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# Larapinta Trail Management Strategy



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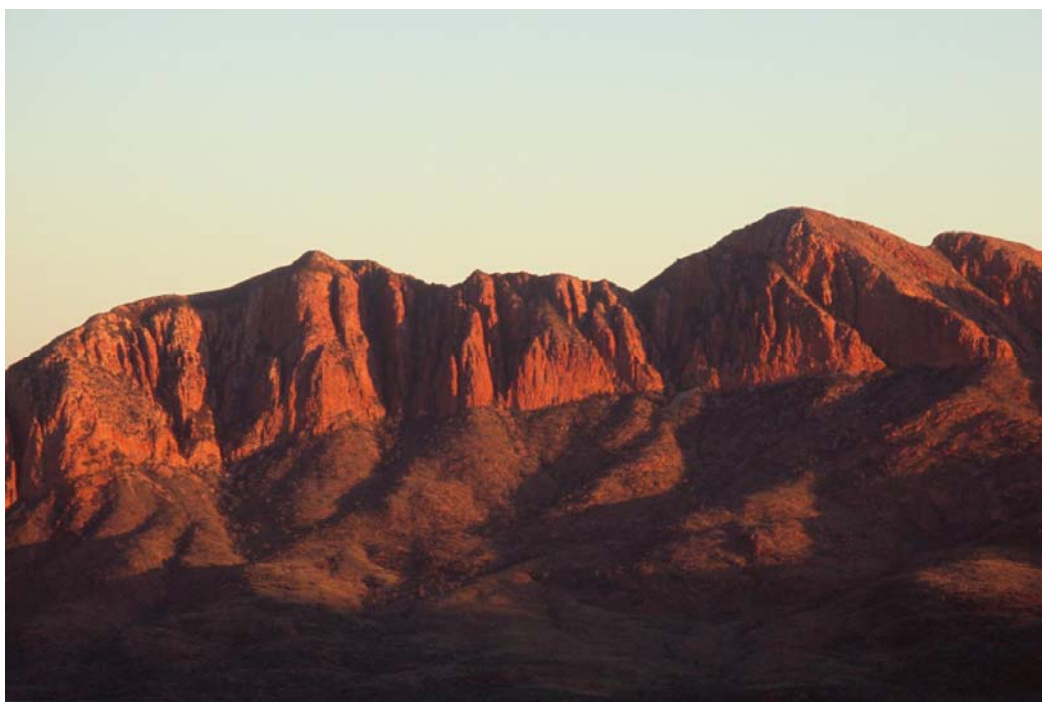
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## Executive Summary

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### Background to the Strategy

The Larapinta Trail extends for 223 kilometres from the Alice Springs Telegraph Station in the east to Redbank Gorge and Mount Sonder in the west. Construction was undertaken using a number of different groups to a variety of standards and using a range of techniques over a period of 12 years.

After such a long period of planning and construction, and with the trail beginning to develop a wide reputation and to attract a growing number of walkers, it became appropriate to review the trail's future management.

This draft Management Strategy for the Larapinta Trail is based on:

- ◇ A thorough analysis of past and current management practices;
- ◇ Relevant understanding of the development of long-distance walking tracks elsewhere in Australia and overseas;
- ◇ Detailed assessment of the trail, its infrastructure and its presentation;
- ◇ Sustainable tourism principles;
- ◇ Stakeholder consultations including the results of visitor surveys;
- ◇ Stakeholder, agency and public feedback on a detailed Discussion Paper aimed at exploring management ideas for the trail; and
- ◇ The deliberations of the Larapinta Trail Strategy Group.

The Larapinta Trail is one of many walking tracks in the region albeit the best known of the tracks. There is a range of walking opportunities associated with the West MacDonnell National Park as well as those emanating from key visitor nodes outside the park and from Alice Springs.

### Key Issues

The following issues have been identified through consultation as important ones to be addressed in terms of trail management.

- ◇ Unrealistic visitor expectations or diminishing quality of trail experiences;
- ◇ The visitors experience to be provided is sustainable;
- ◇ Deteriorating trail conditions and environment;
- ◇ Current low use levels with potential for increase;
- ◇ Working within the objectives and intent of the West MacDonnell National Park plan of management;
- ◇ Managing the impacts of an increase in numbers walking the track;
- ◇ Importance of the track to the local community;

- ◇ The sealing of the Mereenie loop will increase numbers of people visiting the West MacDonnell National Park (especially western parts);
- ◇ Adequate resources for trail management;
- ◇ Poor walker preparation;
- ◇ Walker safety;
- ◇ Conflict between different trail users;
- ◇ Provision of adequate trail interpretation and mapping;
- ◇ Failure to promote walker understanding of the natural/cultural environment of the West MacDonnell Ranges.

## **Future Management**

Through the process of consultation and research, the following vision, guiding principles and key objectives were identified to guide future management.

### **Vision**

The Larapinta Trail will be renowned world-wide as an easily accessible and well maintained track which provides an appreciation of the remoteness, grandeur and cultural significance of the West MacDonnell Ranges through a variety of walking experiences.

### **Guiding Principles**

- ◇ The Larapinta Trail will provide a distinctive experience which is associated with the unique desert mountain environment.
- ◇ A range of visitor experience options will be provided to meet the needs of a range of visitors.
- ◇ Each experience option will be sustainable and involve best practice environmental and management standards.
- ◇ The use of the Larapinta Trail for marketing Central Australia will engender an appreciation of the values of the area and of the remoteness as well as the range of experiences associated with the opportunities offered.
- ◇ Management of the Trail will continue to be consistent with the objectives and principles of any plan of management for the West MacDonnell National Park.

### **Key Objectives**

To provide high quality and sustainable walking opportunities for a range of walkers and increasing numbers.

To use best practice management and environmental standards to ensure the trail and walking experiences are environmentally, culturally, socially and financially sustainable consistent with an iconic long distance walking track.

To develop and manage a distinctive experience which can be used in marketing Central Australia. The trail will be marketed responsibly to create realistic visitor expectations.

## The visitor experience to be provided

It has been recommended that the Larapinta Trail will provide walking experiences to meet the needs of the following types of visitors:



**Day walkers** – one day walkers primarily catered for on sections 1, 10 and 12 as well as links off the Larapinta Trail.

**Short walk comfort-seekers** - two to five days trips with relatively safe and comfortable facilities.

**Remote adventurers** – walks from 2 days upwards (including multi day walks such as the whole track) involving challenge, and a degree of risk and discomfort.

Facility levels appropriate to each of these visitor experiences are proposed as follows:

Day walks	Short walk comfort-seekers	Remote adventurers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Toilet facilities at key visitor nodes</li> <li>◆ Trailhead signage and information</li> <li>◆ Class 2-3 track</li> <li>◆ Trail markers and appropriate interpretation of natural and cultural values</li> <li>◆ Trailhead Orientation to range of walking tracks and links in addition to Larapinta Trail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Toilet facilities at serviced camp sites</li> <li>◆ Water supply and shelter at serviced campsites</li> <li>◆ Trail markers appropriately located</li> <li>◆ Trailhead signage at key access nodes</li> <li>◆ Class 2-4 track</li> <li>◆ Access for commercial and group campsites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Toilet facilities for environmental protection</li> <li>◆ Water supply at key campsites</li> <li>◆ essential trail marking only', also</li> <li>◆ no obvious vehicle access'</li> <li>◆ Class 2-5 track</li> </ul>

## Strategies for Achieving the Vision

The draft strategy recommends a series of strategies and actions that will enable the above to be met. Fundamentally, an approach which provides for differential management of the track to provide a range of experiences has been proposed. The outcomes, policies and strategies for each key objective provide a pertinent summary of the recommendations. These are supported by detailed actions.

**Key Objective 1:** To provide high quality and sustainable walking opportunities for a range of walkers and increasing numbers.

### Outcomes

Opportunities will be provided for people to experience the Larapinta Trail on day, overnight and short walks as well as walking the whole track. These opportunities will cater for a range of experience, capability and comfort levels.

The facilities, infrastructure and social characteristics of each experience will be clearly defined and suited to the experience being offered.

Walkers will appreciate the range of experiences from which they can choose and will understand the nature and implications of each type of experience.

Day walkers will primarily be catered for through walking opportunities provided at each end of the Larapinta Trail and on track sections emanating from Intensive Use zones.

Short walk comfort-seekers and remote adventurers will be provided for in Dispersed Use Zones whilst the Minimum Use Zone<sup>1</sup> will provide opportunities for remote adventurers seeking unmarked walks without facilities.

Policy	Key strategies
Provide high quality sustainable experiences for increasing numbers	Manage trail sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12 for higher use levels and lower experience levels. Provide higher standard facilities on these sections.
	Manage and promote sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 as more remote track sections for more capable walkers.
	Provide infrastructure to support identified visitor experiences consistent with Appendix 1.
	Present a range of recommended one to 4-day walking experiences provided at each end of the Larapinta Trail, from Ormiston Gorge and on track sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12 (as in Appendix 2), in addition to the full traverse.
	Provide comprehensive pre trip information to assist with trip planning and to ensure accurate perceptions of experience options.
	Provide detailed interpretation of natural and cultural values of the West MacDonnells environment
	Recognise limits to acceptable change in social and environmental conditions for the different walking experiences.
	Consider demand and opportunities for environmentally sustainable accommodation options away from the trail
Recognize that the Larapinta Trail is only part	Provide and/or have available information about the full range of high quality short walks and more remote tracks and routes within the park and the region.

<sup>1</sup>(zoning based on West MacDonnell National Park draft plan of management



Policy	Key strategies
of the range of Central Australian walking experiences.	Continue to provide a range of walking opportunities and manage and promote Ormiston Gorge as a hub for walking in the West MacDonnells
Maintain natural qualities and sense of remoteness for Larapinta walkers.	Manage the trail corridor (fire, weeds, noise, etc) to protect natural values.
	For the more remote track sections (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,) and overnight walkers on other sections, implement group size limits and limits to acceptable change in relation to the social impacts of walker numbers.
	Negotiate "Fly Neighbourly" policy which enables continued scenic helicopter operations but minimises impact on remote track experience.
	Separate walker campsites from vehicle-based campsites where possible, and separate supported walker camps from independent walker camps.
	Provide high quality trail infrastructure that has minimal aesthetic impact through appropriate design.
Recognise that pre and post trip are important components of the visitor experience.	<p>Investigate a trip package to include transport, payment, registration, information.</p> <p>Maintain relationships with service operators including transport providers to ensure optimal service.</p> <p>Develop customer service standards and program for service operators who have a key role in assisting with trip planning and information.</p> <p>Monitor the feasibility of establishing a shuttle bus system to provide scheduled transport service between all key trailheads.</p>



**Key Objective 2:** To use best practice management and environmental standards to ensure the trail and walking experiences are environmentally, culturally, socially and financially sustainable consistent with an iconic long distance walking track.

#### Outcomes

1. The walker experience will not deteriorate as a result of increasing visitor numbers.
2. The Larapinta Trail will be recognized for its environmental standards and management practices and will serve as a benchmark for other tracks.
3. The biophysical and cultural heritage impacts of the trail and trail use will be stabilized at an acceptable level.

4. Return on investment made by the Northern Territory Government in the Larapinta Trail will be achieved through increased visitation and economic contribution to Central Australia.

Policy	Key strategies
Provide environmentally sustainable track conditions for increasing numbers	Undertake track construction consistent with Australian Standards and with recommendations provided in the detailed track report.
	Continue program of track maintenance and upgrading consistent with the detailed track report.
	Manage trail use, facilities and infrastructure to promote environmental sustainability.
	Promote minimal impact walker behaviour in trail information.
Manage the track to achieve environmental sustainability.	<p>Ensure the key drivers of sustainable use of the track are effectively managed (track condition, user impacts, infrastructure capacity).</p> <p>Defer consideration of track extensions until existing track is managed sustainably.</p> <p>Establish limits to acceptable change to environmental conditions appropriate to different track sections.</p>
Monitor the impact of increasing visitor numbers on the quality of visitor experiences.	<p>Implement a program of monitoring walker numbers.</p> <p>Continue program of visitor surveys with additional key questions aimed at monitoring satisfaction levels and changes to visitor experience. Review approach to obtain optimal sample.</p>
Ensure management of the track is culturally sustainable	<p>Increase awareness of cultural heritage values through interpretation and education</p> <p>Work with the Aboriginal community to ensure appropriate conservation, management and interpretation of cultural heritage</p>
Implement best practice management and environmental standards.	<p>Ensure adequate resources to implement the recommendations of the track audit report.</p> <p>Develop site plans for each of the key camping areas including identification of user needs, capacity, risk management, facilities and environmental standards.</p>
Pursue financial sustainability in management of the Larapinta Trail.	<p>Develop system for packaging and collection of fees for use of the trail including trail use fee, camp site fees, re-supply shed access, information and Standley Chasm site fee.</p> <p>Monitor the ongoing contribution Larapinta Trail walkers make in terms of percentage of Northern Territory tourism through existing tourism data collection sources.</p>

**Key Objective 3:** To develop and manage a distinctive experience which can be used in marketing Central Australia through the use of effective marketing that promotes realistic visitor expectations of the experiences available.

## Outcomes

1. The importance of the range of values (natural, cultural, recreational and educational) of the trail and the surrounding environment to the product will be recognized and maintained.
2. The landscape and vistas of the West MacDonnell Ranges and the various experiences offered by the Larapinta Trail will be used to attract visitors for longer stays in Central Australia.
3. The Larapinta Trail will be recognized in the domestic and international market place as a unique experience in Central Australia.
4. Marketing programs that focus on the Larapinta Trail will be realistic in their portrayal of the images and experiences of the trail.
5. Visitors will have adequate advance information to enable them to determine the most suitable way to experience the Larapinta Trail.

Policy	Key strategies
Maintain the unique nature of the Larapinta Trail	<p>Recognise the importance of the range of values of the trail (natural, cultural and recreational) in Trail development and promotion.</p> <p>When using images of the Larapinta Trail in promotion ensure appropriate messages that recognise the range of walking opportunities.</p>
Undertake accurate and effective marketing of the track	Market in NT Territory tourism as unique and remote desert walk with range of walking opportunities
Use effective and realistic Marketing messages	<p>Adopt the following key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That there is a range of opportunities to experience the track</li> <li>• That the full traverse is a remote and more difficult experience</li> <li>• That the whole trip experience is of a high standard suited to a range of visitors</li> <li>• That best practice environmental, social and management standards can be expected</li> <li>• That there will be opportunities to learn about the significant values of the area</li> </ul>
Provide high quality appropriate information about the track	<p>Develop a range of collateral (in conjunction with key stakeholders and private enterprise) about the track which will meet the following needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial advance orientation about how to find information</li> <li>• Detailed trip planning information</li> <li>• Interpretation and education about the range of track values and heritage</li> <li>• Track orientation and mapping information</li> </ul>



## Marketing Activities

The marketing activities are designed to reach the appropriate markets in the most cost effective way. The total marketing strategy aims to meet the following outcomes:

- ◇ Build recognition of the Larapinta Trail product
- ◇ Create differentiation from other products
- ◇ Reach target markets
- ◇ Be cost effective
- ◇ Be consumer focused
- ◇ Build new markets
- ◇ Position the Larapinta Trail alongside other well known long distance walks
- ◇ Secure product distribution

## Implementation of the Larapinta Trail Management Strategy

The implementation of the strategy will require considerable time, resources and cooperation between key partners. The following key strategies are raised for consideration:

### Partnerships

It is essential to ensure the maintenance of effective partnerships between Government and the private sector in the provision, management and marketing of sustainable opportunities on the Larapinta Trail.

Achievements in management of a number of other long distance walking tracks has depended to some extent on the involvement of external partners including volunteers, and consideration must be given to such concepts for the Larapinta Trail.

### Larapinta Trail Foundation

The establishment of a Foundation is one way of engendering support of the Trail and for management, as well as pursuing return of track revenue to track management. The role of a Foundation would entail:

- ◇ Revenue raising (including sponsorship)
- ◇ Management of Track Package
- ◇ Promotional programs
- ◇ Retail sales production and management



- ◇ Engagement of volunteers for basic trail maintenance activities
- ◇ Website management

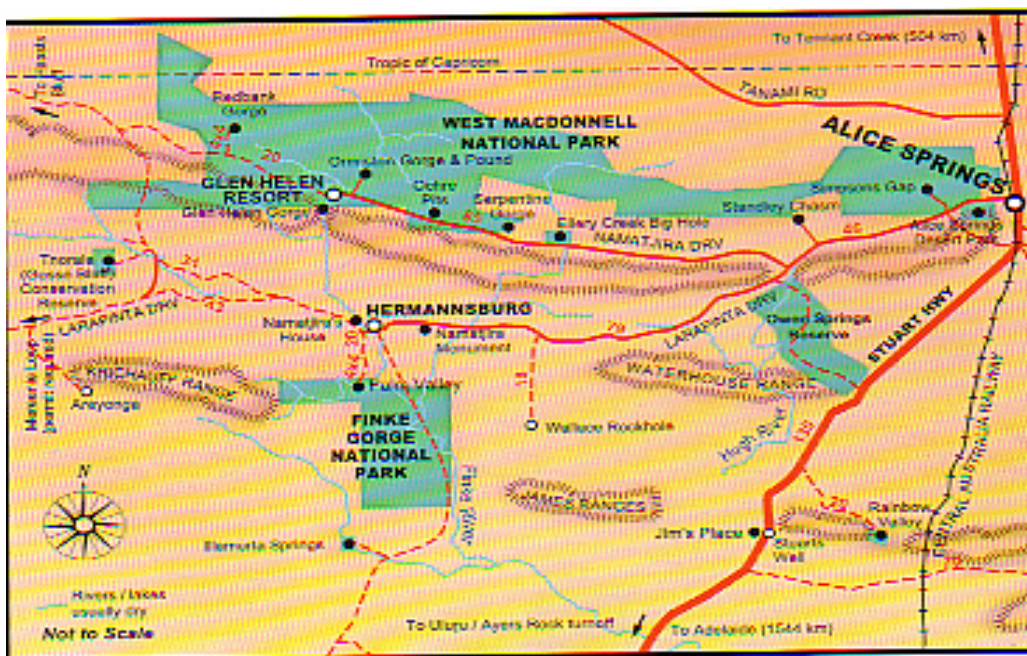
### Works programs

Clearly track improvements recommended in this strategy as well as ongoing maintenance will require considerable resources. A sustainable approach to ensuring resources is required.



