislation.

The *Information Act* also defines strict timeframes for dealing with these requests for information.

During 2016-17, the department received five applications for access to government or personal information under the *Information Act*.

The table below provides statistical data about the formal access applications the department received:

<i>Information Act requests</i>	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Applications carried over from previous year	1	0	0
Applications to access personal information	0	0	0
Applications to access government information	8	4	5
Applications to access personal and government information	0	0	0
Applications to correct personal information	0	0	0
Applications transferred	0	0	4
Requests withdrawn	0	0	1
Requests refused	0	1	0
Internal reviews	0	0	0
Responses completed within 30-day period	9	4	5
Responses completed exceeding 30-day period	0	0	0
Applications handled as at 30 June	9	4	5

Records management

During 2016-17, the department continued to improve record management practices and procedures to ensure compliance with Part 9 of the *Information Act*.

Part 9 of the *Information Act* and the Records Management Standards require that the department develops and implements plans and processes to ensure full and accurate records are created, captured, discoverable, secure and disposed of in line with approved records disposal schedules to potentially reduce storage costs.

During the reporting year, the records training program continued to provide whole-of-department guidance, support and training in information management best practice and use of the whole-of-government mandated record keeping system. This program had a particular focus on increasing the electronic management of records across the department.

The Corporate Services Division achieved full electronic recordkeeping; ongoing development of electronic recordkeeping is being adopted by other business units.

Information Awareness Month

Information Awareness Month was held in May 2017 to increase public awareness of information and promote the value of good information practices and policies.

The Darwin records team held open house events and activities to celebrate and promote awareness of the information service industry in government.

Ombudsman enquiries

The department received no enquiries from the Ombudsman during the reporting year.

MONITORING THROUGH AUDITS AND REVIEWS

Internal audits

The following risk-based internal audits were conducted under the department's 2016–17 Internal Audit Plan. Management's implementation of audit recommendations is monitored by the department's Audit and Risk Management Committee.

Internal audit	Focus	Outcome
Official Duty Travel January–June 2016	Review of the department's official duty travel against the NTG Air Travel Policy.	The internal audit received a satisfactory level of compliance with official duty travel. Recommendations were made to improve existing controls.
Official Duty Travel July–December 2016	Review of the department's official duty travel against the NTG Travel Policy Framework.	The internal audit received a satisfactory level of compliance with official duty travel. Recommendations were made to improve existing controls.
Cabinet Information Security Measures	To assess the department's compliance with the required Cabinet information security measures.	The audit found a satisfactory level of compliance. Recommendations were made to improve existing controls.
ICT Purchases	To assess whether the department's ICT purchases comply with procurement and contract delegations, policies and procedures and the procurement framework.	The audit found a satisfactory level of compliance.
Repetitive Tier 1 Purchases	To assess whether the department is compliant with Tier 1 Procurement assessed against the procurement framework and agency procurement and contract delegations.	The audit found a satisfactory level of compliance. Recommendations were made to improve existing controls.

External audits

Northern Territory Auditor-General audits

The Office of the Northern Territory Auditor-General selected the department for the following external audits during 2016–17. Results from all the audits are published in the Auditor-General's reports to the Legislative Assembly.

External audit	Focus	Outcome
Compliance Audit	To assess compliance against the <i>Financial Management Act</i> and other NTG policies and directives.	The audit found a satisfactory level of compliance. Recommendations were made to improve existing controls.
Selected Agencies – Fraud Assessment Framework Review	The primary objective of this review was to undertake a survey of the fraud control arrangements in selected Northern Territory Government agencies and to analyse the response to determine the maturity of agencies' fraud assessment frameworks.	To date, the department has had no instances of fraud for the financial year 2015–16 and the seven months to 31 January 2017. The review did not provide specific recommendations but outlined that the department may consider an agency specific fraud control maturity assessment to improve fraud control arrangements; and at a whole of government level consider an across government fraud control policy.

INSURABLE RISK

In accordance with Treasurer's Directions M2.1 – Insurance Arrangements, the department is required to detail mitigation strategies and processes it has in place to reduce the likelihood or severity of its insurable risks.

Insurable risks are generally related to workers' compensation, assets and inventories, public liability and indemnities. They exclude financial risks and legal costs in action.

The table below outlines the department's identified insurable risks and the strategies implemented to reduce those risks.

Insurable risk category	Mitigation strategies	Total Number/Total Value of Claims 2016-17
Public liability	Formal risk assessments completed Repairs and maintenance program to reduce risks associated with physical assets Ongoing review of practices and procedures to ensure public safety Appropriate signage Education campaigns for staff and public Independent reviews Building audits, e.g. security, maintenance, compliance Appropriate security and testing, e.g. fire systems, alarms, patrols, staff.	0 claims
Workers' compensation	Formal risk assessments completed Workplace health and safety (WHS) framework developed and implemented WHS policies and standard operating procedures Work site assessments Job-specific training and support Using Employee Assistance Program Early intervention program Critical incident debriefings Work life balance strategies.	11 open workers compensation claims were carried forward from the previous year 1 new case in 2016-17 1 re-opened case in 2016-17 8 cases closed in 2016-17 5 total open as at 30 June 2017 In 2016-17, workers compensation cost \$410 367 In 2016-17 \$20 384 paid for the utilisation of EAP services
Assets and inventories	Formal risk assessments completed Ongoing review of policies and practices to guide standard operating procedures to protect assets and inventories Asset registers were maintained for fixed and leased assets.	0 claims
Vehicles (e.g.: motor vehicles, quad bikes and boats)	Regular service and maintenance checks Driver training (4 wheel drives, quad bikes, boat handling).	14 internal claims valued at \$28 211
Indemnities	Formal risk assessments completed each year and with each new agreement executed.	0 claims

Details of the department's commercial insurance premium arrangements are:

Commercial insurance premium	Total Number/Total Value of Claim		
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Department – overseas travel insurance, small value one-off insurance	\$105 No claims	\$0 No claims	\$136 No claims
Department – marine insurance to transport drilling rig by barge	\$9 000 No claims	\$0 No claims	\$0 No claims
Department - New Industrial Special Plant Policy for Atlas Copco Drill Rig	\$0 No claims	\$0 No claims	\$9 128 No claims

ENGAGEMENT

Environmental grants

The department provides funding through the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority for community-based projects to help reduce impacts on the environment. There are three grant types:

- school grants
- project grants
- Container Deposit Scheme infrastructure grants.

In 2016–17, \$992 169 was distributed across the Territory to fund projects such as:

- Operational grants to support the Arid Lands Environment Centre, the Environmental Defenders Office NT Inc and the Environment Centre NT Inc
- Upgrade fencing and waste management at a number of landfill sites managed by regional councils and organisations including the Coomalie Community Government Council, DEMED Aboriginal Corporation, Roper Gulf Regional Council, Victoria Daly Regional Council and West Arnhem Regional Council
- Motor Trades Association (NT) Inc – Territory end-of-life tyres study
- RecyclingNearYou website and hotline information service, promoting and improving recycling programs in the Northern Territory
- Planet Ark Environmental Foundation
- One-off funding for organisations to buy equipment or infrastructure for establishing Container Deposit Scheme collection depots or points.

Show Circuit

The NT Show Circuit is a major event attended by thousands of Territorians each year. The show circuit begins at the Fred's Pass Show in May and then travels to Alice Springs, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Darwin in July.

The department has been involved in the NT Show Circuit for many years as part of our strong commitment to engage with local community. The show display provides the opportunity for the department to engage with the community and communicate key initiatives and directions.

The former Department of Land and Resource Management in July 2016 had a presence at the Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine regional shows; and was part of the whole of government display at the Darwin show.

Department stand at the Freds Pass Show, May 2017

Staff were very busy at the Freds Pass Show weekend in May 2017 answering questions on topics such as weeds, water, environment, flora and fauna, bushfires mitigation, and land clearing.

The department marquee was very colourful with activities for young and old. Some of the great attractions were the gamba action vehicle (GAV), cabomba boat, live weed display, feral cat and quoll display, giveaways, weed sprayer raffle and Bushfires NT colouring and Lego photo competition.

Ray Nicholls was awarded the Bushfires NT Long and Meritorious Service Medal at the Freds Pass Show. Ray is captain of both the Cox Peninsula Volunteer Bushfire Brigade and the Training Brigade. Ray was presented the award by the Litchfield Mayor, Maree Bredhaur, for his many years of tireless effort and dedication as a volunteer.



Photo: The department's display at Fred's Pass Show.

National Committee for Land Use and Management Information

In early June 2017, the department hosted the National Committee for Land Use and Management Information (NCLUMI). The committee comprises a consortium of Australian and state government partners and promotes the development of nationally consistent land use information. It is chaired by Jason Hill, Director of Land Assessment, Rangelands Division. Land use mapping underpins land use planning, economic modelling and forecasting, biosecurity, water resource management and aquatic health, agricultural development, environmental modelling and management of biodiversity risks.

The first day of the meeting was an open session for government and industry representatives, followed by jurisdictional updates from across Australia and discussion around improving national guidelines. The second day involved a field tour of the Darwin area and the third day was on future work plans.

An extra 40 people attended the open session with representatives of government and industry, with presentations from North Australia Development Office, the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and department staff. They outlined the importance of land use mapping for national reporting but also locally in the Territory. The department's presentation was an opportunity to showcase our Territory-wide collaborative land use mapping project. The feedback from attendees was very positive.

The three-day meeting also allowed interstate representatives to gain a better understanding of land use issues in the Darwin rural area, including changes to groundwater and gamba grass management, tropical fruit horticulture, barramundi farming on the Adelaide River and conservation at Fogg Dam.



Photo: Grant Staben (Project Leader - Land Use Mapping) gives an overview to interstate and Australian Government colleagues on the app form he designed for land use mapping field work.



Photo: Michelle Franklin (Weeds Management Branch) giving a presentation to committee members on the department's new approach to gamba grass management.

Greg Owens from NT Farmers did a fantastic job of leading the field tour and causing interstate hunger pains during a visit to the Humpty Doo Barramundi farm on the second day.

Interstate representatives also provided excellent feedback on the venue, the field tour and our great dry season weather.



Photo: (L-R) Campbell Elliott, Tahnee Thompson, Bill Bright, Susan King.

Edith Farms Volunteer Bushfires Brigade AGM

In February 2017, weed officers attended the Edith Farms Volunteer Bushfires Brigade AGM to talk about plans to protect their area from the devastating impacts of gamba grass.

Members were pleased to hear about the upcoming aerial survey work, which would help determine the current gamba distribution and enable better planning for protection of their community, infrastructure and natural landscape.



Photo: Savannas Regional Bushfires Committee meeting.

Savannas Regional Bushfires Committee

The first meeting of the Savannas Regional Committee appointed under the *Bushfires Management Act* was held in Katherine in March 2017. The new committee reflects a diversity of stakeholders representing most major land uses. The meeting focussed on the new *Bushfires Management Act*; a discussion about the roles and responsibilities of the committee and governance; and an introduction to the regional bushfire management risk planning process.



Amateur Fishermen’s Association of the Northern Territory (AFANT) AGM

AFANT invited the Weed Management Branch to attend its AGM on Sunday 3 April 2017. Weed officers attended and set up a small stall to discuss weed issues related to fishing. *Salvinia* was the main talking point, with many AFANT members showing interest in weeds related to Four Mile Hole in Kakadu along with other weeds such as *cabomba* and *sagittaria* that can impact on fishing in the Top End.



Photo: (L-R) Tahnee Thompson, Tammy Smart, Nathan Mills, David Hooper.

NT Cattlemen’s Association 2017 AGM and Conference

The NT Cattlemen’s Association AGM and Conference was held on 31 March 2017. The department partnered with the Department of Primary Industry and Resources and the Department of Business, Trade and Innovation to sponsor the conference. The display focussed on the services and programs our department delivers across the Northern Territory.



Photo: Roni Opden, Weeds Management Branch.



Girraween Primary School Field Day Weeds Stand

Weed officers attended the Girraween Primary School Field Day and were very well received with their weeds stand. Many children and their parents were excited by the stand, which allowed us to speak about weeds and the problems they cause.

2016 Territory Natural Resource Management Conference

This year's conference theme 'Shaping the future of NRM' focussed on innovative practices and collaborative projects to showcase and encourage real NRM change. Our staff attended as speakers and contributed to the poster presentations on the following topics:

Parkinsonia Biological Control

Monitoring parkinsonia health to better document impacts of management – Poster by Louis Elliott and Bert Lukitsch, Weed Management Branch.

Improving bushfire management planning in the Northern Territory – Mark Gardener, Bushfires NT

As part of National Bushfires Mitigation Program, Bushfires NT is piloting a project to improve how stakeholders work together to reduce risk of wildfire through better planning, mitigation and suppression. Tools include a transparent planning framework that contextualises where each stakeholder fits; developing risk-based tools to prioritise mitigation; standardised planning templates; and support for operational staff, volunteer brigades and landowners. The mitigation program in the Top End is used to demonstrate how planning processes are strengthening partnerships and improving fire management outcomes.

Fish Tracks: Tracking barramundi in the Roper River – Peter Dostine, Aquatic Health Water Resources

Increased demand for water resources from expanding agriculture in northern Australia will affect natural flow regimes of spring-fed rivers, including the Daly and Roper rivers. Sustainable development of water resources will require information on the relationships between river flow and the ecology of key aquatic species to ensure the ecological requirements of these species are not compromised. The Roper River fish movement study will document and model movement responses of barramundi in relation to intra- and inter-annual variation in flow. This information can be used to develop environmental flow recommendations. Incorporating the results of this project into environmental planning processes will achieve improved conservation outcomes for a range of fish species and riverine ecosystems more generally.



Bellyache Bush Management in the Daly River Catchment – Brad Sauer and Rowena Eastick, Weed Management Branch

A project to manage bellyache bush (*Jatropha gossypifolia*), which covers an estimated 12 000 hectares in the upper Daly River catchment, commenced in 2012. The project aimed to protect the Daly River from negative production and biodiversity impacts caused by bellyache bush through a collaborative, adaptive and integrated management approach. A stakeholder group was established to enable collaboration, planning and implementation across tenures.

Integrated management methods applied included foliar, basal barking and cut-stumping in conjunction with aerial herbicide application, burning and stock exclusion. Burning and aerial spraying has resulted in improved access to bellyache bush infested areas; however, an integrated management approach remains critical. There have been many learnings and challenges; most recently a flood event has necessitated complete review of the project activities.

Let's Collaborate: Eradicating Prickly Acacia in the NT – Nathan Mills, Weed Management Branch

Prickly acacia (*Vachellia nilotica*) is a highly invasive woody weed that covers over 6.6 million hectares throughout Australia. Established infestations on the Barkly and Victoria River districts threatened to reduce the productivity of these iconic grazing lands. Collaboration between government and non-government organisations has significantly reduced the impact of prickly acacia in these areas.

Innovative and collaborative projects have provided an opportunity to increase awareness within Aboriginal ranger groups to control prickly acacia on their country. A devoted project officer will help continue to build capacity of landholders and develop catchment based multi-tenure management plans for prickly acacia, with the aim to eradicate prickly acacia from the Northern Territory.

Coastal and Marine Management Strategy - Tony Griffiths, Flora and Fauna Division

The NT Government has committed to developing a Coastal and Marine Management Strategy that will ensure the health and viability of our coast and seas, support their use by Territorians for recreational and cultural purposes, manage growing demand for our natural resources and foster sustainable industry. The strategy will cover the next 10 years, be based on extensive consultation, and is due to be finalised in 2018.

