



BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The department's services and output deliverables, as a Northern Territory Government Public Sector organisation, are framed each year within the Budget Papers. The 2013-14 budget as published in Budget Paper 3 (BP3) in May 2013 set out the government's priorities.

The agency's budget highlights for the reporting period were:

- \$1.148 million to support the volunteer Bushfire Brigades
- \$0.8 million for monitoring and research in Darwin Harbour
- \$0.755 million to maintain herbarium collections within the Northern Territory
- \$0.65 million for management of feral camels to bring the total budget over four years to \$3.3 million
- \$0.5 million for water allocation plan implementation, regulation, and compliance monitoring across the Territory
- \$0.48 million for additional weed extension officers in Katherine and the Barkly
- An additional \$0.4 million for Rangeland Monitoring activities to bring the total budget to \$1.35 million
- \$0.17 million for gamba grass management programs across the Territory
- \$0.1 million to support the Pastoral Land Board.



STRATEGIC BUDGET ISSUES FOR 2013-14

The department's 2013-14 strategic issues as outlined in Budget Paper 3 were:

- Identifying opportunities for agricultural expansion through the strategic assessment and identification of land with suitable soils and sufficient water
- Monitoring key rivers to ensure early warning and notification of flood risk to communities and government assets, and ensuring new developments on floodplains mitigate flood risk
- Facilitating new land resource development through water allocation planning that is informed by best practice modelling and monitoring and community consultation
- Ensuring contemporary natural resource management legislation is applied to the allocation and use of the Territory's land, water, fauna and flora resources
- Developing an appropriate, sustainable and transparent process for rental of the Territory's estate for pastoral purposes
- Assisting the Pastoral Land Board to meet its statutory obligations under the *Pastoral Land Act*
- Providing developers and users of the Territory's natural resources with consistent scientific advice that promotes economic development without compromising the overall health of resources
- Building community resilience to bushfire through increasing community involvement in fire awareness and mitigation programs, and shared responsibility and improved compliance with fire prevention and mitigation legislation by landholders
- Progressing a strategic approach to managing increased risk of bushfire and bushfire intensity in the rural urban interface as a result of closer subdivision and weed infestation
- Delivering policy, strategy and management advice relating to conservation of the Territory's unique wildlife and ecosystems to ensure ongoing sustainable development of the Territory
- Working with Indigenous elders and communities to preserve and utilise Indigenous biocultural knowledge to ensure conservation of the Territory's flora and fauna
- Implementing robust monitoring systems to track the health of the Territory's terrestrial and marine biodiversity and inform adaptive management
- Increasing understanding of the Territory's biodiversity assets and assisting landholders and the community to protect threatened species
- Promoting economic opportunities through the sustainable use of wildlife and supporting environmental service enterprises such as savanna burning.

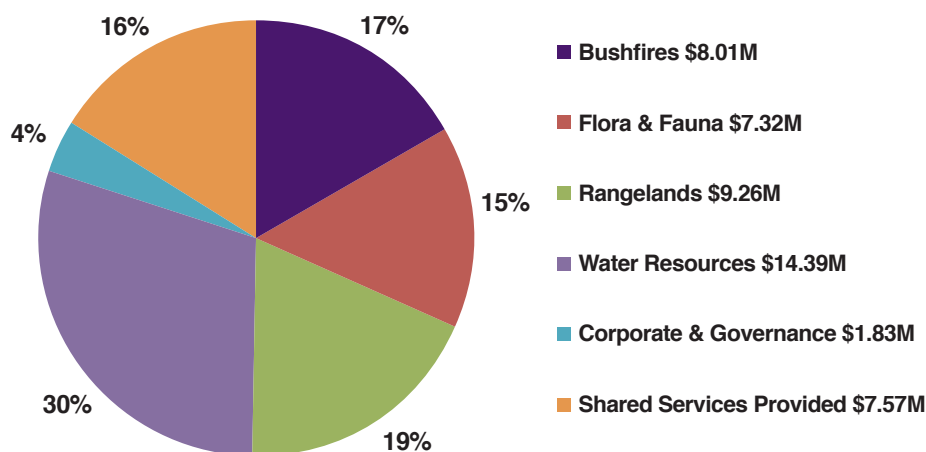
FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

