



Environmental Impact Assessment Procedures

Christmas Island National Park

Christmas Island National Park Environmental Impact Assessment procedures

Purpose

The purpose of these environmental impact assessment procedures is:

- To ensure the likely impacts of proposed actions on park values are properly identified and considered before decisions are made about their approval.

The procedures (page 5 onwards) should be used by Parks Australia staff and external proponents for assessing the environmental impacts of proposed actions, generally for the types of actions described in Table 1 as Category 2 or 3 actions.

Background

Christmas Island National Park is a Commonwealth reserve under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act) 1999*. The Christmas Island National Park (CINP) Management Plan 2014-2024 is prepared under the *EPBC Act* and is the statutory document that provides the strategic actions and policies for managing the park, including what actions can be considered and approved in the park. Proposed actions in the park need to be assessed for their potential environmental impacts, in accordance with Section 8.1 (*Decision making and assessment of proposals* page 79-82) of the Management Plan and these procedures. The Management Plan is available at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/resource/christmas-island-national-park-management-plan-2014-2024>.

Some proposed Category 3 actions (Table 1) in the park may be 'controlled actions' under the *EPBC Act*. Controlled actions require assessment and approval by the Commonwealth Environment Minister as they are likely to have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance (NES). See: <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/what-is-protected>. For Christmas Island National Park matters of NES are:

- Threatened species listed under the *EPBC Act* (see Appendix A below)
- Migratory species listed under the *EPBC Act* (see page 106 Appendix E of the Christmas Island National Park Management Plan)
- Ramsar listed wetlands of international importance, the Dales and Hosnie's Springs (see page 55-58 of the Christmas Island National Park Management Plan).

If a proposed action is to occur outside of the park and may have impacts on matters of NES, then the action should be referred under the *EPBC Act* for assessment. For details see: <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/do-you-need-approval>

Proposed actions in the park, that are not controlled actions under the *EPBC Act*, are assessed by Parks Australia. Parks Australia makes decisions on whether or not proposals should be approved and any relevant conditions, using these environmental impact assessment procedures. If approved, a relevant approval mechanism will be used to enable the proposed action to proceed, which will include specific/relevant conditions (e.g. approval mechanisms may include a permit, licence, lease or other legal mechanism authorised under the *EPBC Act* and/or *Regulations*).

There are several documents that provide relevant background information to assist with the completion of these procedures. However, these documents should only be used as a guide, as (depending on the type and scale of actions) generally environmental impact assessments for proposed actions also require field surveys and assessments. Relevant documents include but are not limited to:

- Christmas Island National Park Management Plan 2014-2024
- Final Report: Christmas Island Expert Working Group (2010): <http://www.environment.gov.au/resource/final-report-christmas-island-expert-working-group>
- Christmas Island National Park related natural resource management documents and reports: <http://www.environment.gov.au/topics/national-parks/christmas-island-national-park/publications> . This includes EPBC Act recovery plans for ten of Christmas Island's threatened terrestrial species.

For questions relating to these procedures or assessments please contact Christmas Island National Park at (08) 9164 8700 or via email ChristmasIslandNP@environment.gov.au

Appendix A – Christmas Island's EPBC Act listed threatened species

Species Name	Common Name	EPBC Act Status
VASCULAR PLANTS		
<i>Asplenium listeri</i>	Christmas Island spleenwort	CR
<i>Pneumatopteris truncata</i>	a fern	CR
<i>Tectaria devexa</i> var. <i>minor</i>	a fern	EN
MAMMALS		
<i>Crocidura trichura</i>	Christmas Island shrew	EN
<i>Pipistrellus murrayi</i>	Christmas Island pipistrelle	CR
<i>Pteropus melanotus natalis</i>	Christmas Island flying-fox	CR
FOREST BIRDS		
<i>Accipiter hiogaster natalis</i>	Christmas Island goshawk	EN
<i>Chalcophaps indica natalis</i>	emerald dove (Christmas Island)	EN
<i>Ninox natalis</i>	Christmas Island hawk-owl	VU
<i>Turdus poliocephalus erythropleurus</i>	Christmas Island thrush	EN
SEABIRDS		
<i>Fregata andrewsi</i>	Christmas Island frigatebird	VU
<i>Papasula abbotti</i>	Abbott's booby	EN
<i>Phaethon lepturus fulvus</i>	golden bosun	EN
REPTILES		
<i>Cryptoblepharus egeriae</i>	blue-tailed skink	CR
<i>Cyrtodactylus sadleiri</i>	giant gecko	EN
<i>Emoia nativitatis</i>	forest skink	CR
<i>Lepidodactylus listeri</i>	Lister's gecko	CR
<i>Ramphotyphlops exocoeti</i>	Christmas Island blind snake	VU

