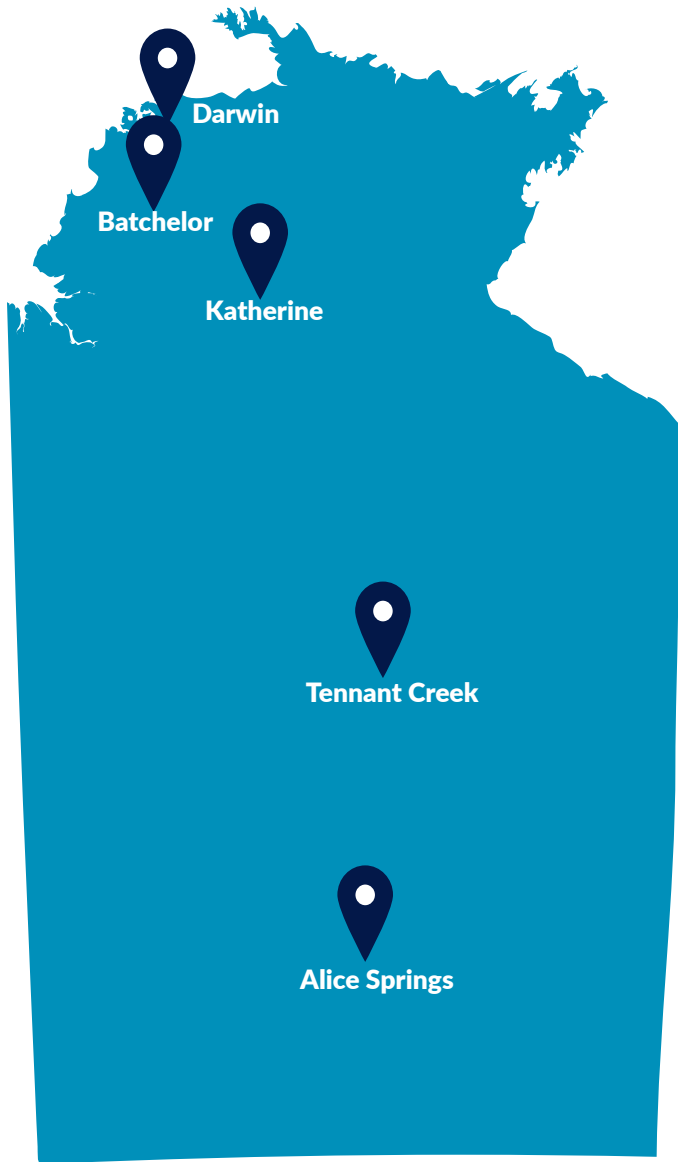


# OUR DEPARTMENT

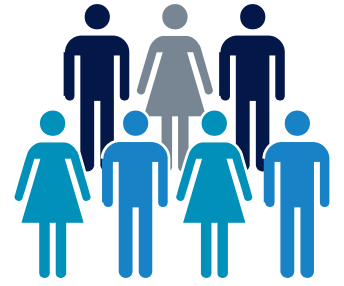
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*Department of Environment  
and Natural Resources  
Regional office locations*

**Budget priorities:**

*Support  
creating jobs*



*Empowering  
the bush*



*Building  
safer, fairer  
and stronger  
communities*



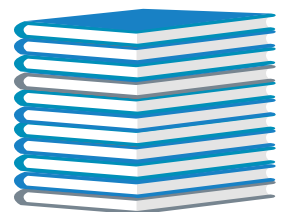
*DENR formed on  
12 September 2016.*



**18 Acts**



**11 pieces  
subordinate  
legislation**





# OUR DEPARTMENT

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## 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.

