Karl Hampton
MINISTER FOR PARKS AND WILDLIFE

16 March 2012

Limmen National Park and Limmen Bight Marine Park

Minister for Parks and Wildlife, Karl Hampton, today announced the formation of a major new National Park and Marine Park.

“Limmen National Park and Limmen Bight Marine Park will be the most significant additions to our parks estate in over a decade, from the Greenest, most environmentally conscious Government in the Territory’s history,” Mr Hampton said.

“Government has taken the time to get the right balance between new economic opportunity for the region and conservation.

“Consideration has been given to the environmental, social and economic issues, and this means making hard decisions to deliver sustainable development for the region,” he said.

“Limmen National Park has significant environmental values and these will be protected by proceeding to declare a new National Park covering 80 per cent of the area originally proposed, or equivalent to an area almost seven times that of Litchfield National Park.

“It has been long acknowledged that the proposal included highly prospective areas that have the potential to create wealth for the region through mining, and those areas will not initially be included in Limmen National Park.

“As exploration proceeds, however; and the prospective areas are more accurately defined, those areas not needed for mining will eventually be folded back into Limmen National Park.

The original park proposal has been updated to take into account the considerable biodiversity values outside and to the east of the originally proposed park.

“I am very pleased that as part of today’s major announcement we introduced Maria Island into the National Park, and with that; a new recreational fishing friendly Marine Park, Limmen Bight, located in the Gulf region approximately 600km south east of Darwin.

“This will help protect turtle, dugong and dolphin habitats and significant sea grass beds.

“Limmen National Park and Limmen Bight Marine Park will add over one million hectares to our parks estate, and the new fishing friendly marine park alone will boost marine conservation in the Territory by 30 per cent.
Voluntary conservation efforts by landholders outside of the Park will be financially supported by a community benefits package, flowing from any approved mining operation in the area.

“The Government has already begun investment in Limmen National Park by way of additional camping infrastructure at Tomato Island which is to be managed by indigenous people from the region.”

“National Parks that connect oceans to the land are of special significance and world class – that is what the updated Limmen National Park delivers.”

“Limmen National Park is set to provide new job opportunities for the region whether through new mining enterprises, additional conservation efforts or new tourism opportunities,” Mr Hampton said.

Member for Arnhem, Malalondirri McCarthy, also welcomed today’s announcement, and commended the decision to value the significance of Maria Island.

“I am very pleased with today’s announcement to declare Limmen National Park,” she said.

“I commend all groups for reaching a consensus, and that the voices of the Traditional Owners were heard and acted upon, not to build a pipeline to Maria Island.”

Today’s Limmen National Park announcement also received high praise from the Local Member for Barkly, Gerry McCarthy.

“These Parks will provides certainty and opportunity for the environment, culture and economy to the people of the Gulf region.

As per statutory requirements, new Parks are subject to a 60 day community consultation period before they can be declared. Public consultation closes Friday, 18 May 2012.

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