Removal of the 15L exemption in the Darwin Rural Area

The exemption from licensing under the *Water Act* applying to water bores pumping 15 litres per second or less in Darwin Rural Water Control District was revoked in 2016–17. Groundwater extraction for uses other than rural stock and domestic purposes now requires a licence and metering, which will assist in sustainable use of groundwater resources in the region.

Communication activities included:

- pop-up information booths at Coolalinga and Howard Springs shops
- information stalls at Coolalinga markets
- community meetings at Berry Springs and Humpty Doo
- industry meetings
- more than 200 people visited the 'bore central' public information office for advice
- social media, radio and the department website
- information packs
- advertising in the Rural Weekly newspaper over a five-month period
- advertising in the NT News
- advertising on all major radio stations.

Darwin Rural Groundwater Watch

The Water Resources Division undertakes routine groundwater monitoring of 96 monitoring bores across the Darwin rural area. At the end of each wet season (and again on October 31 of each year), data from representative bores is used to report on groundwater levels, their recharge response and to predict groundwater levels at the end of the dry season across eight districts in the Darwin rural area.

Communication activities included:

- roadside signs – updated monthly with the levels and predictions
- hydrographs – updated monthly on the department website and social media
- monthly editorials in the Rural Weekly newspaper
- digital screens at MLA offices
- groundwater animation – groundwater and the water cycle, know your bore and what rural residents can do
- monthly public notices in the NT News
- information packs.



A Water Resources digital display screen.

CONSULTATION

Progress on Strategic Aboriginal (Water) Reserves

Water Resources commenced stakeholder consultations into the policy options for Strategic Aboriginal (Water) Reserves with the release of a discussion paper in March 2017.

A Strategic Aboriginal (Water) Reserve is a reserved volume of water from the consumptive pool within a water allocation plan area, which is set aside for exclusive access by Aboriginal landowners to use or trade. The rationale for introducing Strategic Aboriginal (Water) Reserves is to provide Aboriginal landowners with increased opportunity to access water resources for economic development.

Consultation included:

- targeted consultation with traditional owners in water planning areas throughout the Northern Territory
- presentations provided and consultation undertaken with members at Water Advisory Committee meetings (Alice Springs, Ti Tree, Ooloo, Katherine and Howard Springs)
- consultation with land councils, North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance and Aboriginal corporations
- targeted consultation with major non-Aboriginal stakeholder groups, including industry, public water supply, water advisory committees, interest groups, researchers and other experts.

A draft Strategic Aboriginal (Water) Reserves policy informed by stakeholder feedback has been prepared for government consideration.

Environmental regulatory reform

There is a recognised need for substantial reform of the Northern Territory's environment protection framework, particularly in relation to environmental impact assessment and approvals. Reforms are critical to achieving a robust regulatory system the community will trust to ensure the Territory's ecologically sustainable development, while encouraging industry investment and economic growth.

Government has committed to substantial reforms as part of its Healthy Environment, Strong Economy policy platform. There is a need to deliver on these commitments in a timely manner in order to generate trust and confidence in government and any changes to the environmental management framework.

The Environmental Regulatory Reform Discussion Paper released in May 2017 provides a snapshot of the reform process for environmental impact assessment and project approvals.

Draft Western Davenport Water Allocation Plan

The current Western Davenport Water Allocation Plan was declared in 2011. In accordance with the *Water Act*, a review of the plan formally commenced in early 2016.

A consultation process involving stakeholders, landowners and interested parties commenced in April 2016. A draft plan has been prepared for public comment.

The technical report that has informed the development of the draft plan is available on the department's website. All feedback received from stakeholders will contribute to the finalisation of the plan.

Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program

The Northern Territory Government is implementing a new policy initiative – ‘Protecting Country, Creating Jobs’, which seeks to support Aboriginal rangers to protect the environment and create jobs.

This will be achieved through a capital grants program for Aboriginal ranger groups to help purchase essential items, with funding of \$4.1 million over two years. It will also establish a Land Management and Conservation Fund to improve conservation practices on Aboriginal land, with funding of \$2 million per annum from 2017–18.

A discussion paper described the context for the grant program and sought input from Aboriginal ranger groups and other stakeholders about land and sea management problems, methods of addressing those problems and how the grants program could be structured to achieve such outcomes. An Aboriginal Land Management Advisory Group was also formed with a range of highly experienced people in the Aboriginal land management sector, and this group provided crucial advice in the development of the guidelines for the grant program.

Review of statutory weed management plans

In accordance with the *Weeds Management Act*, the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources commenced a review of the weed management plans for:

- bellyache bush (*Jatropha gossypifolia*), 2013
- mimosa (*Mimosa pigra*), 2013
- gamba grass (*Andropogon gayanus*), 2014.

All landowners, managers and users are required to control declared weeds on their land in accordance with the *Weeds Management Act*. They have a legal obligation to manage bellyache bush, mimosa and gamba grass per the requirements of these plans.

Landowners and occupiers were encouraged to provide feedback on the plans, which were developed in 2010 and reviewed in 2013 and 2014, with extensive stakeholder consultation. The plans form part of a strategic approach to bellyache bush, mimosa and gamba grass management in the Northern Territory. They describe on-ground management requirements that can be enforced under the *Weeds Management Act*.

A questionnaire was developed to assist in reviewing these plans.

Bellyache bush, mimosa and gamba grass are all declared weeds in the Northern Territory with split declaration of:

- Class A (to be eradicated)
- Class B (growth and spread to be controlled)
- Class C (not to be introduced into the Northern Territory).

GRANT PROGRAMS

The department provides one-off special-purpose grants. The grants are distributed under an agreement that the purpose of each grant and the reporting process for confirming that the funded objective has been achieved.

A full list of the grants administered by the department is detailed at Appendix 3.

PARTNERSHIPS

Recipient	Purpose	Amount
Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation	Contribution to the Larrakia Nation, which, along with the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics, supports funding for Aboriginal traineeships relating to work on Darwin Harbour.	\$170 000
Geoscience Australia	Study to determine the economic and environmental viability of the Ord Stage 3 Irrigation Scheme, which will construct irrigation channels from the Ord Irrigation Scheme into the Northern Territory.	\$96 807
Jacobs	Managed Aquifer Recharge study to assess scope to convert excess water flows of the wet season to supply or augment irrigation projects in the dry season.	\$335 000

SPONSORSHIPS

During 2016–17, the department sponsored:

- NT Cattlemen's Association Conference – \$10 000
- Waste Recycling Industry Association NT WRINT Conference – \$3 000
- Charles Darwin University Barbara Singer Scholarship – \$3 000
- PFAS Summit (per and polyfluorinated alkyl substances) – \$225
- Charles Darwin University, Department of Land Resource Management Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement in the Bachelor of Environmental Science – \$250
- NT Natural Resource Management Sponsorship 2016 – \$3 000
- Australian Marine Science Conference – Connections through Shallow Seas – \$6 000
- Conoco-Phillips Science Experience – \$1 000

FINANCIALS

THE DEPARTMENT FINANCIAL STATEMENT OVERVIEW

This section of the report provides an analysis of the financial outcome of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for the year ended 30 June 2017. The department's financial performance is reported in four financial statements: the Comprehensive Operating Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity and Cash Flow Statement.

The department includes the following outputs:

- Bushfires NT
- Fauna and Flora
- Rangelands
- Water Resources
- Environment
- NT EPA
- Corporate and Governance.

Machinery of Government

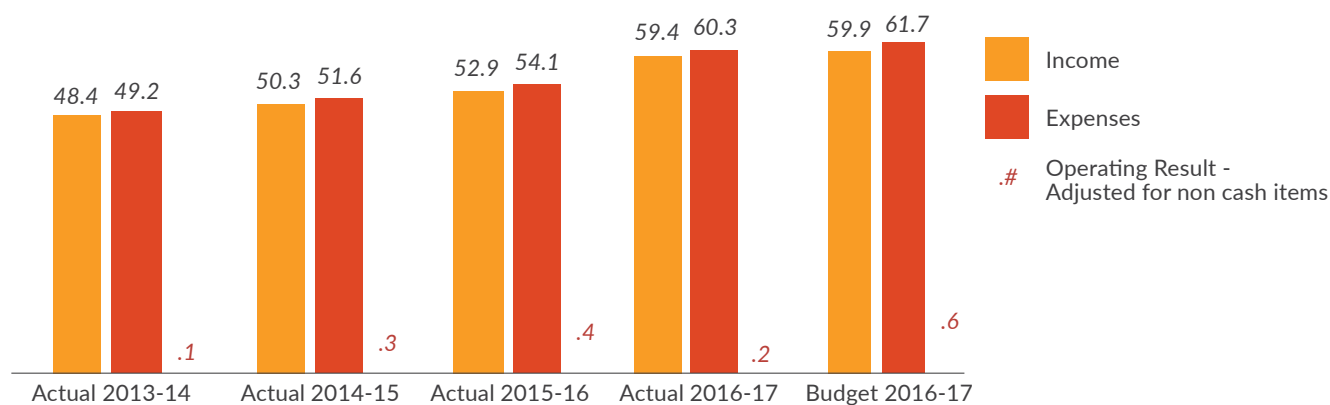
As a result of the Administrative Arrangements Order 12 September 2016 the department underwent a name change from the Department of Land Resource Management to Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The functions of Environment and NT EPA were transferred from the previous Department of Lands Planning and Environment (who are now part of Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics).

Shared services arrangements with three other departments and a Government business division ceased.

COMPREHENSIVE OPERATING STATEMENT - Summary

Operating Result (\$M)



In 2016-17, the department made a net loss of \$0.9 million, or a profit \$0.2 million prior to the charging of non-cash items such as depreciation and non capitalised assets. This compares to a budgeted loss before non-cash items of \$1.8 million.

The budget saving of \$0.8 million was primarily due to an under-spend in externally funded projects.

The four year trend in the operating results and the 2016-17 budget are as follows:

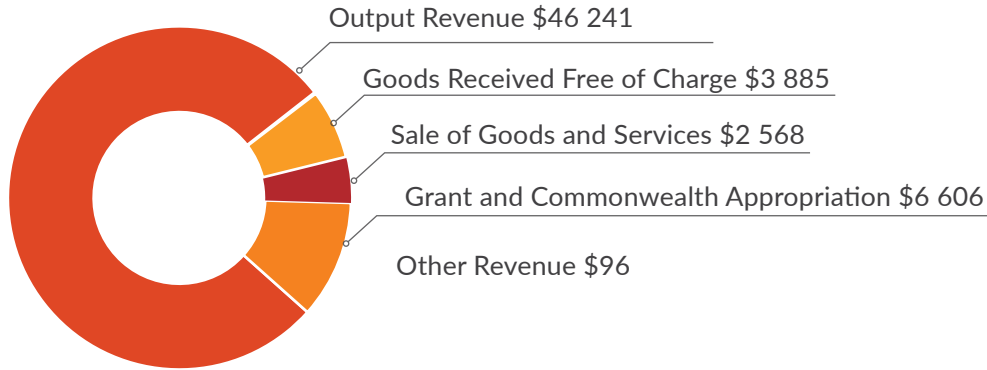
	Actual 2013-14 \$'000	Actual 2014-15 \$'000	Actual 2015-16 \$'000	Actual 2016-17 \$'000	Budget ⁽¹⁾ 2016-17 \$'000
Income	48 376	50 256	52 929	59 396	59 930
Expenses	49 248	51 649	54 105	60 323	61 737
Operating Result	(872)	(1 393)	(1 176)	(927)	(1 807)
Operating Result - Adjusted for non-cash items	(76)	(267)	(380)	202	(620)

⁽¹⁾ Based on 2016-17 Estimate in 2017-18 Budget Paper 3.

INCOME

The department received income of \$59.4 million in 2016-17, \$0.5 million less than budget, and an increase of \$6.5 million compared to 2015-16.

2016-17 Income by Source (\$'000)



The department is funded primarily through NT Parliamentary output appropriation. Revenue is also derived from sales of goods and services, current grants and Commonwealth appropriation and other miscellaneous income including notional revenue for corporate services provided by the Department of Corporate and Information Services.

Output Revenue

In 2016-17, output revenue of \$46.2 million was received, \$0.6 million more than the published budget in 2017-18 Budget Paper 3. Output revenue increased from 2015-16 by \$10.4 million, predominantly due to the Machinery of Government Changes as well as new funding received for gamba grass mitigation, Mary River saltwater barrages and cabomba.

Grants and Commonwealth Appropriation

The department attracted 11.1 percent of its revenue from external sources. In 2016-17, \$6.6 million was received, including \$1.6 million from the Australian Government. This external revenue was \$0.3 million less than the approved budget of \$6.9 million and was \$0.8 million greater than 2015-16. This increase over the prior year was predominately due to the Commonwealth National Water Infrastructure Development Funding.

Some of the key externally funded projects in 2016-17 include:

- West Arnhem Fire Monitoring Agreement
- National Bushfire Mitigation Project
- INPEX Map Habitats in Darwin and Bynoe Harbour
- INPEX Dolphin and Dugong Monitoring
- INPEX Darwin Harbour Indigenous Ranger Marine Program
- INPEX Status of Coastal Dolphins in the NT
- Restoring Central Australian Waterholes
- National Environmental Science Program – Northern Australia Environmental Resources Hub
- National Framework Compliance and Enforcement – Water for the Future
- Bellyache Bush - Daly Biodiversity Fund
- Established Pest and Weed Control – Management of Wild Dogs, Mimosa and Prickly Acacia
- Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary
- National Water Infrastructure Development Fund – Managed Aquifer Recharge
- Stokes Hill Ambient Air Quality Station
- Bonaparte Plains, test drilling and test pumping

Sale of Goods and Services

In 2016-17, income from the sale of goods and services totaled \$2.6 million, \$0.2 less than the approved budget and \$5 million less than 2015-16. The decrease of \$5 million is due to the cessation of corporate services to three other agencies and a Government business division as a result of machinery of government changes.

Goods and Services Received Free of Charge

In 2016-17, notional goods and services received free of charge from Department of Corporate Information Services totaled \$3.9 million, \$0.6 million less than the approved budget and \$0.2 million greater than 2015-16.

There is a corresponding expense, resulting in a net nil effect to the department operating result.

Four Year Trend

The four year trend in income streams and the 2016-17 budget are as follows:

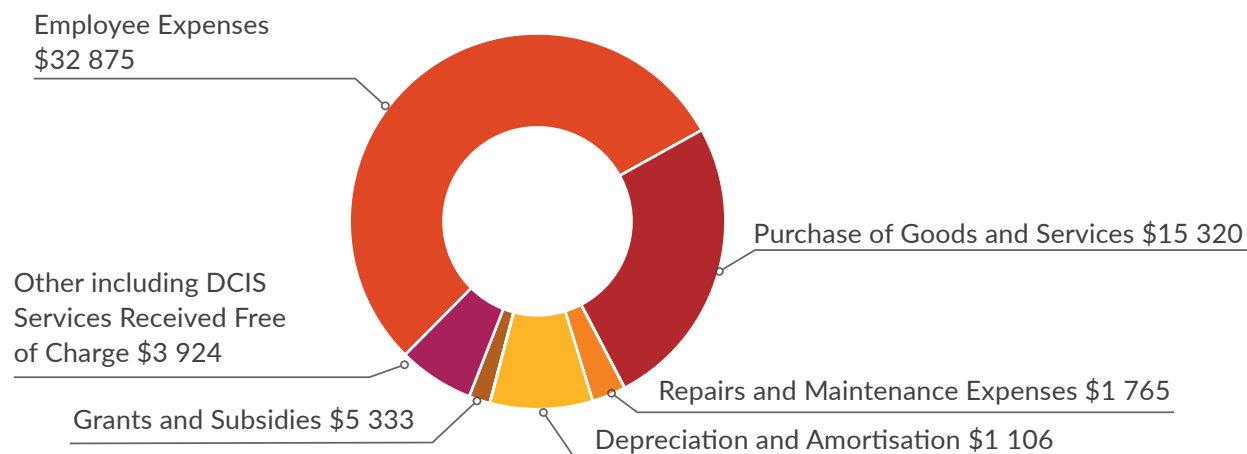
Income Type	Actual 2013-14 \$'000	Actual 2014-15 \$'000	Actual 2015-16 \$'000	Actual 2016-17 \$'000	Variance %	Budget ⁽¹⁾ 2016-17 \$'000	Variance %
Output Revenue	33 038	35 709	35 826	46 241	29%	45 661	(1%)
Grant & Commonwealth Appropriation	3 082	4 377	5 771	6 606	14%	6 890	4%
Sale of Goods and Services	7 693	6 346	7 571	2 568	(66%)	2 828	10%
Goods Received Free of Charge	4 257	3 730	3 656	3 885	6%	4 536	17%
Other Revenue	306	94	105	96	(9%)	15	(84%)
Income Total	48 376	50 256	52 929	59 396	12.2%	59 930	0.9%

⁽¹⁾ Based on 2016-17 Estimate in 2017-18 Budget Paper 3.