INCOME

In 2013-14, the department received income of \$48.4 million against a budget of \$48.5 million for:

- Northern Territory Parliamentary appropriation of \$33 million, being the main source of income
- Goods and services income predominately relating to revenue received for service level arrangements in place with three other departments and a GBD for the provision of corporate services of \$4.8 million
- Other goods and services revenue consisting of works performed by the department for external parties worth \$2.8 million
- Grants and subsidies received from the Australian Government and other external parties totalling \$3.1 million
- Notional revenue for corporate services provided by the Department of Corporate Information Services recognised at \$4.3 million.

Income by Output Group



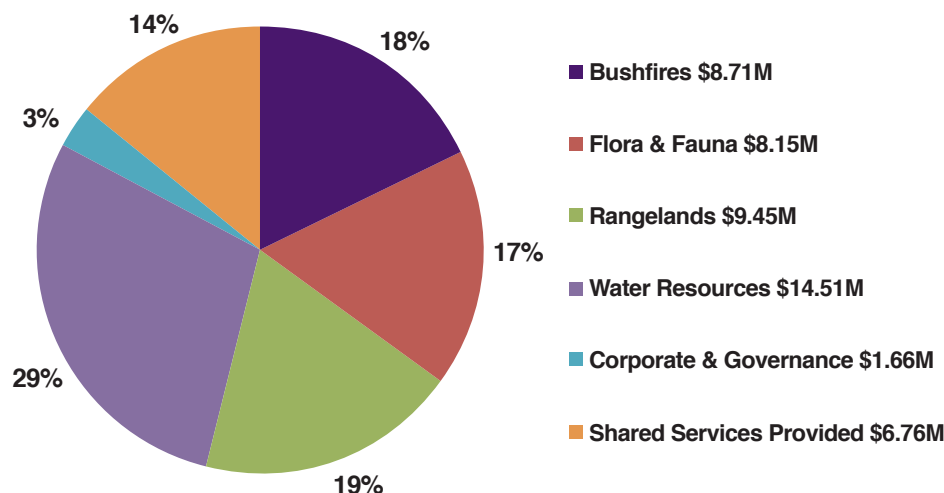
EXPENDITURE

During 2013-14 the department's expenditure totalled \$49.3 million, against a budget of \$50 million for:

- Employee expenses that represented 51 per cent of the total expenditure or \$25.2 million
- Goods and Services expenditure of \$14.5 million
- Repairs and maintenance of assets of \$1.4 million including \$0.5 million spent on the Mary River Saltwater Intrusion Program
- Grants and subsidies payments totalling \$3.1 million including \$1.2 million to support Bushfire Brigades and \$1.4 million for the West Arnhem Fire Management Agreement
- Non-cash expenses totalling \$5.1 million including depreciation charged on the department's asset portfolio and the matching notional expenses charged by the Department of Corporate Information Services.

SECTION 4: PERFORMANCE REPORTING

Expenditure by Output Group



OUTPUTS AND PERFORMANCE

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

A description, key deliverables and achievements for each of the department's five output groups are detailed below.

Additional achievements and priorities are reported against the department's Strategic Plan in Section 1 of this report.

OUTPUT: FLORA AND FAUNA

Scientific assessment and monitoring of the Territory's native flora and fauna, and delivery of policy advice and support relating to species conservation, management and sustainable use.

