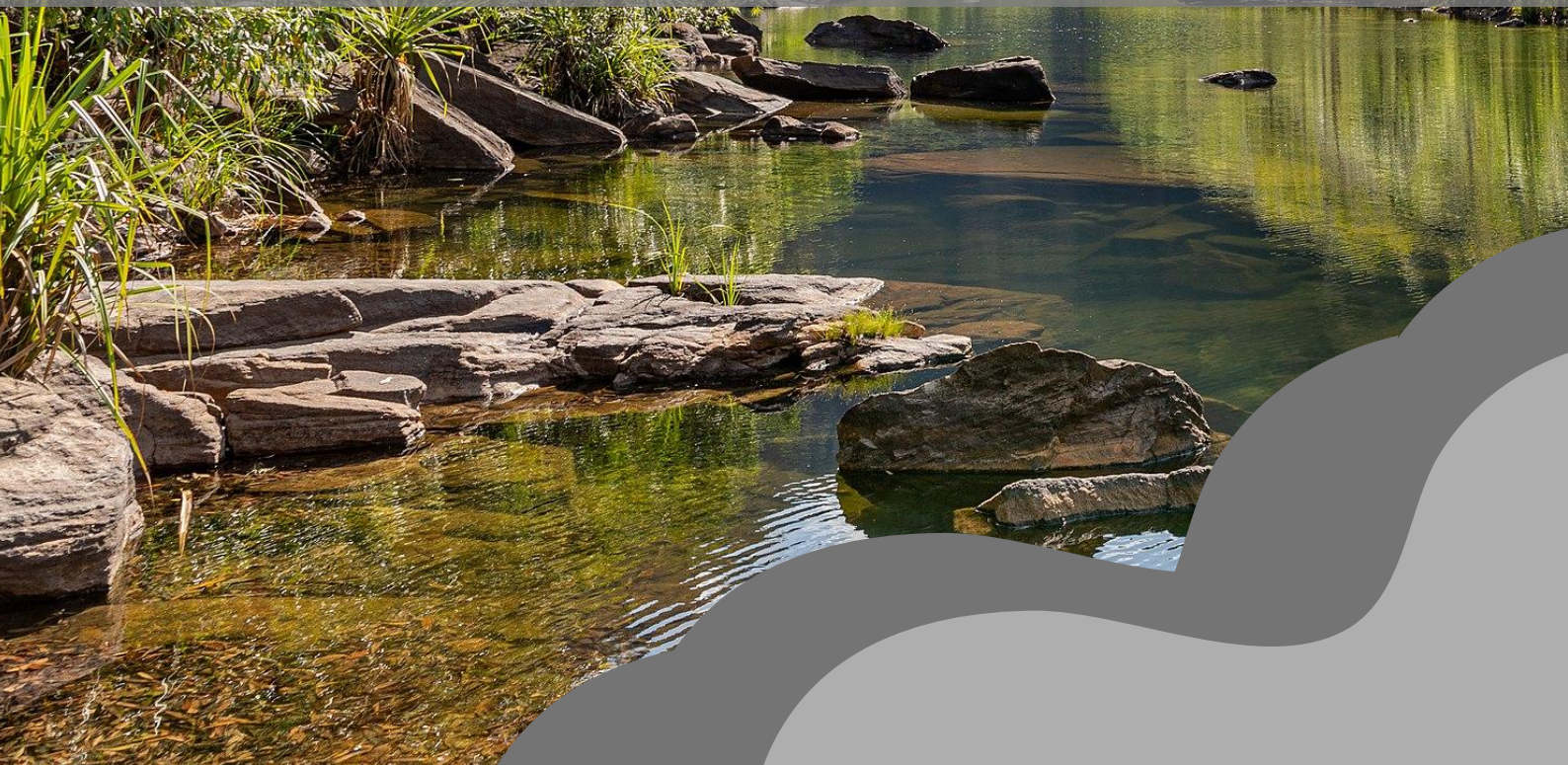




Submission regarding the Preparation of a New Management Plan for Kakadu National Park



the climate centre





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This submission focuses on key activities already happening around Australia but not in Kakadu National Park yet, with a focus on community engagement, environmental engagement and active tourism activities with low environmental impact.. These ideas could provide an opportunity for Kakadu National Park to be a leader in these spaces.

Community Engagement

Disability Inclusion

The Australian Government under the Department for Social Services is investing \$17.1 million from 2024-25 to 2027-28 to encourage disability inclusion in Australia, including in national parks. Two key inclusion products are proposed, firstly all-terrain wheelchairs that allow visitors to access rugged trails that are otherwise not accessible to the users. They are often adjustable for varying abilities including both adults and children. The second is temporary modular accessible paths that can be put down on paths to make them more accessible for those using a wheelchair or otherwise have limited mobility (The Australian Government 2025). Equipment hire for all-terrain wheelchairs should be made available at an affordable cost.

Details on the features of various parts of the park that are accessible should be made available online for the public to view as they are on the South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service's website (National Parks and Wildlife Service South Australia 2025).

Young Adults

Today young Adults are often a missing piece of the community within groups such as Landcare or service clubs. Creating opportunities aimed at this age group can be key to increasing community engagement. Groups such as Intrepid Landcare and Co-Exist are present in Australia and growing nationally in popularity (Landcare Australia 2025). Although they are not currently present in the Northern Territory it is a matter of time until they start, and the community can call for these groups to be set up.

Intrepid Landcare describes itself as: "a place where young people (late teens to thirty-somethings) can come together and create the change they want to see in the world" (Intrepid Landcare 2025).