EXPENSES

The department incurred \$60.3 million in expenses during 2016-17 in the delivery of its programs and services. This was \$1.4 million less than budget and \$6.2 million greater than 2015-16.

2016-17 Expenses by Source (\$'000)



Payments to employees and purchase of goods and services account for 79.9 percent of the department's outlays. Payments of grants and subsidies and repairs and maintenance are the other major departmental expenses, with depreciation and corporate charges levied by Department of Corporate and Information Services representing non-cash transactions.

Employee Expenses

Staffing costs represent 54.5 percent of total expenditure or \$32.9 million, \$0.8 million greater than budget and a \$3.3 million increase from 2015-16. The increase from the prior year is predominately due to the machinery of government changes and an increase in externally funded projects expenditure.

Goods and Services Expenses

Actual spend on the purchase of goods and services in 2016-17 was \$15.3 million, \$1 million less than budget and \$0.5 million less than 2015-16. The saving to budget predominately relates to an under-spend in externally funded projects, that will be spent in 2017-18, offset by additional workers compensation and wildfire expenditure.

Grants and Subsidies

In 2016-17 the department distributed \$5.3 million in grants and subsidies, \$0.6 million less than budget and \$2.1 million more than 2015-16.

Payments were made to the Arnhem Land Fire Abatement Ltd, Northern Land Council and Charles Darwin University for the West Arnhem Fire Management Agreement (WAFMA) of \$1.3 million; support for rural Bushfire Brigades of \$1.2 million; Australian Wildlife Conservancy for the Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary of \$0.7 million; Charles Darwin University for the Mangrove Dieback Program of \$0.2 million; and \$0.3 million to Jacobs Group Australia for the Managed Aquifer Recharge Program.

The \$0.6 million underspend against budget was predominantly due to National Water Infrastructure Development Fund projects and will be spent in 2017-18.

For a full breakdown of grant payments refer to Appendix 3.

Repairs and Maintenance Expenses

Actual repairs and maintenance expenditure for 2016-17 was \$1.8 million, \$0.1 million less than budget and \$0.7 million higher than 2015-16. This increase was predominately due to the Mary River saltwater barrages.

Depreciation

Depreciation is the allocation of an asset's cost over its useful life. In 2016-17 depreciation was \$1.1 million in accordance with budget and \$0.3 million greater than 2015-16. The increase in depreciation is a result of increase in asset base. Depreciation costs represent 1.8 percent of total expenditure.

Goods and Services Received Free of Charge

In 2016-17, notional goods and services received free of charge from Department of Corporate and Information Services totaled \$3.9 million, \$0.6 million less than budget and \$0.2 million greater than 2016-17.

Four Year Trend

The four year expenditure trend and the 2016-17 budget are as follows:

Expenditure type	Actual 2013-14 \$'000	Actual 2014-15 \$'000	Actual 2015-16 \$'000	Actual 2016-17 \$'000	Variance %	Budget ⁽¹⁾ 2016-17 \$'000	Variance %
Employee Expenses	25 153	27 463	29 522	32 875	11%	32 124	(2%)
Purchase of Goods and Services	14 527	15 208	15 812	15 320	(3%)	16 063	5%
Repairs and Maintenance Expenses	1 425	1 046	1 052	1 765	68%	1 874	6%
Grants and Subsidies	3 088	3 070	3 246	5 333	64%	5 938	11%
Depreciation and Amortisation	780	844	781	1 106	42%	1 187	7%
Other including DCIS Services received Free of Charge	4 275	4 018	3 692	3 924	6%	4 551	16%
Expenses Total	49 248	51 649	54 105	60 323	11.5%	61 737	2.3%

⁽¹⁾ Based on 2016-17 Estimate in 2017-18 Budget Paper 3.

BALANCE SHEET - Summary

The Balance Sheet provides a summary of the department's balances at the end of the financial year for assets, liabilities and equity.

The balances reported are the net worth to Government of the departments' asset holdings (what is owned) against liabilities (what is owed).

The four year trend for net assets/equity is as follows:

	Actual 2013-14 \$'000	Actual 2014-15 \$'000	Actual 2015-16 \$'000	Actual 2016-17 \$'000
Assets	16 757	20 714	21 521	21 855
Liabilities	(9 775)	(9 625)	(9 230)	(8 352)
Net Assets/Equity	6 982	11 089	12 291	13 503

Assets

The department's assets at 30 June 2017 totaled \$21.9 million. The balance of assets consists of:

- Cash balances of \$5.7 million, representing cash held in a financial institution and, petty cash and floats;
- Receivables of \$1 million representing the amount that is owed to the department for goods and services provided and delivered;
- Prepaid expenses of \$0.3 million representing expenses that have been paid before the good or service was received or provided; and
- Property, plant, equipment and computer software of \$15 million.

Liabilities

The department's liabilities at 30 June 2017 totaled \$8.3 million. The balance of liabilities consists of:

- Deposits held of \$0.5 million to recognise the liability for Natural Heritage Trust Single Holding Account held on behalf of the Australian Government;
- Payables of \$1.8 million representing the amount owed to creditors for goods and services purchased and received;
- Provisions for employee entitlements of \$5 million, such as recreation leave, leave loading and leave fares to reflect the cost in present day dollars of employee entitlements that are to be paid in the future; and
- Unearned revenue of \$1 million representing the amount received for services not yet provided.

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY - Summary

The Statement of Changes in Equity reflects movements in equity balances during the year.

Equity as at 30 June 2017 is \$13.5 million, an increase in net worth of \$1.2 million from the previous year.

This increase relates to :-

- \$0.2 million transfer in of completed minor new works;
- \$0.7 million net assets transferred in from other Northern Territory Government Agencies;
- \$0.8 million equity injection;
- \$1 million appropriation to purchase capital items; offset by
- \$0.6 million net transfer as a result of Machinery of Government;
- \$0.9 million operating loss for 2016-17 financial year.

	Actual 2013-14 \$'000	Actual 2014-15 \$'000	Actual 2015-16 \$'000	Actual 2016-17 \$'000
Balance of Equity at 1 July	7 229	6 982	11 089	12 291
Net Equity Injections	625	3 741	2 378	2 209
Movement in Reserves	-	1 759	-	(70)
Accumulated Funds	(872)	(1 393)	(1 176)	(927)
Balance of Equity at 30 June	6 982	11 089	12 291	13 503

CASH FLOW STATEMENT - Summary

The Cash Flow Statement provides information on how cash was received and spent during the year. The figures in the Cash Flow Statement vary to those in the Comprehensive Operating Statement as the Cash Flow Statement only includes cash transactions, whereas the Comprehensive Operating Statement includes non-cash items such as depreciation, non cash adjustments for employee entitlements and notional charges for services received free of charge from Department of Corporate and Information Services.

The department's cash balances were \$5.7 million at 30 June 2017.

The cash flows are summarised as follows:

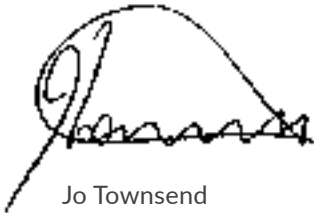
	Actual 2013-14 \$'000	Actual 2014-15 \$'000	Actual 2015-16 \$'000	Actual 2016-17 \$'000
Cash In				
Operating Receipts	46 758	48 557	50 622	57 389
Equity Injections/Capital appropriation/Deposits	466	2 175	2 515	1 809
	47 224	50 732	53 137	59 198
Cash Out				
Operating Payments	(44 438)	(49 795)	(51 889)	(57 219)
Purchase of Fixed Assets	(623)	(687)	(2 212)	(1 160)
Equity withdrawals/ deposits refunded	-	-	-	(1 594)
	(45 061)	(50 482)	(54 101)	(59 973)
Net Increase/ (Decrease) in Cash Held	2 163	250	(964)	(775)
Cash at Beginning of Financial Year	4 989	7 152	7 402	6 438
Cash at End of Financial Year	7 152	7 402	6 438	5 663

CERTIFICATE OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

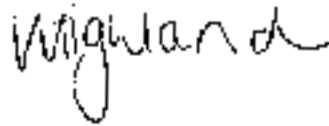
We certify that the attached financial statements for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources have been prepared from proper accounts and records in accordance with the prescribed format, the *Financial Management Act* and Treasurer's Directions.

We further state that the information set out in the Comprehensive Operating Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Cash Flow Statement, and notes to and forming part of the financial statements, presents fairly the financial performance and cash flows for the year ended 30 June 2017 and the financial position on that date.

At the time of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render the particulars included in the financial statements misleading or inaccurate.



Jo Townsend
Acting Chief Executive Officer
30 August 2017



Vicki Highland
Executive Director Corporate Services
30 August 2017

COMPREHENSIVE OPERATING STATEMENT

For the year ended 30 June 2017

The Comprehensive Operating Statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

	Note	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Income			
Grants and subsidies revenue			
Current		4 731	5 459
Capital		250	-
Appropriation			
Output		46 241	35 826
Commonwealth		1 625	312
Sales of goods and services		2 568	7 571
Interest revenue		14	34
Goods and services received free of charge	4	3 885	3 656
Gain on disposal of assets	5	-	21
Other income		82	50
Total Income	3	59 396	52 929
Expenses			
Employee expenses		32 875	29 522
Administrative expenses			
Purchases of goods and services	6	15 320	15 812
Repairs and maintenance		1 765	1 052
Depreciation and amortisation	11,12	1 106	781
Other administrative expenses		3 887	3 658
Grants and subsidies expenses			
Current		5 333	3 246
Interest expense		14	34
Loss on disposal of assets	5	23	-
Total Expenses	3	60 323	54 105
Net Deficit		(927)	(1 176)
Comprehensive Result		(927)	(1 176)

The comprehensive operating statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

BALANCE SHEET

As at 30 June 2017

The Balance Sheet is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

	Note	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and deposits	8	5 663	6 438
Receivables	9	979	965
Inventories	10	11	2
Prepayments		260	151
Total Current Assets		6 913	7 556
Non-Current Assets			
Property, plant and equipment	11	13 868	13 107
Intangible assets	12	1 074	858
Total Non-Current Assets	13	14 942	13 965
Total Assets		21 855	21 521
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Deposits held	14	512	1 508
Payables	15	1 814	2 096
Provisions	16	5 048	4 626
Other liabilities	17	948	972
Total Current Liabilities		8 322	9 202
Non-Current Liabilities			
Other liabilities	17	30	28
Total Non-Current Liabilities		30	28
Total Liabilities		8 352	9 230
Net Assets		13 503	12 291
Equity			
Capital		87 639	85 430
Reserves	19	3 539	3 609
Accumulated funds		(77 675)	(76 748)
Total Equity		13 503	12 291

The balance sheet is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

For the year ended 30 June 2017

The Statement of Changes in Equity is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements

2016-17	Note	Equity at 1 July \$'000	Comprehensive Result \$'000	Transactions with owners in their capacity as owners \$'000	Transactions with owners in their capacity as owners \$'000
Accumulated Funds		(76 748)	(927)	-	(77 675)
Reserves					
Asset revaluation reserve appropriation	19	3 609	-	(70)	3 539
Capital - Transactions with owners		85 430	-	-	85 430
Equity injections					
Capital appropriation		-	-	974	974
Equity transfers in		-	-	1 044	1 044
Other equity injections		-	-	835	835
Equity withdrawals					
Capital withdrawal		-	-	(598)	(598)
Equity transfers out		-	-	(46)	(46)
		85 430	-	2 209	87 639
Total Equity at 30 June		12 291	(927)	2 139	13 503

2015-16	Note	Equity at 1 July \$'000	Comprehensive Result \$'000	Transactions with owners in their capacity as owners \$'000-	Equity at 30 June \$'000
Accumulated Funds		(75 572)	(1 176)	-	(76 748)
Reserves					
Asset revaluation reserve appropriation	19	3 609	-	-	3 609
Capital - Transactions with owners		83 052	-	-	83 052
Equity injections					
Capital appropriation		-	-	2 172	2 172
Equity transfers in		-	-	206	206
Other equity injections		-	-	-	-
Equity withdrawals					
Equity transfers out		-	-	-	-
		83 052	-	2 378	85 430
Total Equity at 30 June		11 089	(1 176)	2 378	12 291

The statement of changes in equity is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

For the year ended 30 June 2017

	Note	2017 \$'000 (Outflows) / Inflows	2016 \$'000 (Outflows) / Inflows
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Operating Receipts			
Grants and subsidies received			
Current		4 731	5 459
Capital		250	-
Appropriation			
Output		46 241	35 826
Commonwealth		1 625	312
Receipts from sales of goods and services		4 526	8 991
Interest received		16	34
Total Operating Receipts		57 389	50 622
Operating Payments			
Payments to employees		(32 387)	(30 445)
Payments for goods and services		(19 483)	(18 164)
Grants and subsidies paid			
Current		(5 333)	(3 246)
Interest paid		(16)	(34)
Total Operating Payments		(57 219)	(51 889)
Net Cash From/(Used In) Operating Activities	20	170	(1 267)
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Investing Receipts			
Proceeds from asset sales	5	-	21
Total Investing Receipts		-	21
Investing Payments			
Purchases of assets	11,12	(1 160)	(2 212)
Total Investing Payments		(1 160)	(2 212)
Net Cash (Used In) Investing Activities		(1 160)	(2 191)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Financing Receipts			
Deposits received		-	322
Equity injections			
Capital appropriations		974	2 172
Other equity injections		835	-
Total Financing Receipts		1 809	2 494
Financing Payments			
Deposits paid		(996)	-
Equity Withdrawals		(598)	-
Total Financing Payments		(1 594)	-
Net Cash From Financing Activities		215	2 494
Net (decrease)/increase in cash held		(775)	(964)
Cash at beginning of financial year	8	6 438	7 402
Cash at End of Financial Year		5 663	6 438

The cash flow statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 30 June 2017

1. Objectives and Funding

2. Statement of Significant Accounting Policies

3. Operating Statement by Output

Income

4. Goods and Services Received Free of Charge

5. Gain/Loss on Disposal of Assets

Expenses

6. Purchases of Goods and Services

7. Write-offs, Postponements, Waivers, Gifts and Ex Gratia Payments

Assets

8. Cash and Deposits

9. Receivables

10. Inventories

11. Property, Plant and Equipment

12. Intangibles

13. Fair Value Measurement of Non-Financial Assets

Liabilities

14. Deposits Held

15. Payables

16. Provisions

17. Other Liabilities

18. Commitments

Equity

19. Reserves

Other Disclosures

20. Notes to the Cash Flow Statement

21. Financial Instruments

22. Related Parties

23. Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

24. Events Subsequent to Balance Sheet Date

25. Schedule of Administered Territory Items

26. Budgetary Information

27. Budgetary Information: Administered Territory Items

1. OBJECTIVES AND FUNDING

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources' purpose is to provide natural resource management extension services and advice including the scientific assessment of flora, fauna, land and water assets, and the allocation, management and monitoring of these resources to enable their sustainable and responsible use. The department goals are as follows:

1. Strategically improve scientific and community knowledge and understanding of water, soils, landscapes and biodiversity to better inform adaptive and responsive management.
2. Advise on the effective planning, allocation, conservation and use of the Northern Territory's natural resources.
3. Develop and deliver robust and transparent assessment and regulation that balance the development of the Northern Territory with effective protection of the Northern Territory's unique environmental assets.
4. Foster and sustain community participation from all regions of the Territory in sustainable natural resource use and management.
5. Manage and mitigate threats to regional communities and our natural ecosystems and native flora and fauna through shared responsibilities and partnerships.
6. Maintain an organisation with the capacity and capability to deliver effective services and that nurtures its human resources.