Key Deliverables	2012-13 Actual	2013-14 Budget	2013-14 Actual	2014-15 Budget
Number of spatial biodiversity records for the Territory	1.68M	1.86M	1.76M	1.86M
Number of biodiversity information requests met	2250	2300	2400	2400
Number of active inventory, monitoring and applied research programs	35	35	35	35
Number of management programs in place for sustainable wildlife use	6	7	6	7

Achievements in 2013-14

- Implemented a substantial research program investigating feral cats, fire and disease factors in mammal decline as part of the National Environmental Research Program North Australia Hub. The work included construction of two cat-free enclosures in Kakadu National Park to assess the role of cats in mammal decline and the potential for native species recovery
- Curated and updated authoritative databases documenting c. 1.75M locality records for all Northern Territory flora and fauna species
- Continued the best-practice monitoring program for dolphin populations in greater Darwin Harbour, in collaboration with INPEX, and significantly improved understanding of distribution and status of marine mammals in Northern Territory waters
- Established long-term biodiversity monitoring sites in West MacDonnell Ranges National Park and completed five-year monitoring cycle for long-term sites in Kakadu National Park

SECTION 4: PERFORMANCE REPORTING

- Completed annual systematic monitoring of crocodile populations in major Top End Rivers and for magpie goose populations and nesting effort across the western Top End
- Provided expert advice in relation to more than 500 development assessments, and assisted with more than 1500 enquiries for plant and animal identification and information.

Priorities in 2014-15

- Complete assessment of biodiversity values in the Tiwi Islands agricultural development area and contribute to completion of the land suitability assessment report
- Maintain the Darwin and Alice Springs Herbaria, and the NT Fauna and Flora Atlases as authoritative accounts of the Territory's biodiversity, and improve integration with corporate Natural Resource Management information systems
- Revise the Saltwater Crocodile Management Plan (2015-2019) in consultation with all stakeholders, including promoting Australian Government support for introducing crocodile safari hunting, and introducing enterprise permits or licences for crocodile farms
- Start developing a feral animal management strategy for the Territory, and a Feral Camel Management Plan to ensure ongoing control at the low densities achieved through the Australian Feral Camel Management Project
- Complete assessment of feral buffalo density and distribution in Arnhem Land and work with stakeholders to develop a regional management strategy
- Start a five-yearly review of the Northern Territory threatened species lists, as required under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*.

OUTPUT: RANGELANDS

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.

Key Deliverables	2012-13 Actual	2013-14 Budget	2013-14 Actual	2014-15 Budget
Percentage of pastoral estate monitored during the year ¹	11%	12%	11%	14%
Land clearing applications assessed ²	13	11	8	10
Area of land receiving weed extension services (000km ²) ³	184	260	337	380
Land development proposals assessed ⁴	249	270	948	800
Soil profile sites described and tested for land suitability assessment and mapping ⁵	N/A	40	19	90

Explanatory notes:

1. Pastoral monitoring inspections are undertaken during the dry season between April and September, seasonal conditions permitting. No inspections are undertaken during wet season due to access issues in the north and extreme heat in the southern regions of NT. In 2013-14 with an extended wet season in the north, and recruitment of new staff starting impacting on fieldwork, the number of properties assessed in the 2013-14 reporting period did not reach the targets set.
2. These are land clearing applications received for unzoned freehold land under the *Planning Act* and land clearing applications for the pastoral estate under the *Pastoral Land Act*. The number of applications assessed is determined by the quantity of applications submitted by proponents and is therefore difficult to accurately predict.
3. Although an area slightly less than forecast received weed extensions visits, many properties received repeat visits over the year if follow-up monitoring was required, and these subsequent visits are not included in the cumulative total.
4. Land development proposals assessed include development applications under the *Planning Act*; mining extraction licences under the *Minerals Titles Act*; and notices of intent under the *NT Environmental Assessment Act*. The number of development proposals assessed is determined by the quantity of development proposals received and is therefore difficult to accurately predict. The 2013-14 figure includes proposals assessed that were assessed although "no comment" was provided by the department to the governing body of the development assessment.
5. The land suitability field season occurs during the dry season and commenced in May 2014. Access to the northern part of Bathurst Island for land suitability field work had been initially restricted due to areas being inaccessible by four wheel drive vehicle, resulting in a delay in completing soil profile sites as forecast.