CR - Critically Endangered: EN - Endangered: VU - Vulnerable: EXT - Extinct

Table 1:

Christmas Island National Park - Impact assessment decision making processes

Action / Proposal Category	Examples	Decision-making process and impact assessment requirements
Category 1		
Actions considered likely to have no impact, or no more than a negligible impact, on the park's environment and values (see Table 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor capital works (e.g. new minor infrastructure, maintenance, replacement, repairing or improving existing infrastructure in its present form) Regular/routine ongoing operations to implement prescriptions in this plan (e.g. weed control, road maintenance, walking track maintenance) Issuing permits for activities outlined in and in accordance with this plan (e.g. tour operator, research) 	<p>If Park's Australia considers the proposed action is consistent with the CINP Management Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If needed, consult with relevant/ affected stakeholders Formal impact assessment not usually required Decision made by Parks Australia <p>If the proposed action is not considered consistent with the Management Plan the action will not generally be permitted or may be assessed as a Category 2 proposal</p>
Category 2		
Actions considered likely to have more than a negligible impact, but not a significant impact, on the park's environment and values (see Table 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate capital works (e.g. new infrastructure or moderate expansion/upgrade of existing infrastructure) Rehabilitation of heavily eroded sites (including forest rehabilitation) Management/research programs for listed species requiring active intervention (e.g. capture, moving, tagging) Developments for approved existing tourism activities that do not require major works New operations or developments to implement policies and actions in this plan 	<p>If Parks Australia considers that the proposed action is consistent with the CINP Management Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If needed, consult with relevant/ affected stakeholders Impact assessment by park staff or external expert using impact assessment procedures in Table 2 Decision made by Parks Australia <p>If the proposed action is not considered consistent with the Management Plan the action will not generally be permitted or may be assessed as a Category 3 proposal</p>
Category 3		
Actions considered likely to have a significant impact on the park's environment and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major capital works (e.g. new major infrastructure or significant expansion/upgrade of existing infrastructure) Major new operations or developments to implement this plan New types of commercial activities not enabled under this plan 	<p>If Parks Australia considers that the proposed action may or may not be consistent with the CINP Management Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks Australia will consider whether action should be referred to the Minister for the Environment for consideration as a 'controlled action' under the EPBC Act if action referred and Minister decides it is a controlled action the action is assessed under the EPBC Act if action not referred, or referred and Minister decides it is not a controlled action, assessment as for Category 2

Table 2:
Matters and considerations for assessment

Matters for assessment	Considerations include, but not limited to
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1. IUCN category	
(a) IUCN category II, national park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency with IUCN category II, national park principles
2. Environmental context	
<p>(a) Components or features of the environment in the area where the action will take place</p> <p>(b) Components or features of the environment likely to be impacted</p> <p>(c) Is the environment which is likely to be impacted, or are elements of it, sensitive or vulnerable to impacts?</p> <p>(d) The history, current use and condition of the environment which is likely to be impacted</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matters of National Environmental Significance under the EPBC Act • The environment, as defined under the EPBC Act, including listed Commonwealth heritage values • Terrestrial and marine ecosystems, communities, habitats and species and their uniqueness in the park, island and region • Ground and surface water values • Cultural and built features and values • Socio-economic and community values • Tourism, recreational and visitor experience values • Aesthetic/landscape features and values • Scientific values • Infrastructure
3. Potential impacts	
<p>(a) Describe the proposal or action</p> <p>(b) What are the predicted adverse impacts associated with the action?</p> <p>(c) How severe are the potential impacts?</p> <p>(d) What is the extent of uncertainty about potential impacts?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts on considerations above including short-term, long-term, off-site, cumulative, indirect and compounding impacts • Describe action components, activities, stages, scale, intensity and any associated infrastructure • Energy use and climate change impact considerations • Human health and safety
4. Impact avoidance and mitigation	
<p>(a) Will any measures to avoid or mitigate impacts ensure, with a high degree of certainty, that impacts are not significant?</p> <p>(b) What certainty is there that avoidance and mitigation measures will be implemented and sustained?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider timing, duration and frequency of actions/activities • Include any alternative sites for actions • Design factors and considerations • Are there any acceptable impact off-set actions?
5. Significance of impacts	
(a) Considering all the matters above, is the action likely to have a significant impact on the environment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, the Director will consider whether action should be referred for Ministerial consideration under the EPBC Act



For proposed actions within Christmas Island National Park that are Category 2 - 3 Actions (see Table 1) these procedures must be completed for proposals to be assessed and considered for approval.