Additional information in relation to the department and its principal activities can be found in the annual report.

The department is predominantly funded by, and dependent on, the receipt of Parliamentary appropriation. The financial statements encompass all funds through which the department controls resources to carry on its functions and deliver outputs. For reporting purposes, outputs delivered by the department are summarised into the following Outputs:

- Flora and Fauna
- Rangelands
- Water Resources
- Bushfires
- Environment
- Statutory Body – NT EPA
- Corporate and Governance.

Note 3 provides summary financial information in the form of an Operating Statement by Output.

(a) Machinery of Government Changes

Transfers In

Details of Transfer: Environment unit transferred from the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Logistics

Basis of Transfer: Administrative Arrangements Order 12 September 2016

Date of Transfer: Effective from 1 July 2016

The assets and liabilities transferred as a result of this change were as follows:

Assets	\$000
Cash	-
Receivables	17
Property, Plant and Equipment	764
	<u>781</u>
Liabilities	
Payables	88
Provisions	488
Other liabilities	-
	<u>576</u>
Net Assets	<u>205</u>

Transfers In

Details of Transfer: NT EPA unit transferred from the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Logistics

Basis of Transfer: Administrative Arrangements Order 12 September 2016

Date of Transfer: Effective from 1 July 2016

The assets and liabilities transferred as a result of this change were as follows:

Assets	\$000
Cash	-
Receivables	-
Property, Plant and Equipment	-
	<u>-</u>
Liabilities	
Payables	2
Provisions	34
Other liabilities	-
	<u>36</u>
Net Assets	<u>(36)</u>

2. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(a) Statement of Compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Financial Management Act* and related Treasurer's Directions. The *Financial Management Act* requires the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to prepare financial statements for the year ended 30 June based on the form determined by the Treasurer. The department's financial statements are to include:

- (i) a Certification of the Financial Statements
- (ii) a Comprehensive Operating Statement
- (iii) a Balance Sheet
- (iv) a Statement of Changes in Equity
- (v) a Cash Flow Statement
- (vi) applicable explanatory notes to the financial statements.

(b) Basis of Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared using the accrual basis of accounting, which recognises the effect of financial transactions and events when they occur, rather than when cash is paid out or received. As part of the preparation of the financial statements, all intra department transactions and balances have been eliminated.

Except where stated, the financial statements have also been prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention.

The form of the department financial statements is also consistent with the requirements of Australian Accounting Standards. The effects of all relevant new and revised Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) that are effective for the current annual reporting period have been evaluated.

The following new and revised accounting standards and interpretations were effective for the first time in 2016-17:

AASB 124 Related Party Disclosures

This standard applies to not-for-profit sector for the first time in 2016-17. The accounting standard requires disclosures about the remuneration of key management personnel, transactions with related parties, and relationships between parent and controlled entities. For any such transactions, disclosures will include the nature of the related party relationship, as well as information about those transactions' terms/conditions and amounts, any guarantees given/received, outstanding receivables/payables, commitments, and any receivables where collection has been assessed as being doubtful.

Several other amending standards and AASB interpretations have been issued that apply to the current reporting periods, but are considered to have no impact on public sector reporting.

AASB 16 Leases

AASB 16 Leases is effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2019 and will be reported in these financial statements for the first time in 2019-20. When the standard is effective it will supersede AASB 117 Leases and requires the majority of leases to be recognised on the balance sheet.

For lessees with operating leases, a right-of-use asset will now come onto the balance sheet together with a lease liability for all leases with a term of more than 12 months, unless the underlying assets are of low value. The Comprehensive Operating Statement will no longer report operating lease rental payments, instead a depreciation expense will be recognised relating to the right-to-use asset and interest expense relating to the lease liability.

While for lessors, the finance and operating lease distinction remains largely unchanged. For finance leases, the lessor recognises a receivable equal to the net investment in the lease. Lease receipts from operating leases are recognised as income either on a straight-line basis or another systematic basis where appropriate.

Consequently, it is expected that approximately \$4 million in operating lease commitments will be required to be recognised in the balance sheet through a lease liability and corresponding right to use asset from 2019-20 in accordance with AASB 16 Leases. In the comprehensive income statement the operating lease expense will be replaced with a depreciation expense relating to the right to use asset and interest expense relating to the lease liability. These cannot be quantified at this time.

AASB 1058 Income for not-for-profit entities and AASB 15 Revenue from contracts with customers

AASB 1058 Income for Not-for-Profit Entities and AASB 15 Revenue with Contracts with Customers are effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2019 and will be reported in these financial statements for the first time in 2019-20.

Under the new AASB 1058 Income for Not-for-Profit Entities, revenue from grants and donations will be recognised when any associated performance obligation to provide goods or services is satisfied, and not immediately upon receipt as currently occurs. Consequently, more liabilities will be recognised in the balance sheet after adoption of this standard.

AASB 1058 clarifies and simplifies income-recognition requirements that apply to not-for-profit entities in conjunction with AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers.

While the full impacts are yet to be determined, potential impacts identified include:

Grants received to construct or acquire a non-financial asset will be recognised as a liability, and subsequently recognised as revenue as the performance obligations under the grant are satisfied. At present, such grants are recognised as revenue on receipt.

Grants with an enforceable agreement and sufficiently specific performance obligations will be recognised as revenue progressively as the associated performance obligations are satisfied. At present, such grants are recognised as revenue on receipt.

Grants that have an enforceable agreement but no specific performance obligations but have restrictions on the timing of expenditure will also continue to be recognised on receipt as time restriction on the use of funds is not sufficiently specific to create a performance obligation.

Grants that are not enforceable and/or not sufficiently specific will not qualify for deferral, and continue to be recognised as revenue as soon as they are controlled.

Several other amending standards and AASB interpretations have been issued that apply to future reporting periods, but are considered to have limited impact on future financial reporting.

At the date of authorisation of the financial statements, the following standards and interpretations were in issue but are not yet effective and are expected to have a potential impact on future reporting periods:

(c) Reporting Entity

The financial statements cover the department as an individual reporting entity.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (“the department”) is a Northern Territory department established under the *Interpretation Act Administrative Arrangements Order*.

The principal place of business of the department is:

1st Floor, Goyder Centre
25 Chung Wah Terrace
PALMERSTON NT 0832

(d) Agency and Territory Items

The financial statements of the department include income, expenses, assets, liabilities and equity over which the department has control (department items). Certain items, while managed by the department, are controlled and recorded by the Territory rather than the department (Territory items). Territory items are recognised and recorded by the Central Holding Authority as discussed below.

Central Holding Authority

The Central Holding Authority is the ‘parent body’ that represents the Government’s ownership interest in Government-controlled entities.

The Central Holding Authority also records all Territory items, such as income, expenses, assets and liabilities controlled by the Government and managed by agencies on behalf of the Government. The main Territory item is Territory income, which includes taxation and royalty revenue, Commonwealth general purpose funding (such as GST revenue), fines, and statutory fees and charges.

The Central Holding Authority also holds certain Territory assets not assigned to agencies as well as certain Territory liabilities that are not practical or effective to assign to individual agencies such as unfunded superannuation and long service leave.

The Central Holding Authority recognises and records all Territory items, and as such, these items are not included in the department’s financial statements. However, as the department is accountable for certain Territory items managed on behalf of Government, these items have been separately disclosed in Note 25: Schedule of Administered Territory Items.

(e) Comparatives

Where necessary, comparative information for the 2015-16 financial year has been reclassified to provide consistency with current year disclosures.

No comparative restatements were made as a result of the Administrative Arrangements Order 12 September 2016.

(f) Presentation and Rounding of Amounts

Amounts in the financial statements and notes to the financial statements are presented in Australian dollars and have been rounded to the nearest thousand dollars, with amounts of less than \$500 being rounded down to zero. Figures in the financial statements and notes may not equate due to rounding.

(g) Changes in Accounting Policies

There have been no changes to accounting policies adopted in 2016-17 as a result of management decisions.

(h) Accounting Judgments and Estimates

The preparation of the financial report requires the making of judgments and estimates that affect the recognised amounts of assets, liabilities, revenues and expenses and the disclosure of contingent liabilities. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances, the results of which form the basis of making the judgments about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

Judgments and estimates that have significant effects on the financial statements are disclosed in the relevant notes to the financial statements. Notes that include significant judgments and estimates are:

- Employee Benefits - Note 16: Provisions in respect of employee benefits are measured as the present value of estimated future cash outflows based on the appropriate Government bond rate, estimates of future salary and wage levels and employee periods of service

- Property, Plant and Equipment – Note 11: The fair value of land, building, infrastructure and property, plant and equipment are determined on significant assumptions of the exit price and risks in the perspective market participant, using the best information available.
- Contingent Liabilities - Note 23: The present value of material quantifiable contingent liabilities are calculated using a discount rate based on the published 10-year Government bond rate.
- Allowance for Impairment Losses – Note 9: Receivables and Note 21: Financial Instruments. The allowance represents debts that are likely to be uncollectible and are considered doubtful. Debtors are grouped according to their aging profile and history of previous financial difficulties.
- Depreciation and Amortisation - Note 11: Property, Plant and Equipment and Note 12: Intangibles.

(i) Goods and Services Tax

Income, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of Goods and Services Tax (GST), except where the amount of GST incurred on a purchase of goods and services is not recoverable from the Australian Tax Office (ATO). In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of the expense.

Receivables and payables are stated with the amount of GST included. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included as part of receivables or payables in the Balance Sheet.

Cash flows are included in the Cash Flow Statement on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing and financing activities, which are recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO are classified as operating cash flows. Commitments and contingencies are disclosed net of the amount of GST recoverable or payable unless otherwise specified.

(j) Repairs and Maintenance expense

Funding is received for repairs and maintenance works associated with department assets as part of output revenue. Costs associated with repairs and maintenance works on department assets are expensed as incurred.

(k) Interest Expense

Interest expenses include interest and finance lease charges. Interest expenses are expensed in the period in which they are incurred.

(l) Prepayments

Prepayments represent payments in advance of receipt of goods and services or that part of expenditure made in one accounting period covering a term extending beyond that period.

(m) Leased Assets

Leases under which the department assumes substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership of an asset are classified as finance leases. Other leases are classified as operating leases.

Finance Leases

Finance leases are capitalised. A leased asset and a lease liability equal to the present value of the minimum lease payments are recognised at the inception of the lease.

Lease payments are allocated between the principal component of the lease liability and the interest expense.

Operating Leases

Operating lease payments made at regular intervals throughout the term are expensed when the payments are due, except where an alternative basis is more representative of the pattern of benefits to be derived from the leased property. Lease incentives under an operating lease of a building or office space is recognised as an integral part of the consideration for the use of the leased asset. Lease incentives are to be recognised as a deduction of the lease expenses over the term of the lease.

(l) Contributions by and Distributions to Government

The department may receive contributions from Government where the Government is acting as owner of the department. Conversely, the department may make distributions to Government.

In accordance with the *Financial Management Act* and Treasurer's Directions, certain types of contributions and distributions, including those relating to administrative restructures, have been designated as contributions by, and distributions to, Government. These designated contributions and distributions are treated by the department as adjustments to equity.

The Statement of Changes in Equity provides additional information in relation to contributions by, and distributions to, Government.

3. OPERATING STATEMENT BY OUTPUT

	Flora and Fauna		Rangelands		Water Resources		Bushfires		Environment ⁽²⁾		NT EPA ⁽²⁾		Corporate and Governance		Total		
	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000	2017 \$'000
Income																	
Grants and subsidies revenue																	
Current	2 598	2 610	162	161	627	900	1 326	1 788	18	-	-	-	-	-	4 731	5 459	
Capital	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	250	-	-	-	-	-	250	-	
Appropriation																	
Output	4 871	4 902	11 401	9 229	11 459	11 899	6 697	6 736	6 666	-	557	-	4 590	3 060	46 241	35 826	
Commonwealth	162	12	129	-	1 035	-	299	300	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 625	312	
Sales of goods and services ⁽³⁾	126	335	441	48	1 111	1 438	853	789	-	-	-	-	37	4 961	2 568	7 571	
Interest Revenue	-	-	14	34	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	34	
Goods and services received free of charge ⁽¹⁾	474	477	890	898	1 193	1 132	357	346	517	-	22	-	432	803	3 885	3 656	
Other income	44	23	1	3	1	18	1	-	1	-	-	-	34	6	82	50	
Gain on disposal of assets	-	-	-	-	-	18	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	
Total Income	8 275	8 359	13 038	10 373	15 426	15 405	9 533	9 962	7 452	-	579	-	5 093	8 830	59 396	52 929	
Expenses																	
Employee expenses	4 568	4 392	7 244	6 654	9 508	9 382	3 220	2 904	4 451	-	299	-	3 585	6 190	32 875	29 522	
Administrative expenses																	
Purchases of goods and services	2 279	3 288	3 092	2 467	4 659	4 974	3 338	3 776	850	-	330	-	772	1 307	15 320	15 812	
Repairs and maintenance	40	55	1 435	607	29	106	178	200	-	-	-	-	83	84	1 765	1 052	
Depreciation and amortisation	129	118	226	120	454	406	122	116	156	-	-	-	19	21	1 106	781	
Other administrative expenses ⁽¹⁾	474	477	890	898	1 195	1 137	354	343	517	-	22	-	435	803	3 887	3 658	
Grants and subsidies expenses																	
Current	1 034	10	206	192	602	185	2 499	2 859	992	-	-	-	-	-	5 333	3 246	
Interest Expense	-	-	14	34	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	34	
Loss on disposal of assets	-	-	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	-	
Total Expenses	8 524	8 340	13 130	10 972	16 447	16 190	9 711	10 198	6 966	-	651	-	4 894	8 405	60 323	54 105	
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(249)	19	(92)	(599)	(1 021)	(785)	(178)	(236)	486	-	(72)	-	199	425	(927)	(1 176)	

⁽¹⁾ Includes DCIS service charges.

⁽²⁾ New outputs in 2016-17 as functions transferred in as part of Administrative Arrangements Order 12 September 2016.

⁽³⁾ Reduction in Corporate and Governance output due to shared services arrangement with 3 other Government Agencies and 1 Government Business Division that ceased as a result of Administrative Arrangements Order 12 September 2016.

Income Recognition

Income encompasses both revenue and gains.

Income is recognised at the fair value of the consideration received, exclusive of the amount of GST. Exchanges of goods or services of the same nature and value without any cash consideration being exchanged are not recognised as income.

Grants and Other Contributions

Grants, donations, gifts and other non-reciprocal contributions are recognised as revenue when the department obtains control over the assets comprising the contributions. Control is normally obtained upon receipt.

