our department
Budget priorities:

- Jobs and economy
- Safer communities
- Investing in the bush
- Trust

31 pieces of legislation administered

- 19 Acts
- 12 pieces of 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 also provides assessment, monitoring and compliance support, and services on behalf of the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA) to support environmentally sustainable development.

To be effective, we need a strong partnership approach. It is through partnerships with landholders, across government and with 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 throughout the Territory, including in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Batchelor and Darwin. We provide natural resource management services and advice to landholders across the 1,350,000km² of the Northern Territory.

Through our presence in the regions we maintain strong connections with rural and remote communities to deliver effective consultation, planning and services. The Katherine, Tennant Creek, Batchelor and Alice Springs teams appreciate the value of partnerships with local stakeholders. They are proud of the relationships they have established and continue to strengthen them with regular and meaningful engagement.

Darwin

The Goyder building in Palmerston is the central location for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The department has staff based at Tannadice Street (Winnellie), the Herbarium Building (Palmerston), CSIRO Building (Berrimah), Arnhemica House (Parap), and Bushfire Headquarters and Operations Centre (Winnellie and Batchelor).

A total of 280 staff are located in the Darwin region across all divisions.

Katherine region

Our regional office in Katherine hosts 14 staff in the Water Resources, Bushfires NT, Rangelands and Executive divisions. Staff are based in the Giles Street building.

The Katherine region covers some 370,000km² and supports a range of major industries including mining, pastoralists, agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

Barkly region

Our regional office in Tennant Creek hosts 3 positions in the Bushfires NT and Rangelands divisions, and staff are based at the Leichhardt Street building.

It services the Barkly region which covers around 322,500km².

Central Australia region

In Alice Springs our department employs 36 staff across the Flora and Fauna, Water Resources, Bushfires NT, Environment, Rangelands and Executive divisions, based at the Arid Zone Research Institute and Elders Street Alice Springs.

The Central Australia region covers an area of 546,000km², which comprises 40% of the Northern Territory.
## Strategic plan 2017-20

### 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.

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<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
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| 1 Strategically improve scientific and community knowledge and understanding of water, soils, landscapes and biodiversity to better inform adaptive and responsive management. | • 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.  
• 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. | • Implement water allocation planning in conjunction with water policy reform.  
• Ensure that outputs from the Mapping the Future project inform natural resource allocation planning and decisions.  
• Provide the best available information on the Territory’s natural resources to support the NT Government’s Economic Development Framework.  
• Develop and maintain integrated information systems for natural resource data and information accessible to stakeholders, land managers and the community.  
• 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. | • Reform, streamline and increase transparency of environmental regulatory systems in the Territory.  
• 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 reduce the impacts of waste and pollution on the Territory’s environment.  
• Ensure mining and petroleum activities are subject to the Water Act 1992.  
• Support and engage with stakeholders and the community on managing risks and mitigating the impact of waste on the environment. |
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<th>Goals</th>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Foster and sustain community participation from all regions of the Territory in sustainable natural resource use and management.</td>
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<td>• Develop and maintain engagement and partnerships with stakeholders and the community to leverage knowledge and better manage the Territory's natural resources.</td>
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<td>• Support Aboriginal rangers and communities to protect the environment and create jobs.</td>
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<td>• Establish an Aboriginal Carbon Unit to deliver carbon abatement and economic development on Aboriginal land.</td>
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<td>• Implement a Strategic Aboriginal Water Reserves policy and methodology to give Aboriginal landholders increased opportunity to access water resources for economic development.</td>
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<td>• Develop digital information products to better inform the community about contentious natural resource management issues.</td>
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<td>• Develop a Coastal and Marine Management Strategy that protects our valued coast and marine environments while encouraging sustainable development and use by Territorians.</td>
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<td>• Establish the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Manage and mitigate threats to regional communities and our natural ecosystems and native flora and fauna through shared responsibilities and partnerships.</td>
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<td>• Support land managers to reduce the impacts of fire, feral animals and weeds on productive and natural systems.</td>
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<td>• Progress a strategic approach to manage the increased risk of bushfire in the rural area caused by grassy weeds.</td>
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<td>• Build community understanding of, and capacity to mitigate, the impacts of wildfire, weeds and feral animals.</td>
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<td>• Provide flood monitoring and advice in consultation with other agencies for major ‘at risk’ communities.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Maintain an organisation with the capacity and capability to deliver effective services and that nurtures its human resources.</td>
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<td>• Inspire and support a workplace culture that is collaborative, respectful and accountable.</td>
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<td>• Build and enhance strategic leadership across the agency.</td>
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<td>• Implement targeted development programs to ‘grow our own’, with an emphasis on succession planning.</td>
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<td>• Provide a safe working environment and promote safe practices in both office and field operations.</td>
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<td>• Continue to improve business processes and streamline internal systems.</td>
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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 regions.