### Revenue

There is an expectation amongst long distance track walkers that they will pay a fee for usage of facilities. Whilst user pays for park use is not a NT Government policy, the use of camping sites attracts a fee. Given the upgrading of facilities on the Larapinta Trail and the high standard that walkers may expect, the charging of a combined camping fee is appropriate. It is also a more efficient approach to the current expectation that walkers may pay at some campsites on an honesty policy. Payment of one up front fee is preferable with arrangements to be made in relation to the regular and local users.



Map 1 Location, West MacDonnell National Park

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## 1. Background to the Strategy

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The Larapinta Trail (Map 2) had its genesis in a 1989 strategy to develop a large national park in the West MacDonnell Ranges. A long distance walking track was conceived to provide a unifying theme for the park with world class, extended bush walking opportunities in the desert mountain environment. The Trail would link popular waterholes and other visitor attractions along the backbone of the Chewings and Heavitree Ranges westward from Alice Springs. The first section of the trail was opened in July 1990 and the final section was completed 12 years later. The complete trail was opened on 15 April 2002.



Most of the trail is within the West MacDonnell National Park, with four sections comprising about 10% of the total trail length on other conservation and Aboriginal lands. The trail starts within the Alice Springs Telegraph Station Historical Reserve and crosses lands of the Iwupataka and Roulpmaulpma Aboriginal Land Trusts and an Aboriginal living area north-west of Glen Helen which is likely to be incorporated back into the park. The trail is managed in its entirety by the Parks and Wildlife Service of the Northern Territory (PWSNT), by agreement with other landowners.

After such a long period of planning and construction, and with the trail beginning to develop a wide reputation and to attract a growing number of walkers, it became appropriate to review the trail's future management.

Early in 2004 the Northern Territory Tourist Commission (NTTC) and the PWSNT established a joint committee (the Larapinta Trail Strategy Group) to oversee the development of a management strategy for the Larapinta Trail. The Strategy Group also includes representatives of the local tourism industry connected with the Larapinta Trail. In June 2004, following a competitive tender process, Planning For People Pty Ltd were appointed as consultants to prepare the strategy.

This draft Management Strategy for the Larapinta Trail is based on:

- ◇ a thorough analysis of past and current management practices;
- ◇ relevant understanding of the development of long-distance walking tracks elsewhere in Australia and overseas;
- ◇ detailed assessment of the trail, its infrastructure and its presentation;
- ◇ sustainable tourism principles;
- ◇ stakeholder consultations including the results of visitor surveys;
- ◇ stakeholder, agency and public feedback on a detailed Discussion Paper aimed at exploring management ideas for the trail and
- ◇ the deliberations of the Larapinta Trail Strategy Group.

Additional to the Key Objectives of the Strategy, the NTTC and the Tourism Infrastructure Taskforce are investigating the feasibility of establishing walking huts along the Larapinta Trail, in consultation with PWSNT.

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## 2. The Trail Today

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The Larapinta Trail extends for 223 kilometres from the Alice Springs Telegraph Station in the east to Redbank Gorge and Mount Sonder in the west. (Map 2) Construction was undertaken using a number of different groups to a variety of standards and using a range of techniques over a period of 12 years.



The total, officially measured length of the main trail from Alice Springs Telegraph Station to Mt Sonder (south summit) is 223 km.

The links to track heads and vehicle access points at Birthday Waterhole (0.7 km), Ochre Pits (4 km), Jay Creek (4.5km) Glen Helen (3.5 km) and Redbank (0.7km) add slightly more than another 13 km for a grand total of 236 km. Map 2 details the track and trail heads.

The trail is managed and presented to the public in 12 sections, with each section providing a connected series of shorter walks of between one and two days. Walkers can choose from a day hike to a two week or longer adventure on the trail. The trail is marked throughout with direction and distance markers. (Map 3)

The track standard has been designed to be primarily suitable for trekkers (people who are capable walkers prepared to carry reasonable loads and to camp out), varying from the more well defined track with moderate grades (Class B, or Australian Standard Class 3) on sections 1, and 2 to the slightly lower standard (Class C, or Australian Standard Class 4 and 5) with the track appearing as a well used footpad with some difficult portions on sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11 and 12. Sections 7 and 10, however, are suited to the average walker.

A few short lengths of the trail correspond to pre-existing four-wheel-drive management trails and public access roads. The remainder is walking track, most of which was purpose-constructed as part of the Larapinta Trail. The trail is generally of 'footpad' width, with some parts featuring high-level construction with intensive stonework and benching to stabilise the formation on steep slopes. A minimalist approach was followed on many other sections of ridge-top, gorge and elsewhere, using track markers, vegetation removal and basic clearing of obstructions to define the alignment. This approach also minimises the potential for soil erosion resulting from track construction and use.

Structural elements employed on the trail include a basic track formation (ie. cleared of rocks and other obstructions), benched formations where the track sidles cross-slopes, steps (mainly local stone with a few timber) and a limited amount of rock pitching on steep ascents/descents. Drainage structures include water bars, cross-drains and rollover drains, generally from local stone and earth material.



Campsites, including some minor facilities such as toilets and shelters, have been developed at a number of points along the Trail. Elsewhere recommended campsites are identified, but no facilities provided. Campfires are permitted along the trail, however walkers are encouraged to carry portable cooking appliances to reduce the impact of wood collection and the potential for wildfire.



Some water is supplied at intervals along the Trail in tanks and limited natural water supplies also occur. Most water supplies are untreated and it is recommended that they be treated before consumption.

The Trail has conventional and/or four-wheel-drive vehicle access points at track heads for each section. Some of the track heads are located at major visitor nodes such as Simpsons Gap, Standley Chasm, Ellery Creek Big Hole, Ormiston Gorge, Glen Helen Gorge and Redbank Gorge. Others are at more remote vehicle access points.

A map of adjacent trail sections with safety notes is displayed at the track heads. More detailed maps and notes are also available free of charge for each section. A voluntary walker registration scheme is available and logbooks are in place at all track heads.

Visitor usage information is limited and inconclusive, but trail usage is currently estimated at over 1000 per year for experiences ranging from day walks to extended traverses. Usage is reported to be steadily increasing. The typical overnight or longer walker is experienced, from interstate Australia and values the track very highly.

Five companies currently offer guided experiences on the track, ranging from day walks to extended unsupported walks to long traverses with vehicle-supported camping. A number of operators provide transport and food re-supply services which are an important support feature for those undertaking longer traverses.



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## 3. Context for Future Management of the Larapinta Trail

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### 3.1 Management of the West MacDonnell National Park

Consistent with Section 18 of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*, a (draft) plan of management has been prepared for the West MacDonnell National Park. The draft will be reviewed and re-written to reflect the proposed joint management of the Park.

The following overall principles of the draft plan are relevant to the management of the Larapinta Trail:

- ◇ Parks provide opportunities for visitors to enjoy and appreciate the values for which they have been set aside. Recreation is an important element in the use, appreciation and enjoyment of parks by visitors.
- ◇ Poorly designed recreational facilities or infrastructure can diminish park values.
- ◇ Well designed interpretation and education programs can increase visitor knowledge and understanding of park values and their management leading to enhanced visitor experiences and compliance with management provisions.
- ◇ The safety of park visitors is of paramount importance in the development and management of parks.
- ◇ Issues related to equity of use including gender and physical impairment are primary considerations in the provision of visitor access and development of park visitor facilities.
- ◇ Effective liaison with the tourism industry can help to improve the delivery of park recreational opportunities and the provision of visitor services.
- ◇ Understanding visitor use and expectations can help to improve park recreational opportunities and the provision of visitor services.
- ◇ Appropriate commercial operations can be a very important tool for managing visitors and better utilizing staff resources. Well-managed operations can make parks more enjoyable to a greater number of people and contribute to the value of the tourism industry. In addition, appropriate and well-managed commercial operations may enhance visitor opportunities and enjoyment, contribute significantly to local economies, and reduce the resource requirements of park management.<sup>2</sup>

#### Larapinta Trail

The objectives of management for the Larapinta Trail as stated within the draft plan of management are:

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<sup>2</sup> *West MacDonnell National Park draft Plan of Management, Northern Territory Government, 2002, p.20*

- ◇ To provide a high quality extended walking track within the Park.
- ◇ To maintain the natural values of the Park which contribute to the quality of experience for walkers using the Larapinta Trail.

### Zoning Scheme

The draft plan uses a system of zoning for management of visitor use. Five zones have been defined for the Park:

- ◇ Intensive Use Zone
- ◇ Dispersed Use Zone
- ◇ Minimum Use Zone
- ◇ Special Protection Zone
- ◇ Service Zone

In terms of walking track provision, the plan states that

“As a general guide the following track standards are considered appropriate for each of the Park’s zones:

- Intensive Recreation Zone: A Class, B Class (comment: Australian Standard Class 1 to 3)
- Dispersed Use Recreation Zone: B Class, C Class (comment: Australian Standard Class 3 to 5)
- Minimum Use Zone: Unmarked routes.” (comment: Australian Standard Class 6)”<sup>3</sup>

### 3.2 Management of Aboriginal land and heritage

The full length of the trail traverses lands over which Aboriginal traditional ownership has been acknowledged. Traditional owners have an ongoing interest in land management and caring for country.

Parts of the trail also traverse lands owned by both the Iwupataka and Roulpmaulpma Aboriginal Land Trusts. PWSNT manages the trail on these lands by agreement with the Aboriginal Land Trusts. The route of the trail within West MacDonnell National Park was also subject to discussions with traditional owners during its development and clearance certificates were obtained from the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority for all sections of the trail before construction.

The Central Land Council and PWSNT are currently negotiating towards joint management of the West MacDonnell National Park between the government and traditional owners. Traditional owners also have an interest in economic opportunities associated with the park and the Larapinta trail.

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<sup>3</sup> as above,

The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) has responsibility under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act* for the protection of Aboriginal sacred sites, balanced with use and development of land in the Territory. The AAPA administers procedures to identify sacred site protection needs in relation to works.

### 3.3 Tourism Context

The *Northern Territory Tourism Strategic Plan 2003-2007* sets out the direction for tourism in the NT for the next five years and beyond. The plan focuses on building a sustainable tourism industry in the Territory...including a destination-based approach to future development as well as an increased focus on the Territory's building blocks of nature based and cultural tourism. The plan acknowledges that the NTTC will continue to build on the Territory's existing market strengths to position the region in line with 'real outback', indigenous culture, natural wonders and iconic national parks.

The plan identifies three key principles essential to nature based tourism:

- ◇ Development must be sustainable
- ◇ Experiences must be interpreted
- ◇ The integrity of the destination must be maintained<sup>4</sup>

The *Destination Development Strategy* (NTTC, February 2004) was the output of an audit of potential destinations in the NT and the assessment of priority destinations. The strategy concluded that "the greatest effect on Territory tourism could be achieved by maintaining support for major tourist destinations whilst boosting smaller destinations through the implementation of tangible on ground outcomes to expand consumer options"<sup>5</sup>

The strategy identified Alice Springs as a mature destination of the highest priority. The West MacDonnell Ranges were also identified as a highest priority but as a developing destination. Development phases were identified for developing destinations. The Larapinta Trail Management Strategy is one short term strategy which was identified in the Action Plan of the *Destination Development Strategy* for the West MacDonnells as a priority destination for tourism.

The following observations identified with representatives of the tourism industry in the development of this strategy are also important in planning for the Larapinta Trail within the region.

- ◇ Alice Springs is commonly used as a start point for tours including fly drive and coach trips with limited time spent in the town or the immediate surrounds. Uluru is the focal point of the Centre and Alice Springs a "transit town".

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<sup>4</sup> NT Government, *Northern Territory Tourism Strategic Plan 2003-2007*

<sup>5</sup> *The Destination Development Strategy* (NTTC, February 2004), p 11

- ◇ The recent commencement of the Ghan train through to Darwin has brought high numbers of tourists to Alice Springs but many only for a very short duration (hours). An increase in the frequency of this service has recently been announced.
- ◇ Backpackers to Alice Springs are commonly on short fly in package trips of 3-5 days duration that visit Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park (Ayers Rock and the Olgas) and Watarrka National Parks with one or two nights only in Alice Springs.
- ◇ Visitors that have time to spend in the West MacDonnells that have not previously planned to walk the Larapinta Trail, regularly seek information about the trail to plan a return visit to walk all or part of the track.
- ◇ The Mereenie Loop Road link between Alice Springs and Watarrka National Park via the West MacDonnell National Park is to be sealed by 2006/07 which will result in increasing numbers of visitors to the West MacDonnell National Park and a greater exposure of the Larapinta Trail.
- ◇ The industry is working cooperatively to enhance the attraction of Alice Springs as a destination as well as a transit town and to enhance the appeal of the town itself. The Larapinta Trail has the potential to play a significant role in this endeavour.
- ◇ Central Australia receives an approximate 50:50 split of international and domestic visitors and many of this market would be inexperienced and seeking the day walks and short walk comfort-seekers experience.

### 3.4 The Larapinta Trail as part of a range of walking opportunities

The Larapinta Trail is one of many walking tracks in the region albeit the best known of the tracks. There is a range of walking opportunities associated with the West MacDonnell National Park as well as those emanating from key visitor nodes outside the park and from Alice Springs. Additionally, there are a number of favoured routes for people seeking more remote experiences. Ormiston Gorge is a key hub for walking activities.

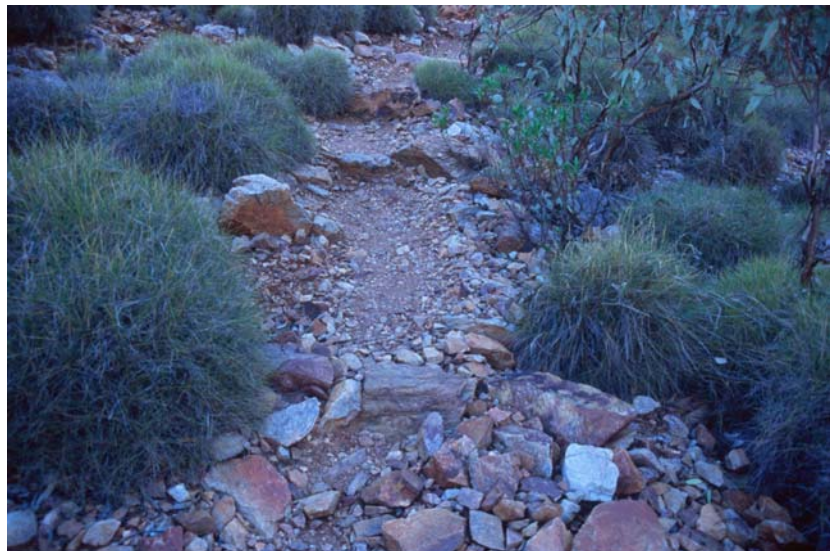


Table 1 below identifies the range of walking opportunities in the West MacDonnell Ranges area (excluding the Larapinta Trail).

**Table 1 Range of walking opportunities**

Trailhead or locality	Track	Experience
Alice Springs	Riverside Walk (to Telegraph Station)	2 hours return
Alice Springs Telegraph Station	Bradshaw Walk Spencer Hill Walk Stuart Walk Wigley Waterhole	30 mins return 30 mins return 30 mins return 1 hour return
Alice Springs Desert Park	Circuit tracks through exhibits	30 mins to several hours
Simpsons Gap	Simpson's Gap Bicycle Path from Alice Springs via Flynns Grave and Simpsons Gap Ghost Gum walk Cassia Hill walk Woodland Trail	2 hours 30 mins one way  30 mins return 30 mins return 5 hours return
Standley Chasm	Chasm walk	40 mins return
Ellery Creek Big Hole	Water hole walk Dolomite Walk	20 mins return 40 mins return
Serpentine Gorge	Waterhole Lookout	1 hour return 1 hour return
Serpentine Chalet	Chalet Dam	One hour return
Ochre Pits	Ochre Pits walk Arrernte Bush walk	15 mins return 3 hours return
Ormiston	Pound Walk Water hole Walk Ghost Gum lookout Ghost Gum walk Mount Giles Bowmans Gap	2-3 hours return 10 mins return 30 mins return 1.5 hours return 2-3 days 1-2 days return
Glen Helen	Waterhole walk	20 mins return
Redbank Gorge	Gorge Walk Mount Sonder Lookout	1 hour return 4 hours return

## 4. KEY ISSUES TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THE TRAIL

The following issues have been identified through consultation as important ones to be addressed in terms of trail management.