Delete all sentences in blue or with yellow highlight once completed

Environmental Impact Assessment procedures

1 Summary of the proposed action and proponent details

1.1 Proposal/project title: Provide one short sentence/line

1.2 Location/site

Insert a map showing the proposed site in relation to the national park boundary, access routes, locality names, and other key landscape features and provide a brief written description of the location. Also provide longitude and latitude/GPS coordinates.

1.3. Proponents details

Organisation:

Contact person/proponent:

ABN:

Postal Address:

Telephone and email:

Signature:

Date (of this assessments completion):

1.4 Environmental record and experience of proponent

Provide brief details of any previous projects where you/your organisation have conducted environmental assessments and/or your ability to undertake such assessments and conduct this project in a manner that would minimise environmental impacts.

If the proponent is not directly undertaking/preparing this environmental impact assessment, please provide details of the company/organisation that is undertaking the environmental impact assessment on behalf of the proponent, including their record and experience.

2 Description of proposed action

2.1 Proposed action objective(s) and justification

This should provide a clear objective for the proposed action so it is clear what it is trying to achieve (which should be related to the proposed/projects actions title).

The justification should briefly state why the proposed action is being conducted and refer to/state relevant sections, policies and actions of the Christmas Island National Park Management Plan (2014-2024), and other relevant Parks Australia policies and plans that identify or support the proposal.

The justification must consider the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) protected area Category 3: National Park (category II) assigned for Christmas Island National Park, as described on page 101 of the Christmas Island National Park Management Plan (2014-2024).

2.2 Detailed description of proposed action

This should provide enough detail so that all aspects of the proposed action are clear. This should include but may not be limited to:

- The scope of the action including if this is or will be part of a larger project
- All major stages/phases of the action(s) (e.g. planning, construction & operation/implementation).
- The activities associated with all stages/phases of the action(s) (e.g. clearing, construction etc)
- The area/footprint of the action

2.3 Timeframes

Provide details about the timeframes of all the proposed actions major stages/phases and major activities associated with each stage/phases. Also identify if the proposed action is a once off activity or an ongoing activity (or a combination of both). A Gantt chart may be useful but is not essential.

2.4 Legislative and planning requirements

Outline any requirements the proposed action will need to address/meet under other relevant Commonwealth, State and Shire of Christmas Island legislation, in addition to meeting the requirements under 2.1 in relation to the Park Management Plan. This may, where relevant, include building codes, and potentially approvals from the Indian Ocean Territories Administration.

Parks Australia's assessment requirements are addressed through these assessment processes as well as (if approved) any conditions under relevant approval mechanisms (e.g. permits, lease, license etc). However, specific Department of the Environment approvals (such as proposed actions that may significantly impact on matters of national environmental significance (NES) under the EPBC Act) are not addressed by these procedures.

2.5 Alternative locations, time frames or activities that may form part of the proposal

If relevant, describe any alternatives related to the physical location of the proposed action, time frames within which the proposed action is to be undertaken and alternative methods/activities for undertaking the proposed action. Please note: If the proposed action is not approved (either as a distinct action or in the proposed location etc) any alternative locations, time frames or methods/activities that are identified here may be subject to further environmental impact assessments using these procedures.

2.6 Alternative to taking the proposed action

This should describe any feasible alternatives to taking the proposed action (including not taking the action) that were considered but are not proposed (note, this is distinct from any proposed alternatives relating to location, time frames, or methods/activities – Section 2.5).

2.7 Personnel

Where possible, provide details of the personnel who will carry out/implement the proposed action(s) (e.g. government staff, contractors, research scientists (where relevant)). If possible specific names/legal entities should be provided if/as known and they can be provided. Alternatively, if these details are not known, include brief details of any proposed contract or other legal arrangements that will be used between the proponent and the future personnel who will carry out the proposed work.

2.8 Community and stakeholder consultation

Briefly describe any consultation that has occurred in relation to the proposed action or what if any is planned. Key Christmas Island stakeholders include the Shire of Christmas Island, Territories Administration (Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development) and relevant community groups. Other stakeholders may include relevant Commonwealth, State agencies and non-government organisations and community groups.

2.9 Business plan

Briefly describe proposal/project funding/budget, set up costs, even if only indicative. Also provide details if the funding has been sourced or needs to be sourced.