Below is the Governance Board membership.

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 (NT EPA). A recent addition to his responsibilities is oversight of the environmental regulation of the onshore petroleum industry. Paul has 15 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 4 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).

Karen Avery
Executive Director
Environment Policy and Support

Karen has been the Executive Director, Environment Policy and Support since November 2016 overseeing the Environment Division’s policy development and support activities.

Karen’s time is mostly occupied with leading the reform of the Territory’s environmental regulatory framework. Karen has worked in government at state/Territory and federal levels for over 30 years, much of which has been in complex regulatory environments. The majority of her time in the NT has been spent working in the complex regulatory policy areas of drugs, gambling and liquor.

Karen holds a Bachelor of Business.

Jo Townsend
Chief Executive Officer

Jo is the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources which is a position she has held since December 2016.

As the Chief Executive Officer, Jo is responsible for leading the agency to deliver natural resource monitoring, assessment and management of natural resource assets across the Northern Territory, including advice and management on flora and fauna, water resources, bushfire mitigation, pests and weeds and the Northern Territory’s pastoral estate.

The department is also responsible for assessment, monitoring and compliance and support services on behalf of the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA).

Jo has more than 24 years of experience in the Northern Territory public sector, including 16 years in executive leadership roles and has been responsible for leading and reforming a range of diverse portfolio areas such as child protection, alcohol and other drugs and family and youth services.

Jo has a Bachelor of Arts and a Graduate Diploma in Applied Psychology.
Collene Bremner  
Executive Director  
Bushfires NT

Collene joined the department in December 2016 as the Executive Director Bushfires NT.

Collene has worked in the Northern Territory Public Service for nearly 20 years in a number of leadership roles across government and has more than 10 years of experience working in leadership and emergency management roles. Collene’s extensive career consists of appointments such as chair of the Australian and New Zealand Emergency Management Recovery Sub-Committee and the Northern Territory representative on the Australian and New Zealand Emergency Management Committee. Collene has also been involved with the coordination of many local, national and international recovery efforts during this period.

Collene has a Graduate Diploma of Public Sector Executive Management.

Christine Long  
Executive Director  
Water Resources

Christine was appointed to the role of Executive Director Water Resources in March 2018.

Christine acted as the Executive Director Rangelands in 2017.

Christine has a Bachelor of 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 prior to joining the Northern Territory Government in 1990. Her work has been primarily in pastoral and land administration, strategic land use planning and primary industries.

Luis Da Rocha  
Executive Director  
Rangelands

Luis was appointed to the role of Executive Director Rangelands in February 2019, a position he has held since 2016.

Luis provides strategic leadership and direction in implementing Government objectives for the economic development and sustainable use of the Territory’s rangelands and broader natural environment. Luis was born and raised in Darwin and has over 16 years of experience in the Northern Territory Public Service, including leading diverse and geographically dispersed teams.

Luis has a Bachelor of Arts and Graduate Certificate in Public Sector Management.

Alaric Fisher  
Executive Director  
Flora and Fauna

Alaric has been with the department and its precursors since 1996 and has been Executive Director Flora and Fauna since 2011. Alaric also acted as Executive Director Environment Protection for 6 months in 2018.