Contributions are recognised at their fair value. Contributions of services are only recognised when a fair value can be reliably determined and the services would be purchased if not donated.

Appropriation

Output Appropriation is the operating payment to each agency for the outputs they provide and is calculated as the net cost of agency outputs after taking into account funding from agency income. It does not include any allowance for major non-cash costs such as depreciation.

Commonwealth appropriation follows from the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations, resulting in Specific Purpose Payments (SPPs) and National Partnership (NP) payments being made by the Commonwealth Treasury to state treasuries, in a manner similar to arrangements for GST payments. These payments are received by Treasury on behalf of the Central Holding Authority and then on passed to the relevant agencies as Commonwealth appropriation.

Revenue in respect of appropriations is recognised in the period in which the department gains control of the funds.

Sale of Goods

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised (net of returns, discounts and allowances) when:

- the significant risks and rewards of ownership of the goods have transferred to the buyer
- the department retains neither continuing managerial involvement to the degree usually associated with ownership nor effective control over the goods sold
- the amount of revenue can be reliably measured
- it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the department
- the costs incurred or to be incurred in respect of the transaction can be measured reliably.

Rendering of Services

Revenue from rendering services is recognised by reference to the stage of completion of the contract. The revenue is recognised when:

- the amount of revenue, stage of completion and transaction costs incurred can be reliably measured
- it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the entity.

Interest Revenue

Interest revenue is recognised as it accrues, taking into account the effective yield on the financial asset.

Contributions of Assets

Contributions of assets and contributions to assist in the acquisition of assets, being non-reciprocal transfers, are recognised, unless otherwise determined by Government, as gains when the department obtains control of the asset or contribution. Contributions are recognised at the fair value received or receivable.

Administered Income

The department collects taxes, fines and regulatory fees on behalf of the Territory. The department does not gain control over assets arising from these collections, consequently no income is recognised in the departments financial statements. Accordingly, these amounts are disclosed as income in Note 25: Schedule of Administered Territory Items.

4. GOODS AND SERVICES RECEIVED FREE OF CHARGE

	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Corporate and information services	3 885	3 656
Total Goods and Services Received Free of Charge	3 885	3 656

Goods and services free of charge are recognised as revenue when a fair value can be reliably determined and the resource would have been purchased if it had not been donated. Use of the resource is recognised as an expense.

5. GAIN/LOSS ON DISPOSAL OF ASSETS

Net proceeds from the disposal of non-current assets	-	21
Less: Carrying value of non-current assets disposed	23	-
Gain/(Loss) on the Disposal of Non-Current Assets	(23)	21

A gain or loss on disposal of assets is included as a gain or loss on the date control of the asset passes to the buyer, usually when an unconditional contract of sale is signed. The gain or loss on disposal is calculated as the difference between the carrying amount of the asset at the time of disposal and the net proceeds on disposal.

6. PURCHASES OF GOODS AND SERVICES

The net (deficit) has been arrived at after charging the following expenses:

Goods and services expenses		
Consultants ⁽¹⁾	567	695
Advertising ⁽²⁾	206	183
Marketing and promotion ⁽³⁾	173	95
Document production	55	30
Legal expenses ⁽⁴⁾	80	248
Recruitment ⁽⁵⁾	56	46
Training and study	412	400
Official duty fares	1 117	1 356
Travelling allowance	597	583

⁽¹⁾ Includes marketing, promotion and IT consultants.

⁽²⁾ Does not include recruitment advertising.

⁽³⁾ Excludes advertising for marketing and promotion and marketing and promotion consultants' expenses, which are incorporated in the advertising and consultants' categories.

⁽⁴⁾ Includes legal fees, claim and settlement costs.

⁽⁵⁾ Includes recruitment related advertising costs.

7. WRITE-OFFS, POSTPONEMENT, WAIVERS, GIFTS AND EX GRATIA PAYMENTS

	Department / group		Department / group		Territory Items		Territory Items	
	2017 \$'000	no. of Trans	2016 \$'000	no. of Trans	2017 \$'000	no. of Trans	2016 \$'000	no. of Trans
Write-offs, Postponements and Waivers under the Financial Management Act								
<i>Represented by:</i>								
<i>Amounts written off, postponed and waived by Delegates</i>								
Irrecoverable amounts payable to the Territory or an Agency written off payable to the Territory or an Agency written off	2	6	-	1	-	-	-	-
Losses or deficiencies of money written off	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Public property written off	23	1	-	3	-	-	-	-
Total Written Off, Postponed and Waived by Delegates	25	7	-	5	-	-	-	-
<i>Amounts written off, postponed and Waived by the Treasurer</i>								
Irrecoverable amounts payable to the Territory or an Agency written off ⁽¹⁾	10	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Losses or deficiencies of money written off	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public property written off	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Written Off, Postponed and Waived by Delegates	10	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

⁽¹⁾ Debt was approved for write off prior to raising of debt within the accounts

8. CASH AND DEPOSITS

	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Cash on hand	1	1
Cash at bank	5 662	6 437
Total Cash and Deposits	5 663	6 438

For the purposes of the Balance Sheet and the Cash Flow Statement, cash includes cash on hand, cash at bank and cash equivalents. Cash equivalents are highly liquid short-term investments that are readily convertible to cash. Cash at bank includes monies held in the Accountable Officer's Trust Account (AOTA) that are ultimately payable to the beneficial owner.

9. RECEIVABLES

Accounts receivable	575	529
Less: Allowance for impairment losses	(9)	(8)
	566	521
Interest receivables	1	2
GST receivables	376	372
Other receivables	36	70
Total Receivables	979	965

Receivables include accounts receivable and other receivables and are recognised at fair value less any allowance for impairment losses.

The allowance for impairment losses represents the amount of receivables the department estimates are likely to be uncollectible and are considered doubtful. Analysis of the age of the receivables that are past due as at the reporting date are disclosed in an aging schedule under credit risk in Note 21: Financial Instruments. Reconciliation of changes in the allowance accounts is also presented.

Accounts receivable are generally settled within 30 days.

10. INVENTORIES

	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
General Inventories		
At cost	11	2
Total Receivables	11	2

Inventories include assets held either for sale (general inventories) or for distribution at no or nominal consideration in the ordinary course of business operations.

General inventories are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value, while those held for distribution are carried at the lower of cost and current replacement cost. Cost of inventories includes all costs associated with bringing the inventories to their present location and condition. When inventories are acquired at no or nominal consideration, the cost will be the current replacement cost at date of acquisition.

The cost of inventories are assigned using a mixture of first-in, first out or weighted average cost formula or using specific identification of their individual costs.

Inventory held for distribution are regularly assessed for obsolescence and loss.

11. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Land		
At Fair Value	4 842	4 932
	4 842	4 932
Buildings		
At Fair Value	8 764	9 236
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(4 487)	(4 784)
	4 277	4 452
Infrastructure		
At Fair Value	489	489
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(140)	(130)
	349	359
Plant and Equipment		
At Cost	11 544	11 645
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(9 450)	(8 644)
	2 094	3 001
Transport Equipment		
At Cost	3 676	1 440
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(1 375)	(1 092)
	2 301	348
Computer Hardware		
At Cost	206	211
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(201)	(196)
	5	15
Total Property, Plant and Equipment	13 868	13 107

Property, Plant and Equipment Valuations

An independent valuation of land, buildings and infrastructure assets was undertaken by Territory Property Consultants as at 30 June 2015. Refer to Note 13: Fair Value Measurement of Non-Financial Assets for additional disclosures.

Impairment of Property, Plant and Equipment

Department property, plant and equipment assets were assessed for impairment as at 30 June 2017. No impairment adjustments were required as a result of this review.

Property, Plant and Equipment Reconciliations

A reconciliation of the carrying amount of property, plant and equipment at the beginning and end of 2016-17 and 2015-16 is set out below:

2016-17	Land \$'000	Buildings \$'000	Infrastructure \$'000	Plant and Equipment \$'000	Transport Equipment \$'000	Computer Hardware \$'000	Total \$'000
Carrying Amount as at 1 July	4 932	4 452	359	3 001	348	15	13 107
Additions	-	-	-	(1 004)	2 136	-	1 132
Impairment Loss	-	(23)	-	-	-	-	(23)
Additions/(Disposals) from Asset Transfers	(90)	84	-	455	-	-	449
Depreciation and Amortisation	-	(236)	(10)	(358)	(183)	(10)	(797)
Carrying Amount as at 30 June	4 842	4 277	349	2 094	2 301	5	13 868

2015-16	Land \$'000	Buildings \$'000	Infrastructure \$'000	Plant and Equipment \$'000	Transport Equipment \$'000	Computer Hardware \$'000	Total \$'000
Carrying Amount as at 1 July	4 932	4 501	370	1 783	430	29	12 045
Additions	-	-	-	1 545	12	-	1 557
Additions from Asset Transfers	-	191	-	-	-	-	191
Depreciation and Amortisation	-	(240)	(11)	(327)	(94)	(14)	(686)
Carrying Amount as at 30 June	4 932	4 452	359	3 001	348	15	13 107

Acquisitions

All items of property, plant and equipment with a cost, or other value, equal to or greater than \$10 000 are recognised in the year of acquisition and depreciated. Items of property, plant and equipment below the \$10 000 threshold are expensed in the year of acquisition.

The construction cost of property, plant and equipment includes the cost of materials and direct labor, and an appropriate proportion of fixed and variable overheads.

Complex Assets

Major items of plant and equipment comprising a number of components that have different useful lives, are accounted for as separate assets. The components may be replaced during the useful life of the complex asset.

Subsequent Additional Costs

Costs incurred on property, plant and equipment subsequent to initial acquisition are capitalised when it is probable that future economic benefits in excess of the originally assessed performance of the asset will flow to the department in future years. Where these costs represent separate components of a complex asset they are accounted for as separate assets and are separately depreciated over their expected useful lives.

Construction (Work in Progress)

As part of the financial management framework, the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Logistics is responsible for managing general government capital works projects on a whole of government basis.

Therefore appropriation for the department's capital works is provided directly to the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics and the cost of construction work in progress is recognised as an asset in the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics. Once completed, capital work assets are then transferred to this department.

Revaluation of Assets

Subsequent to initial recognition, assets belonging to the following classes of non-current assets are revalued with sufficient regularity to ensure that the carrying amount of these assets does not differ materially from their fair value at reporting date:

- land
- buildings
- Infrastructure assets.

Fair value is the amount for which an asset could be exchanged, or liability settled, between knowledgeable, willing parties in an arms-length transaction.

Plant and equipment are stated at historical cost less depreciation, which is deemed to equate to fair value.

The unique nature of some of the heritage and cultural assets may preclude reliable measurement. Such assets have not been recognised in the financial statements. Heritage and cultural assets recognised in the financial statements are stated at historical cost less depreciation, which is deemed to equate fair value. Where differences exist, these are not material.

Impairment of Assets

An asset is said to be impaired when the asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount.

Non-current physical and intangible department assets are assessed for indicators of impairment on an annual basis. If an indicator of impairment exists, the department determines the asset's recoverable amount. The asset's recoverable amount is determined as the higher of the asset's depreciated replacement cost and fair value less costs to sell. Any amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds the recoverable amount is recorded as an impairment loss.

Impairment losses are recognised in the Comprehensive Operating Statement unless the asset is carried at a revalued amount. Where the asset is measured at a revalued amount, the impairment loss is offset against the Asset Revaluation Reserve for that class of asset to the extent that an available balance exists in the Asset Revaluation Reserve.

In certain situations, an impairment loss may subsequently be reversed. Where an impairment loss is subsequently reversed, the carrying amount of the asset is increased to the revised estimate of its recoverable amount. A reversal of an impairment loss is recognised in the Comprehensive Operating Statement as income, unless the asset is carried at a revalued amount, in which case the impairment reversal results in an increase in the Asset Revaluation Reserve. Note 19 provides additional information in relation to the asset revaluation reserve.

Depreciation and Amortisation Expense

Items of property, plant and equipment, including buildings but excluding land, have limited useful lives and are depreciated or amortised using the straight-line method over their estimated useful lives.

Amortisation applies in relation to intangible non-current assets with limited useful lives and is calculated and accounted for in a similar manner to depreciation.

The Treasurer's Directions provide guidance for the estimated useful lives for each class of assets as follows, and allow the department to make other estimates as necessary:

	2017 Years	2016 Years
Buildings	10 - 50	10 - 50
Infrastructure Assets	8 - Infinite	8 - Infinite
Plant and Equipment	1 - 20	1 - 20
Transport Equipment	10	10
Computer Hardware	3 - 6	3 - 6
Heritage and Cultural Assets	100	100
Intangibles - Computer Software	2 - 10	2 - 10

Assets are depreciated or amortised from the date of acquisition or from the time an asset is completed and held ready for use.

12. INTANGIBLES

	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Carrying Amounts		
Intangibles with a Finite Useful Life		
Intangibles - Computer Software		
At Cost	1 761	1 153
Less: Accumulated Amortisation	(687)	(295)
Written Down Value - 30 June	1 074	858

Impairment of Intangibles

Department intangible assets were assessed for impairment as at 30 June 2017. No impairment adjustments were required as a result of this review.

Reconciliation of Movements

Intangibles with a Finite Useful Life		
Carrying Amount at 1 July	858	298
Additions	28	655
Additions from Asset Transfers	497	-
Depreciation and Amortisation	(309)	(95)
Carrying Amount as at 30 June	1 074	858

13. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENT OF NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS

(a) Fair Value Hierarchy

Fair values of non-financial assets categorised by level of inputs used to compute fair value are:

2016-17	Level 1 \$'000	Level 2 \$'000	Level 3 \$'000	Total Fair Value \$'000
Asset Classes				
Land (Note 11)		4 842		4 842
Buildings (Note 11)			4 277	4 277
Infrastructure (Note 11)			349	349
Plant and Equipment (Note 11)			2 094	2 094
Transport Equipment (Note 11)			2 301	2 301
Computer Hardware (Note 11)			5	5
Intangibles (Note 12)			1 074	1 074
Total Fair Value	-	4 842	10 100	14 942

(b) Valuation Techniques and Inputs

Valuation techniques used to measure fair value are:

Asset Classes	Level 2 Technique	Level 3 Technique
Land	Market	-
Buildings	-	Cost
Infrastructure	-	Cost
Plant and Equipment	-	Cost
Transport Equipment	-	Cost
Computer Hardware	-	Cost
Intangibles	-	Cost

There were no changes in valuation techniques from 2015-16 to 2016-17.

The department's land, buildings and infrastructure are revalued at least once every five years.

The department's land, building and infrastructure are stated at their revalued amounts, being the fair value at the date of revaluation, less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses, including any additions or modifications. The latest revaluation of these assets was performed by Territory Property Consultants as at 30 June 2015.

Level 2 fair values of land were determined based on market evidence of sales price per square metre of comparable land.

Level 3 fair values are predominantly related to buildings and infrastructure and were determined by computing their depreciated replacement costs because an active market does not exist for such assets due to their unique nature and potential inherent restrictions upon use. The depreciated replacement cost was based on a combination of internal records of the historical cost of the assets, adjusted for contemporary pricing and construction approaches, the remaining useful life of the assets, and current condition of the assets.