Issue	Impact on Larapinta	Potential solutions
Unrealistic visitor expectations or diminishing quality of trail experiences	Dissatisfied walkers, loss of unique experiences and loss of product advantage	Define the range of experiences to be provided, manage the trail to protect those experiences, and promote them to appropriate market segments
The visitors experience to be provided is sustainable	Potential exists to lose the unique product advantage	Define the range of experiences to be provided and promote them to appropriate market segments
Deteriorating trail conditions and environment	Dissatisfied walkers, loss of unique experiences and loss of product advantage	Improve identified trail segments, campsites and trail infrastructure to improve stability and aesthetics and protect quality of experience
Current low use levels	Trail use continues below potential and fails to adequately return investment	Market trail as offering a variety of experiences Ensure promoted experiences are high quality and continue to be available
Working within the objectives and intent of the West MacDonnell National Park draft plan of management	Need to manage significant natural and cultural features and be consistent with management objectives	Ensure effective on-ground planning Well designed infrastructure aimed at minimising impact on values Effective interpretation and education programs aimed at increasing appreciation of values Effective and focused monitoring of visitor numbers and impacts
Increase in numbers walking the track	Increased numbers of visitors will accelerate trail impacts and may detract from remote experience for some visitors	Identification and management of different track sections to offer different experiences Effective management of trail conditions and biophysical impacts Promotion of trail sections for likely use patterns Providing information on range of walking opportunities in the park and region Promotion of the Trail as one that is remote but popular Possible future need for booking system for more remote sections Allocation of adequate resources for trail maintenance
Importance of the track to the local community	Increasing use leading to sense of loss of local experience and value	Recognition of the importance of the Trail to the regional economy Engagement of the local community in

Issue	Impact on Larapinta	Potential solutions
	of trail	management of the track. Continued promotion and support of the educational role of the Trail for local schools. Undertake assessment of economic benefits of the trail as a basis for funding allocations.
The sealing of the Mereenie loop will increase numbers of people visiting the West MacDonnell National Park (especially western parts).	Increased numbers at Redbank Gorge both camping and walking. Increased visitors incl. coach groups to the key nodes of Ormiston Gorge, Standley Chasm and Simpson's Gap. Increased demand for camping sites.	Promotion and management of trail sections for likely use patterns. Separation of large group and Larapinta walker campsites. Re-routing of trail sections away from key visitor nodes to make interaction at high use points optional.
Adequate resources for trail management	Trail conditions, the trail environment and walker experiences may deteriorate if resources inadequate	Recognise economic significance of trail as a regional tourism attractor Create appropriate management model Secure some income from trail users Increase government funding for trail Complete trail improvements to reduce maintenance needs
Poor walker preparation	Increased safety issues & walker dissatisfaction	Upgrade information package available to prospective walkers and for use during walk
Walker safety	More frequent safety incidents could detract from trail image and increase costs	Recognise inherent risks of walking the trail Promote trail options to appropriate market segments Include appropriate safety messages and advice in all trail information Consider including key messages in non-English languages Monitor and maintain data on track incidents
Conflict between different trail users	Diminished quality of experience	Differential management of trail for different users Clearly communicate appropriate uses in trail information Separate campsites for supported and independent walkers
Failure to promote walker understanding of the natural/cultural environment of the West MacDonnell Ranges	Poor environmental practices by walkers and sub-optimal walker experiences	Ensure pre-trip and on-trip information includes substantial interpretive content by ensuring key stakeholder involvement in production

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## 5. Managing The Visitor Experience

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### 5.1 Vision for the Larapinta Trail

The Larapinta Trail will be renowned world-wide as an easily accessible and well maintained track which provides an appreciation of the remoteness, grandeur and cultural significance of the West MacDonnell Ranges through a variety of walking experiences.



### 5.2 Guiding Principles

- ◇ The Larapinta Trail will provide a distinctive experience which is associated with the unique desert mountain environment.
- ◇ A range of visitor experience options will be provided to meet the needs of a range of visitors
- ◇ Each experience option will be sustainable and involve best practice environmental and management standards
- ◇ The use of the Larapinta Trail for marketing Central Australia will engender an appreciation of the values of the area and of the remoteness as well as the range of experiences associated with the opportunities offered.
- ◇ Management of the Trail will continue to be consistent with the objectives and principles of any plan of management for the West MacDonnell National Park.

### 5.3 Key Objectives

1. To provide high quality and sustainable walking opportunities for a range of walkers and increasing numbers.
2. To use best practice management and environmental standards to ensure the trail and walking experiences are environmentally, culturally, socially and financially sustainable consistent with an iconic long distance walking track.
3. To develop and manage a distinctive experience which can be used in marketing Central Australia. The trail will be marketed responsibly to create realistic visitor expectations.

### 5.4 The visitor experience to be provided

The Larapinta Trail will provide walking experiences to meet the needs of the following types of visitors:



**Day walkers** – one day walkers primarily catered for on sections 1, 10, 12 as well as links off the Larapinta Trail;

**Short walk comfort-seekers** - two to five days trips with relative safe and comfortable facilities (on sections 1- 3, 10 -12);

**Remote adventurers** – walks from 2 days upwards (including multi day walks such as the whole track) involving challenge, and a degree of risk and discomfort.

Facility levels appropriate to each of the visitor experiences are proposed as follows:

Day walks	Short-walk.comfort-seekers	remote adventurers
Toilet facilities at key visitor nodes Trailhead signage and information Class 2-3 track Trail markers and appropriate interpretation of natural and cultural values Trailhead Orientation to range of walking tracks and links in addition to Larapinta Trail	Toilet facilities at serviced camp sites Water supply and shelter at serviced campsites Trail markers appropriately located Trailhead signage at key access nodes Class 2-4 track Access for commercial and group campsites	Toilet facilities for environmental protection Water supply at key campsites essential trail marking only no obvious vehicle access' Class 2-5 track

### 5.5 Who is the Market?

Current usage of the trail tends towards the more experienced end of the walking spectrum. This is attributable in part to the current presentation and reputation of the trail, so there is potential for encouraging a wider spectrum of use (on the less difficult sections). There is an opportunity to provide a diversity of walking experiences on the Larapinta Trail to provide for a range of needs, and as part of the total suite of walking opportunities available across Central Australia. There is an associated need to provide appropriate information to ensure realistic visitor perceptions of the experiences available.

The most likely areas of natural growth in walkers to the Larapinta Trail are expected to be:

- ◇ Local day walkers ;
- ◇ Short Stop Travellers undertaking day walks at key visitor nodes;



- ◇ Overnight Visitors staying in the West MacDonnells or nearby doing day walks on the trail;
- ◇ Specialist ecotours picking up multi day packages
- ◇ People undertaking walks of one, two and three nights' duration with or without commercial guides;
- ◇ Bushwalking clubs' new and return visits as Remote Adventurers and doing the longer walks;
- ◇ International and domestic Short Walk Comfort-seekers using the services of commercial tour operators and doing the longer walks and full traverse;
- ◇ The international and domestic market that seeks to undertake the full range of long distance walks in Australia.

Areas which have the potential to be increased through effective marketing include:

- ◇ Day walkers;
- ◇ Backpackers becoming Remote Adventurers through extended itineraries ;
- ◇ Interstate repeat visitors as Remote Adventurers and Short Walk Comfort-seekers;
- ◇ Short Walk Comfort-seekers;
- ◇ Local market
- ◇ International and domestic market groups seeking to undertake all "must do" long distance walks.



## 6. Strategies for Achieving the Vision

### 6.1 Key Objective 1

To provide high quality and sustainable walking opportunities for a range of walkers and increasing numbers.

#### Outcomes

1. Opportunities will be provided for people to experience the Larapinta Trail on day, overnight and short walks as well as walking the whole track. These opportunities will cater for a range of experience, capability and comfort levels.
2. The facilities, infrastructure and social characteristics of each experience will be clearly defined and suited to the experience being offered.
3. Walkers will appreciate the range of experiences from which they can choose and will understand the nature and implications of each type of experience.
4. Day walkers will primarily be catered for through walking opportunities provided at each end of the Larapinta Trail and on track sections emanating from Intensive Use zones.
5. Short walk comfort-seekers and remote adventurers will be provided for in Dispersed Use Zones whilst the Minimum Use Zone will provide opportunities for remote adventurers seeking unmarked walks without facilities.



Policy	Key strategies
Provide high quality sustainable experiences for increasing numbers	Manage trail sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12 for higher use levels and lower experience levels. Provide higher standard facilities on these sections.
	Manage and promote sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 as more remote track sections for more capable walkers.
	Provide infrastructure to support identified visitor experiences consistent with Appendix 1.
	Present a range of recommended one to 4-day walking experiences provided at each end of the Larapinta Trail, from Ormiston Gorge and on track sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12 (as in Appendix 2), in addition to the full traverse.
	Provide comprehensive pre trip information to assist with trip planning and to ensure accurate perceptions of experience options.
	Provide detailed interpretation of natural and cultural values of the West MacDonnells environment

Policy	Key strategies
	<p>Recognise limits to acceptable change in social and environmental conditions for the different walking experiences.(see Appendix 9)</p> <p>Consider demand and opportunities for environmentally sustainable accommodation options away from the trail</p>
<p>Recognize that the Larapinta Trail is only part of the range of Central Australian walking experiences.</p>	<p>Provide and/or have available information about the full range of high quality short walks and more remote tracks and routes within the park and the region.</p> <p>Continue to provide a range of walking opportunities and manage Ormiston Gorge as a hub for walking in the West MacDonnells</p>
<p>Maintain natural qualities and sense of remoteness for Larapinta walkers.</p>	<p>Manage the trail corridor to protect natural values (fire, weeds, noise, etc).</p> <p>For the more remote track sections (3-9) and overnight walkers on other sections, implement group size limits and limits to acceptable change in relation to the social impacts of walker numbers.</p> <p>Negotiate “Fly Neighbourly” policy which enables continued scenic helicopter operations but minimises impact on remote track experience.</p> <p>Separate walker campsites from vehicle-based campsites where possible, and separate supported walker camps from independent walker camps.</p> <p>Provide high quality trail infrastructure that has minimal aesthetic impact through appropriate design.</p>
<p>Recognise that pre and post trip are important components of the visitor experience.</p>	<p>Investigate a trip package to include transport, payment, registration, information.</p> <p>Maintain relationships with service operators including transport providers to ensure optimal service.</p> <p>Develop customer service standards and program for service operators who have a key role in assisting with trip planning and information.</p> <p>Monitor the feasibility of establishing a shuttle bus system to provide scheduled transport service between all key trailheads.</p>

## Actions

### Track marking and signs

6.1.1	Maintain the current track marking format.
6.1.2	Minimise the need for track markers overall (but especially on sections 4-9), firstly by good track definition, and also by providing improved maps and detailed route notes.
6.1.3	Limit the use of permanent track markers on trail sections 4-9 to intersections, turnoffs, difficult-to-follow segments and occasional reassurance.
6.1.4	Promote self-reliance amongst walkers on trail sections 4 -9 by emphasising that basic map reading and navigational skills are required (to reduce dependence on markers).
6.1.5	Provide a higher level of track marking on trail sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12 by including reassurance markers at regular intervals.
6.1.6	Ensure consistency in track marking by communicating clear guidelines, providing oversight, encouraging track management staff to walk as many sections of the trail as possible, and varying the direction walked on routine track inspections.
6.1.7	Add additional track markers only after careful consideration of the guidelines and the situation.
6.1.8	Continue to remove unnecessary markers and signs as they become redundant (eg. as track definition improves).
6.1.9	Continue to exclude stone cairns as markers and remove those that have appeared.
6.1.10	Re-assess track markers at least annually and after major events such as fires and floods as well as years of high rainfall when vegetation growth can be exceptional
6.1.11	Limit the use of flagging tape as a supplement to permanent track markers to temporary (eg. one season) emergency use in response to changed track conditions, eg. flood or fire. Standardise the colour used to dark blue.
6.1.12	Progressively remove all total distance markers from the trail and install a system of section distance markers (every km) complemented by total distances to the track ends at Alice Springs and Mount Sonder (at each section track head)
6.1.13	Amend the trail maps to exclude total trail distances, but to show inter-nodal distances (as on a road map) and progressive totals along each section (node to node cumulative, E-W direction).
6.1.14	Develop and apply an unobtrusive but standardised way of labeling distances for management purposes on track marker posts.
6.1.15	Limit written signage in lower use areas along the trail to locality names which are identified on maps but not obvious from context, plus essential signs providing direction at major visitor nodes and to off-track facilities.

### Campsites and facilities

6.1.16	Identify an expanded suite of suggested campsites in two categories: the existing suite of serviced sites, plus a non-serviced category (to include several already-developed ridge sites and a number of low impact valley sites, as provisionally listed in Appendix 3).
6.1.17	Provide toilets, water supply and defined tent pads (if required by ground conditions) at all 'standard' (serviced) campsites on sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12 (Wallaby Gap, Simpsons Gap, Mulga Camp, Jay Creek, Serpentine Gorge, Ormiston

	Gorge, Finke River [walker's camp], Rocky Bar Gap, Redbank Gorge).
6.1.18	Reinforce the current suite of serviced and other 'standard' campsites as the best option for most walkers (as listed in Appendix 3—mostly large capacity and with water supplies, many with emergency vehicle access, and appropriate to a full-traverse itinerary of 20 days).
6.1.19	Provide no facilities (other than water supply at some) at any of the other suggested campsites (on all trail sections) and reinforce that they are suited to experienced independent walkers who can cope without water supplies and toilets.
6.1.20	Clearly define and identify areas prohibited to camping on trail maps, list them in trail information and mark them on the trail (with a 'no camping' symbol sign at each end of the zone).
6.1.21	Clearly indicate in trail maps and information the capacity of all suggested sites and the facilities provided.
6.1.22	Promote a walker camping code which prohibits ground and vegetation disturbance to create new tent and sleeping sites and emphasizes creek bed camping as a low impact option as well as the need to carry comfortable camping mats and free-standing tents.
6.1.23	Retain the freedom for walkers to camp anywhere outside the prohibited zones, including away from the track, provided no new disturbance is created and minimal impact practices are strictly followed.
6.1.24	Reduce the proliferation of smoothed sleeping sites on the ridges by including selected sites in the 'suggested' suite (Appendix 3), and rehabilitating others.
6.1.25	Establish alternative trail campsites wherever possible at the major visitor nodes along the trail: Standley Chasm, Ellery Creek, Hugh Gorge, Birthday Waterhole, Serpentine Gorge, Ormiston Gorge and Redbank Gorge.
6.1.26	Provide separate campsites (if possible) for group and independent walkers at Simpsons Gap, Jay Creek, Birthday Waterhole, Hugh Gorge, Rocky Gully, Ellery Creek, Serpentine Gorge, Ormiston Gorge, Rocky Bar Gap and Redbank Gorge. Independent walker camps to be separated from vehicle access (other than for essential management) and include a number (suggested 8) of leveled and prepared tent sites.
6.1.27	Place all new or relocated campsites (where possible) along short branch-tracks so they are removed from the through trail.
6.1.28	As numbers increase, and if issues become identified through monitoring, implement booking system for group campsites, and , beyond that, if necessary, independent walker campsites

### Track grades, walking times and distances

6.1.29	Apply a standardised system of difficulty gradings to trail sections in public information (as suggested in Appendix 4).
6.1.30	Check all track distances on the ground using the best available and consistent technology, eg. GPS mapping.
6.1.31	Incorporate any revised distances into signage and published information.
6.1.32	Revise trail maps to show 'leg' distances between identified landmarks (corresponding to the segments used for suggested times).
6.1.33	Establish Serpentine Chalet Dam as the trailhead for sections 8 and 9 (rather than Inarlanga Pass).

6.1.34	Review the revised walking times as suggested in Appendix 7, adjust as necessary and include in trail information.
6.1.35	Include the following statement (or similar) wherever suggested walking times are published: These walking times are provided as a guide only, for Larapinta Trail walkers of average fitness and capability carrying overnight packs (eg. 15-20 kg). The times are based on a steady pace and allow for some brief stops but no long rests. Fast walkers and day walkers may travel more quickly on the easier sections of the trail, while less agile walkers may be slowed down by gorges and rocky ground.

### Water supply

6.1.36	Maintain the current artificial water supply points and provide water supply where new serviced campsites are established.
6.1.37	Investigate improving the cost-effectiveness of maintaining the artificial water supplies (options for consideration include helicopter re-supply, contract supplier, larger tanks, spring-loaded taps, catchment roofs, radio telemetry monitoring).
6.1.38	Maintain the current advice for walkers to treat all surface and tank water.
6.1.39	Upgrade the trail maps and information to indicate both permanent and temporary waterholes with appropriate advice on seasonality and seeking current information.
6.1.40	Promote a web information page on the trail to include up-to-date reports from staff and walkers on water availability at the ephemeral waterholes.

### Levels of use/group sizes

6.1.41	Apply group size limits as follows: Limit of 8 on all groups on trail sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 (consistent with other states' approach to minimal impact bushwalking) Limit of 15 on all groups on trail sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12. Work with tour operators to determine a process and timeline for implementation of group sizes
6.1.42	Apply the group size limits equally to both commercial tours and other non-commercial groups.
6.1.43	Require groups of greater than 8 to use the separate group camps where they are provided.

### Walker registration

6.1.44	Encourage increased use of the voluntary registration scheme by including it in the comprehensive trail package (see below).
6.1.45	Review and improve the current walker registration procedure to remove barriers to its use ( eg shortness of time to de-register).
6.1.46	Maintain the records from the registration scheme as part of the visitor monitoring program.



## Walker safety

6.1.47	Promote trail sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 as being for self-reliant walkers who are proficient in traveling through the remote desert mountain environment safely, have a high level of fitness and experience in walking in steep terrain and who have some ability in map reading and bush navigation.
6.1.48	Promote trail sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12 as being suited to less capable walkers who nevertheless are able to handle the remote desert mountain environment.
6.1.49	Continue to encourage walkers to take responsibility for their own safety and not to rely on outside assistance.
6.1.50	Include in trail information detailed warnings on the following risks and how to prepare for or manage them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dehydration/heat exhaustion</li> <li>• bushfire</li> <li>• floods</li> <li>• cliffs</li> <li>• rough walking conditions</li> <li>• loose rock</li> <li>• untreated water</li> <li>• sunburn</li> <li>• remoteness from assistance</li> </ul>
6.1.51	Maintain the current system of water supply and treatment advice.
6.1.52	Strongly discourage but do not prohibit walking alone or in extremely hot weather. Describe in trail information the specific risks in this hot, dry and isolated environment.
6.1.53	Ensure clear emergency response procedures and responsibilities are in place for overdue walkers, search and rescue alerts, and emergency events such as fire and flood which may impact the trail.
6.1.54	Continue to encourage walkers to carry satellite telephones (preferably) or EPIRBs (of lesser usefulness) for emergency communication but to firstly rely on their own sound planning and safe practices. Research information on mobile phone, EPIRB and satphone coverage and place on maps.
6.1.55	Show potential emergency exit routes on trail maps, including 4WD management trails which connect with or closely approach the Larapinta Trail.