Alaric provides strategic leadership and policy advice on matters relating to the biodiversity of the Northern Territory, ecologically sustainable development, 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 27 years. In that time, he has covered a broad range of fields including wildlife inventory, biodiversity monitoring, conservation planning and environmental impact assessment.
Vicki Highland  
**Executive Director Corporate Services**  
Vicki has held the Executive Director Corporate Services role with the department for the last 3 years and is responsible for delivering streamlined corporate service functions. Vicki joined the Northern Territory Public Service 16 years ago and has held a number of leadership roles across government, including Executive Director Corporate Services, Chief Financial Officer and Senior Director Business Services within departments, government owned corporations and government business divisions. Vicki is a Chartered Accountant, with a Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting and Business Law, and has undertaken further studies such as an ANZSOG Leadership program, Graduate Certificate in Public Sector Management, and certificates in Governance and Risk Management and Investigations.

Chris Shaw  
**Executive Director Onshore Gas Reform**  
Chris joined the department as the Executive Director Onshore Gas Reform in June 2018. The key aspect of Chris’ role is to lead the department’s actions and responsibilities arising from the implementation of the 135 recommendations of the Northern Territory Government’s Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing. Chris has extensive experience in the regulation and management of the onshore gas industry both as a consultant and high level regulator. He was responsible for the assessment and approval of major onshore gas projects and the implementation of the major environmental and water reforms for the onshore gas industry.

Stephanie Jungfer  
**Executive Officer**  
Stephanie has been in the Executive Officer position since December 2016. The role provides support to the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Directors across their broad portfolio responsibilities. Stephanie initially joined the department 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.

John Gaynor  
**Regional Director South**  
John represents the department in the southern region, ensuring an integrated approach across programs, assists with developing and implementing new policies, and deals with emerging issues in the region. John has lived in the Territory for 25 years and during that time has occupied executive management positions in the Commonwealth, Northern Territory and Local Governments. He holds a Bachelor of Social Work and a Diploma of Applied Management.

Tahnee Hill  
**Manager Katherine region**  
Tahnee is the department’s senior representative in the Katherine region. Tahnee builds effective networks across agencies and stakeholder groups to ensure the integration of departmental planning, policies and programs. Tahnee has over 10 years of experience working in the field of natural resource management in the region. Tahnee holds a Bachelor of Environmental Science and a Graduate Certificate in Business (Public Sector Management).
Looking forward
Our budget priorities for 2019-20

Creating local jobs

- Undertaking baseline environmental assessments to support the environmentally sustainable development of the hydraulic fracturing industry in the Territory.
- Providing strategic guidance and monitoring of the hydraulic fracturing industry while preserving the Territory’s unique environment.
- Collaborating with Aboriginal Elders and communities to document and preserve their biocultural knowledge in the Tennant Creek, Arnhem Land, Numbulwar, Gulf and Daly regions.
- Progressing the Mapping the Future program to provide natural resource information to facilitate sustainable resource use and regional economic growth.
- Working with our partners to implement outcomes from the review of the Container Deposit Scheme under the Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Act 2011.
- Supporting the economic viability of the pastoral industry through contemporary land management practices and ongoing diversification of the pastoral estate.
- Providing developers and users of the Territory’s natural resources with robust, consistent scientific advice that promotes economic development without compromising the overall health of the Territory’s natural resources.
- Delivering a new environmental regulatory framework for environmental impact assessments and approvals, and the management of waste, pollution and environmental impacts of mining.

Investing in the bush

- Implementing a strategic Aboriginal water reserves policy and methodology to increase Aboriginal landholders’ opportunity to access water resources for economic development.
- Identifying opportunities for agricultural expansion through strategic assessment and identification of land with suitable soils and sufficient water.
- Continuing implementation of the strategy to assess and manage risks to vegetation and biodiversity.
- Supporting sustainable management of our rangelands and protecting our environment.
- Improving management of the Territory’s water resources including ongoing development and finalisation of water allocation plans across the Territory.
- Supporting Aboriginal rangers through a land management and conservation fund to promote environmental, economic and social outcomes.
- Continuing to develop and implement a legislative and policy reform program to contemporise water resource management in the Territory.
Creating a safer Territory