(c) Additional information for Level 3 Fair value Measurements**(i) Reconciliation of Recurring Level 3 Fair Value Measurements**

2016-17	Buildings \$'000	Infrastructure \$'000	Plant and Equipment \$'000	Transport Equipment \$'000	Computer Hardware \$'000	Intangibles \$'000
Fair value as at 1 July	4 452	359	3 001	348	15	858
Additions	-	-	-	1 132	-	28
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers between asset classes	-	-	(1 004)	1 004	-	-
Additions/ (Disposals) from asset transfers	84	-	455	-	-	497
Depreciation and amortisation	(236)	(10)	(358)	(183)	(10)	(309)
Gains/(losses) recognised in net surplus/deficit	(23)	-	-	-	-	-
Fair Value as at 30 June	4 277	349	2 094	2 301	5	1 074

2015-16	Buildings \$'000	Infrastructure \$'000	Plant and Equipment \$'000	Transport Equipment \$'000	Computer Hardware \$'000	Intangibles \$'000
Fair value as at 1 July	4 501	370	1 783	430	29	298
Additions	-	-	1 545	12	-	655
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers between asset classes	-	-	-	-	-	-
Additions/ (Disposals) from asset transfers	191	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation and amortisation	(240)	(11)	(327)	(94)	(14)	(95)
Gains/(losses) recognised in net surplus/deficit	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fair Value as at 30 June	4 452	359	3 001	348	15	858

(ii) Sensitivity analysis

Unobservable inputs used in computing the fair value of land, buildings and infrastructure include the historical cost and the consumed economic benefit for each asset. Given the large number of assets, it is not practical to compute a relevant summary measure for the unobservable inputs. In respect of sensitivity of fair value to changes in input value, a higher historical cost results in a higher fair value and greater consumption of economic benefit lowers fair value.

Fair Value Measurement

Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

Fair value measurement of a non-financial asset takes into account a market participant's ability to generate economic benefits by using the asset in its highest and best use or by selling it to another market participant that would use the asset in its highest and best use. The highest and best use takes into account the use of the asset that is physically possible, legally permissible and financially feasible.

When measuring fair value, the valuation techniques used maximise the use of relevant observable inputs and minimise the use of unobservable inputs. Unobservable inputs are used to the extent that sufficient relevant and reliable observable inputs are not available for similar assets/liabilities.

Observable inputs are publicly available data that are relevant to the characteristics of the assets/ liabilities being valued. Observable inputs used by the agency include, but are not limited to, published sales data for land and general office buildings.

Unobservable inputs are data, assumptions and judgments that are not available publicly, but are relevant to the characteristics of the assets/ liabilities being valued. Such inputs include internal agency adjustments to observable data to take account of particular and potentially unique characteristics/functionality of assets/ liabilities and assessments of physical condition and remaining useful life.

All assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the financial statements are categorised within the following fair value hierarchy based on the inputs used:

- Level 1 - inputs are quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities;
- Level 2 - inputs are inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly; and
- Level 3 - inputs are unobservable.

14. DEPOSITS HELD

	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Current		
Deposits held - Natural Heritage Trust and clearing accounts	512	1 508
Total Deposits Held	512	1 508

15. PAYABLES

Current		
Accounts payable	788	1 744
Accrued expenses	1 026	352
Total Payables	1 814	2 096

Liabilities for accounts payable and other amounts payable are carried at cost, which is the fair value of the consideration to be paid in the future for goods and services received, whether or not billed to the department. Accounts payable are normally settled within 30 days.

16. PROVISIONS

Current	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Employee Benefits		
Recreation leave	3 855	3 604
Leave loading	554	447
Other employee benefits	40	46
Other Current Provisions		
Other provisions (fringe benefits, payroll tax, superannuation and other)	599	529
Total Provisions	5 048	4 626
Balance as at 1 July	4 626	4 889
Additional provisions recognised	3 454	2 753
Reductions arising from payments	(3 275)	(3 016)
Transfer of provisions ⁽¹⁾	243	-
Balance as at 30 June	5 048	4 626

The department had 328 employees as at 30 June 2017 (319 employees as at 30 June 2016).

⁽¹⁾ Net effect due to Administrative Arrangements Order 12 September 2016

Employee Benefits

A liability is recognised for benefits accruing to employees in respect of wages and salaries, annual leave, long service leave and sick leave when it is probable that settlement will be required and they are capable of being measured reliably.

Liabilities recognised in respect of employee benefits that are expected to be settled wholly within 12 months are measured at their nominal values using the remuneration rate expected to apply at the time of settlement.

Liabilities recognised in respect of employee benefits that are not expected to be settled within 12 months are measured as the present value of the estimated future cash outflows calculated using the appropriate government bond rate and taking into consideration expected future salary and wage levels, experience of employee departures and periods of service.

All recreation leave liabilities are classified as current liabilities as the department does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the reporting period. No provision is made for sick leave, which is non vesting, as the anticipated pattern of future sick leave to be taken is less than the entitlement accruing in each reporting period.

Employee benefit expenses are recognised on a net basis in respect of the following categories:

- wages and salaries, non-monetary benefits, recreation leave, sick leave and other leave entitlements
- other types of employee benefits.

As part of the financial management framework, the Central Holding Authority assumes the long service leave liabilities of government agencies, including the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and as such no long service leave liability is recognised in these financial statements.

17. OTHER LIABILITIES

	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Current		
Unearned revenue	948	972
Non-Current		
Unearned revenue	30	28
Total Other Liabilities	978	1 000

Superannuation

Employees' superannuation entitlements are provided through the:

- Northern Territory Government and Public Authorities Superannuation Scheme (NTGPASS);
- Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme (CSS); or
- non-government employee nominated schemes for those employees commencing on or after 10 August 1999.

The department makes superannuation contributions on behalf of its employees to the Central Holding Authority or non-government employee nominated schemes. Superannuation liabilities related to government superannuation schemes are held by the Central Holding Authority and as such are not recognised in department financial statements.

18. COMMITMENTS

	2017		2016	
	Internal \$'000	External \$'000	Internal \$'000	External \$'000
i. Other Expenditure Commitments				
Other non-cancellable expenditure commitments not recognised as liabilities are payable as follows:				
Within one year	-	5 222	-	3 864
Later than one year and not later than five years	-	6 146	-	4 840
Later than five years	-	2 166	-	-
	-	13 534	-	8 704

ii. Operating Lease Commitments

The department leases property under non-cancellable operating leases expiring from 1 to 5 years. Leases generally provide the department with a right of renewal at which time all lease terms are renegotiated. The department also leases items of plant and equipment under non-cancellable operating leases. Future operating lease commitments not recognised as liabilities are payable as follows:

Within one year	-	1 515	-	1 378
Later than one year and not later than five years	-	2 418	-	2 729
	-	3 933	-	4 107

Commitments are those contracted as at 30 June where the amount of the future commitment can be reliably measured.

19. RESERVES

Asset Revaluation Reserve

The asset revaluation reserve includes the net revaluation increments and decrements arising from the revaluation of non-current assets. Impairment adjustments may also be recognised in the Asset Revaluation Reserve.

	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Balance as at 1 July	3 609	3 609
Transfer to Other Government Agency	(70)	-
Balance as at 30 June	3 539	3 609

20. NOTES TO THE CASH FLOW STATEMENT

Reconciliation of Cash

The total of department Cash and Deposits of \$5.7 million recorded in the Balance Sheet is consistent with that recorded as 'cash' in the Cash Flow Statement.

Reconciliation of Net (Deficit) to Net Cash From Operating Activities

Net (Deficit)	(927)	(1 176)
Non-Cash Items:		
Depreciation and amortisation	1 106	781
Repairs & maintenance non cash	25	15
(Gain)/Loss on disposal of assets	-	(21)
Asset write-offs/write-downs	23	-
Assets acquired for nil consideration	(42)	-
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
(Increase) in receivables	(14)	(217)
Decrease/(Increase) in inventories	(9)	4
Decrease/(Increase) in prepayments	(109)	64
(Decrease) in payables	(282)	(133)
Increase/(Decrease) in employment benefits	351	188
(Decrease)/Increase in other provisions	70	(451)
(Decrease) in other liabilities	(22)	(321)
Net Cash (Used In)/From Operating Activities	170	(1 267)

21. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

A financial instrument is a contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Financial instruments held by the department include cash and deposits, receivables, payables and deposits held. The department has limited exposure to financial risks as discussed below.

Financial assets and liabilities are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the entity becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument. The entity's financial instruments include cash and deposits; receivables; payables; advances received; and deposits held.

Due to the nature of operating activities, certain financial assets and financial liabilities arise under statutory obligations rather than a contract. Such financial assets and liabilities do not meet the definition of financial instruments as per AASB 132 Financial Instruments Presentation. These include statutory receivables arising from taxes including GST and penalties.

Exposure to interest rate risk, foreign exchange risk, credit risk, price risk and liquidity risk arise in the normal course of activities. The entity's investments, loans and placements, and borrowings are predominantly managed through the Northern Territory Treasury Corporation adopting strategies to minimize the risk. Derivative financial arrangements are also utilised to manage financial risks inherent in the management of these financial instruments. These arrangements include swaps, forward interest rate agreements and other hedging instruments to manage fluctuations in interest or exchange rates.

(a) Categorisation of Financial Instruments

The carrying amounts of the department's financial assets and liabilities by category are disclosed in the table below:

2016-17 Categorisation of Financial Instruments

	Designated at Fair Value Through Profit or Loss \$'000	Finance Assets – Loans and Receivables \$'000	Total \$'000
Cash and deposits	5 663	-	5 663
Receivables ⁽¹⁾	-	581	581
Total Financial Assets	5 663	581	6 224
Deposits held	512	-	512
Payables ⁽¹⁾	1 607	-	1 607
Total Financial Liabilities	2 119	-	2 119

⁽¹⁾ Total amounts disclosed exclude statutory amounts (e.g. ATO)

2015-16 Categorisation of Financial Instruments

	Designated at Fair Value Through Profit or Loss \$'000	Finance Assets – Loans and Receivables \$'000	Total \$'000
Cash and deposits	6 438	-	6 438
Receivables ⁽¹⁾	-	558	558
Total Financial Assets	6 438	568	6 996
Deposits held	1 508	-	1 508
Payables ⁽¹⁾	1 965	-	1 965
Total Financial Liabilities	3 473	-	3 473

⁽¹⁾ Total amounts disclosed exclude statutory amounts (e.g. ATO)

Classification of Financial Instruments

AASB 7 Financial Instruments: Disclosures requires financial instruments to be classified and disclosed within specific categories depending on their nature and purpose.

Financial assets are classified into the following categories:

- financial assets at fair value through profit or loss
- held-to-maturity investments
- loans and receivables
- available-for-sale financial assets.

Financial liabilities are classified into the following categories:

- financial liabilities at fair value through profit or loss (FVTPL)
- financial liabilities at amortised cost.

Financial Assets or Financial Liabilities at Fair Value through Profit or Loss (FVTPL)

Financial instruments are classified as at FVTPL when the instrument is either held for trading or is designated as at FVTPL.

An instrument is classified as held for trading if it is:

- acquired or incurred principally for the purpose of selling or repurchasing it in the near term with an intention of making a profit;
- part of a portfolio of identified financial instruments that are managed together and for which there is evidence of a recent actual pattern of short-term profit-taking; or
- a derivative that is not a financial guarantee contract or a designated and effective hedging instrument.

A financial instrument may be designated as at FVTPL upon initial recognition if:

- such designation eliminates or significantly reduces a measurement or recognition inconsistency that would otherwise arise;
- the instrument forms part of a group of financial instruments, which is managed and its performance is evaluated on a fair value basis, in accordance with a documented risk management or investment strategy, and information about the grouping is provided internally on that basis; or
- it forms part of a contract containing one or more embedded derivatives, and AASB 139 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement permits the contract to be designated as at FVTPL.

- financial liabilities at fair value through profit or loss include deposits held excluding statutory deposits, accounts payable and accrued expenses. Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss include short-term securities and bonds.

Loans and Receivables

For details refer to Note 9, but exclude statutory receivables.

Financial Liabilities at Amortised Cost

Financial instrument liabilities measured at amortised cost include all advances received, finance lease liabilities and borrowings. Amortised cost is calculated using the effective interest method.

(b) Credit Risk

The department has limited credit risk exposure (risk of default). In respect of any dealings with organisations external to Government, the department has adopted a policy of only dealing with credit worthy organisations and obtaining sufficient collateral or other security where appropriate, as a means of mitigating the risk of financial loss from defaults.

Additionally, the nature of the department's revenue is such that if the debtor was to default on the debt it would cause them to suffer a business impact through the department's ability to discontinue licenses etc. until financial obligations are met. Primarily the department's credit risk comes from the regulatory work performed on behalf of landholders (i.e. fire breaks under section 47 of the *Bushfires Management Act*). In these instances if a debt is not settled the department has the ability, and does, take a lien over the property whereby the debt will be settled on sale of the property.

The carrying amount of financial assets recorded in the financial statements, net of any allowances for losses, represents the department's maximum exposure to credit risk without taking account of the value of any collateral or other security obtained.

Receivables

Receivable balances are monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure that exposure to bad debts is not significant. A reconciliation and aging analysis of receivables is presented below.

	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Internal Receivables		
Aging of Receivables		
Not overdue	510	90
Overdue for less than 30 days	-	-
Overdue for 30 to 60 days	-	-
Overdue for more than 60 days (includes S47 Firebreaks)	-	-
Total Gross Receivables	510	90

Reconciliation of the Allowance for Impairment Losses

Allowance for impairment losses at the beginning of the reporting period	-	-
Increase/(Decrease) in allowance recognised in profit or loss	-	-
Allowance for Impairment Losses at the End of the Reporting Period	-	-

External Receivables

Aging of Receivables		
Not overdue	16	410
Overdue for less than 30 days	8	-
Overdue for 30 to 60 days	-	1
Overdue for more than 60 days (includes S47 Firebreaks)	56	65
Total Gross Receivables	80	476

Reconciliation of the Allowance for Impairment Losses

Allowance for impairment losses at the beginning of the reporting period	8	7
Increase/(Decrease) in allowance recognised in profit or loss	1	1
Allowance for Impairment Losses at the End of the Reporting Period	9	8

(c) Liquidity Risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the entity will not be able to meet its financial obligations as they fall due. The department's approach to managing liquidity is to ensure that it will always have sufficient liquidity to meet its liabilities when they fall due.

The department's liquidity risk includes credit cards which are managed with tight controls and low limits. Credit card use and limits are reviewed regularly.

The following tables detail the department's remaining contractual maturity for its financial assets and liabilities.

Maturity Analysis for Financial Assets and Liabilities

2016-17	Variable Interest Rate Less than a year \$'000	Non – Interest Bearing \$'000	Carrying Amount \$'000
Assets			
Cash and deposits	509	5 154	5 663
Receivables	-	581	581
Total Financial Assets	509	5 735	6 244
Liabilities			
Deposits held	509	3	512
Payables	-	1 607	1 607
Total Financial Liabilities	509	1 610	2 119

2015-16	Variable Interest Rate Less than a year \$'000	Non – Interest Bearing \$'000	Carrying Amount \$'000
Assets			
Cash and deposits	1 503	4 935	6 438
Receivables	-	558	558
Total Financial Assets	1 503	5 493	6 996
Liabilities			
Deposits held	1 503	5	1 508
Payables	-	1 965	1 965
Total Financial Liabilities	1 503	1 970	3 473

(d) Market Risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value of future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate due to changes in market prices. It comprises interest rate risk, price risk and currency risk. The primary market risk that the department is exposed to is interest rate risk.

(i) Interest Rate Risk

The department has limited exposure to interest rate risk as all financial assets and financial liabilities, with the exception of the Single Holding Account deposits held, are non-interest bearing. Changes to the variable rates of 100 basis points (1%) at reporting date would have had no effect on the department's profit or loss and equity as interest earned on the Single Holding Account is accounted for as both an asset and a liability.

(ii) Price Risk

The department is not exposed to price risk as the department does not hold units in unit trusts.

(iii) Currency Risk

The department is not exposed to currency risk as the department does not hold borrowings denominated in foreign currencies or transactional currency exposures arising from purchases in a foreign currency.