SECTION 4: PERFORMANCE REPORTING



Achievements in 2013-14

- Published Land Resources of the Victoria River District to enable natural resource managers to make more informed decisions on land use
- Began investigative resource analysis for soils and vegetation on the Tiwi Islands, in order to assess suitability for a proposed 10,000 hectare precinct for agricultural and horticultural development
- Undertook land resource mapping on Eva Downs and Anthony Lagoon pastoral leases
- Completed Stage 1 of regional land type mapping across the southern NT pastoral estate at 1:1,000,000 scale
- Conducted an on-ground rangeland monitoring program on 27 pastoral properties with 329 monitoring sites assessed
- Commenced the satellite based rangeland monitoring program to deliver a draft report of preliminary land cover products for priority areas
- Finalise amendments to the *Pastoral Land Act* Section 7 Non-pastoral use provision to allow greater diversification opportunities on the pastoral estate
- Drafted consistent Northern Territory standards for erosion and sediment control planning and management by the construction, civil and building industry
- Provided agency advice to more than 900 development proposals
- Provided new weed extension services to landholders into the Barkly and Katherine region through an increase of employee resources
- Delivered the Bellyache Bush and Chinese Apple herbicide assistance program to a range of landholders, including pastoral lessees, in the Katherine region
- Released Parkinsonia weed bio-control agents on pastoral properties in the Barkly region and commenced monitoring population establishment
- Declared five weeds under the *Weed Management Act*: Thatch grass, Parrots feather, Leaf cactus, Fountain grass and Brazilian pepper
- Delivered the Gamba Grass Herbicide Assistance Program in the Top End with record uptake by landholders.

Priorities in 2014-15

- Finalise Stage 2 regional land type mapping across the southern NT pastoral estate at 1:250,000 scale
- Finalise land resource mapping on Eva Downs and Anthony Lagoon pastoral leases at 1:1,000,000 scale
- Complete field assessment of soil, water and biodiversity resources for Tiwi Islands agricultural development area and produce a land and water suitability assessment report

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- Begin land suitability assessment fieldwork at Larrimah and Ali Curung and produce a land and water suitability assessment report
- Provide data and undertake additional field assessment as required to facilitate the development of Ord Stage 3 within the Northern Territory
- Engage landholders in rearing, releasing and monitoring *Parkinsonia* biocontrol agents
- Continue to mitigate infestations of Bellyache Bush in Northern Territory Savanna region
- Increase survey activity along the Northern Territory/Queensland border to prevent incursions of rubber vine in the Territory
- Declare neem as a weed under the *Weed Management Act*, develop a weed management plan and implement a program to assist landholders control isolated infestations and plants where neem is yet to establish. eradicate mature trees Promote appropriate erosion sediment control guidelines for the development and construction industry
- Commence the review of the *Weeds Management Act 2001*
- Continue to deliver the Gamba Grass Herbicide Assistance Program to landholders, including monitoring the on ground effectiveness of the program
- Develop a weed seed spread prevention strategy with commitment from government agencies and landholders (including managers of road and rail corridors and mining industry)
- Complete the review of the Athel Pine and Cabomba Weed Management Plans.

OUTPUT: WATER RESOURCES

Scientific assessment and monitoring of the Northern Territory's water resources, allocation of this resource for sustainable use and delivery of flood forecasting services.

Key Deliverables	2012-13 Actual	2013-14 Budget	2013-14 Actual	2014-15 Budget
Proportion of the Territory assessed for ground water availability	7%	8.5%	7%	7.2%
Proportion of the Territory assessed for surface water availability	5.9%	5.9%	5.9%	6%
River, coastal regions and communities covered by flood risk mapping	15	25	25	26
Proportion of licensed groundwater use covered by current water allocation plans ¹	60%	86%	48%	80%
Annual report cards on aquatic health of Darwin published	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Explanatory notes:

1. Reflects delays in declaring five water plans in 2013-14.

Achievements in 2013-14

- Completed Western Davenport Water Allocation Plan hydro geological mapping
- Completed and published Darwin Harbour Report Card and Darwin Harbour Water Quality Improvement Plan
- Established the Northern Territory Catchments Advisory Committee to advise the Minister on key water and catchment issues relating to the development of the Northern Territory and growing the Territory's economy
- Secured additional funding to expand the integrated land and water assessment team to assess potential for new agricultural precincts.