Co-Exist describes itself as: "a nationwide movement of young people driving positive change. We come together to connect with each other, explore our wild places, and take action in our communities. Co-Exist empowers young Australians to build friendships, learn new skills, and lead local projects together" ("Co-Exist Australia | Explore. Connect. Protect." 2025).

The key to these groups is recognising their diverse and strong skills to empower young people to lead, and provide support to help young people grow and learn whilst making an impact. Both organisations have a national leadership team that



could support a group's development in the Northern Territory and in turn support activities and community engagement in the Kakadu National Park.

Environmental Engagement

Citizen Science events

In Australia and around the world there are existing citizen science events such as the City Nature Challenge which is an international event that encourages cities and their residents to record the living world around them ("City Nature Challenge" 2025). Using phone camera or audio to take photos or record audio, then uploading to the iNaturalist app that uses AI and a community of professional and other citizen scientists to identify what has been recorded. The data is then available in an open dataset and added to research projects ("iNaturalist" 2025).

An event being run with strong leadership in Australia is the Great Southern Bioblitz or GSB. The event works in the same way as the City Nature Challenge but with a focus on the diverse southern hemisphere. The event is run annually ("About | Great Southern BioBlitz" 2025) and also uses iNaturalist like the City Nature Challenge. iNaturalist provides the option of creating custom projects to cater for diverse research projects such as for recording dead trees, recording Echidnas, recording tree hollows or what parrots eat ("iNaturalist" 2025). These projects all seek to better understand the biodiversity using AI and the community.

Universities, governments, NGOs and other organisations and groups are all increasingly using citizen science as a tool for community input into science that ranges beyond environmental science into other disciplines such as space or history. The involvement of AI has made the sector easier and more efficient to grow. The Australian Citizen Science Association (ACSA) is the peak body for involving scientists and citizens into citizen science ("Australian Citizen Science Association – Citizen Science Is Redefining How We Do Science" 2025). They have a list on their website under resources of all citizen science projects in Australia.

Similar tools and activities described above could be used within the Kakadu National Park as a way to foster engagement with residents and visitors, create awareness about the unique biodiversity of the area, and also have the potential to contribute to research.

Active Tourism Activities

Biking

Biking on existing dirt roads could be an opportunity for responsible biking that has limited environmental impact. Well planned bike trails (or roads) are found to increase visibility of areas by users and reduce the likelihood of antisocial behaviour such as rubbish dumping in National Parks (AusCycling and GHD ADVISORY 2021). Biking has social and health benefits that includes physical and mental health, increased connection to nature, opportunities for social connections and provides outdoor educational opportunities (AusCycling and GHD ADVISORY 2021). Biking also provides an opportunity for tourism and economic development in regional areas, being one of the global fastest growing recreational pursuits (AusCycling and



GHD ADVISORY 2021). There are multiple options for bikes that can be used for tourism such as e-bikes, mountain bikes, touring bikes or others. This makes it inclusive to a range of abilities and interests.

The Queensland Government and other state and local governments around Australia are currently looking to expand and capitalise on the bike culture and have produced a range of strategies to develop new facilities and trails to increase its tourism and community footprint. There should be much to learn from Northern Queensland state and local government strategies and practices for Kakadu National Park.

Biking events

Biking events are a popular way for people to come together from a range of demographic groups and provides economic input to local economies. For example, the Tour Down Under provided more than \$87 million into South Australia's economy in 2024 ("Government of South Australia" n.d.). Other examples of biking events in Australia include the Outback Odyssey in South Australia, which is described as an epic bucket-list ride for any cycling enthusiast across 900 kilometres of country (Bicycle SA 2025). Another example, one which takes place in the Northern Territory in the Alice Springs area, is the Shimano Gravel Muster. The event is described: "This all-inclusive, 4-day gravel stage race is set in the majestic landscapes of the East MacDonnell Ranges (Northern Territory) and will be a lifetime experience for any rider" ("Northern Territory Government" 2025).

Running events

Outback running events are popular and inclusive and cater for a variety of abilities, from marathons to fun runs, they draw people from across Australia to get together to run and socialise whilst visiting the local area and taking in the scenery. The Australian Outback Marathon describes itself as: "Enjoyed by both professional runners, club runners, casual runners and beginners, there are events for all running levels including the full marathon, half marathon, 11km and 6km fun runs. In addition to its beauty, the course is relatively flat, with only a couple inclines and sand dunes. Most of the course is on unsealed roads, bush tracks and soft-sand trails, with a few small sand dunes and plenty of Australia's famed "Red Earth" thrown in for good measure." ("Australian Outback Marathon | Central Australia Marathon Races" 2025). Running events are popular across the world and can draw international participants (Canal Aventure 2025). With scope for national and international tourism running events could be a way to increasing visitor numbers whilst involving the local community and encouraging people to run.



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Benjamin Brice is a volunteer Policy Analyst at the Climate Centre; he holds a Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning (Honours) and is studying a Master of Environment and Climate Emergency. He has experience in Infrastructure economic and real estate in a professional services firm as well as internship experience across the government, not for profit and university sectors.

About The Climate Centre

The Climate Centre is a volunteer-run charitable not-for-profit focused on building bridges between research, policy and communities. It achieves this by undertaking research relevant to local communities, providing digital materials and outreach initiatives that make it easier to interpret climate information and apply it to a local scale, as well as engaging in policy analysis and advocacy to government, and fostering conversations and understanding at individual, community, and national scales through its various projects.