## Food re-supply

6.1.56	Install standardised re-supply storage facilities at Standley Chasm and Ellery Creek. Facility to be a small lockable shed which protects the supplies from rain and extremes of heat, with a capacity of at least 10 caches to cope with potential increase in demand over the next few years.
6.1.57	Provide a coded or key access system for all storage facilities (including Ormiston Gorge), with the code/key included in the trail package.

## Accommodation

6.1.58	Limit roofed shelter directly on the trail to the shelters provided at key sites with capacity for water capture and continue program of upgrading to metal-roofed shelter
6.1.59	Where accommodation exists or investment in cabins and resort accommodation has potential (eg. Standley Chasm, Ellery Creek, Glen Helen, Ormiston, Hamilton Downs), work with businesses to provide packaged short walks on higher use trail sections.
6.1.60	Investigate demand and opportunities for minimal impact niche accommodation options and possible off trail locations for development of accommodation suited to trail users.

## Economic benefits of the Trail

6.1.61	Commission research into the economic benefits of the Larapinta Trail to the regional economy and utilize the results in determining appropriate funding for the Trail.
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## 6.2 Key Objective 2

To use best practice management and environmental standards to ensure the trail and walking experiences are environmentally, culturally, socially and financially sustainable.

### Outcomes

1. The walker experience will not deteriorate as a result of increasing visitor numbers.
2. The Larapinta Trail will be recognized for its environmental standards and management practices and will serve as a benchmark for other tracks.
3. The trail formation will be environmentally stable throughout.
4. Impacts of the trail and trail use on the biophysical environment and cultural heritage values will be stabilized at an acceptable level.



5. Return on investment made by the Northern Territory Government in the Larapinta Trail will be achieved through increased visitation and economic contribution to Central Australia.

Policy	Key strategies
Provide environmentally sustainable track conditions for increasing numbers	Undertake track construction consistent with Australian Standards and with recommendations provided in the detailed track report.
	Continue program of track maintenance and upgrading consistent with the detailed track report.
	Manage trail use, facilities and infrastructure to promote environmental sustainability.
	Promote minimal impact walker behaviour in trail information.
Manage the track to achieve environmental sustainability.	<p>Ensure the key drivers of sustainable use of the track are effectively managed (track condition, user impacts, infrastructure capacity).</p> <p>Defer consideration of track extensions until existing track is managed sustainably.</p> <p>Establish limits to acceptable change to environmental conditions appropriate to different track sections.</p>
Monitor the impact of increasing visitor numbers on the quality of visitor experiences.	<p>Implement a program of monitoring walker numbers.</p> <p>Continue program of visitor surveys with additional key questions aimed at monitoring satisfaction levels and changes to visitor experience. Review approach to obtain optimal sample.</p>
Ensure management of the track is culturally sustainable	<p>Increase awareness of cultural heritage values through interpretation and education</p> <p>Work with Aboriginal community to ensure appropriate conservation, management and interpretation of cultural heritage</p>
Implement best practice management and environmental standards.	<p>Ensure adequate resources to implement the recommendations of the track audit report.</p> <p>Develop site plans for each of the key camping areas including identification of user needs, capacity, risk management, facilities and environmental standards.</p>
Pursue financial sustainability in management of the Larapinta Trail.	<p>Develop system for packaging and collection of fees for use of the trail including trail use fee, camp site fees, re-supply shed access, information and Standley Chasm site fee.</p> <p>Monitor the ongoing contribution Larapinta Trail walkers make in terms of percentage of Northern Territory tourism through existing tourism data collection sources.</p>

## Actions

### Track standards, construction and maintenance

6.2.1	Manage the trail to Australian Standard (as listed by section in Appendix 5).
6.2.2	Reconstruct or upgrade specific trail segments on a priority basis for environmental remediation and/or to cater for higher levels of less capable use (as listed in Appendix 6 and prior to any increased promotion of particular sections).
6.2.3	Develop a field manual detailing best practice and design guidelines for all Larapinta Trail construction building on work undertaken elsewhere (eg Tasmania)
6.2.4	Increase maintenance capacity to cope with increasing use levels and new works (potential opportunity to utilize indigenous employment programs)
6.2.5	Ensure all track works and maintenance is implemented to the highest standards.
6.2.6	Adopt a policy of using local stone wherever possible in track structures, and carefully blending all trackwork into the immediate environment.
6.2.7	Use good track definition as the primary means of keeping walkers to the track.
6.2.8	Encourage high level track construction and maintenance skills, skills continuity and Larapinta Trail familiarity amongst key PWSNT staff and contractors.
6.2.9	Ensure track management is consistent along the full length of the track.

### Track route and variations

6.2.10	<p>Undertake detailed investigation of the following recommended track variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• connection from Euro Ridge back to Alice Springs (to provide a loop day walk option);</li> <li>• connection from Hilltop Lookout back to Ormiston Gorge or Ormiston Gorge road (to provide a loop day walk option);</li> <li>• construction of foot tracks as alternatives to following public roads on the eastern approach to Ormiston Gorge and the western approach to Standley Chasm;</li> <li>• realignment of the track off known Aboriginal artefact scatters at Bond Gap, Inarlanga Pass and elsewhere;</li> <li>• alternatives to the short sections of track which follow management tracks at Birthday Waterhole, Serpentine Gorge and Serpentine Chalet Dam (in conjunction with campsite changes);</li> <li>• re-routing of section 6 to reduce winding and overall distance;</li> <li>• partial re-routing of the eastern part of section 7 between Ellery Creek and the trig point to utilise more of the adjacent valleys and gentle slopes while retaining access to part of the dolomite ridge and the trig point;</li> <li>• alternate route to north of Heavitree Range from gap on section 7, to the north of Ellery Creek Big Hole and then to rejoin section 6 north of saddle over Heavitree Range.</li> </ul>
6.2.11	Extend no other tracks or marked routes into the Minimum Use Zone.
6.2.12	Defer consideration of any trail extensions or other variations until the above priorities for variations and improvements are achieved.
6.2.13	Maintain the identity of the Larapinta Trail by continuing to manage the Mount Giles walk and other remote walking opportunities in the Minimum Use Zone as separate from the Larapinta Trail and for more experienced walkers.
6.2.14	Promote the 'low route' between Tangentyere Junction and Millers Flat as the 'standard' route for section 3 (since this section will be promoted for less capable walkers)

## Campfires

6.2.15	Implement and clearly articulate a fuel stove only policy for the Larapinta Trail (except at those visitor use sites where fireplaces will continue to be provided for the use of general visitors).
6.2.16	Explain the reasons for the no-fire policy in trail information and make clear the need to carry fuel stoves on extended trips.
6.2.17	Rehabilitate all informal fireplaces and fire scars along the track.
6.2.18	Install free gas burners at all serviced campsites on trail sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12.

## Toilets, human waste and other waste

6.2.19	Install toilets (of an appropriate type) at the serviced campsites which do not currently have them – Jay Creek, Birthday Waterhole, Hugh Gorge, Rocky Gully, Serpentine Chalet Dam, Rocky Bar Gap.
6.2.20	Review the effectiveness of the current pit toilets at Mulga Camp and Wallaby Gap and replace if appropriate.
6.2.21	Continue to monitor the situation with regard to human waste at campsites with no toilets and generally along the trail.
6.2.22	Provide waste disposal opportunities in conjunction with re-supply facilities.

## Management of other natural and cultural heritage issues

6.2.23	Continue to closely monitor weed occurrences along the trail and consider focusing weed control programmes along the trail to minimise the risk of transport.
6.2.24	Provide detailed advice to walkers about avoiding the transport of weeds propagules on clothing, etc.
6.2.25	Consider signposting the boundaries of weed infestations and directing walkers to clean boots, socks, clothing and packs when leaving infected areas.
6.2.26	Minimise the impacts of feral animals and weeds on the trail by strengthening control programmes.
6.2.27	Continue to apply an objective of protecting from fires the limited areas of mature vegetation along the trail (eg. parts of Sections 10 and 11).
6.2.28	Continue programmes to re-establish a more natural fire regime in the park.
6.2.29	Require all trekking poles to have rubber tips and/or exclude their use in gorges and other areas where the route traverses exposed rock.
6.2.30	Collect and document information on rare/endemic plant locations and physical Aboriginal features along the trail corridor during routine inspections.
6.2.31	Continue to apply standard procedures for protecting Aboriginal sacred sites during trail works.
6.2.32	Continue to identify cultural heritage fabric along the Trail and manage according to the Burra Charter and PWSNT policies.

## Vehicle access

6.2.33	Maintain but do not extend the current public and management ground vehicle access systems.
6.2.34	Retain the current public exclusion from the management trail system.
6.2.35	Review the vehicle access currently provided to tour operators to Wallaby Gap, Jay Creek, Rocky Gully and Rocky Bar Gap in conjunction with new group campsites

	nearby. Manage access on to the camping surfaces to eliminate vehicle impacts through site planning.
6.2.36	Investigate the potential for using small vehicles to assist maintenance of some lowland sections of the Larapinta Trail.
6.2.37	Exclude the landing of helicopters for tourism or visitor purposes along the trail corridor.
6.2.38	Ensure the noise impacts of helicopter tourism are minimized along the remote sections of the trail corridor by negotiating a Fly Neighbourly policy including limits to routes and/or frequency.

#### Design guidelines

6.2.39	Develop and implement design guidelines for all infrastructure on the Larapinta Trail that provides for consistency in furniture and facilities as well as high quality and sustainable design.
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#### Visitor Nodes

6.2.40	Work with managers to ensure the standard of facilities and site design at key visitor nodes is consistent with the quality that is being promoted for the Larapinta Trail.
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#### Visitor monitoring

6.2.41	Implement a system of visitor monitoring which will enable walker numbers to be recorded on each section.
6.2.42	Establish a program of monitoring of environmental impacts to be used to assess when limits to acceptable change have been reached. Suggested indicators include – track width beyond design width; expansion of campsites beyond boundaries; evidence of human waste; track branching.
6.2.43	Implement a system of monitoring social impacts. Potential indicators to be used for measuring social impacts include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crowding at campsites or huts as indicated by the number of times capacity is exceeded</li> <li>• Length/time of queues at toilets</li> <li>• The number of tents within eyesight at a campsite (the standard may vary if they are part of your group)</li> <li>• The size of group or the number of people encountered on the track (in both directions)</li> <li>• Frequency of aircraft overhead or audible</li> </ul>
6.2.44	Continue program of qualitative surveys to monitor walker satisfaction, but conduct every third year. The survey can be shortened but also amended to include assessment of social impacts.
6.2.45	Monitor impacts in the context of limits to acceptable change to the track experience and implement appropriate management actions where limits are reached (see Appendix 9)

#### Interpretation

6.2.46	Provide interpretive signage along the trail at major visitor sites and places where the trail overlaps with shorter walks.
6.2.47	Consider replacing the signs within the section trail-head information shelters with a generalised promotional presentation on the trail, plus detailed interpretive information on local features and track sections.

## Trail package

6.2.48	<p>Establish a track package which includes the following components as a pre-paid package (see Appendix 10):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trip information (guide book, maps)</li><li>• Fee to incorporate costs of:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>campsites</li><li>Standley Chasm entry fee</li><li>access to food cache lockers (code or key)</li><li>transport to and from start and finish points (optional)</li><li>overnight walker registration</li></ul></li></ul> <p>Package to be designed to provide alternate option for regular users and day use</p>
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### 6.3 Key Objective 3

To develop and manage a distinctive experience which can be used in marketing Central Australia. The trail will be marketed responsibly to create realistic visitor expectations.

#### Outcomes

1. The importance of the range of values (natural, cultural, recreational and educational) of the trail and the surrounding environment to the product will be recognized and maintained.
2. The landscape and vistas of the West MacDonnell Ranges and the various experiences offered by the Larapinta Trail will be used to attract visitors for longer stays in Central Australia.
3. The Larapinta Trail will be recognized in the domestic and international market place as a unique experience in Central Australia.
4. Marketing programs that focus on the Larapinta Trail will be realistic in their portrayal of the images and experiences of the trail.
5. Visitors will have adequate advance information to enable them to determine the most suitable way to experience the Larapinta Trail.

Policy	Key strategies
Maintain the unique nature of the Larapinta Trail	Recognise the importance of the range of values of the trail (natural, cultural and recreational) in Trail development and promotion
	When using images of the Larapinta Trail in promotion ensure appropriate messages that recognise the range of walking opportunities
Undertake accurate and effective marketing of the track	Market as unique and remote desert walk with range of walking opportunities.
Use effective and realistic Marketing messages	Adopt the following key messages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That there is a range of opportunities to experience the track</li> <li>• That the full traverse is a remote and more difficult experience</li> <li>• That the whole trip experience is of a high standard suited to a range of visitors</li> <li>• That best practice environmental, social and management standards can be expected</li> <li>• That there will be opportunities to learn about the significant values of the area</li> </ul>
Provide high quality appropriate information about the track	Develop a range of collateral (in conjunction with key stakeholders and private enterprise) about the track to meet the following needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial advance orientation about how to find information</li> <li>• Detailed trip planning information</li> <li>• Interpretation and education about the range of track values and heritage</li> <li>• Track orientation and mapping information</li> </ul>

## Actions

### Use of Logo

6.3.1	Upgrade the use of the logo as a key component of all marketing and presentation so that it is recognized for the Larapinta Trail.
6.3.2	Create a branding for the Larapinta Trail through the use of the logo that aims to maximize trail usage and patronage as well as create an awareness of the range of recreation and walking experiences that is associated with Alice Springs and the West MacDonnell Ranges. Consider the use of "Larapinta – do a little or do the lot"
6.3.3	Encourage co-branding with commercial and service operators to use the Larapinta Trail logo in their promotional material.

### Presentation

6.3.4	Continue to provide detailed information on the length (time and distance), difficulty, character and required fitness/skill level for each trail section.
6.3.5	Present the trail in a differential format with a standard itinerary for a full traverse plus a number of recommended easier/shorter walks of one to four days' duration on Sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12 only (provisionally listed in Appendix 2).
6.3.6	Present the standard full traverse itinerary as a 20-day walk using the serviced and other 'standard' campsites, recommended water points and re-supply points.
6.3.7	Include the additional short walk and loop options attached to the Larapinta Trail (eg. Serpentine Gorge Lookout, Dolomite Track, Ghost Gum Walk, Pound Walk) in detailed trail information.

### Information

6.3.8	Implement a "one stop shop" website for the Larapinta Trail that provides all pre-trip planning information including links to commercial and service operators and enables pre booking of components of the trip.
6.3.9	Produce upgraded colour A3 maps of each trail section for sale, to include (as a minimum): correction of all errors, contour values, more feature names, inter-nodal (leg) distances, more campsites, campsite information (facilities, capacity), side tracks, management trails, magnetic north and variation and date of printing.
6.3.10	Produce (or support the production of) a pocket A6 colour guidebook to the trail for sale, to include detailed walk planning information, track notes, general and interpretive information and graphics.
6.3.11	Sell the A3 maps and A6 guidebook as a package or individually, and as part of a 'trail package'.
6.3.12	Upgrade the official website by improving the maps, adding (as a minimum) more detailed information on walk planning, safety, minimal impact current water availability and trail news/updates.
6.3.13	Consider producing a full-trail colour, interpretive wall map for sale, based on the current PWSNT map.
6.3.14	Encourage all official information providers – PWSNT, NTTC, operators, etc use the official trail products when assisting walkers.
6.3.15	Promote a code of conduct for all walkers to minimise their impact on the trail environment and other walkers.



6.3.16	<p>As an adjunct to the code of conduct, expand current minimal impact advice in trail information to emphasise and explain the reasons for the following practices (as a minimum):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No disturbance to ground or vegetation to create campsites.</li> <li>• Carry sleeping mats and self-supporting tents to help manage the hard ground.</li> <li>• The suggested campsites are the preferred campsites.</li> <li>• Observe maximum group sizes.</li> <li>• Groups to use group campsites.</li> <li>• Where toilets are not available, bury toilet waste at least 100 metres from any watercourse.</li> <li>• Do not wash or wash up in or adjacent to any water body. Use a collapsible basin or billy well away from the water instead.</li> <li>• Do not swim in protected waterholes (mark them on maps).</li> <li>• The Larapinta Trail is a fuel stove only area. Campfires are not permitted.</li> <li>• Treat all drinking water.</li> <li>• Keep to the track wherever possible.</li> <li>• Trekking poles to be fitted with rubber tips to avoid scratching rock surfaces. Avoid using them in rocky gorges.</li> <li>• Carry out all rubbish, including organic scraps.</li> </ul>
6.3.17	Expand the current walker safety advice in trail information to cover all the risks listed above (section 6.1) and to strongly promote walker responsibility.
6.3.18	Ensure that consistent minimal impact and safety messages are reinforced wherever possible and that conflicting information and signals are avoided (eg. rehabilitate all fire scars and unnecessary campsite pads).

### Nomenclature

6.3.19	Develop a policy to guide the naming of features along the Larapinta Trail, giving priority to existing Western Arrente names where appropriate, combined with pronunciation guides and explanations of meanings/significance.
6.3.20	Place importance also on evocative names and those that reference natural features and phenomena and provide interpretive opportunities, eg. historical, botanical, geological, etc.
6.3.21	Develop a comprehensive nomenclature for significant unnamed features (and those with uninteresting current names) and submit for official approval. See Appendix 8
6.3.22	Interpret the origins and significance of names (including 'Larapinta') in trail information.
6.3.23	Install routed timber locality signs at all 'point' locations that are noted on maps but not readily identifiable on the ground.
6.3.24	Continue the use of the term Larapinta 'Trail' rather than Larapinta 'Track'
6.3.25	Continue to label trail sections by number, but consider attaching verbal/geographic labels to recommended short walk options.