(e) Net Fair Value

The carrying amount of financial assets and financial liabilities recorded in the financial statements approximates to their respective net fair values. Where differences exist, these are not material.

22. RELATED PARTIES**(i) Related Parties**

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is a government administrative entity and is wholly owned and controlled by the Territory Government. Related parties of the department include:

- the Portfolio Minister and key management personnel (KMP) because they have authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the department directly; and
- spouses, children and dependents who are close family members of the Portfolio Minister or KMP; and
- all public sector entities that are controlled and consolidated into the whole of government financial statements; and
- any entities controlled or jointly controlled by the Portfolio Minister or the KMP's or controlled or jointly controlled by their close family members.

(ii) Key Management Personnel

Key management personnel of the department are those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of Department Environment and Natural Resources. These include the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources, the Chief Executive Officer and the 11 members of the executive team of Department Environment and Natural Resources as listed on page 132 .

(iii) Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

The details below excludes the salaries and other benefits of Minister for Environment and Natural Resources as the Minister's remunerations and allowances are payable by the Department of the Legislative Assembly and consequently disclosed within the Treasurer's Annual Financial Statements.

The aggregate compensation of key management personnel of Department of Environment and Natural Resources is set out below:

	2017 \$'000
Short-term Benefits	1 706
Post-employment Benefits	206
Total	1 912

(iv) Related party transactions

Transactions with Northern Territory Government controlled entities

The departments' primary ongoing source of funding is received from the Central Holding Authority in the form of output and capital appropriation and on-passed Commonwealth national partnership payments.

Related party transactions of the former Minister have not been assessed as the period served during the 2016-17 financial year is considered minor.

The following table provides quantitative information about related party transactions entered into during the year with all other Northern Territory controlled entities.

Related Party	Revenue from related parties 2017 \$'000	Payments to related parties 2017 \$'000	Amounts owed by related parties 2017 \$'000	Amounts owed to related parties 2017 \$'000
All NTG Government departments	5 382	9 776	510	-

The departments' transactions with other government entities are not individually significant.

Other related party transactions are as follows:

Given the breadth and depth of Territory Government activities, related parties will transact with the Territory Public sector in a manner consistent with other members of the public including paying stamp duty and other government fees and charges and therefore these transactions have not been disclosed. There have been no other related party transactions in excess of \$10 000.

23. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND CONTINGENT ASSETS

(a) Contingent Liabilities

The department had no contingent liabilities as at 30 June 2017 or 30 June 2016.

(b) Contingent Assets

The department had no contingent assets as at 30 June 2017 or 30 June 2016.

24. EVENTS SUBSEQUENT TO BALANCE SHEET DATE

No events have arisen between the end of the financial year and the date of this report that require adjustment to, or disclosure in these financial statements.

25. SCHEDULE OF ADMINISTERED TERRITORY ITEMS

The following Territory items are managed by the Department on behalf of the Government and are recorded in the Central Holding Authority (refer note 2(d)).

	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
TERRITORY INCOME AND EXPENSES		
Income		
Fees from regulatory services	69	-
Royalties and rents	4 992	5 002
Other income	25	-
Total Income	5 086	5 002
Expenses		
Central Holding Authority income transferred	5 086	5 002
Total Expenses	5 086	5 002
Territory Income Less Expenses	-	-
TERRITORY ASSETS AND LIABILITIES		
Assets		
Royalties and rent receivable	6	24
Other receivables	4	-
Total Assets	10	24
Liabilities		
Central Holding Authority income payable	10	24
Total Liabilities	10	24
Net Assets	-	-

26. BUDGETARY INFORMATION

COMPREHENSIVE OPERATING STATEMENT	2016-17 Actual \$'000	2016-17 Original Budget \$'000	Variance \$'000	Note
Income				
Grants and subsidies revenue				
Current	4 731	3 473	1 258	1
Capital	250	-	250	
Appropriation				
Output	46 241	37 559	8 682	2
Commonwealth	1 625	2 831	(1 206)	3
Sales of goods and services	2 568	6 775	(4 207)	4
Interest revenue	14	-	14	
Goods and services received free of charge	3 885	3 820	65	
Other income	82	-	82	
Total Income	59 396	54 458	4 938	
Expenses				
Employee expenses	32 875	29 921	2 954	5
Administrative expenses				
Purchase of goods and services	15 320	15 098	222	
Repairs and maintenance	1 765	1 871	(106)	
Depreciation and amortisation	1 106	726	380	
Other administrative expenses	3 887	3 820	67	
Grants and subsidies expenses				
Current	5 333	4 194	1 139	6
Interest expenses	14	-	14	
Loss on disposal of asset	23	-	23	
Total Expenses	60 323	55 630	4 693	
Net Deficit	(927)	(1 172)	245	
Comprehensive Result	(927)	(1 172)	245	

Notes

The following note descriptions relate to variances greater than \$0.5 million.

1. The increase in current grants and subsidies received is due to new externally funded programs being sourced since the publication of the 2016-17 budget papers.
2. The increase in output appropriation is due to the transfer in of Environment and NT EPA from Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics as a result of Administrative Arrangements Order 12 September 2016.
3. The decrease in Commonwealth appropriation is due to the funding for National Water Infrastructure Development Fund not being received until 2017-18 which is offset by new Commonwealth funded programs sourced since the publication of the 2016-17 budget papers.
4. The decrease in Sales for Goods and Services is due to the cessation of shared services arrangement under which Department of Land Resource Management provided services to the previous Department of Arts & Museums, Department of Sport and Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory.
5. The increase in employee expenses is a net increase due to the transfer in of the Environment and NT EPA functions from Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics as part of the Administrative Arrangements Order 12 September 2016, and a decrease in externally funded projects expenditure that requires to be carried forward to 2017-18.
6. The increase in grants and subsidies expenditure is due to the transfer in of Environment and NT EPA from Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics as a result of Administrative Arrangements Order 12 September 2016.

BALANCE SHEET	2016-17 Actual \$'000	2016-17 Original Budget \$'000	Variance \$'000	Note
Assets				
Current Assets				
Cash	5 663	6 317	(654)	1
Receivables	979	747	232	
Inventories	11	6	5	
Prepayments	260	216	44	
Total Current Assets	6 913	7 286	(373)	
Non-Current Assets				
Property, plant and equipment	13 868	16 000	(2 132)	2
Intangible assets	1 074	858	216	2
Total Expenses	14 942	16 858	(1 916)	
Total Assets	21 855	24 144	(2 289)	
Liabilities				
Current Liabilities				
Deposits held	512	1 186	(674)	3
Payables	1 814	2 229	(415)	
Provisions	5 048	4 889	159	
Other liabilities	948	1 322	(374)	
Total Current Liabilities	8 322	9 626	(1 304)	
Non-Current Liabilities				
Other liabilities	30	-	30	3
Total Non-Current Liabilities	30	-	30	
Total Liabilities	8 352	9 626	(1 274)	
Net Assets	13 503	14 518	(1 015)	
Equity				
Capital	87 639	89 066	(1 427)	4
Reserve	3 539	3 609	(70)	
Accumulated funds	(77 675)	(78 157)	482	
Total Equity	13 503	14 518	(1 015)	

- Notes
- The following note descriptions relate to variances greater than \$0.5 million.
1. The decrease in cash held relates to the decrease in liabilities.
 2. The decrease in property, plant and equipment is due to the Mary River Saltwater Barrages infrastructure expected to be completed and transferred however this will not occur until 2017-18.
 3. The decrease in the deposits held is a result of funds approved to be utilised from the Single Holding Account for projects in 2016-17.
 4. The increase in capital is due to the transfer in of the Environment and NT EPA functions from Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics as a part of the Administrative Arrangements Order 12 September 2016.

CASH FLOW STATEMENT	2016-17 Actual \$'000	2016-17 Original Budget \$'000	Variance \$'000	Note
Cash Flows from Operating Activities				
Operating Receipts				
Grants and subsidies received				
Current	4 731	3 473	1 258	1
Capital	250	-	250	
Appropriation				
Output	46 241	37 559	8 682	2
Commonwealth	1 625	2 831	(1 206)	3
Receipts from sales of goods and services	4 526	6 775	(2 249)	4
Interest received	16	-	16	
Total Operating Receipts	57 389	50 638	6 751	
Operating Payments				
Payments to employees	(32 387)	(29 921)	(2 466)	5
Payments for goods and services	(19 483)	(16 969)	(2 514)	6
Grants and subsidies paid				
Current	(5 333)	(4 194)	(1 139)	7
Interest paid	(16)	-	(16)	
Total Operating Payments	(57 219)	(51 084)	(6 135)	
Net Cash (Used In) Operating Activities	170	(446)	616	
Cash Flows from Investing Activities				
Investing Payments				
Purchases of assets	(1 160)	(974)	(186)	
Total Investing Payments	(1 160)	(974)	(186)	
Net Cash (Used In) Investing Activities	(1 160)	(974)	(186)	
Cash Flows from Financing Activities				
Financing Receipts				
Equity injections				
Capital appropriations	974	974	-	
Other equity injections	835	-	835	8
Total Financing Receipts	1 809	974	835	
Financing Payments				
Deposits paid	(996)	-	(996)	9
Equity withdrawals				
Capital withdrawals	(598)	-	(598)	10
Total Financing Payments	(1 594)	-	(1 594)	
Net Cash From Financing Activities	215	974	(759)	
Net decrease in cash held	(775)	(446)	(329)	
Cash at beginning of financial year	6 438	6 438	-	
Cash at End of Financial Year	5 663	5 992	(329)	

Notes

The following note descriptions relate to variances greater than \$0.5 million.

1. The increase in current grants and subsidies received is due to new externally funded programs being sourced since the publication of the 2016-17 budget papers.
2. The increase in output appropriation is due to the transfer in of Environment and NT EPA from Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics as a result of Administrative Arrangements Order 12 September 2016.

3. The decrease in Commonwealth appropriation is due to the funding for National Water Infrastructure Development Fund not being received until 2017-18 which is offset by new Commonwealth funded programs sourced since the publication of the 2016-17 budget papers.
4. The decrease in Sales for Goods and Services is due to the cessation of shared services arrangement under which Department of Land Resource Management provided services to the previous Department of Arts & Museums, Department of Sport and Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory, and Government Business Division of Territory Wildlife Parks.
5. The increase in employee expenses is a net increase due to the transfer in of the Environment and NT EPA functions from Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics as part of the Administrative Arrangements Order 12 September 2016, and a decrease in externally funded projects expenditure that requires to be carried forward to 2017-18 .
6. The increase in payments to goods and services is a result of the increase in cash expenditure as a result of the transfer in of Environment and NT EPA from Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics as a result of Administrative Arrangements Order 12 September 2016 as well as the GST paid during the year which is not included in the budget.
7. The increase in grants and subsidies expenditure is due to the transfer in of Environment and NT EPA from Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics as a result of Administrative Arrangements Order 12 September 2016.
8. The Other Equity Injection is a combination of corporate functions transferring to the Department of Tourism and Culture as part of the Administration Arrangements Order 12 September 2016 and Commonwealth funding received via transfers from other Government Agencies.
9. Funds held in the Single Holding Account were disbursed.
10. The Equity Withdrawal is due to the transfer in of opening balances due to the functions of the Environment and NT EPA from the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics as a result of the Administration Arrangements Order 12 September 2016.

27. BUDGETARY INFORMATION: ADMINISTERED TERRITORY ITEMS

In addition to the specific departmental operations which are included in the financial statements, the department administers or manages other activities and resources on behalf of the Territory such as rent. The transactions relating to these activities are reported as administered items in this note.

	2016-17 Actual \$'000	2016-2017 Original Budget \$'000	Variance \$'000	Note
TERRITORY INCOME AND EXPENSES				
Income				
Fees from regulatory services	69	-	69	1
Royalties and rents	4 992	5 063	(71)	
Other income	25	-	25	1
Total Income	5 086	5 063	23	
Expenses				
Central Holding Authority income transferred	5 086	5 063	23	
Total Expenses	5 086	5 063	23	
Territory Income Less Expenses	-	-	-	

	2016-17 Actual \$'000	2016-2017 Original Budget \$'000	Variance \$'000	Note
TERRITORY ASSETS AND LIABILITIES				
Assets				
Royalties and rent receivable	6	-	6	
Other receivables	4	-	4	
Total Assets	10	-	10	
Liabilities				
Central Holding Authority income payable	10	-	10	
Total Liabilities	10	-	10	
Net Assets	-	-	-	

Notes

Additional revenue relating to income from Environment and NT EPA whose functions were transferred to DENR as a result of Administrative Arrangement Orders 12 September 2016.

APPENDIX 1

DEPARTMENT BOARD AND COMMITTEES - MEMBERSHIP

The department's governance structure comprises a Governance Board and supporting committees that are focussed on key governance elements.

The board and committees oversee the allocation of resources across the department and the development and implementation of policies, plans and procedures that provide a foundation of good governance for the department's activities.

The committees include:

Governance Board

Membership:

- Chief Executive Officer (Chair)
- Executive Director, Rangelands
- Executive Director, Corporate Services
- Executive Director, Water Resources
- Executive Director, Flora and Fauna
- Executive Director, Bushfires NT
- Executive Director, Environment Protection
- Executive Director, Environment Policy and Support
- Executive Officer – Executive Services
- Regional Director, South
- Regional Manager, Katherine

Audit and Risk Management Committee

Membership:

Previous members of the Audit and Risk Management Committee for 2016–17:

Committee Member	Division	Position
Mr Mark Ashley (Chair)	Water Resources	A/Executive Director
Mr Piers Barrow	Rangelands	A/Principal Weeds Officer
Ms Kiley Hanslow	Water Resources	Business Manager
Ms Cathy Fong (observer)	Corporate Services	Director Corporate Governance

Current members of the Audit and Risk Management Committee as at 30 June 2017:

Committee Member	Division	Position
Mr Simon Cruickshank (Chair)	Water Resources	A/Executive Director
Ms Collene Bremner	Bushfires NT	Executive Director
Mr Keith Saalfeld	Flora and Fauna	Director Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program
Ms Kathleen Davis	Environment Policy	Director
Ms Tania Moloney	Rangelands	Director Pastoral Lease Administration and Board
Mr Stephan Jackson (external member)	Department of Infrastructure Planning and Logistics	Senior Director Engineering and Environmental Services
Ms Carly Holman (Secretariat)	Corporate Services	Manager Corporate Governance

Divisional Work Health and Safety Committees

Membership:

Bushfires NT

- Collene Bremner (Chair)
- Lisa Williams
- Joshua Fischer
- Miranda Seib
- Ken Baulch
- Lucas Fiddaman
- Adam Redpath
- Troy Munckton
- Des Oakhill.

Flora and Fauna

- Alaric Fisher (Chair)
- Keith Saalfeld
- Plaxy Purich
- Kym Brennan
- Neil Smit
- Peter McDonald
- Glenn Edwards
- Debbie Randall.

Environment

- David Rhind (Chair)
- Jane Orr
- Peter Morante
- Alison Watters

Water Resources

- Executive Director (Chair)
- Kiley Hanslow
- Allan Russ
- Cherie Jackson
- Duncan Rance
- Grant Robinson
- Mohammed Dilshad
- Noel Gibbons
- Pru Ducey
- Ralf Koberstein
- Stephen Hester.

Corporate Services

- Vicki Highland (Chair)
- Drew Wilkinson
- Michelle Murray
- Megan Hughes
- Edwin Edlund
- Rebecca Litten.

Rangelands

- Christine Long (Chair)
- Jason Hill
- Tahnee Thompson
- Gary Bastin
- Kara Maclean.