- Building community resilience to bushfires through improving engagement, education and awareness of bushfires, both planned and uncontrolled, and mitigation programs in order to share responsibility and improve compliance with fire prevention and mitigation.
- Improving capacity to respond to bushfires and engagement with stakeholders through construction of a new rural Bushfires NT headquarters in the Darwin rural area.
- Implementing the bushfires emergency management system across the volunteer bushfire brigade network to improve communication and connectivity of fire management and activities.
- Increasing accredited firefighting and incident management training for staff and volunteers.
- Managing robust monitoring systems so Territorians are accurately informed of the condition of the Territory’s biodiversity.
- Developing a robust, contemporary system for tracking the movement and storage of hazardous waste in and out of the Territory.
- Addressing historical contamination to minimise environmental and health impacts.
- Implementing robust monitoring systems and developing best practice guidelines to protect our environment from the impact of feral cats and wild dogs across the Territory.
- Progressing the Western Davenport and Gunn Point groundwater assessment projects.
- Monitoring key rivers to support early warning and notification of flood risk to communities and infrastructure assets and developing mapping to assist in managing flood risk.

Restoring trust

- Maintaining the trust of Territorians by continuing to deliver best practice environmental protection services.
- Continuing to be open and transparent during the development of the hydraulic fracturing industry in the Territory.
- Supporting the NT EPA in assessing and regulating the environmental impacts of development.
- Supporting an open and transparent government through sharing of data and effective community engagement.
- Improving the Territory’s environmental management by delivering a robust regulatory framework for environmental impact assessments and environmental approvals.

Budget highlights

2019-20 new and existing initiatives

Creating local jobs

- $0.500m to increase the capacity for assessment, licensing and regulation of water use by mining and petroleum activities (new initiative)
- $2.824m for the Land Management and Conservation Fund to support Aboriginal rangers (existing)
- $1.639m for water reform and improved service delivery (existing)

Creating a safer Territory

- $2m in additional funding to support volunteer bushfire brigades and improve community engagement (existing)
- $0.880m to implement the recommendations of the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory (existing)

Restoring trust

- $0.926m to increase our capacity to process environmental approvals for major projects (existing)

Budget repair

(savings and efficiencies)

- ($0.654m) in whole of government efficiencies
- ($0.836m) program rationalisation savings
- ($0.544m) workforce sustainability savings
The department is responsible for administering 31 pieces of legislation, including 19 Acts and 12 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 community expectations and incorporates best practice in the areas it governs.

Legislation administered

- Bushfires Management Act 2016
  - Bushfires Management (General) Regulations 2017
  - Bushfires Management (Volunteer Bushfire Brigades) Regulations 2006
- Environmental Assessment Act 1982
  - Environmental Assessment Administrative Procedures 1984
- Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Act 2011
  - Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Regulations 2011
- Environmental Offences and Penalties Act 1996
  - Environmental Offences and Penalties Regulations 2011
- Lake Eyre Basin Intergovernmental Agreement Act 2009
- Litter Act 1972
- Marine Pollution Act 1999
  - Marine Pollution Regulations 2003
- National Environment Protection Council (Northern Territory) Act 1994
- Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority Act 2012
- Nuclear Waste Transport, Storage and Disposal (Prohibition) Act 2004
  - Nuclear Waste Transport, Storage and Disposal (Prohibition) Regulations 2019
- Pastoral Land Act 1992 (except provisions about Aboriginal community living areas)
  - Pastoral Land Regulations 1992
- Petroleum Act 1984 Part V, Division 2
  - Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016
- Planning Act 1999
  - Land clearing approvals on unzoned land (under delegation from the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics)
- Soil Conservation and Land Utilisation Act 1969
- Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998
  - Waste Management and Pollution Control (Administration) Regulations 1998
  - Environment Protection (National Pollutant Inventory) Objective 2004
- Water Act 1992
  - Water Regulations 1992
- Water Efficiency Labelling Standards (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2014
- Weeds Management Act 2001
  - Weeds Management Regulations 2006