



Australian Government

# Minister for Resources and Energy Minister for Tourism

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The Hon Martin Ferguson AM MP

15 Apr 2010

## AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT GETS BEHIND KIMBERLEY TOURISM

10-057

The Minister for Tourism, Martin Ferguson AM MP and the Minister for Environment Protection, Peter Garrett AM MP, today announced the Kimberley region will be included in Tourism Australia's National Landscapes Program and will feature prominently within Australia's future international tourism marketing.

The Kimberley is Western Australia's first region in the National Landscapes Program which highlights iconic destinations across Australia.

Landscapes are nominated by local communities, in this case the Kimberley National Landscapes Steering Committee. With the support of Tourism Australia and Parks Australia, the Steering Committee will now bring together tourism industry and government stakeholders to identify commercial opportunities, environmental management priorities, infrastructure gaps and marketing plans.

Nearly two thirds of international visitors identify an Australian nature experience as a highlight of their visit. The National Landscapes Program aims to promote Australian landscapes which will be major drawcards for international visitors because of their natural and cultural values.

It also aims to help regional tourism operators develop quality tourism products and services that capitalise on these values, celebrating the environmental significance and importance of the unique landscapes that are part of the Program.

Minister Ferguson said: "The Kimberley's rich Indigenous history and culture, pearling and mining history, ancient gorges, spectacular waterfalls, rugged wilderness and remote beaches make it an obvious choice for the National Landscapes Program. "It is a vast wilderness area more than twice the size of my home State, Victoria.

"The National Landscapes Program offers great opportunities for Indigenous training, employment and business development in both tourism and conservation.

"Tourism is a major source of employment across the Kimberley with more than 1500 tourism organisations providing jobs for rangers, pilots, cruise ship crews, chefs and many other trades and professions.

Minister Garrett said: "The Kimberley is a stunning part of Australia, internationally renowned for its vibrant Indigenous culture and unique environment and of course, the world famous Cable Beach.


"The inclusion of the Kimberley in the National Landscapes Program recognises the extraordinary environmental importance of the Kimberley, from the beauty and incredible diversity of the marine environment to the ecological diversity of this huge north-western landscape.

"The Kimberley region now joins destinations such as Australia's Red Centre, Kakadu and the Australian Alps as part of a program which sees tourism and conservation working in partnership to promote some of the extraordinary natural landscapes that make our country both so unique and such an international tourism drawcard."

The Ministers made the announcement on a visit to Broome before travelling to Kununurra for the first Kimberley Land Council Ranger Forum, celebrating the important role Indigenous Rangers play in the management and environmental protection of the region.

Through the Government's Working on Country Program, supported by the Kimberley Land Council, 65 Indigenous Ranger positions at eight communities across the Kimberley, including the Miriuwung Gajerrong Rangers in Kununurra, have been supported, creating employment opportunities for Indigenous people working on country and protecting the unique natural values of the region.

The Ministers congratulated Parks Australia, Tourism Australia, the Kimberley National Landscapes Steering Committee (chaired by Marilynne Paspaley AM), tourism operators and conservation groups for all the hard work they have put in to get the Kimberley ready for inclusion in the Program.



Tourism is a \$40 billion industry employing nearly 500,000 Australians and contributing nearly 4 per cent to annual GDP. In Western Australia, tourism directly employs more than 45,000 people and contributes \$3 billion to the Western Australian economy each year.

*For more information visit [www.tourism.australia.com/nl](http://www.tourism.australia.com/nl)*

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The Hon Martin Ferguson AM MP

15 Apr 2010

## INDIGENOUS RANGERS HOLD KEY TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE KIMBERLEY

10-058

The Minister for Tourism, the Hon Martin Ferguson AM MP, today spoke with rangers at the Kimberley Ranger Forum at Home Valley Station in Kununurra, Western Australia.

The Australian Government's Working on Country Program is investing \$229 million over five years to create 660 Indigenous ranger positions across the country.

In the Kimberley, \$20 million has been provided to fund 65 ranger positions in eight communities through to 2013.

Minister Ferguson said: "The Kimberley Land Council, led by Wayne Bergmann, is facilitating the Program and I congratulate the KLC for holding the Ranger Forum to share information and provide professional development and training opportunities.

"Indigenous rangers play an important role in protecting and preserving Australia's pristine land and sea environments, which attract tourists from all over the world.

"The ranger initiative is unique in bringing together traditional knowledge and science to maintain the natural and cultural values that attract people to the region.

"Visitors to the region also want an experience that respects Indigenous culture and heritage.

"Having rangers on country not only creates valuable jobs for people in remote areas, it generates opportunities for the transmission of cultural knowledge from elders to younger people.

"Through these experiences, rangers are building the skills to interpret Indigenous culture and resource management practices for a non-Indigenous audience.

"In the longer term this combination of cultural knowledge and cross-cultural skills will create important opportunities for the establishment of sustainable Indigenous tourism enterprises."

In destinations like the Kimberley, rangers work hand in hand with local tourism operators to showcase the natural beauty of the landscape, while using their traditional knowledge of the country as well as science to minimise the impact of visitors and protect the environment.

"These jobs are building on the synergies between tourism and the protection and promotion of both the natural environment and Indigenous culture and heritage," Minister Ferguson said.

"Tourism has great potential to provide the sorts of job and business opportunities that can deliver economic independence for regional Indigenous communities, particularly here in the Kimberley which has the highest concentration of Indigenous tourism experiences on offer anywhere in Australia.

"Grasping those opportunities is the key to closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and the ranger initiative is helping move us closer to that outcome."

Tourism contributes \$3 billion to the Western Australian economy each year and directly employs more than 45,000 people.

Nation-wide tourism is a \$40 billion industry, employing nearly 500,000 Australians and contributing nearly 4 per cent to annual GDP.

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