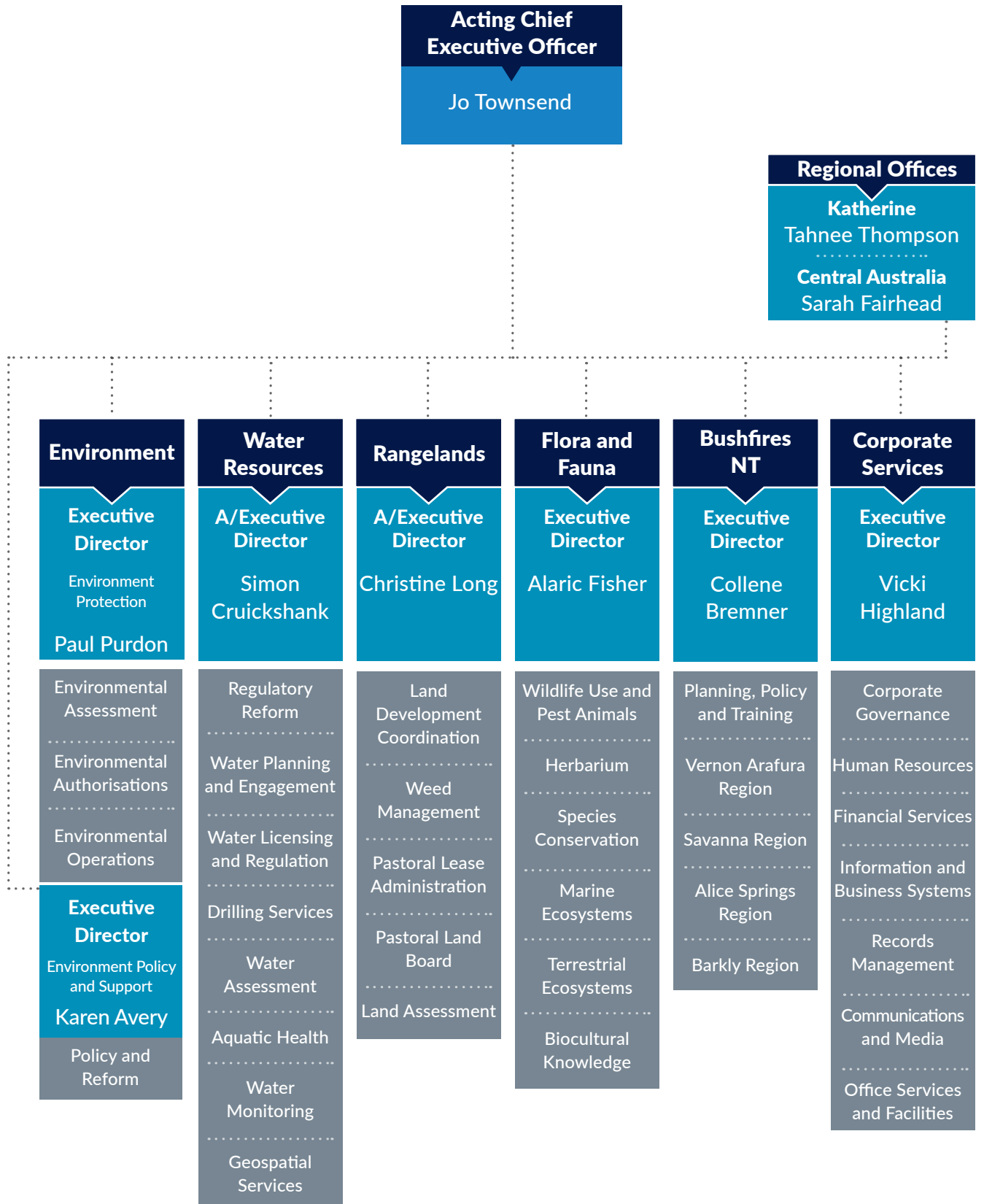
### Our Purpose

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"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Develop and implement an online information strategy to improve community understanding of the Territory's natural resources.</li> </ul>
2	Advise on the effective planning, allocation, conservation and use of the Northern Territory's natural resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Water Allocation Planning in conjunction with water policy reform.</li> <li>• Ensure that outputs from the Mapping the Future project inform natural resource allocation decisions.</li> <li>• Provide the best available information on the Territory's natural resources to support the Economic Development Framework.</li> <li>• Develop and maintain integrated information systems for natural resource data and information, accessible to internal and external clients.</li> <li>• Support the sustainable development of the pastoral estate through contemporary pastoral legislation.</li> </ul>
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"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Ensure that robust, evidence-based advice relating to natural resources informs all environmental impact assessments and approvals.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Ensure mining and petroleum activities are subject to the <i>Water Act</i>.</li> </ul>

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

# 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.