### Overall site management

6.3.26	Ensure and encourage the highest standards of infrastructure and site planning at all key visitor nodes to reflect the high quality of the total visitor experience that is being promoted.
6.3.27	Work with the Aboriginal community to attract funding or investment to improve the facilities and landscape at Standley Chasm, including the potential relocation of

	camping and development of cabin accommodation.
6.3.28	Relocate the Larapinta Trail-head at the Telegraph Station to a site that is visible from the kiosk/shop but does not change the net trail distance.
6.3.29	Promotion of the Riverside walk from Alice Springs to the Telegraph Station as the start of one loop for the Larapinta Trail can be achieved through the establishment of a Larapinta Trailhead Information Shelter in the city centre with a broad range of information.  Improved access to the trail at Geoff Mosley Bridge via the old Stuart Highway will also assist a diversity of use of section 1

### Strategic Marketing

6.3.30	<p>Adopt the following Principles and Value Statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing of the Larapinta Trail will be undertaken consistent with the vision for the trail and with the following ecotourism and marketing principles</li> <li>• Development must be sustainable</li> <li>• Experiences must be high quality and interpreted</li> <li>• The integrity of the destination must be maintained</li> <li>• The private and public sector must cooperate in marketing and development</li> </ul>
6.3.31	<p>Recognise the Core Product as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A range of walking experiences associated with the Larapinta Trail including</li> <li>• Day walk opportunities</li> <li>• Short walks</li> <li>• Remote adventure opportunities</li> </ul>
6.3.32	<p>Promotion of the Trail to recognise the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For visitors to Central Australia, the Larapinta Trail offers a range of opportunities for walks associated with the Larapinta Trail.</li> <li>• An experience of the Larapinta Trail is a valuable addition to any travellers itinerary</li> <li>• The Larapinta Trail and the key visitor nodes with which it intersects provide a diversity of options and attractions as well as a range of walks to appreciate the values of the West MacDonnell Ranges</li> <li>• Ormiston Gorge provides a hub for walking access to the Larapinta Trail including day and short walk opportunities</li> </ul>
6.3.33	<p>Promotion of the Trail to recognise the following attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape</li> <li>• Natural and cultural values</li> <li>• Escape</li> <li>• Remoteness</li> <li>• Challenge and adventure</li> <li>• Safety</li> <li>• Availability of tours and services</li> </ul>

6.3.34	<p>Develop a Brand Position for the Larapinta Trail</p> <p>The range of experiences offered by the product will enable Central Australia to compete for longer stay and increased yield associated with the current markets, as well as growth in domestic and international markets.</p> <p>The brand may reflect a series of key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That any experience of the Larapinta landscape is amazing</li> <li>• That there is a range of opportunities to experience the trail</li> <li>• That the full traverse is a remote and more difficult experience</li> <li>• That the whole trip experience is of a high standard suited to range of visitors</li> <li>• That best practice environmental, social and management standards can be expected</li> <li>• That there will be opportunities to learn about the significant values of the area</li> <li>• That there will be opportunities to learn about the cultural aspects of the Larapinta Trail and surrounding area</li> </ul>
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### Marketing Activities

The marketing activities are designed to reach the appropriate markets in the most cost effective way. The total marketing strategy aims to meet the following outcomes:

- ◇ Build recognition of the Larapinta Trail product
- ◇ Create differentiation from other products
- ◇ Reach target markets
- ◇ Be cost effective
- ◇ Be consumer focused
- ◇ Build new markets
- ◇ Position the Larapinta Trail alongside other well known long distance walks
- ◇ Secure product distribution



6.3.35	<p>Encourage visitors to Alice Springs to return for the Larapinta Trail through ready availability of information including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single sheet of information required to pre plan a Larapinta trip (including website and contact details)</li> <li>• Larapinta Trail post card with pre planning information/website address</li> </ul>
6.3.36	<p>Support the continuation of a range of professional commercial operator options, and market the range of experiences as part of pre trip information for visitors.</p>
6.3.37	<p>Develop high quality branded packages for one to four day walks for independent walkers</p>
6.3.38	<p>Encourage packaging of short Larapinta Trail experiences with other products and services including transport, accommodation, meal before and after and possibly other places of interest.</p>
6.3.39	<p>Continue to provide a video and still image library of the Larapinta Trail for use in</p>

	domestic and international marketing.
6.3.40	Negotiate with wholesalers for the inclusion of Larapinta Trail packages in their programs and for the distribution of Larapinta Trail information and opportunities with Central Australia package information.
6.3.41	Promote Larapinta Trail cooperatively with other Central Australian product through inclusion of one page branded information on the trail experiences.
6.3.42	Promote Larapinta Trail in Tasmania, New Zealand and in association with other great walker markets.
6.3.43	Develop a Larapinta Trail display for use at key Trade Shows including travel and outdoor recreation forums.
6.3.44	Create high quality collateral that includes appropriate promotion of the Larapinta Trail.
6.3.45	Conduct familiarisations for travel wholesalers on the range of opportunities the Larapinta Trail offers.
6.3.46	Develop a training package and accreditation program for Larapinta Trail service and walking tour providers ( eg. CATIA, Glen Helen, Standley Chasm, Alice Wanderer, ONWRS staff, Lone Dingo, PWSNT counter staff etc.) that includes information on safety, transport and educational material.
6.3.47	Produce a Kids Larapinta Kit that provides activities and educational information about the natural and cultural values.
6.3.48	Create a diverse list of PR related issues for use externally, that will create interest for special interest groups and travelers and work in conjunction with NTTC PR unit to ensure maximum branding/theming and conduct familiarisations for key media players
6.3.49	Engage key markets with story lines in targeted publications.
6.3.505	Contract the design and production by Expression of Interest of a suite of appropriate retail products consistent with the brand including but not limited to t-shirts, post cards, drink bottles and certificates of achievement

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## 7. Implementation of the Larapinta Trail Management Strategy

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The implementation of this strategy will require considerable time, resources and cooperation between key partners. Implementation will also require careful planning and prioritisation to ensure balanced progress. For instance, it is critical that marketing and increasing usage do not outstrip the physical capacity of the trail to cope.

### Partnerships

It is essential to ensure the maintenance of effective partnerships in the provision, management and marketing of sustainable opportunities on the Larapinta Trail with the following key roles.

#### Parks and Wildlife Service

- ◇ Management of the Trail
- ◇ Management of the natural and cultural resources
- ◇ Management and promotion of key attractions

#### Northern Territory Tourist Commission

- ◇ Overall positioning and branding
- ◇ Marketing
- ◇ Co-operative marketing
- ◇ Marketing and development advice

#### Aboriginal community

- ◇ Management of Aboriginal owned lands
- ◇ Assist in ensuring due regard to cultural heritage considerations
- ◇ Provide goods and services
- ◇ Contract employment in maintenance and services

#### Operators and businesses

- ◇ Provide goods and services including accommodation, tours and activities
- ◇ Assist marketing and information activities

#### Others

- ◇ Investment in future business opportunities
- ◇ Achievements in management of a number of other long distance walking tracks has depended to some extent on the involvement of external partners including volunteers, and consideration must be given to such concepts for the Larapinta Trail.

- ◇ Provision of high quality collateral in guide books, maps and souvenirs.

### **Larapinta Trail Foundation**

The establishment of a Foundation is one way of engendering support of the Trail and for management, as well as pursuing return of track revenue to track management. The role of a Foundation would entail:

- ◇ Revenue raising (including sponsorship);
- ◇ Management of Track Package;
- ◇ Promotional programs;
- ◇ Retail sales production and management;
- ◇ Engagement of volunteers for basic trail maintenance activities;
- ◇ Website management.

The Foundation could be structured to include

- ◇ Board (consisting of representatives of key stakeholders plus appropriate external skills eg. Business management, marketing);
- ◇ Volunteer coordinator;
- ◇ Executive Officer (paid position);

The Foundation may include members from elsewhere in Australia with an interest in the trails future management.

### **Works programs**

Clearly track improvements recommended in this strategy as well as ongoing maintenance will require substantial resources. A sustainable approach to ensuring resources is required.

Options to be considered include:

- ◇ Direct allocation of budget for the Trail from the Government;
- ◇ Return of revenue from trail users to maintenance budget;
- ◇ Development of locally-based skilled workforce (potentially local Aboriginal community);
- ◇ Engagement of volunteers.

Each of these options has some issues associated with it that will need to be addressed and a combination of all approaches may be optimal.

### **Risk Management program**

The strategy addresses some specific issues associated with visitor risk management (water supply, information, emergency procedures etc.). It is critical, however, that a strategic risk management process be put in place for the Trail particularly given the

likely growth in use of the track. A GIS Based system that tracks the required frequency of risk assessment, tracks the repair and maintenance actions undertaken, and links with the planned maintenance program needs to be put in place.

## **Approvals**

The implementation of works associated with the Trail will require all necessary legislative requirements to be met and the input of traditional owners sought as necessary.

## **Revenue**

There is an expectation amongst long distance track walkers that they will pay a fee for usage of facilities. Whilst user pays for entry to parks is not a NT Government policy, the use of facilities such as camping sites and other services can attract a fee. Given the upgrading of facilities on the Larapinta Trail and the high standard that walkers may expect, the charging of a combined camping fee is appropriate. It is also a more efficient approach to the current expectation that walkers may pay at some campsites on an honesty policy. Payment of one up-front fee is preferable. The system will need to consider the varying needs of the local community and regular users as well as day walkers.

Commercial operators currently pay a fee which is not commensurate with the level of facilities provided, and the per capita fee for clients needs to be consistent with the fee charged for independent walkers and to reflect the value of any exclusive access via management tracks.

## **Management Strategy Review**

The strategy needs to be reviewed on an annual basis with re-assessment of priority actions and achievements against the strategy.

## **Priorities, timeframes and responsibility**

The following tables identify the priorities and responsibilities for achievement of all actions.

Priorities are ranked as follows:

- 1 within first year
- 2 1-3 years
- 3 as resources become available
- 4 ongoing

The following priorities, timeframes and responsibilities outlined are provided as recommendations to the lead agencies. It is suggested that these items be integrated into existing plans and policies.

NUMBER	ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY
6.1.1	Maintain the current track marking format.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.1.2	Minimise the need for track markers overall (but especially on sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9), firstly by good track definition, and also by providing improved maps and detailed route notes.	2	PWSNT
6.1.3	Limit the use of permanent track markers on trail sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 to intersections, turnoffs, difficult-to-follow segments and occasional reassurance.	2	PWSNT
6.1.4	Promote self-reliance amongst walkers on trail sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 by emphasising that basic map reading and navigational skills are required (to reduce dependence on markers).	1	PWSNT
6.1.5	Provide a higher level of track marking on trail sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12 by including reassurance markers at regular intervals.	1	PWSNT
6.1.6	Ensure consistency in track marking by communicating clear guidelines, providing oversight, encouraging track management staff to walk as many sections of the trail as possible, and varying the direction walked on routine track inspections.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.1.7	Add additional track markers only after careful consideration of the guidelines and the situation.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.1.8	Continue to remove unnecessary markers and signs as they become redundant (eg. as track definition improves).	ongoing	PWSNT
6.1.9	Continue to exclude stone cairns as markers and remove those that have appeared.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.1.10	Re-assess track markers at least annually and after major events such as fires and floods as well as years of high rainfall when vegetation growth can be exceptional	ongoing	PWSNT
6.1.11	Limit the use of flagging tape as a supplement to permanent track markers to temporary (eg. one season) emergency use in response to changed track conditions, eg. flood or fire. Standardise the colour used to dark blue.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.1.12	Progressively remove all total distance markers from the trail and install a system of section distance markers (every km) complemented by total distances to the track ends at Alice Springs and Mount Sonder (at each section track head)	2	PWSNT
6.1.13	Amend the trail maps to exclude total trail distances, but to show inter-nodal distances (as on a road map) and progressive totals along each section (node to node cumulative, E-W direction).	1	PWSNT
6.1.14	Develop and apply an unobtrusive but standardised way of labeling distances for management purposes on track marker posts.	2	PWSNT



6.1.15	Limit written signage in lower use areas along the trail to locality names which are identified on maps but not obvious from context, plus essential signs providing direction at major visitor nodes and to off-track facilities.	2	PWSNT
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### Campsites and facilities

6.1.16	Identify an expanded suite of suggested campsites in two categories: the existing suite of serviced sites, plus a non-serviced category (to include several already-developed ridge sites and a number of low impact valley sites, as provisionally listed in Appendix 3).	1	PWSNT
6.1.17	Provide toilets, water supply and defined tent pads (if required by ground conditions) at all 'standard' (serviced) campsites on sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12 (Wallaby Gap, Simpsons Gap, Mulga Camp, Jay Creek, Serpentine Gorge, Ormiston Gorge, Finke River [walker's camp], Rocky Bar Gap, Redbank Gorge).	2	PWSNT
6.1.18	Reinforce the current suite of serviced and other 'standard' campsites as the best option for most walkers (as listed in Appendix 3—mostly large capacity and with water supplies, many with emergency vehicle access, and appropriate to a full-traverse itinerary of 20 days).	1	PWSNT
6.1.19	Provide no facilities (other than water supply at some) at any of the other suggested campsites (on all trail sections) and reinforce that they are suited to experienced independent walkers who can cope without water supplies and toilets.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.1.20	Clearly define and identify areas prohibited to camping on trail maps, list them in trail information and mark them on the trail (with a 'no camping' symbol sign at each end of the zone).	1	PWSNT
6.1.21	Clearly indicate in trail maps and information the capacity of all suggested sites and the facilities provided.	1	PWSNT
6.1.22	Promote a walker camping code which prohibits ground and vegetation disturbance to create new tent and sleeping sites and emphasizes creek bed camping as a low impact option as well as the need to carry comfortable camping mats and free-standing tents.	1	PWSNT
6.1.23	Retain the freedom for walkers to camp anywhere outside the prohibited zones, including away from the track, provided no new disturbance is created and minimal impact practices are strictly followed.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.1.24	Reduce the proliferation of smoothed sleeping sites on the ridges by including selected sites in the 'suggested' suite (Appendix 3), and rehabilitating others.	1	PWSNT
6.1.25	Establish alternative trail campsites wherever possible at the major visitor nodes along the trail: Standley Chasm, Ellery Creek, Hugh Gorge, Birthday Waterhole, Serpentine Gorge, Ormiston Gorge and Redbank Gorge.	2	PWSNT

6.1.26	Provide separate campsites (if possible) for group and independent walkers at Simpsons Gap, Jay Creek, Birthday Waterhole, Hugh Gorge, Rocky Gully, Ellery Creek, Serpentine Gorge, Ormiston Gorge, Rocky Bar Gap and Redbank Gorge. Independent walker camps to be separated from vehicle access (other than for essential management) and include a number (suggested 8) of leveled and prepared tent sites.	2	PWSNT
6.1.27	Place all new or relocated campsites (where possible) along short branch-tracks so they are removed from the through trail.	2	PWSNT
6.1.28	As numbers increase, and if issues become identified through monitoring, implement booking system for group campsites, and , beyond that, if necessary, independent walker campsites	3	PWSNT

#### Track grades, walking times and distances

6.1.29	Apply a standardised system of difficulty gradings to trail sections in public information (as suggested in Appendix 4).	1	PWSNT
6.1.30	Check all track distances on the ground using the best available and consistent technology, eg. GPS mapping.	1	PWSNT
6.1.31	Incorporate any revised distances into signage and published information.	1	PWSNT
6.1.32	Revise trail maps to show 'leg' distances between identified landmarks (corresponding to the segments used for suggested times).	1	PWSNT
6.1.33	Establish Serpentine Chalet Dam as the trailhead for sections 8 and 9 (rather than Inarlanga Pass).	1	PWSNT
6.1.34	Review the revised walking times as suggested in Appendix 7, adjust as necessary and include in trail information.	1	PWSNT
6.1.35	Include the following statement (or similar) wherever suggested walking times are published: These walking times are provided as a guide only, for Larapinta Trail walkers of average fitness and capability carrying overnight packs (eg. 15-20 kg). The times are based on a steady pace and allow for some brief stops but no long rests. Fast walkers and day walkers may travel more quickly on the easier sections of the trail, while less agile walkers may be slowed down by gorges and rocky ground.	1	PWSNT

#### Water supply

6.1.36	Maintain the current artificial water supply points and provide water supply where new serviced campsites are established.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.1.37	Investigate improving the cost-effectiveness of maintaining the artificial water supplies (options for consideration include helicopter re-supply, contract supplier, larger tanks, spring-loaded taps, catchment roofs, radio telemetry monitoring).	1	PWSNT

6.1.38	Maintain the current advice for walkers to treat all surface and tank water.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.1.39	Upgrade the trail maps and information to indicate both permanent and temporary waterholes with appropriate advice on seasonality and seeking current information.	1	PWSNT
6.1.40	Promote a web information page on the trail to include up-to-date reports from staff and walkers on water availability at the ephemeral waterholes.	1	PWSNT

#### Levels of use/group sizes

6.1.41	Apply group size limits as follows: Limit of 8 on all groups on trail sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 (consistent with other state's approach to minimal impact bushwalking) Limit of 15 on groups on trail sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12. Work with tour operators to determine a process and timeline for implementation of group sizes	1	PWSNT
6.1.42	Apply the group size limits equally to both commercial tours and other non-commercial groups.	1	PWSNT
6.1.43	Require groups of greater than 8 to use the separate group camps where they are provided.	1	PWSNT

#### Walker registration

6.1.44	Encourage increased use of the voluntary registration scheme by including it in the comprehensive trail package (see below).	2	PWSNT
6.1.45	Review and improve the current walker registration procedure to remove barriers to its use ( eg shortness of time to de-register).	1	PWSNT
6.1.46	Maintain the records from the registration scheme as part of the visitor monitoring program.	1	PWSNT

#### Walker safety

6.1.47	Promote trail sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 as being for self-reliant walkers who are proficient in traveling through the remote desert mountain environment safely, have a high level of fitness and experience in walking in steep terrain and who have some ability in map reading and bush navigation.	1	PWSNT
6.1.48	Promote trail sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12 as being suited to less capable walkers who nevertheless are able to handle the remote desert mountain environment.	1	PWSNT
6.1.49	Continue to encourage walkers to take responsibility for their own safety and not to rely on outside assistance.	ongoing	PWSNT

