

5. ULURU NATIONAL PARK

5.1 Description¹²

Location, size

Uluru National Park is located in central Australia, 335 km south-west of Alice Springs. The Park covers 1325 km².

Major natural features

The Park encompasses Uluru (Ayers Rock) and Kata Tjuta (the Olgas) in an arid landscape and protects a range of desert ecosystems.

History

Uluru National Park was declared under Commonwealth legislation in 1977. In 1985, the area of Uluru National Park was granted as inalienable freehold to the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Land Trust. Arrangements were put in place for the Park area to be leased to the Director of the Australian Nature Conservation Agency (ANCA, formerly Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service) and for the area to continue to be managed as a National Park (with emphasis on Aboriginal involvement). In 1987, Uluru National Park was inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Management arrangements

Planning and management is undertaken jointly by the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Board of Management and the Director of ANCA. Day-to-day management is undertaken by ANCA.

Management funding

The majority of funding for management is provided to ANCA by the Commonwealth Government. In 1991-92, ANCA allocated \$2.9 million to park management.

Park entry fees are levied on every visitor. From July 1993, these fees will be \$10 per person.

Revenue from all sources in 1991-92 was \$1.85 million, and in 1992-93 it was \$2.05 million.

Management objectives

Uluru is an Aboriginal National Park and the involvement of the traditional owners of the land governs management objectives. The Park not only includes many art sites signifying earlier use but the lands have contemporary significance to the traditional owners. Thus a principle management objective is 'to continue to take into account Anangu religious interpretations of landscape in all areas of Park management, particularly in relation to the nature and siting of developments in the Park' (p. 12). Other objectives include; managing visitors based on Anangu perceptions of appropriate behaviour, protecting and conserving rock art resources and other archaeological resources, and taking into account Anangu ecosystem knowledge and understanding in the planning and implementation of land management within the Park.

Major uses

As identified in the management objectives, the primary uses of the Park are to provide for contemporary use by Aboriginal people, protection of sites of cultural significance and nature conservation.

Tourism and recreation generate the greatest financial values, see section 5.2 below.

¹² Information was compiled from *Uluru (Ayers Rock - Mount Olga) National Park Plan of Management* (ANPWS 1991b) and personal communication from ANCA staff.

A permit is required for commercial filming and photography. Guidelines have been developed to direct filming and photography away from sites with Aboriginal significance that would be compromised by the dissemination of images or verbal descriptions. The permit requirement is for management rather than to raise revenue. The financial value generated from photographic images of Uluru National Park is unknown.

5.2 Uluru National Park tourism and recreation

Tourism is the direct use which generates by far the greatest financial values of Uluru National Park. Due to the distance of Uluru National Park from other population centres, virtually all visitors are tourists (not local residents taking day trips). Uluru is open to visitors only during the day. Accommodation is provided at Yulara village which is 5 km from the park entry station and 13 km from Uluru (Ayers Rock).

Around a quarter of a million people currently visit Uluru National Park each year. A recent study of tourism in Uluru National Park found that many visitors made more than one trip into the Park during their stay, and estimated that the number of visitor days are more than twice the number of visitors (ES&S 1991). There are no estimates of visitor days for previous periods. Table 5.1 lists available information on visitor levels in the last decade and projections for the year 2000.

Table 5.1 Visitor Numbers Uluru National Park

	Visitors	Visitor days
1981-82	86 884	
1991-92	250 000	550 000
Projected 2000	370 000	814 000

Source: ES&S 1991, ANCA pers. comm.

The number of visitors grew by 187 per cent in the decade from 1981-82 to 1991-92. The rate of growth prior to the opening of Yulara in 1984 was 5 per cent per annum and this climbed to 16 per cent per annum in the four years after opening. The average length of stay at Yulara resort is 1.8 nights (ES&S 1991).

Visitors to Uluru either arrive in their own cars (52 per cent of visitors) or on commercial tours (48 per cent) of visitors. There is a variety of tours into the National Park, including bus tours from other parts of Australia on which Uluru is one of a number of tour highlights, and scenic flights and vehicle based tours from Yulara. Commercial facilities located within Uluru National Park which cater for visitors are the Ininti Kiosk which sells refreshments and souvenirs and the Maruku Arts and Crafts centre which retails work of local artists.

Financial values

An estimate of expenditure by visitors to Uluru National Park has been put at \$38 million for 1991-92. This figure is an order-of-magnitude estimate only.

Calculating financial values

The financial value of tourism in Uluru National Park is made up of expenditure by tourists on:

- (a) admission fees
- (b) returns to retail facilities within the park
- (c) commercial tours from Yulara
- (d) accommodation and services at Yulara
- (e) a proportion of travel costs to the region.

Information on expenditure by tourists is collected through the Northern Territory Tourism Monitor (NTTC 1992). Yulara and Uluru National Park are included in the Centre Region which also includes

Alice Springs and the MacDonnell Ranges. Unfortunately, expenditure at Yulara and in Uluru is not reported separately from that for the Centre Region. An estimate of expenditure at Uluru/Yulara has been based on estimates of visitor nights spent in the area of Uluru National Park (ES&S 1991). The average expenditure per visitor night for the entire Northern Territory of \$83.80 for 1991-92 has been used in this calculation.

Table 5.2 Estimated expenditure at Uluru/Yulara 1991-92

	Centre Region	Uluru/Yulara
Visitors	348 000	250 000
Average stay	5 days	1.8 days
Visitor nights	1 849 000	450 000*
NT av. exp./visitor night	\$83.80	\$83.80
Expenditure	\$155 million*	\$37.7 million*

Source: Northern Territory Travel Monitor (NTTC 1992), ES&S 1991, and * calculated in this table.

The figure of \$38 million dollars direct expenditure is an order-of-magnitude estimate only as it is not based on a direct survey of visitors to Uluru/Yulara. The figure does not include a component of expenditure on travel to the area.

TABLE 5.3 ULURU NATIONAL PARK WORLD HERITAGE AREA

<i>USES</i>	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>GROSS FINANCIAL VALUES</i>	<i>ECONOMIC VALUES</i>
PRIMARY USES			
Aboriginal contemporary use Nature conservation	1325 km ² of relatively undisturbed natural environment.	Nil, however these attributes provide the resource base for potentially sustainable direct uses which generate financial values	These attributes provide the resource base for economic values of potentially sustainable direct uses plus the economic values of non-market indirect uses
Conservation of cultural features	Numerous art sites, sacred sites and other features.		Economic values of non-market indirect uses have not been measured for the Uluru National Park.
COMPATIBLE DIRECT USES			
Tourism and recreation	250 000 visitors in 1991-92	Direct: \$38 million (1991-92)	not known
Commercial filming and photography	not known	not known	not known
Research	not known	not known	not known