For Parks Australia proposals procurement approvals and a business case will be needed so provide brief details of the status of procurement and other approvals.

3 Description of the environment and proposals likely impacts

Descriptions: Site information is needed in order to assess the impacts of proposed actions. The condition of the environment (particularly its natural and conservation values) need to be described in order to assess what features/natural assets may be impacted at or off the sites, which include environmental, cultural and social/Park use and management considerations and impacts.

Likely impacts: Need to consider local site impacts (e.g. clearing of site vegetation); off-site impacts (e.g. waste management or invasive species spread) and cumulative impacts over time (e.g. accumulation of toxic substances, or the impacts of the cumulative clearing of vegetation (e.g. if part of a larger proposal), spread of non-native species).

Impacts will also need to, where relevant, consider various stages (e.g. construction/ implementation and ongoing operational phases).

3.1 Natural heritage and conservation values

3.1 (a) Current state of the natural environment

Briefly provide an overview in one or two short paragraphs of the existing natural environment at the site including the level of disturbance. This section could be completed following completion of sections 3.1(b) to 3.1(g)

3.1 (b) Landscape and geology

Description

Describe the landscape, terrain, surface geology.

Likely impacts

Describe any actual, likely or potential impacts (e.g. clearing of/drilling into in-situ limestone etc)

3.1 (c) Soils

Description

Describe soil stability, depths etc.

Likely impacts

Describe any actual, likely or potential impacts. This should include consideration of contamination and erosion and cumulative impacts over time (e.g. from contaminated water drainage into the soil).

3.1 (d) Wetlands and groundwater

Description

Describe any wetlands or springs in or near the proposed location/area, particularly Ramsar listed wetlands of international importance (the Dales and Hosnie's Springs) which are also protected as Matters of National Environmental Significance under the EPBC Act. Groundwater, water flows/drainage, and cave/sinkholes should also be described.

Likely impacts

Describe any actual, likely or potential impacts. This should also include consideration of any contamination issues to wetlands/spring water and ground water, including cumulative impacts over time.

3.1 (e) Vegetation

Description

Describe the vegetation community of the site, if the site has been cleared and any EPBC threatened flora species (it is not necessary to list all plant species) or species that are critical habitat for listed species.

Likely impacts

Describe any actual, likely or potential impacts. Where relevant this must include details of proposed vegetation clearing including the type and area of vegetation to be cleared and its use as habitat for other native species. This should also consider cumulative impacts over time such as the likely introduction and spread of weeds following any clearing of vegetation, increased soil erosion or the cumulative impacts of clearing.

3.1 (f) Fauna and fauna habitat values

Description

Describe the fauna species that inhabit the site and its surrounds. This must consider:

(a) EPBC Act listed threatened native species

(b) EPBC Act listed migratory species

(c) Land crabs

Note: land crabs on Christmas Island are protected under Part 9 of the EPBC Regulations 2000 (as described in Schedule 12 of the Regulations). Many proposed actions are likely to impact on

land crabs (e.g. red crabs, robber crabs) to some degree, so details of the extent of likely impacts must be described here.

(d) Non-EPBC listed native terrestrial and marine species.

For example, this would, where relevant, include coral reefs, fish etc

Likely impacts

Describe any actual, likely or potential impacts on each of the groups of fauna above. This should also include consideration of any impacts on the habitat of native species and factors such as vegetation clearing and vehicle impacts from the proposed activities on land crabs, including red crabs during their annual early wet season migration (around Oct-Dec) and loss of red crab habitat/burrows.

3.1 (g) Marine Environment

Description

Describe the parks marine environment if/as applicable (i.e. if in the marine environment or if the proposed action is on land adjacent to the marine environment).

Likely impacts

Describe any actual, likely or potential impacts on the marine environment. While it is unlikely that many proposed actions will be located/occur in the marine environment, land based proposals (e.g. adjacent to the coastline) could also impact on the marine environment (e.g. soil erosion, contaminated water runoff etc) so the impacts on the marine environment need to be considered.

3.2 Cultural heritage values

3.2 (a) Built cultural heritage sites

Description

Describe any built cultural heritage sites near or adjacent to the proposed location of the site. Christmas Island National Park's built cultural heritage sites include but are not limited to temples, WWII sites, railway associated ruins, Grants Well and the Pink House

Likely impacts

Include any immediate impacts (e.g. through construction activities) and longer term/cumulative impacts (e.g. through more people interacting with the site over time).