6.1.50	Include in trail information detailed warnings on the following risks and how to prepare for or manage them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dehydration/heat exhaustion</li> <li>• bushfire</li> <li>• floods</li> <li>• cliffs</li> <li>• rough walking conditions</li> <li>• loose rock</li> <li>• untreated water</li> <li>• sunburn</li> <li>• remoteness from assistance</li> </ul>	1	PWSNT
6.1.51	Maintain the current system of water supply and treatment advice.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.1.52	Strongly discourage but do not prohibit walking alone or in extremely hot weather. Describe in trail information the specific risks in this hot, dry and isolated environment.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.1.53	Ensure clear emergency response procedures and responsibilities are in place for overdue walkers, search and rescue alerts, and emergency events such as fire and flood which may impact the trail.	1	PWSNT
6.1.54	Continue to encourage walkers to carry satellite telephones (preferably) or EPIRBs (of lesser usefulness) for emergency communication but to firstly rely on their own sound planning and safe practices. Research information on mobile phone, EPIRB and satphone coverage and place on maps.	1	PWSNT
6.1.55	Show potential emergency exit routes on trail maps, including 4WD management trails which connect with or closely approach the Larapinta Trail.	1	PWSNT

### Food re-supply

6.1.56	Install standardised re-supply storage facilities at Standley Chasm and Ellery Creek. Facility to be a small lockable shed which protects the supplies from rain and extremes of heat, with a capacity of at least 10 caches to cope with potential increase in demand over the next few years.	1	PWSNT
6.1.57	Provide a coded or key access system for all storage facilities (including Ormiston Gorge), with the code/key included in the trail package.	1	PWSNT

### Accommodation

6.1.58	Limit roofed shelter directly on the trail to the shelters provided at key sites with capacity for water capture and continue program of upgrading to metal-roofed shelter	3	PWSNT
6.1.59	Where accommodation exists or investment in cabins and resort accommodation has potential (eg. Standley Chasm, Ellery Creek, Glen Helen, Ormiston, Hamilton Downs), work with businesses to provide packaged short	3	PWSNT

	walks on higher use trail sections.		
6.1.60	Investigate demand and opportunities for minimal impact niche accommodation options and possible off trail locations for development of accommodation suited to trail users.	3	PWSNT

### **Economic benefits of the Trail**

6.1.61	Commission research into the economic benefits of the Larapinta Trail to the regional economy and utilize the results in determining appropriate funding for the Trail.	3	NTTC/PWSNT
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### **Track standards, construction and maintenance**

6.2.1	Manage the trail to Australian Standard (as listed by section in Appendix 5).	3	PWSNT
6.2.2	Reconstruct or upgrade specific trail segments on a priority basis for environmental remediation and/or to cater for higher levels of less capable use (as listed in Appendix 6 and prior to any increased promotion of particular sections).	1	PWSNT
6.2.3	Develop a field manual detailing best practice and design guidelines for all Larapinta Trail construction building on work undertaken elsewhere (eg Tasmania)	1	PWSNT
6.2.4	Increase maintenance capacity to cope with increasing use levels and new works (potential opportunity to utilize indigenous employment programs)	1	PWSNT
6.2.5	Ensure all track works and maintenance is implemented to the highest standards.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.2.6	Adopt a policy of using local stone wherever possible in track structures, and carefully blending all trackwork into the immediate environment.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.2.7	Use good track definition as the primary means of keeping walkers to the track.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.2.8	Encourage high-level track construction and maintenance skills, skills continuity and Larapinta Trail familiarity amongst key PWSNT staff and contractors.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.2.9	Ensure track management is consistent along the full length of the track.	ongoing	PWSNT

## Track route and variations

6.2.10	<p>Undertake detailed investigation of the following recommended track variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connection from Euro Ridge back to Alice Springs (to provide a loop day walk option);</li> <li>• Connection from Hilltop Lookout back to Ormiston Gorge or Ormiston Gorge road (to provide a loop day walk option);</li> <li>• Construction of foot tracks as alternatives to following public roads on the eastern approach to Ormiston Gorge and the western approach to Standley Chasm;</li> <li>• Realignment of the track off known Aboriginal artefact scatters at Bond Gap, Inarlanga Pass and elsewhere;</li> <li>• Alternatives to the short sections of track which follow management tracks at Birthday Waterhole, Serpentine Gorge and Serpentine Chalet Dam (in conjunction with campsite changes);</li> <li>• Re-routing of section 6 to reduce winding and overall distance;</li> <li>• Partial re-routing of the eastern part of section 7 between Ellery Creek and the trig point to utilise more of the adjacent valleys and gentle slopes while retaining access to part of the dolomite ridge and the trig point;</li> <li>• Alternate route to north of Heavitree Range from gap on section 7, to the north of Ellery Creek Big Hole and then to rejoin section 6 north of saddle over Heavitree Range.</li> </ul>	3	PWSNT with assistance from Bushwalking Club
6.2.11	Extend no other tracks or marked routes into the Minimum Use Zone.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.2.12	Defer consideration of any trail extensions or other variations until the above priorities for variations and improvements are achieved.	3	PWSNT
6.2.13	Maintain the identity of the Larapinta Trail by continuing to manage the Mount Giles walk and other remote walking opportunities in the Minimum Use Zone as separate from the Larapinta Trail and for more experienced walkers.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.2.14	Promote the 'low route' between Tangentyere Junction and Millers Flat as the 'standard' route for section 3.	1	PWSNT

## Campfires

6.2.15	Implement and clearly articulate a fuel stove only policy for the Larapinta Trail (except at those visitor use sites where fireplaces will continue to be provided for the use of general visitors).	1	PWSNT
6.2.16	Explain the reasons for the no-fire policy in trail information and make clear the need to carry fuel stoves on extended trips.	1	PWSNT
6.2.17	Rehabilitate all informal fireplaces and fire scars along the track.	1	PWSNT
6.2.18	Install free gas burners at all serviced campsites on trail sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12.	2	PWSNT

### Toilets, human waste and other waste

6.2.19	Install toilets (of an appropriate type) at the serviced campsites which do not currently have them – Jay Creek, Birthday Waterhole, Hugh Gorge, Rocky Gully, Serpentine Chalet Dam, Rocky Bar Gap.	1	PWSNT
6.2.20	Review the effectiveness of the current pit toilets at Mulga Camp and Wallaby Gap and replace if appropriate.	3	PWSNT
6.2.21	Continue to monitor the situation with regard to human waste at campsites with no toilets and generally along the trail.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.2.22	Provide waste disposal opportunities in conjunction with re-supply facilities.	2	PWSNT

### Management of other natural and cultural heritage issues

6.2.23	Continue to closely monitor weed occurrences along the trail and consider focusing weed control programmes along the trail to minimise the risk of transport.	Ongoing	PWSNT
6.2.24	Provide detailed advice to walkers about avoiding the transport of weeds propagules on clothing, etc.	1	PWSNT
6.2.25	Consider signposting the boundaries of weed infestations and directing walkers to clean boots, socks, clothing and packs when leaving infected areas.	2	PWSNT
6.2.26	Minimise the impacts of feral animals and weeds on the trail by strengthening control programmes.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.2.27	Continue to apply an objective of protecting from fires the limited areas of mature vegetation along the trail (eg. parts of Sections 10 and 11).	ongoing	PWSNT
6.2.28	Continue programmes to re-establish a more natural fire regime in the park.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.2.29	Require all trekking poles to have rubber tips and/or exclude their use in gorges and other areas where the route traverses exposed rock.	2	PWSNT
6.2.30	Collect and document information on rare/endemic plant locations and physical Aboriginal features along the trail corridor during routine inspections.	3	PWSNT with assistance from Universities
6.2.31	Continue to apply standard procedures for protecting Aboriginal sacred sites during trail works.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.2.32	Continue to identify cultural heritage fabric along the Trail and manage according to the Burra Charter and PWSNT policies.	ongoing	PWSNT with assistance from Universities

### Vehicle access

6.2.33	Maintain but do not extend the current public and management ground vehicle access systems.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.2.34	Retain the current public exclusion from the	ongoing	PWSNT

	management trail system.		
6.2.35	Review the vehicle access currently provided to tour operators to Wallaby Gap, Jay Creek, Rocky Gully and Rocky Bar Gap in conjunction with new group campsites nearby. Manage access on to the camping surfaces to eliminate vehicle impacts through site planning.	1	PWSNT
6.2.36	Investigate the potential for using small vehicles to assist maintenance of some lowland sections of the Larapinta Trail.	3	PWSNT
6.2.37	Exclude the landing of helicopters for tourism or visitor purposes along the trail corridor.	1	PWSNT
6.2.38	Ensure the noise impacts of helicopter tourism are minimized along the remote sections of the trail corridor by negotiating a Fly Neighbourly policy including limits to routes and/or frequency.	ongoing	PWSNT

#### Design guidelines

6.2.39	Develop and implement design guidelines for all infrastructure on the Larapinta Trail that provides for consistency in furniture and facilities as well as high quality and sustainable design.	1	PWSNT
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#### Visitor Nodes

6.2.40	Work with managers to ensure the standard of facilities and site design at key visitor nodes is consistent with the quality that is being promoted for the Larapinta Trail.	ongoing	PWSNT
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#### Visitor monitoring

6.2.41	Implement a system of visitor monitoring which will enable walker numbers to be recorded on each section.	1	PWSNT
6.2.42	Establish a program of monitoring of environmental impacts to be used to assess when limits to acceptable change have been reached. Suggested indicators include – track width beyond design width; expansion of campsites beyond boundaries; evidence of human waste; track branching.	1	PWSNT with assistance from Universities
6.2.43	Implement a system of monitoring social impacts. Potential indicators to be used for measuring social impacts include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crowding at campsites or huts as indicated by the number of times capacity is exceeded</li> <li>• Length/time of queues at toilets</li> <li>• The number of tents within eyesight at a campsite (the standard may vary if they are part of your group)</li> <li>• The size of group or the number of people encountered on the track (in both directions)</li> <li>• Frequency of aircraft overhead or audible</li> </ul>	1	PWSNT with assistance from universities
6.2.44	Continue program of qualitative surveys to monitor walker satisfaction, but conduct every third year. The survey can be shortened but also amended to include assessment of	ongoing	PWSNT with assistance from



	social impacts.		universities
6.2.45	Monitor impacts in the context of limits to acceptable change to the track experience and implement appropriate management actions where limits are reached (see Appendix 9)	ongoing	PWSNT with assistance from universities

### Interpretation

6.2.46	Provide interpretive signage along the trail at major visitor sites and places where the trail overlaps with shorter walks.	2	PWSNT
6.2.47	Consider replacing the signs within the section trail-head information shelters with a generalised promotional presentation on the trail, plus detailed interpretive information on local features and track sections.	3	PWSNT

### Trail package

6.2.48	Establish a track package which includes the following components as a pre-paid package (see Appendix 10): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trip information (guide book, maps)</li> <li>• Fee to incorporate costs of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>campsites</li> <li>Standley Chasm entry fee</li> <li>facilities use</li> <li>access to food cache lockers (code or key)</li> <li>transport to and from start and finish points (optional)</li> <li>overnight walker registration</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	1	PWSNT /NTTC/ CATIA
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### Use of Logo

6.3.1	Upgrade the use of the logo as a key component of all marketing and presentation so that it is recognized for the Larapinta Trail.	3	PWSNT /NTTC
6.3.2	Create a branding for the Larapinta Trail through the use of the logo that aims to maximize trail usage and patronage as well as create an awareness of the range of recreation and walking experiences that is associated with Alice Springs and the West MacDonnell Ranges. Consider the use of "Larapinta – do a little or do the lot"	3	PWSNT /NTTC
6.3.3	Encourage co-branding with commercial and service operators to use the Larapinta Trail logo in their promotional material.	3	PWSNT /NTTC

### Presentation

6.3.4	Continue to provide detailed information on the length (time and distance), difficulty, character and required fitness/skill level for each trail section.	1	PWSNT
6.3.5	Present the trail in a differential format with a standard itinerary for a full traverse plus a number of recommended easier/shorter walks of one to four days' duration on Sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12 only (provisionally listed in	1	PWSNT

	Appendix 2).		
6.3.6	Present the standard full traverse itinerary as a 20-day walk using the serviced and other 'standard' campsites, recommended water points and re-supply points.	1	PWSNT
6.3.7	Include the additional short walk and loop options attached to the Larapinta Trail (eg. Serpentine Gorge Lookout, Dolomite Track, Ghost Gum Walk, Pound Walk) in detailed trail information.	1	PWSNT

### Information

6.3.8	Implement a "one stop shop" website for the Larapinta Trail that provides all pre-trip planning information including links to commercial and service operators and enables pre booking of components of the trip.	1	PWSNT
6.3.9	Produce upgraded colour A3 maps of each trail section for sale, to include (as a minimum): correction of all errors, contour values, more feature names, inter-nodal (leg) distances, more campsites, campsite information (facilities, capacity), side tracks, management trails, magnetic north and variation and date of printing.	3	PWSNT
6.3.10	Produce (or support the production of) a pocket A6 colour guidebook to the trail for sale, to include detailed walk planning information, track notes, general and interpretive information and graphics.	3	PWSNT
6.3.11	Sell the A3 maps and A6 guidebook as a package or individually, and as part of a 'trail package'.	3	PWSNT
6.3.12	Upgrade the official website by improving the maps, adding (as a minimum) more detailed information on walk planning, safety, minimal impact current water availability and trail news/updates.	2	PWSNT
6.3.13	Consider producing a full-trail colour, interpretive wall map for sale, based on the current PWSNT map.	3	PWSNT
6.3.14	Encourage all official information providers – PWSNT, NTTC, operators, etc use the official trail products when assisting walkers.	1	PWSNT
6.3.15	Promote a code of conduct for all walkers to minimise their impact on the trail environment and other walkers.	1	PWSNT

6.3.16	<p>As an adjunct to the code of conduct, expand current minimal impact advice in trail information to emphasise and explain the reasons for the following practices (as a minimum):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No disturbance to ground or vegetation to create campsites.</li> <li>• Carry sleeping mats and self-supporting tents to help manage the hard ground.</li> <li>• The suggested campsites are the preferred campsites.</li> <li>• Observe maximum group sizes.</li> <li>• Groups to use group campsites.</li> <li>• Where toilets are not available, bury toilet waste at least 100 metres from any watercourse.</li> <li>• Do not wash or wash up in or adjacent to any water body. Use a collapsible basin or billy well away from the water instead.</li> <li>• Do not swim in protected waterholes (mark them on maps).</li> <li>• The Larapinta Trail is a fuel stove only area. Campfires are not permitted.</li> <li>• Treat all drinking water.</li> <li>• Keep to the track wherever possible.</li> <li>• Trekking poles to be fitted with rubber tips to avoid scratching rock surfaces. Avoid using them in rocky gorges.</li> <li>• Carry out all rubbish, including organic scraps.</li> </ul>	1	PWSNT
6.3.17	Expand the current walker safety advice in trail information to cover all the risks listed above (section 6.1) and to strongly promote walker responsibility.	1	PWSNT
6.3.18	Ensure that consistent minimal impact and safety messages are reinforced wherever possible and that conflicting information and signals are avoided (eg. rehabilitate all fire scars and unnecessary campsite pads).	ongoing	PWSNT

### Nomenclature

6.3.19	Develop a policy to guide the naming of features along the Larapinta Trail, giving priority to existing Western Arrernte names where appropriate, combined with pronunciation guides and explanations of meanings/significance.	2	PWSNT in conjunction with Aboriginal community
6.3.20	Place importance also on evocative names and those that reference natural features and phenomena and provide interpretive opportunities, eg. historical, botanical, geological, etc.	ongoing	PWSNT in conjunction with Aboriginal community
6.3.21	Develop a comprehensive nomenclature for significant unnamed features (and those with uninteresting current names) and submit for official approval. See Appendix 8	3	PWSNT in conjunction with Aboriginal community
6.3.22	Interpret the origins and significance of names (including 'Larapinta') in trail information.	2	PWSNT in conjunction with Aboriginal

			community
6.3.23	Install routed timber locality signs at all 'point' locations that are noted on maps but not readily identifiable on the ground.	3	PWSNT
6.3.24	Continue the use of the term Larapinta 'Trail' rather than Larapinta 'Track'	ongoing	PWSNT
6.3.25	Continue to label trail sections by number, but consider attaching verbal/geographic labels to recommended short walk options.	2	PWSNT

### Overall site management

6.3.26	Ensure and encourage the highest standards of infrastructure and site planning at all key visitor nodes to reflect the high quality of the total visitor experience that is being promoted.	ongoing	PWSNT
6.3.27	Work with the Aboriginal community to attract funding or investment to improve the facilities and landscape at Standley Chasm, including the potential relocation of camping and development of cabin accommodation.	1	PWSNT in conjunction with Aboriginal community
6.3.28	Relocate the Larapinta Trail-head at the Telegraph Station to a site that is visible from the kiosk/shop but does not change the net trail distance.	2	PWSNT
6.3.29	Promotion of the Riverside walk from Alice Springs to the Telegraph Station as the start of one loop for the Larapinta Trail can be achieved through the establishment of a Larapinta Trailhead Information Shelter in the city centre with a broad range of information.  Improved access to the trail at Geoff Mosley Bridge via the old Stuart Highway will also assist a diversity of use of section 1	2	PWSNT

### Strategic Marketing

6.3.30	Adopt the following Principles and Value Statement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing of the Larapinta Trail will be undertaken consistent with the vision for the trail and with the following ecotourism and marketing principles</li> <li>• Development must be sustainable</li> <li>• Experiences must be high quality and interpreted</li> <li>• The integrity of the destination must be maintained</li> <li>• The private and public sector must cooperate in marketing and development</li> </ul>	1	NTTC/PWSNT
6.3.31	Recognise the Core Product as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A range of walking experiences associated with the Larapinta Trail including</li> <li>• Day walk opportunities</li> <li>• Short walks</li> <li>• Remote adventure opportunities</li> </ul>	1	NTTC/PWSNT