Priorities in 2014-15

- Develop aquatic health monitoring program for Roper River and review Daly River aquatic monitoring program

SECTION 4: PERFORMANCE REPORTING

- Develop an overarching Northern Territory Water Policy
- Complete water allocation plans for key water control districts - Ooloo Aquifer, Mataranka Tindal, Alice Springs and Great Artesian Basin
- Complete five-year revision of Katherine Tindal Water Allocation Plan
- Complete field assessment of soil, water and biodiversity resources for Tiwi Islands agricultural development area
- Begin water resource assessment in Mataranka and Larrimah areas and complete planning for water resource assessment in Ali Curung area.

OUTPUT: BUSHFIRES

Supporting landholders in the management and mitigation of wildfire and assisting volunteer brigades in fire mitigation and suppression outside the Territory's urban centres.

Key Deliverables	2012-13 Actual	2013-14 Budget	2013-14 Actual	2014-15 Budget
Number of property inspections conducted annually for firebreak compliance	5494	5000	5212	5500
Percentage of strategic firebreaks completed across the Territory annually	90%	100%	100%	90%
Number of trained volunteer brigade member firefighters	505	490	481	540
Area of the Territory affected by wildfires	15%	12%	5.7%	15%

Achievements in 2013-14

- The West Arnhem Fire Management Agreement achieved a total carbon abatement of 178,800 t/CO₂-e and more than 200 Aboriginal rangers were employed for in excess of 9500 hours
- Supported volunteer bushfire brigades in managing 148 wildfire events throughout the Territory
- Trained 564 landowners and community members in wild fire management
- Drafted policies and procedures to deliver Strategic Fire Break Program
- Improved efficiencies through automation of the *Bushfires Act* Section 47 processes.

Priorities in 2014-15

- Implement Strategic Fire Break Program to improve mitigation programs throughout the Territory
- Manage high risk fire season through improved resource planning and allocation in conjunction with volunteer bushfire brigades
- Complete review of *Bushfires Act*, Bushfires NT organisational structures, roles and responsibilities, community partnership arrangements, and Volunteer Bushfires support mechanisms
- Improve land management planning capacity within Bushfires NT Network.

OUTPUT GROUP: CORPORATE AND GOVERNANCE

This output group was created in 2013-14 to reflect the range of functions undertaken to serve core corporate, executive and governance needs, including financial services, human resource management, information and communication technology, governance and risk services and communications and media.

SECTION 4: PERFORMANCE REPORTING

CORPORATE AND EXECUTIVE

Provide executive leadership and management to the Department of Land Resource Management.

Key Deliverables	2012-13 Actual	2013-14 Budget	2013-14 Actual	2014-15 Budget
Ministerial satisfaction with strategic policy advice ¹	n/a	n/a	≥4	≥4

Explanatory notes:

1. Rating of 1 = extremely dissatisfied through to 5 = extremely satisfied.

SHARED SERVICES PROVIDED

Provide shared corporate and governance services to four agencies and a government business division. Undertake a wide range of functions to serve the agencies' core corporate needs, including financial services, human resource management, information and communication technology, governance and risk services, and communications and media.

Key Deliverables	2012-13 Actual	2013-14 Budget	2013-14 Actual	2014-15 Budget
Client satisfaction with services ¹	n/a	n/a	4.2	≥4

Explanatory notes:

1. Rating of 1 = extremely dissatisfied through to 5 = extremely satisfied.

Achievements in 2013-14

- Implemented a performance evaluation system and developed PESA agreements for most department staff
- Introduced a staff recognition and reward scheme
- Developed, implemented and evaluated Service Level Agreements
- Supported the creation of Museums and Art Galleries NT as a separate statutory body
- Introduced electronic transaction processes for Human Resources.

Priorities in 2014-15

- Continue to develop a high performing team that provides quality professional corporate services under shared services arrangements
- Develop a department Information Management Strategy
- Develop a department Workforce Planning Strategy
- Conduct a 'voice of the people' survey to gauge and monitor organisational capacity and capability
- Review the department's Governance Framework and identify accountability gaps
- Review the Corporate Reporting Framework to ensure currency and relevance of information to support effective business decisions.