Emergency Management Committee

Membership:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Executive Director, Rangelands (Chair)
- Director, Land Development Coordination, Rangelands
- Director, Corporate Communications and Media, Corporate Services.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Governance Committee

Membership:

- Regional Director, South (Chair)
- Executive Director, Flora and Fauna
- Executive Director, Corporate Services
- Executive Director, Environment Protection
- Senior Manager, Geospatial Services Branch
- Director, Policy and Engagement, Bushfires NT
- Director, Land Assessment Branch
- Chief Information Officer, Corporate Services.

APPENDIX 2

STATUTORY BOARDS AND COMMITTEES – MEMBERSHIP

Water Advisory Committees

Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee

Membership:

- Ms Jocelyn Davies
- Ms Eli Melky
- Mr Jimmy Cocking
- Mr Adam Davis
- Ms Wendy Stuart
- Mr Rod Cramer
- Ms Robyn Grey-Gardener
- Mr Richard Hayes
- Mr Glenn Marshall
- Ms Veronica Lynch.

Howard Water Advisory Committee

Membership:

- Ms Donna Jackson
- Mr Bill Risk
- Mr Gerry Wood
- Mr Mark Smith
- Ms Kate Peake
- Ms Maree Bredhauer
- Mr David Ciaravolo
- Ms Jan Hintze
- Mr Mathew Salter
- Mr Shane Papworth.

Katherine Water Advisory Committee

Membership:

- Ms Marie Piccone
- Mr Warren de With
- Mr Allister Andrews (proxy is Liam Golding)
- Alison King
- Michael Jerram
- Rick Fletcher
- Marie Allen (proxy is Samantha Sing)
- Peter Rix
- Peter Marks
- Shane Papworth
- Neal Adamson
- Steven Rose
- Charmaine Roth.

Ooloo Water Advisory Committee

Membership:

- Mr John Childs
- Ms Kate Peake
- Mr Simon Smith
- Mr Malcom Baker (proxy is Peter Rix)
- Mr Sam McBean
- Mr Warren de With
- Mr Richard Perry
- Mr Eddie Webber
- Ms Mona Liddy (proxy is Elizabeth Sullivan)
- Dr Lorrae McArthur
- Dr Alison King
- Mr Peter Marks
- Mr Phil Howie
- Mr Rob Lindsay.

Rapid Creek Water Advisory Committee

Membership:

- Mr Ian Lancaster
- Mr Ian Kew
- Ms Lisa Peters
- Prof. Karen Gibb
- Mr Neal Adamson
- Ms Emma Lewis
- Ms Donna Jackson
- Mr Tim Moore
- Ms Julia Schult
- Mr Nigel Weston.

Ti Tree Water Advisory Committee

Membership:

- Mr John Thompson
- Mr Vincent Lange
- Mr Adam Davis
- Mr Willie Lane
- Mr Dan Pepperill
- Mr Bevan Ball
- Mr Rodney Baird
- Mr Bill Low
- Ms Robyn Grey-Gardener.

Tindall Mataranka – Daly Waters Water Advisory Committee

Membership:

- Dr Rebecca Mohr-Bell
- Mr Kane Youngusband
- Mr Peter Rix
- Ms Tracey Hayes
- Ms Clair O'Brien
- Ms Sarah Kerin
- Mr David Ciaravolo
- Mr David Crook
- Ms Sharon Hillen
- Mr Vincent Lange
- Mr Allister Andrews (proxy is Liam Golding)
- Ms Jocelyn James
- Ms Kerry Roberts
- Ms Helena Lardy.

Northern Territory Catchments Advisory Committee

The Northern Territory Catchments Advisory Committee was disbanded in February 2017.

Previous membership:

- Mr George Roussos
- Mr Kit Jolley
- Dr Allison King
- Mr Tom Harris
- Ms Maria Kraatz
- Mr Colin Beard
- Ms Kate Peake.

Drillers Qualification Advisory Committee

Membership:

- Mr Lance Martin
- Mr Mark Ballard
- Mr Henry Van Tilburg
- Mr Trevor Edwards
- Mr David George
- Mr Des Yin Foo
- Mr Tom Harris
- Ms Kirsten Marmion.

Water Resources Review Panel

Membership:

- John Childs - Chair
- David George
- Phil Howie
- George Roussos
- Joe Morrison
- Andrew Macrides
- Colin Beard
- Rob Fish
- Alan Hughes.

Bushfires Council of the Northern Territory

Membership:

- Ms Elizabeth Bird
- Mr Paul Blore
- Mr Todd Smith
- Ms Dianne Tynan
- Mr Garry Cook
- Mr Mark Spain
- Ms Patricia Rigby-Christopherson
- Mr Ben Kaethner
- Mr Matt Braitling
- Mr Ian Stewart
- Ms Tracey Hayes
- Ms Karen May
- Ms Joella Nelson
- Ms Alice Beilby
- Mr Shaun Ansell
- Mr Nigel Gellar
- Mr Jessie Carpenter.

Regional Bushfires Committees

Alice Springs Regional Bushfires Committee

Membership:

- Ms Joella Nelson
- Ms Kristen Appel
- Ms Elizabeth Bird
- Mr Ashley Severin
- Mr Ben Kaethner
- Mr Edward Hayes
- Mr Alastair Bayly
- Mr Ben Heaslip
- Ms Kimberley McKay.

Arnhem Regional Bushfires Committee

Membership:

- Ms Jessie Alderson
- Mr Otto Champion
- Mr Nigel Gellar
- Mr Jakob Weigal
- Mr Simon Ponto
- Mr William Rioli
- Mr Clarry Rogers
- Mr Connell Tipiloura
- Mr Greg Wilson
- Ms Anna Pickworth.

Barkly Regional Bushfires Committee

Membership:

- Ms Lena Perkins
- Mr Michael Johnson
- Mr Donald Shadforth
- Mr Jesse Carpenter
- Mr Stephen Bryce
- Mr Ken Ford.

Savanna Regional Bushfires Committee

Membership:

- Mr Campbell Elliott
- Ms Heidi Millership
- Mr Thomas Shephard
- Mr Michael Harding
- Ms Jessica Beckhouse
- Ms Tammy Kruckow
- Mr James Benjamin Lewis
- Ms Alice Beilby
- Mr Sam Tapp
- Mr Simon Cheers.

Vernon/Arafura Regional Bushfires Committee

Membership:

- Mr Andrew McTaggart
- Mr Ian Stewart
- Mr Colin Deveraux
- Mr Shaun Ansell
- Ms Susan Jones
- Mr Thomas Harrower
- Mr David McLachlan
- Mr Desmond Oakhill
- Mr Daniel Thomson
- Mr Kevin Phillips
- Mr Rodney Beament.

Pastoral Land Board

Membership:

- Mr Paul Zlotkowski
- Dr Leigh Hunt
- Mr Steven Craig
- Ms Anne Kilgariff
- Mr David James.

Northern Territory Weed Advisory Committee

Membership:

- Dr Margaret Friedel
- Mr Jay Mohr-Bell
- Mr Garry Fischer
- Dr Dionne Walsh
- Mr Anthony Cox.

Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA)

Membership:

- Dr Paul Vogel (Chair)
- Dr Ian Geoffrey Wallis
- Ms Janice van Reyk
- Dr John Colin Chapman
- Mr Colin Joseph (Joe) Woodward
- Mr Brendan Dowd.

Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee

Membership:

- Mr Nick Hanigan
- Mr Nigel Browne
- Ms Shar Molloy
- Ms Anna Boustead
- Mr David Ciaravolo
- Mr Jim Smith
- Ms Maria Kraatz
- Dr Graeme Suckling
- Prof. Karen Gibb
- Mr Alan Roe
- Mr Terry O'Connor
- Dr Claire Streten
- Mr Greg Oliver
- Ms Trish Rigby
- Ms Shenagh Gamble.

Aboriginal Land Management Advisory Group

Membership:

- Dr Alaric Fisher (Chair)
- Mr Matt Salmon
- Mr Peter Donohoe
- Mr Brian Tipungwuti
- Mr Adrian Hogg
- Mr Ricky Archer
- Dr Linda Ford
- Mr Henry Wilson
- Ms Karen May
- Mr Paul Donohoe
- Mr Dean Yibarbuk
- Ms Melissa George
- Mr Conrad Ratarra
- Mr Paul Jenkins.

Coastal and Marine Management Partnership Group

Membership:

- Ms Katherine Winchester
- Ms Adele Pedder
- Mr Ross McDonald
- Ms Melissa George
- Mr Matthew Salmon
- Ms Shar Molloy
- Ms Kate Hadden
- Professor Karen Gibb
- Dr Ed Butler
- Dr Janice Warren
- Mr David Ciaravolo
- Mr Graeme Williams
- Mr Trevor Cox
- Ms Robin Knox
- Ms Karen May (Chair).

APPENDIX 3

GRANTS

A full list of grants administered by the department, are shown below:

Grant Name	Recipient	NTG or externally funded	Amount (\$)
Arid Lands Environment Centre	Election commitment to provide operational support.	NTG	100 000
Arnhem Land Fire Abatement Ltd (ALFA)	West Arnhem Fire Management Agreement (WAFMA) between the Northern Territory Government and Conoco Phillips. Funding to be used to conduct fire planning, mitigation and suppression activities on country in western Arnhem Land.	Externally Funded	936 343
Australian Red Cross (Tennant Creek)	Environment Project Grant for the Cleaner Homes Project.	NTG	19 000
Australian Wildlife Conservancy	Establishment of a large feral free area at Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary.	Externally Funded	700 000
Berry Springs School	Environment schools grant.	NTG	2 000
Bulla Camp School	Environment schools grant.	NTG	1 968
Charles Darwin University	Environment Project Grant to reduce waste generation at source.	NTG	34 400
	Mangrove Dieback Program for urgent research in the Gulf of Carpentaria.	NTG	200 000
	West Arnhem Fire Management Agreement (WAFMA) between the Northern Territory Government and Conoco Phillips. Funding to be used to conduct fire planning, mitigation and suppression activities on country in western Arnhem Land.	Externally Funded	150 000
Coomalie Community Government Council	Environment Project Grant to upgrade fence at the Batchelor landfill.	NTG	20 000
DEMED Aboriginal Corporation	Environment Project Grants for data collection and mapping, and the Mamdawerre landfill waste management upgrade.	NTG	32 304
Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (Cwth)	National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement Review Contribution.	NTG	974
East Arnhem Regional Council	Container Deposit Scheme Infrastructure Grant.	NTG	27 509
Environmental Defenders Office NT Inc.	Operational Grant to support centre.	NTG	50 000
Forrest Parade School	Election commitment to provide operational support.	NTG	2 000
Garage Sale Trail	Environment Project Grant for the Garage Sale Trail.	NTG	10 000
GeoScience Australia	National Water Infrastructure Development Fund for extension of the Ord irrigation Scheme Stages 1 and 2. To provide new arable farming land by constructing irrigation channels from the Ord irrigation Scheme into the Northern Territory.	Externally Funded	96 807
Gray Primary School	Container Deposit Scheme Infrastructure Grant.	NTG	1 681
Jacob's Group Australia	National Water Infrastructure Development Fund - Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) investigate the economic and technical viability of certain aquifers in support of mosaic irrigation development. Feasibility study to assess if MAR and conjunctive water use in targeted areas of the Northern Territory is an economic and sustainable way in which to convert the excesses of the wet season to supply or augment water to irrigation projects in the dry season.	Externally Funded	335 000
Keep Australia Beautiful Council	To provide operational support to the Centre.	NTG	200 000
Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation	Biodiversity Impact Mitigation Offset Strategy Project.	NTG	170 000
Litchfield Council	Container Deposit Scheme Infrastructure Grant.	NTG	10 890
Manunda Terrace Primary School	Container Deposit Scheme Infrastructure Grant.	NTG	13 710
Marrara Christian College	Container Deposit Scheme Infrastructure Grant.	NTG	14 898

Grant Name	Recipient	NTG or externally funded	Amount (\$)
Mindil Beach Sunset Market Association Inc.	Container Deposit Scheme Infrastructure Grant.	NTG	30 000
Motor Trades Association (NT) Incorporated	Environment Project Grant for Territory End-of-life Tyres Study.	NTG	19 565
National Indigenous Pastoral and Enterprises PTY Ltd.	Environment Project Grant. Gunbalanya Abattoir to carry out feasibility study to enable meatworks operators and the Gunbalanya community to make informed decisions on waste streams.	NTG	12 000
Nganmariyanga School	Environment schools grant.	NTG	1 200
Northern Land Council	West Arnhem Fire Management Agreement (WAFMA) between the Northern Territory Government and Conoco Phillips. Funding to be used to conduct fire planning, mitigation and suppression activities on country in western Arnhem Land.	Externally Funded	174 595
NT Department of Primary Industry and Resource	Commonwealth Project agreement for managing established pest animals and weeds to support the development of best practice guidelines for assessing and managing the impacts of wild dogs across the Northern Territory.	Externally Funded	124 500
NT Farmers Association Incorporated	Collaborative agreement to provide to land use field data and act as a liaison with industry stakeholders for the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) Land Use Mapping (LUMP) - Biosecurity project.	Externally Funded	40 000
Palmerston Senior College	Environment schools grant.	NTG	2 000
Pine Creek School	Environment schools grant.	NTG	1 729
Planet Ark Environmental Foundation	Environment Project Grant for the RecyclingNearYou website and hotline information service.	NTG	15 000
Queensland Department of Agricultural & Fisheries	Contribution to the National Four Tropical Weeds Eradication Program.	NTG	47 549
	Red Witchweed Program due to new detections and subsequent impact.	NTG	17 301
Queensland Department of Science Information Technology and Innovation	A collaborative research project between the Northern Territory Government and the Queensland DSITIA to provide an integrated system that will inform both governments and land managers on the condition of Northern Territory Rangelands.	NTG	100 000
Roper Gulf Regional Council	Environment grants under the Container Deposit Scheme Infrastructure Grant and Project grant for remote waste facilities at Daly Waters and Larrimah.	NTG	43 003
St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School	Container Deposit Scheme Infrastructure Grant.	NTG	9 872
St Francis Xavier Catholic School	Environment schools grant	NTG	2 000
The Environment Centre NT Inc.	Election commitment to provide operational support to the Centre.	NTG	100 000
University of Tasmania	Environment Project Grant. Collaboration with University of Tasmania, Menzies and NT organisations to complete a smartphone app, Air Rater. The app will provide easy access to real time, locally-specific information on air pollutants, pollen and other environmental hazards.	NTG	22 790
University of Technology (Sydney)	Australian Research Council Linkage grant contribution for project titled Preventing and reversing population declines of northern quolls.	NTG	10 000
Various recipients for bushfire grants relating to protective clothing or equipment	Funding for personal protective clothing and equipment is provided to volunteer firefighters on completion of basic training.	NTG	18 226
	Subsidy is provided for landholders to purchase firefighting equipment and radios at 50 percent of the purchase price (exclusive of GST) with maximum value of \$1 200 per applicant.	NTG	38 365
Victoria Daly Regional Council	Environment Project Grant for the Timber Creek waste management facility.	NTG	50 000
Volunteer Bushfire Brigades	Operational grant to support 22 volunteer bushfire brigades.	NTG	601 842
	Vehicle replacement program for firefighting vehicles of the volunteer bushfire brigades.	NTG	579 287
West Arnhem Regional Council	Environment Project Grants for waste oil storage and removal, landfill signage, sorting bays a Gunbalanya, Jabiru and Maningrida, and internal fencing at Gunbalanya, Jabiru and Maningrida.	NTG	142 650
TOTAL			5 332 958

CONTACTS

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Alice Springs - Phone: 08 8951 9208

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Weed Management Branch

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Pollution

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Container deposit

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