6.3.32	<p>Promotion of the Trail to recognise the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For visitors to Central Australia, the Larapinta Trail offers a range of opportunities for walks associated with the Larapinta Trail.</li> <li>• An experience of the Larapinta Trail is a valuable addition to any travellers itinerary</li> <li>• The Larapinta Trail and the key visitor nodes with which it intersects provide a diversity of options and attractions as well as a range of walks to appreciate the values of the West MacDonnell Ranges</li> <li>• Ormiston Gorge provides a hub for walking access to the Larapinta Trail including day and short walk opportunities</li> </ul>	1	NTTC/PWSNT
6.3.33	<p>Promotion of the Trail to recognise the following attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape</li> <li>• Natural and cultural values</li> <li>• Escape</li> <li>• Remoteness</li> <li>• Challenge and adventure</li> <li>• Safety</li> <li>• Availability of tours and services</li> </ul>	1	NTTC/PWSNT
6.3.34	<p>Develop a Brand Position for the Larapinta Trail</p> <p>The range of experiences offered by the product will enable Central Australia to compete for longer stay and increased yield associated with the current markets, as well as growth in domestic and international markets.</p> <p>The brand may reflect a series of key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That any experience of the Larapinta landscape is amazing</li> <li>• That there is a range of opportunities to experience the trail</li> <li>• That the full traverse is a remote and more difficult experience</li> <li>• That the whole trip experience is of a high standard suited to range of visitors</li> <li>• That best practice environmental, social and management standards can be expected</li> <li>• That there will be opportunities to learn about the significant values of the area</li> <li>• That there will be opportunities to learn about the cultural aspects of the Larapinta Trail and surrounding area</li> </ul>	1	NTTC/PWSNT

### Marketing

6.3.35	<p>Encourage visitors to Alice Springs to return for the Larapinta Trail through ready availability of information including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single sheet of information required to pre plan a Larapinta trip (including website and contact details)</li> <li>• Larapinta Trail post card with pre planning information/website address</li> </ul>	1	NTTC/PWSNT/ CATIA
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6.3.36	Support the continuation of a range of professional commercial operator options, and market the range of experiences as part of pre trip information for visitors.	ongoing	NTTC/PWSNT
6.3.37	Develop high quality branded packages for one to four day walks for independent walkers	2	NTTC/PWSNT & Tourism Industry
6.3.38	Encourage packaging of short Larapinta Trail experiences with other products and services including transport, accommodation, meal before and after and possibly other places of interest.	2	NTTC/PWSNT & Tourism Industry
6.3.39	Continue to provide a video and still image library of the Larapinta Trail for use in domestic and international marketing.	ongoing	NTTC/PWSNT
6.3.40	Negotiate with wholesalers for the inclusion of Larapinta Trail packages in their programs and for the distribution of Larapinta Trail information and opportunities with Central Australia package information.	2	Tourism Industry
6.3.41	Promote Larapinta Trail cooperatively with other Central Australian product through inclusion of one page branded information on the trail experiences.	2	NTTC/PWSNT
6.3.42	Promote Larapinta Trail in Tasmania, New Zealand and in association with other great walker markets.	2	NTTC/PWSNT
6.3.43	Develop a Larapinta Trail display for use at key Trade Shows including travel and outdoor recreation forums.	3	NTTC/PWSNT
6.3.44	Create high quality collateral that includes appropriate promotion of the Larapinta Trail.	2	NTTC/PWSNT
6.3.45	Conduct familiarisations for travel wholesalers on the range of opportunities the Larapinta Trail offers.	2	NTTC/PWSNT
6.3.46	Develop a training package and accreditation program for Larapinta Trail service and walking tour providers ( eg. CATIA, Glen Helen, Standley Chasm, Alice Wanderer, ONWRS staff, Lone Dingo, PWSNT counter staff etc.) that includes information on safety, transport and educational material.	2	NTTC/PWSNT
6.3.47	Produce a Kids Larapinta Kit that provides activities and educational information about the natural and cultural values.	2	NTTC/PWSNT
6.3.48	Create a diverse list of PR related issues for use externally, that will create interest for special interest groups and travelers and work in conjunction with NTTC PR unit to ensure maximum branding/theming and conduct familiarisations for key media players	1	NTTC/PWSNT
6.3.49	Engage key markets with story lines in targeted publications.	1	NTTC/PWSNT
6.3.50	Contract the design and production by Expression of Interest of a suite of appropriate retail products consistent with the brand including but not limited to t-shirts, post cards, drink bottles and certificates of achievement	1	NTTC/PWSNT

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NT Government, Northern Territory Tourism Strategic Plan 2003-2007

The Destination Development Strategy (NTTC, February 2004)

NT Government, Northern Territory Tourist Commission Marketing Plan, 2004-2005

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## Appendix 1

### Proposed infrastructure to support a range of experiences on the Larapinta Trail

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Trail Sections	Experience to be provided	Trail marking	Interpretive signs (on trail)	Campsite facilities
1-3	day walkers comfort-seekers	comprehensive	appropriate	water gas burners tent pads (if necessary) toilets furniture
4-9	remote	minimum	inappropriate	water (if possible) toilets (if necessary) tent pads (if necessary)
10, 11 and 12	day walkers comfort-seekers	comprehensive	appropriate	water gas burners tent pads (if necessary) toilets furniture

\* note that section 7 is not required to cater for camping comfort-seekers



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## Appendix 2

### Suggested short walk options (1-4 days) on the Larapinta Trail

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Recommended walk	Distance	Difficulty grade	Required fitness and skill level
Day walks (full sections only- other out and back walks are also possible on these sections)			
Section 1	23.7 km	Medium	Good fitness, no previous experience
Section 10	12.5 km	Medium	Reasonable fitness, no previous experience (Ormiston-Glen Helen)
Section 12	16 km	Hard	High fitness level, previous bushwalking experience, navigation ability
2-day walks			
Section 1	23.7 km	Medium	Good fitness, previous bushwalking experience, navigation ability
Section 2	24 km	Medium	Good fitness, previous bushwalking experience, navigation ability
Section 11	29 km	Hard	Good fitness, previous bushwalking experience, navigation ability (Glen Helen-Redbank)
3-day walks			
Section 10-11	34.5 km	Hard	Good fitness, previous bushwalking experience, navigation ability
Section 11-12	44.8 km	Hard	Good fitness, previous bushwalking experience, navigation ability (Glen Helen-Sonder)
4-day walks			
Section 1-2	47.7 km	Medium	High fitness level, previous bushwalking experience, navigation ability
Section 10-12	50.5 km	Hard	High fitness level, previous bushwalking experience, navigation ability

## Appendix 3

### Suggested campsites (to be recommended in trail information)

Section	Current suggested camps (as per existing trail information)		Proposed additional camps
	'Standard' camps (mostly serviced, daily intervals)	Other camps (intermediate & unserviced)	
1	Wallaby Gap Simpson Gap		
2	Mulga Camp Jay Creek	Creek east of Mulga Camp	
3	Miller Flat* Standley Chasm		Jay Ck south of Fish Hole (subject to Aboriginal liaison) Saddle east of Angkale Jcn
4	Brinkley Bluff* Birthday Waterhole	Birthday Waterhole jcn	Stuarts Pass
5	Fringe Lily Creek* Hugh Gorge	Hugh Gorge jcn	
6	Rocky Gully Ellery Big Hole	Ghost Gum Flat	Creek west of Rocky Gully
7	Serpentine Gorge		Creek east of Serpentine Gorge
8	Serpentine Chalet Dam		Pioneer Creek
9	Waterfall Gorge* Ormiston Gorge		'Lookout' ridge
10	Glen Helen		Creek west of Ormiston Finke River (track crossing)
11	Rocky Bar Gap Redbank Gorge		Davenport Creek 'Hilltop Lookout'
12	Redbank Gorge		

\* unserviced, no vehicle access

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## Appendix 4

### Proposed walking track grades for the Larapinta Trail

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Grade	Trail section											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	med	med	hard	very hard	very hard	med	hard	hard	hard	med	hard	hard

**Easy** a generally well-formed, mostly level track

(suitable for most people who walk occasionally)

**Medium** a narrow track which may be rough in places, with some climbing and descending (suitable for people who walk regularly)

**Hard** a rough and narrow track with some steep and/or long climbs and descents (suitable for fit people with previous bushwalking experience)

**Very hard** a rugged track or marked route with frequent steep and long climbs and descents (suitable for fit people with extensive previous bushwalking experience)

Note that these grades are independent of length. Any part of the Larapinta Trail will require adequate fitness to complete because each is at least 12.5 km in length.

Some shorter segments would rate an easy grade if not combined with adjacent sections, eg. Alice Springs to Stuart Highway (Section 1), Wallaby Gap to Scorpion Pool (Section 1), Simpsons Gap to Bond Gap (Section 2), Stuart Pass to Birthday Waterhole (Section 4), Hugh Gorge to Ghost Gum Flat (Section 6).

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## Appendix 5

### Suggested track construction standards for management of the Larapinta Trail (as per AS 2156.1)

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Some sections of the track are currently at a lower standard than suggested for future management.

Section	Suggested classification (per element)		
	Track conditions	Signage	Infrastructure
1	2-3	3	2
2	3	3	2
3	3-5	4	3
4	3-4	4	3
5	3-5	4	3
6	3-5	4	3
7	4	3	3
8	3-4	4	3
9	3-5	4	3
10	3	3	2
11	4	3	3
12	4	3	3

## Appendix 6

### Reconstruction/improvement of parts of Larapinta Trail to ensure environmental sustainability: Recommended priorities

Section	Location	Works required	Approx. Length <sup>6</sup>	Priority <sup>7</sup>	Comment
1	ASTS-Stuart Hwy	Improve water bars – too high, narrow & loose	Spot work	4	Bars being knocked down by cyclists
	Stuart Hwy-Wallaby Gap	Improve placement of some water bars	Spot work	4	Older water bars working well
	W of Wallaby Gap	Drain track on flats	2.5 km	3	Track is channelling water
	E of Hat Hill	Widen benching	1 km	4	Natural slope movement is narrowing bench
2	W of Simpsons Gap	Drain track on flats	4 km	3	Track is channelling water
	E of Bond Gap	More steps	Spot work	4	Some steep sections eroding
	W of Bond Gap	Refill track channels and/or sidle spurs	500m	4	Track channelled in places on spurs
	W of Mulga Camp	Refill track channels and/or sidle spurs	300m	4	Track channelled in places on spurs
3	Tangentyere Ridge: E spur & W ridge/gully	Reconstruct with steps and/or benched zig-zags	400m + 300m	1	Unformed & unstable track directly up/down steep & loose slopes
	Standley Chasm creek	Reconstruct with steps on gorge side	300m	1	Very loose & unstable track

<sup>6</sup> 1 Detailed lengths given only for intensive reconstruction work

<sup>7</sup> 2 Priority based on difficulty/cost to correct after continued deterioration/erosion

Section	Location	Works required	Approx. Length <sup>6</sup>	Priority <sup>7</sup>	Comment
4	E of Bridle Path LO	Add some steps to benched sidle above creek	Spot work	4	
	W of Reveal Saddle	Reduce slope of zig-zags & increase benching on sidles	1 km	1	Eroding track on steep and loose slopes
	Above Rocky Cleft	Reconstruct with steps	300m	1	Very steep & loose
	Below saddle E of Stuart Pass	Add steps	200m	3	Unstable gneiss slopes
5	E of Spencer Gorge	Improve sidling bench	300m	3	Only rudimentary benching in part
	Above Windy Saddle	Add steps/zig-zags	200m	2	Loose & unstable
	W end Razorback Ridge	Add steps/zig-zags	400m	1	Very loose & unstable
	Rocky Saddle: both sides	Add steps, improve benching	500m + 200m	3	Unstable slopes. Burnt in 2002 Poor track definition
6	Whole section	Improve track definition where possible	Spot work over 31km	4	Burnt 2002
	Saddle E of Ellery Creek: Both sides	Step steepest parts	80m + 20m	3	Short sections only
7	Ellery Creek - Trig	Improve track definition where possible	Spot work over 6.4 km	4	Track poorly defined on rocky sections. Subject to realignment?
8	Spur at E end Counts Pt ridge: upper section	Add steps	200m	2	Extend superb steeping from lower section
	Counts Pt ridge	Improve track definition where possible	Spot work over 4 km	4	Poor definition on rocky ground

Section	Location	Works required	Approx. Length <sup>6</sup>	Priority <sup>7</sup>	Comment
	Spur at W end Counts Pt ridge: upper section	Add steps	200m	2	Extend superb steeping from lower section
	E of Serpentine Dam	Add water bars	Spot work	4	Some sections over-gouged and channelling
9	W of Serpentine Dam	Add water bars	Spot work	4	Some sections over-gouged and channelling
	Valleys between Inarlanga Pass & Waterfall Gorge	Improve track definition where possible	Spot work over 8 km	4	Poor track definition after fire
	S entry to Waterfall Gorge	Add steps	100m	2	Loose rubble
	Spur to lookout: lower section	Add steps/shallow zig-zags	200m	2	Loose rubble
	Lookout to Ormiston Gorge	Improve track definition where possible	Spot work over 14 km	4	Poor track definition in places after fire
	E of 174 km mark	Re-align eroding section to sidle spur	200m	2	Track directly up spur is scouring
1 1	Spur E of Hilltop LO: upper part below 199 km	Add steps/zig-zags	100m	1	Very loose large rocks – walkers starting to bypass
1 2	Spur to saddle: upper part	Add steps	Spot work over 400m	2	Extend construction from lower part
	Lookout to summit	Improve track definition where possible	Spot work over 6 km	4	Poor track definition in places after fire – branching prevalent

<sup>1</sup> Detailed lengths given only for intensive reconstruction work

<sup>2</sup> Priority based on difficulty/cost to correct after continued deterioration/erosion



## Appendix 7

### Proposed revised walking times (to be shown in trail information)

Section	Track segment	Distance	Current brochure time	Proposed time	Section Total
1	ASTS to Geoff Moss Bridge	4.9 km	1.5 hours	1.5 hours	9 hours
	Geoff Moss Bridge to Euro Ridge	7.1 km	2.5 hours	2.5 hours	
	Euro Ridge to Wallaby Gap	1.5 km	1.0 hours	1.0 hours	
	Wallaby Gap to Scorpion Pool	4.3 km	1.5 hours	1.5 hours	
	Scorpion Pool to Hat Hill Saddle	3.9 km	1.5 hours	1.5 hours	
	Hat Hill Saddle to Simpsons Gap	2.1 km	1.0 hours	1.0 hours	
2	Simpsons Gap to Bond Gap	8.0 km	2.5 hours	2.5 hours	8 hours
	Bond Gap to Mulga Camp	5.7 km	2.0 hours	2.0 hours	
	Mulga Camp to Spring Gap	3.5 km	0.5 hours	1.0 hours	
	Spring Gap to Jay Creek	7.3 km	2.5 hours	2.5 hours	
3	Jay Creek to Fish Hole	1.2 km	0.5 hours	0.5 hours	6.5 hours
	Fish Hole to Tangentyere Junction	3.5 km	0.5 hours	1.0 hours	
	Tangentyere Jcn to Millers Flat	4.5 km	2.5 hours	2.5 hours	
	Millers Flat to Angkale Junction	3.4 km	1.5 hours	1.5 hours	
	Angkale Jcn to Standley Chasm	1.5 km	1.0 hours	1.0 hours	
4	Standley Chasm to Bridle Path LO	4.8 km	3.0 hours	2.0 hours	9 hours
	Bridle Path LO to Reveal Saddle	1.2 km	1.0 hours	0.5 hours	
	Reveal Saddle to Brinkley Bluff	4.0 km	1.5 hours	2.5 hours	
	Brinkley Bluff to Rocky Cleft	1.1 km	2.0 hours	1.0 hours	
	Rocky Cleft to Mintbush Spring	4.4 km	2.0 hours	2.0 hours	
	Mintbush Spring to Birthday WH	2.2 km	1.5 hours	1.0 hours	
5	Birthday WH to Spencer Gorge	2.9 km	2.5 hours	1.0 hours	10 hours
	Spencer Gorge to Rocky Talus	1.7 km	3.0 hours	1.5 hours	
	Rocky Talus to Windy Saddle	0.6 km	1.0 hours	1.0 hours	
	Windy Saddle to Razorback Ridge	1.7 km	0.5 hours	1.0 hours	
	Razorback Ridge to creek	1.8 km	1.0 hours	1.0 hours	
	Creek to Rocky Saddle	2.2 km	1.0 hours	1.0 hours	
	Rocky Saddle to Hugh Gorge Jcn	1.6 km	2.5 hours	1.0 hours	
	Hugh Gorge Jcn to Pocket Valley	1.3 km	1.0 hours	1.0 hours	
Pocket Valley to Hugh Gorge camp	2.2 km	1.5 hours	1.5 hours		
	Hugh Gorge to Hugh View	4.0 km	1.5 hours	1.5 hours	
	Hugh View to Ghost Gum Flat	3.2 km	1.0 hours	1.0 hours	

Section	Track segment	Distance	Current brochure time	Proposed time	Section Total
6	Ghost Gum Flat to Rocky Gully	8.7 km	3.0 hours	3.0 hours	11 hours
	Rocky Gully to saddle	11.4 km	3.0 hours	4.0 hours	
	Saddle to Ellery Creek	3.9 km	1.5 hours	1.5 hours	
7	Ellery Creek to stile	2.0 km	1.0 hours	1.0 hours	5.5 hours
	Stile to Trig Point	4.4 km	2.0 hours	2.0 hours	
	Trig Point to creek	3.2 km	1.5 hours	1.0 hours	
	Creek to Serpentine Gorge carpark	4.2 km	2.0 hours	1.5 hours	
8	Serpentine Gorge to Counts Point	6.9 km	3.5 hours	3.0 hours	6.5 hours
	Counts Point to Serp. Chalet Dam	6.5 km	3.0 hours	2.5 hours	
	Serp. Chal. Dam to Inarlanga Pass	2.3 km	1.0 hours	1.0 hours	
9	Inarlanga Pass to Waterfall Gorge	12.6 km	5.0 hours	4.5 hours	11 hours
	Waterfall Gorge to lookout	1.6 km	1.0 hours	1.0 hours	
	Lookout to Base of Hill	5.1 km	3.0 hours	2.5 hours	
	Base of Hill to Ormiston Gorge	8.6 km	3.5 hours	3.0 hours	
10	Ormiston Gorge to Hilltop LO	5.0 km	3.0 hours	2.0 hours	4 hours
	Hilltop LO to Section 11 jcn	4.9 km	1.5 hours	2.0 hours	
11	Section 11 jcn to Hilltop LO	8.7 km	4.0 hours	3.0 hours	9 hours
	Hilltop LO to Rocky Bar Gap	4.7 km	3.0 hours	2.0 hours	
	Rocky Bar Gap to Redbank Gorge	11.8 km	5.0 hours	4.0 hours	
12	Redbank Gorge to saddle	2.3 km	1.0 hours	1.0 hours	6.0 hours
	Saddle to Mount Sonder	5.6 km	3.0 hours	2.5 hours	
	Mount Sonder to Redbank Gorge	7.9 km	3.0 hours	2.5 hours	
TOTALS			107.5	95.5.0	95.5 hours

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## Appendix 8

### Suggested features for naming or renaming on Larapinta Trail (provisional list):

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- ◇ Creek through Mulga Camp
- ◇ 'Tangentyere' ridge
- ◇ gully at W end of 'Tangentyere' ridge
- ◇ 'Millers Flat' creek
- ◇ saddle E of Angkale Junction
- ◇ creek W of Standley Chasm
- ◇ Rocky Cleft
- ◇ creek through Stuarts Pass
- ◇ Rocky Talus
- ◇ Windy Saddle
- ◇ creek at W end of Razorback Ridge ('Fringe Lily Creek')
- ◇ Rocky Saddle
- ◇ Rocky Gully
- ◇ saddle E of Ellery Creek
- ◇ creek and gap E of Serpentine Gorge
- ◇ ridge from Serpentine Gorge to Counts Point
- ◇ Counts Point
- ◇ gorge S of Counts Point
- ◇ saddles (3) between Inarlanga Pass and Waterfall Gorge
- ◇ lookout N of Waterfall Gorge
- ◇ ridge N of Waterfall Gorge
- ◇ camp on ridge N of Waterfall Gorge
- ◇ creek W of Ormiston Gorge
- ◇ Hilltop Lookout (E of Rocky Bar Gap)
- ◇ ridge with 'Hilltop Lookout'

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## Appendix 9

### Limits to Acceptable Change (LAC)

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Limits to Acceptable Change is a planning approach that developed from the realisation that all recreation use has some effect on the environment in which it takes place. Even low levels of recreation have some effect.

