



Premier of Western Australia

Our Reference: 59-001158

Mr John Storey
PO Box 366
KUNUNURRA WA 6473

Dear Mr Storey

Thank you for your letter regarding the Prince Regent National Park.

In permitting public access to national parks and other reserves, the Department of Parks and Wildlife considers a range of matter and a risk assessment of any operational programs, such as prescribed burning, undertaken. I am advised that your application for remote walking was subject to this assessment process and approved for 10 to 23 June 2017 when it was considered safe.

Aboriginal people have a strong connection to the lands managed by Parks and Wildlife in the Kimberley. The Department is committed to moving towards joint management of conservation reserves with traditional owners and supporting their aspirations regardless of whether native title exists. Referral of remote area activities to traditional owners is consistent with this approach and I am advised that to date the traditional owners of Prince Regent National Park have not objected to any applications for remote walking.

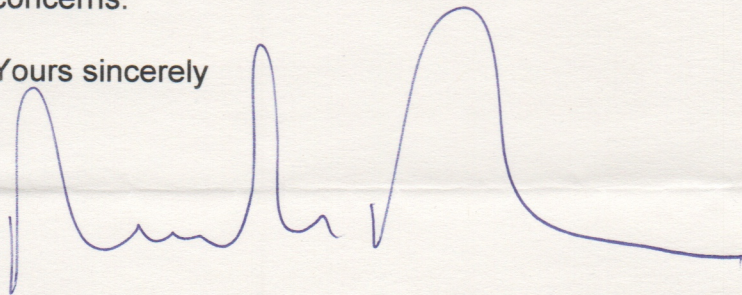
With regard to rainfall and prescribed burning in the north Kimberley, the region has received above average rainfall during the 2016/17 wet season. This rainfall has resulted in prolific grass growth that will become highly flammable as the dry season progresses. Parks and Wildlife has advised that it is important that this vegetation is burnt now, while it is still moist, in order to prevent late, dry season fires, which are destructive and a significant threat to the broader community and the high biodiversity values of the north Kimberley.

I am also advised that long-term monitoring of fire patterns in the north Kimberley shows considerable change over the past 10 years. The 2006 Environmental Protection Authority report that you refer to was a catalyst for this change. Until this time, large tracts of the Kimberley were burnt by late, dry season fire by undertaking early season prescribed burning. Late, dry season fires have been halves and the total area burnt has also been reduced.

Better management has not only seen a shift in the seasonality of fire, but also in the size and patchiness of fires. In addition to monitoring fire patterns, Parks and Wildlife has established more than 600 permanent monitoring plots to ascertain the response of fire sensitive threatened small mammals and vegetation to fire management. Small mammal abundance has increased as has vegetation cover.

I appreciate your correspondence and I trust the information provided addresses your concerns.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal tail, positioned below the text 'Yours sincerely'.

Mark McGowan MLA

PREMIER

11 SEP 2017