Parks and Wildlife Minister, Karl Hampton, today invited the public to comment on draft joint management plans for two of the Territory’s most popular parks in the Red Centre.

Mr Hampton said the draft plans for Watarrka National Park and West MacDonnell (Tyurretye) National Park would be open for public comment from 2 October to 13 November 2009.

“Jointly managed parks provide a range of benefits for Traditional Owners and visitors to our parks,” Mr Hampton said.

“This includes improved land management through the use of Indigenous traditional knowledge together with scientific approaches.

“Social development and economic opportunities for Traditional Owners, their families and communities also flow from joint management.

“Joint management also recognises the rights, interests and respect for Aboriginal people’s aspirations and desire to express traditional connections to country.”

Watarrka National Park – which receives 215,000 visitors each year - is traditional country for the Martutjurra people who refer to themselves as Anangu and their language is Luritja.

About 128,000 people visit West MacDonnell (Tyurretye) National Park each year, which is traditional country for many Central Arrernte, Western Arrernte and Luritja people.

“Joint management will protect the outstanding natural and cultural values of each Park by retaining the area’s natural, cultural and scenic qualities,” Mr Hampton said.

“The needs of Traditional Owners will be met to maintain their connection to country and gain meaningful economic benefit from the area.

“Planning the draft joint management plans for each of the parks has involved extensive consultation with Traditional Owners, the Central Land Council and tourism industry,” Mr Hampton said.

The public can view the draft plans at www.nt.gov.au/nretas/consult

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