3.3 Use and management of the park

3.3 (a) Tourism, visitor and community use/experience of the park

Description

Describe if/how the area is used by the Christmas Island community, tourists and other visitors. This includes customary uses of the park by the community such as for temple ceremonies and the collection of non-native food plants.

Likely impacts

Describe if/how the proposed action may impact on other people's/visitors use of the park. This should include visual amenity / scenic impact considerations (e.g. the visual obtrusiveness of new infrastructure). As some tourism/visitor proposals (e.g. visitor infrastructure) will enhance visitor use of the park, the impacts may be positive.

3.3 (b) Human Health and Safety

Where relevant, briefly describe how the proposal/action could impact on human health and safety in all stages.

3.3 (c) Existing infrastructure

Description

Describe existing infrastructure in or near the site including any vehicle/walking tracks, visitor and park management assets. Where relevant, essential service access (power and water) should also be described.

Likely impacts

Consider how the proposed action may impact on existing infrastructure. This may, for example, include additional impacts on and maintenance requirements for vehicle tracks, through increased visitation to new visitor sites etc

4 Measures to monitor and avoid or mitigate likely impacts

4.1 Monitoring activities to assess and measure likely impacts

Describe how impacts from the proposal/project will be monitored. This will need to include methods and frequency of monitoring.

4.2 Impact avoidance or mitigation measures

a) Natural heritage and conservation values

b) Cultural heritage values

c) Use and management of the park

For each of the likely impacts identified in section 3, identify how the likely/actual impacts will be avoided or mitigated. Examples of relevant measures to avoid or mitigate impacts may include: the timing of works, avoidance of important habitat/sites, specific design measures, or adoption of specific work practices.

In some case local impacts cannot be avoided or mitigated (e.g. the clearing of non-critical habitat/vegetation) but may possibly be off-set by enhancing the natural environment at another location (e.g. planting of native vegetation or enhancing existing vegetation through weed control). There should be enough detail to identify how the measures are expected to be effective and the timeframes for the implementation of the avoidance or mitigation measures.

4.3 Reversibility of the proposal

Indicate the extent by which the proposal's impacts can be reversed. For example, can the site impacts be mitigated through vegetation rehabilitation if clearing is needed etc.

5 Significance of likely impacts

5.1 Significance and summary of likely impacts

Provide a summary of the significance of likely environmental, cultural and social/park use impacts once the measures to avoid or mitigate likely impacts are adopted. This must include a statement of likely impacts on relevant matters of national environmental significance under the *EPBC Act*.

If there are likely to be significant environmental impacts, the Director will consider whether the action should be referred for Ministerial consideration under the *EPBC Act*.

6 Information sources and attachments

6.1 Information sources

Provide an overview statement of the information sources/references used and their currency and reliability/certainty.

6.2 Bibliography/references

Provide references / details of each of the documents/information sources used for the assessment.

6.3 Attachments

Attach any relevant documents. This may include field surveys reports etc and other documents that may be relevant to the proposed action and its impacts or assessment.

7 Checklist

Please use this checklist to ensure you have included/addressed all the critical factors in your responses to the sections above.

Christmas Island National Park (CINP) Management Plan 2014-2024	Addressed Yes / No
CINP Management Plan 2014-2024 Is the proposed action specifically identified in the Management Plan or otherwise consistent with its policies or actions?	
CINP plans and strategies Is the proposal consistent with any other relevant park plans, strategies or policies?	
<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act</i>	Addressed Yes / No
Ramsar sites Will the proposed action take place in or could otherwise affect Ramsar listed wetland of international importance, the Dales or Hosnie's Springs?	
EPBC listed threatened and migratory species Could or will the proposed action significantly affect EPBC listed threatened species or migratory species?	
EPBC listed threatened species recovery plans Where the proposed action may directly affect a nationally listed threatened species, is the proposed action consistent with the provisions of any relevant EPBC Act threatened species recovery plan?	
Marine environment Could or will the proposed action affect the Commonwealth marine environment/marine waters surrounding Christmas Island, including Christmas Island National Parks marine waters.	
EPBC Regulations Do any specific provisions of the EPBC Regulations apply? (e.g. use of genetic resources and consideration of Part 9 and Schedule 12 of the Regulations, which amongst other species, protects land crabs (e.g. red and robber crabs) and native vegetation).	
Other legal considerations (where relevant)	Addressed Yes / No
Compliance with other relevant legislation Is there other relevant legislation that is or may be relevant to the proposed action and this environmental impact assessment? For example, relevant Western Australian or Shire of Christmas Island building planning legislation, building codes etc?	