FUNDING BOOST FOR PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

The Government has increased operational funding for the Parks and Wildlife Service by more than 13 per cent.

Parks and Wildlife Minister Dr Chris Burns told Parliament today that the increase - from $9m to $10.2m – would ensure the NT’s national parks remain a cornerstone of the Territory’s tourism industry.

“This funding increase will improve the Parks and Wildlife Service’s capacity to perform core park management functions,” Dr Burns said.

“This involves the delivery of visitor programs, as well as controlling weeds, fire and feral animals.

“As more and more people visit major Territory parks like Litchfield, Nitmiluk and Watarrka, more resources can be allocated to developing these high visitation areas, reducing pressure on existing infrastructure.

“The ongoing boost to funding will ensure that current successful weed management programs such as the annual Devils Claw Festival in Gregory National Park will continue.

“In the Katherine Region, the Nitmiluk Fire Plot Monitoring program will continue to provide scientific data that can be used to implement biodiversity conservation practices.

“In the Alice Springs region, more resources can be deployed into the fire management program which has become a high priority following relatively low rainfall over the past 12 months.

“Programs for the control of feral animals such as camels, horses and donkeys can be expanded, involving more frequent patrols by helicopter.

“Overall, the standard of the Territory’s current parks and visitor facilities will improve as the Parks and Wildlife Service maintains more of its plant and equipment, walking tracks, signs and fences across the regions and delivers its land management programs on a wider scale.”

Dr Burns paid tribute to the staff at Parks and Wildlife who, he said, play a crucial role in protecting the Territory’s unique environment.

“They do a tremendous job and deserve the thanks of all Territorians,” he said.