MAJOR UPGRADE FOR LITCHFIELD NATIONAL PARK

The Territory Government will invest $7.48 million over the next three-years upgrading visitor facilities at Litchfield National Park, Chief Minister, Clare Martin, announced today.

Ms Martin said the Government was determined to ensure the park can cope with an expected increase in visitor numbers over the next five - ten years.

The centrepiece of the $7.48 million announcement is a $3.4 million information centre - similar to the one at Kakadu - that will house park information, a kiosk and campground management offices.

“In the Territory tourism means jobs and economic growth,” she said.

“We want to provide visitors with a great Litchfield experience that helps keep the Territory moving ahead - it’s already one of our most popular tourist attractions, with nearly 250,000 visitors each year.

“However, this popularity leads to issues such as overcrowding - particularly at Wangi Falls and Buley Rockhole - illegal parking, and increased pressure on park facilities and resources.”

The 2005/06 Budget will include nearly $2 million worth of projects including:

- Redeveloping the Wangi Falls day-use area, including provision of more parking (est. $850,000)
- Upgrading the campground at Florence Falls (est. $700,00)
- Closure and rehabilitation of the campground at Buley Rockhole;
- Landscaping works along the creek between Florence Falls and Buley Rockhole; and
- Formalisation of entry to the southern park entrance at the Walker Creek/Bamboo Creek area.

Ms Martin said the funding is focused on upgrading existing facilities, improving access to the park, and establishing new camping and picnic sites.

Other key projects over the next three years include:

- Develop information centre at Wangi Fall (est. $3.4 million).
- Re-design and re-locate Wangi campground (est. $950,000).
- Formalise access and visitor facilities at Cascade Creek (est. $500,000).
- Upgrade picnic facilities at Tabletop Swamp and Greenant Creek.
- Develop more walking tracks, camping/day use facilities, a 4WD track and interpretation facilities

Last year $15 million was allocated to seal the Litchfield Loop Road from Wangi Falls to the Cox Peninsula Road (approx 44 kilometres). Tenders have been called for the first 9km (cost approx $2.5M).

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