LAC fundamentally identifies a vision for the area/site that reflects the maximum level of change that is acceptable before the site has been impacted to the extent that it is unable to meet that vision.

A series of environmental and social indicators are developed to describe the vision and the level of change (or threshold) that is accepted. Monitoring of impacts then occurs and strategies are identified that will be put in place as the thresholds are reached.

The Larapinta Trail Management Strategy suggests that there is a different vision for sections 1-2 , section 7 and 9-10 than for the other track sections particularly in terms of the social condition.

#### The proposed approach

##### 1. Track condition

The assumption is that the strategy will result in a well designed and constructed track that is environmentally stable and suited to the experiences to be provided on each section.

Expansion of the trail beyond design width or continuing erosion/instability is not acceptable in terms of the objective of providing best practice management and environmental standards.

Performance indicator	Measure	Process	Potential actions
Erosion/scouring of track formation Runoff channeling along track Loose and unstable rock on track	No scouring of track No track instability Walker complaints about loose and/or eroding tracks	Photo monitoring at key points Ranger observation of track formation	Repair/upgrading/const ruction of vulnerable parts of track High standard track works Maintenance of track
Increase in braiding or new track formation beyond design width	No increase in track width beyond design once completed	Photo monitoring at key points Ranger observation of track formation	Maintenance of track Limits on numbers (if significant along whole track)

##### 2. Campsite capacity

The strategy has recommended increased campsite capacity and a design approach.

Use of campsites beyond this design capacity may be expected to result in a reduced quality visitor experience reflected in the need for longer queuing for the toilet, missing out on campsite, and loss of remote social experience. Campsite expansion spreads impacts into the surrounding environment and may promote the establishment of informal campsites in other locations.

Performance indicator	Measure	Process	Potential actions
Expansion beyond campsite design Deterioration in campsite social experience	No increase beyond design of campsite once complete No proliferation of informal campsites Campers expressing dissatisfaction with numbers at sites or with length of queuing for toilet	Photo monitoring at key campsites Ranger observation Monitoring of campsite numbers Monitoring of visitor satisfaction through key questions in regular survey	Campsite booking system

### 3. Overall Quality of visitor experience

The strategy will provide in the provision of a range of experiences, each of which is expected to be a high standard.

Satisfaction with the visitor experience will vary with the visitor expectations and with the track section they have chosen to walk. A high level of satisfaction is necessary for all types of experience.

Performance indicator	measure	process	Potential actions
Visitor satisfaction with the experience they have sought	Greater than 80% of walkers seeking the range of experiences express satisfaction with their experience	Visitor satisfaction expressed through key questions in regular survey	Limits on numbers, campsite bookings, improvements to services

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## Appendix 10

### Trail package – further details of potential approach

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The introduction of a trail package is considered a key concept for the Larapinta Trail. Experience in other areas and in the tourism industry indicate that:

- ◇ Many people prefer packaged products
- ◇ People expect to pay for long distance walking track facilities (and other park facilities)
- ◇ The majority (upwards of 90%) of people are honest and want to meet requirements

The following are seen as essential and immediate components of the package:

- ◇ Trip information (guide book, maps)
- ◇ Fee to incorporate costs of
  - Campsites
  - Standley Chasm entry fee
  - Access to food cache lockers (code or key)
  - Phone through information service
  - Website access

The following are highly desirable inclusions that will need to be further negotiated:

- ◇ Transport to and from start and finish points
- ◇ Overnight walker registration (once current contract completed)

Inclusion of all elements will make this a highly attractive package for all walkers and will be valuable for management in terms of monitoring numbers.

The package will need to meet the needs of those people who walk the track only once and those who walk it regularly or walk shorter sections.

A lower fee package for local walkers and people who use the track on a regular basis would be desirable. No fee would be payable for day walks.

The best option is considered to be the availability for purchase of an annual package for the track which is also available without the guide (for those returning).

The potential exists to contract the provision and management of the entire track package and it is considered likely that existing commercial enterprises in the region might express interest in tendering.

A potential costing on the annual package (excluding transport component) might be in the order of \$150 based on a nightly Campsite usage fee at \$8 per night. The second and subsequent year package (and that for additional party members to the leader) would then be \$120.

The use of a branded product (eg Larapinta logo carabiner) would serve as proof of purchase (for campsites and visitor nodes).

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## Appendix 11

### Design Guidelines

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#### Design objectives

- ◇ Create a high quality sustainable landscape to reflect the expectation of visitors and that complements the surrounding visual amenity.
- ◇ Create a unifying landscape and range of visitor facilities that reflect the character of the local area and provides a sense of place that maintains the natural landscape setting.
- ◇ Ensure the scale of the development integrates with the scale of the environment.
- ◇ Create a landscape that is coherent and complex so not to lose interest of the user.
- ◇ To promote long term sustainable visitor use.
- ◇ To have minimal impact on environmental elements such as, flora and fauna, visual setting, soils and cultural and heritage sites.
- ◇ Minimise earthworks and locate site infrastructure and facilities to complement the existing topography.
- ◇ To provide landscape treatments that contribute positively to environmental best practice.
- ◇ Selection of materials and design detailing to consider durability, low maintenance and measures to reduce and/or combat vandalism.
- ◇ Design of landscape elements and furniture to utilise recycled materials, plantation timber and materials with comparative low levels of embodied energy where possible.

#### Dayuse facilities

All day use areas are required to be planned and designed and to consider the following design requirements:

- ◇ Delineate between the carpark and dayuse areas by appropriate planning, planting and vehicular barriers to emphasise the user experience and minimise conflict between pedestrians and vehicles.
- ◇ Locate dayuse areas to take advantage of views, shade, shelter from prevailing winds and screened where possible from access roads, carparks and toilets.
- ◇ Locate tables to provide users with a variety of experiences and opportunities and minimise conflicts between users.
- ◇ Where BBQ's are required, locate centrally to be accessible from all of the dayuse area.
- ◇ To improve the visual amenity and environmental values of the site, rehabilitate all degraded areas using indigenous species based on the surrounding vegetation structure.
- ◇ Toilets should be located within 100 metres of any part of the dayuse area. Locate to visually integrate into the surrounding landscape by either being screened by existing vegetation or landforms. Locate door away from the

dayuse area to maximise privacy for users. Toilets should be located a minimum of 200metre from any watercourse.

- ◇ Provide access for people with disabilities to a least one of the picnic tables and to toilet facilities from the carpark to comply to AS 1428.
- ◇ If paving is required where there is areas of high use and wear, use a pavement material that will suit the surrounding landscape. Preferably use local materials such as rock and stabilised gravel with appropriate preparation and base materials.

### **Carparks / trailheads**

All carparks and trailheads are required to be planned and designed and to consider the following design requirements:

- ◇ Plan and design the carpark to minimise risk to pedestrians, clearly locate the trailhead and facilitate the flow of pedestrians to the trailhead
- ◇ Locate and design the carpark to minimise earthworks and area of disturbance.
- ◇ Where a new carpark is proposed, locate where it will be visually unobtrusive from surrounding areas and the walking track.
- ◇ Delineate the carpark from the surrounding facilities such as dayuse areas and/or campsites.
- ◇ Provide adequate drainage around and over the carpark to minimise the potential of erosion with a maximum of 3% slope for a gravel carpark.

### **Campsites**

All camping areas are required to be planned and designed and to consider the following design requirements:

- ◇ Locate campsites to take advantage shade, have shelter from prevailing winds and screened where possible from access roads, walking tracks, carparks and toilets.
- ◇ Delineate between campsites and walking tracks, dayuse areas and carparks by appropriate planting and landforms to provide privacy and minimise conflicts between users.
- ◇ Define campsites by clearing woody vegetation. The edge of the campsite can either be defined by informal placement of timber bollards or rocks or by providing a raised camping area retained by timber edging.
- ◇ Provide a variety of sizes for campsites to accommodate both single campers and groups. Allocate a minimum of 14m<sup>2</sup> for a single campsite that includes the parking of one vehicle and one tent / campsite.
- ◇ Delineate between campsites by allowing minimum of 4 metres between campsites to maximise privacy of users.
- ◇ Locate toilets to be accessible by all campsites and to be a maximum of 100m from any part of the campsite. Ensure that the access path to the toilet does not compromise the privacy of other campsites.
- ◇ Ensure the campsites are located on level ground with a minimum slope of 3% to facilitate drainage.



## Appendix 12

### Summary of proposed treatment of major campsites on Larapinta trail

(19 campsites recommended as standard for a full traverse)

Campsite	Section junction or intermediate	Current vehicle access <sup>2</sup>	Current water supply <sup>3</sup>	Proposed facilities/actions					
				Toilets	Gas BBQs	Furniture	Tent pads	Relocate to better site <sup>7</sup>	Provide separate group camp
Wallaby Gap <sup>1</sup>	Intermediate	4WD mgt	Tank	Existing <sup>4</sup>	Existing	Existing	Yes		
Simpsons Gap <sup>1</sup>	Section	Public	Tank	Existing	Existing	Existing	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mulga Camp <sup>1</sup>	Intermediate	4WD mgt	Tank	Existing <sup>4</sup>	Yes	Existing	No <sup>6</sup>		
Jay Creek <sup>1</sup>	Section	4WD mgt	Tank	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Millers Flat	Intermediate	Nil	Nil	No <sup>5</sup>	No	No	No		
Standley Chasm	Section	Public	Reticulated	Existing	Existing	Existing	No	Yes	Yes
Brinkley Bluff	Intermediate	Nil	Nil	No <sup>5</sup>	No	No	No		
Birthday W'hole	Section	4WD public	Tank	No <sup>5</sup>	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
'Fringe-lily' Ck	Intermediate	Nil	Creek	No <sup>5</sup>	No	No	No		
Hugh Gorge	Section	4WD public	Tank	No <sup>5</sup>	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Rocky Gully	Intermediate	4WD mgt	Tank	No <sup>5</sup>	No	No	No		Yes

Campsite	Section junction or intermediate	Current vehicle access <sup>2</sup>	Current water supply <sup>3</sup>	Proposed facilities/actions					
				Toilets	Gas BBQs	Furniture	Tent pads	Relocate to better site <sup>7</sup>	Provide separate group camp
Ellery Creek	Section	Public	Waterhole	Existing	Existing	Existing	No	Yes	Yes
Serpentine Gorge	Section	Public	Bore	Existing	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Serp. Chalet Dam	Section	4WD mgt	Tank	No <sup>5</sup>	No	No	No		Yes
Waterfall Gorge	Intermediate	Nil	Waterhole	No <sup>5</sup>	No	No	No		
Ormiston Gorge <sup>1</sup>	Section	Public	Reticulated	Existing	Existing	Existing	Yes	Yes	Yes
Glen Helen <sup>1</sup>	Section	Public	Reticulated	Existing	Yes	Existing	Yes		
Rocky Bar Gap <sup>1</sup>	Intermediate	4WD mgt	Tank	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Redbank Gorge	Section	Public	Tank	Existing <sup>5</sup>	Existing	Existing	Yes	Yes	Yes

<sup>1</sup> campsites on sections 1-3, and 10-12 proposed for higher level of facilities (where not already associated with a major vehicle campsite)

<sup>2</sup> guided groups currently have approval to use 4WD management access to campsites at Jay Creek, Rocky Gully, Serpentine Chalet Dam, Rocky Bar Gap

<sup>3</sup> no change is proposed to current water supply arrangements (except generally to improve efficiency of tank supplies)

<sup>4</sup> improved technology should be investigated for these existing toilet sites

<sup>5</sup> toilets are not yet required at these sites for environmental protection, but the situation should be monitored

<sup>6</sup> even though a higher level of facilities is proposed for Mulga Camp, ground conditions are such that tent pads are not required

<sup>7</sup> all listed facilities to be relocated to new site or established anew

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## Appendix 13

### Visitor Monitoring

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#### Quantitative data collection

A range of approaches to estimating visitor numbers is available.

These include:

- ◇ Traffic counters
- ◇ Infrared detectors
- ◇ Pressure pad counters
- ◇ Fees and charges
- ◇ Permits and registration data
- ◇ Simple spot counting with calibration
- ◇ Aerial photography.

Appendix 1 contains details on some counter suppliers. Additional information is also available on simple effective people counters. Tasmanian Parks has undertake extensive visitor monitoring on walking tracks. They would be a valuable source of information.

The following approach to monitoring numbers of visitors is recommended.

- ◇ Purchase and install a series of traffic counters/ data loggers on key access points and at key visitor nodes.
- ◇ Establish a program of sample monitoring of numbers walking key track sections using people counters/data loggers. Counters may be established as part of track construction or drainage structure installation.
- ◇ Continue with program of staff recording of numbers at sites and on track sections whilst on duty.
- ◇ Collate and maintain track record data through Overnight Walker Registration System
- ◇ Investigate potential use and accuracy of visitor log book system using a calibration program to establish percentage completing.
- ◇ Develop data base for compilation and analysis of all visitor numbers data.

The development of a strategic approach to monitoring visitors will enable long term trends in use to be assessed. It will enable ongoing monitoring of satisfaction with the track, the walk, the visitor experience etc. It is essential to ensure data is recorded and maintained effectively, and that management observations continue to form a key element in the monitoring program.

USDA Forest Service, Wilderness Recreation Use Estimation: A handbook of methods and systems, Watson A etal, Oct 2000, which is published on line at:  
[http://www.fs.fed.us/rm/pubs/rmrs\\_gtr56.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/rm/pubs/rmrs_gtr56.html)  
<http://www.sctrails.net/trails/library/FSPubs/trafficcounter/>

CONTACT NAME	COMPANY NAME	PHONE	ADDRESS_1	ADDRESS_2
Dave Brewer	MetroCount	08 9430 6164	PO Box 1182	Freemantle
David Cheney	BH Industries	08 8276 7766	PO Box 156	Daw Park
Walter and Patrick Kunz	Romex	02 9774 1944	1/21 Davies Road	Padstow
Steve Romteck	Romteck Pty Ltd	0401 691116	PO Box 1475	Osborne Park Business Centre
Gerard Byrne	Dominion Electronics	02 9906 6988	Suite 201	82 Christie Street
Burt Prinsloo	PPK Environment and Infrastructure Pty Ltd	02 4929 3900	Suite 1	3rd floor
Harald Kolodziej	TCS Instruments	02 9476 6266	PO Box 65	Hornsby
Dylan Connell	TTM Data	02 9898 9055	Unit 6	24 - 26 Clyde Street
Bob White	The Centre for Excellence	02 9740 8600	PO Box 538	Hurstville
Greg Hodge	Skytron	03 6223 6946	20 Olinda Grove	Mt Nelson

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## Appendix 14

### Consultation

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People and organisations contacted and consulted during the development of the Larapinta Trail Management Strategy

Various staff of the Northern Territory Tourist Commission

Various staff of the Parks and Wildlife Service

St Phillips College

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Living Waters Lutheran Primary School

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Alice Springs High School

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Marrara Christian School

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Glen Helen Resort

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Desert Dwellers

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Barbecues Galore

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Alice Disposal Store

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Central Communication

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Alice Springs Telegraph Station

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Hamilton Downs Youth Camp

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Alice Springs Scout Association

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Alice Springs Field Naturalists

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Alice Springs Bush Walking Club

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Alice Springs Police Department

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Alice Springs Emergency Services

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Standley Chasm

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World Expeditions

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Lone Dingo

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Trek Larapinta

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Alice Ecotours

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Alice Wanderer

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CATIA

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CATIA distribution list

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Karen May

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Peter McDonald

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Rural Helicopters

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Willis Walkabouts

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central land council

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John Chapman