

014582F3102
Department of Conservation
Andrew Burbidge, Keith Morris
Director of Nature Conservation

Department of Conservation
and Land Management
19 MAY 1987
COMO, W.A.

You Ref:
Our Ref:
Enquiries:
Phone:

Subject: VISIT TO BARROW ISLAND, MAY 1987

From 4 to 8 May 1987 a party visited Barrow Island to carry out the official biennial visit; the first since the creation of CALM and the vesting of the Barrow Island Nature Reserve in the NPNCA.

The party consisted of Mrs M Blackwell and Mr A Fewster (NPNCA), K.D. Morris (Pilbara Region/Research) and A.A. Burbidge. On the island we were accompanied by Mr W.H. Butler, WAPET's Conservation Consultant. We met both Mr Peter Ford and Mr Leary O'Connor, Joint Island Superintendents for WAPET.

As has been the custom on past visits we were able to visit and inspect all WAPET's facilities and inspect and discuss all field operations. As before we paid particular attention to:

- i) Hygiene for material being brought to the island from the mainland.
- ii) Rubbish disposal.
- iii) Rehabilitation of disturbed areas.

My comments on each of these are:

- i) Hygiene Probably the most important conservation management relates to preventing introduction of exotics. So far WAPET's record has been impressive - no exotic animals have become established and Barrow is probably the largest land mass in the world without exotic rodents. While there may be ecological reasons for this (Rattus rattus was established on 6 small islands adjacent to Barrow; we have now eradicated them from five of these) a high level of vigilance to prevent rodents (or cats, etc) from coming ashore in goods and/or equipment is essential. WAPET has established procedures for wash down or fumigation and inspection of material shipped from Onslow and checks are carried out in warehouses on the island.

Mr Butler showed us WAPET's written procedure for fumigation. We noted that while efficient

446
26587
/ Dr. Wilson DW

77

procedures exist the manual did not state which materials should be fumigated. We believe that this should be rectified.

ii) Rubbish disposal There is a high standard of rubbish disposal on Barrow and the roads and picnic areas are remarkably free of litter. WAPET is to be commended for this work.

iii) Rehabilitation Again operational procedures are of a high standard and there is abundant evidence that rehabilitation is most successful. CALM staff involved is Rehabilitation Research and operations would benefit greatly from an on-site explanation of the procedures used on Barrow.

Since the previous inspection in early 1985 the following changes were noted.

1. The power station had been completed and the electricity grid for cathodic protection was in place.
2. A new seismic survey of the island was in progress involving 395 kilometres of seismic time, the majority of it being new construction.

In both cases environmental protection and management measures have been implemented. In the case of the power lines plastic tie-strips have been installed in selected places to discourage birds from perching and/or nesting where this would be in danger, and to prevent damage to the grid itself.

Some of the new seismic lines were being constructed with a tractor-mounted slasher, rather than following the traditional method of using a bulldozer or grader. This was a most interesting innovation. We were told it was cheaper and I expect that natural regeneration of vegetation be greatly enhanced. We should keep a close watch on this experiment with a view to requiring slashed rather than cut seismic lines on certain types of CALM land.

Signs There are no CALM signs on Barrow; indeed the only evidence that Barrow is a nature reserve is a statement on two WAPET signs, one at the airport and one at the landing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That a letter be written to WAPET thanking them for facilitating the visit and congratulating them on the high standard of environmental management on the island. (see attached draft).
2. That WAPET be asked to amend their written procedures for fumigation to ensure that all

relevant materials are fumigated before landing on Barrow Island.

That a visit be arranged to Barrow for senior CALM personnel involved in rehabilitation and environmental protection so they can see WAPET's rehabilitation program. Mr Butler told me he would be happy to make a special trip to Barrow for this purpose.

4. That after liaising with WAPET two standard Nature Reserve signs be erected on Barrow Island, one at the airport and one at the barge landing. The signs should, in addition to the standard information, advise that the reserve extends to low water mark and that all animals and plants are protected.

Andrew A Burbidge

ANDREW A BURBIDGE
Senior Principal Research
Scientist

K. D. Morris
p. AAB.

KEITH D MORRIS
Research Scientist



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT

FILE NUMBER 014582F3102

TITLE PROTECTION 10000

TITLE

NATURE RESERVES<
TENURE<
BARROW ISLAND A 11648<
<
VOLUME 5<

TEXT PROTECTION 10000
CLASSIFICATION 3102
LOCATION [REDACTED]
OLD FILE NUMBER WL19260004

CREATION DATE 1:01:1951
DESTRUCTION CODE [REDACTED]

KEEP

THIS FILE
IS
CLOSED

DATE 9-8-88
FP = 026646F 3102
PP = 014581F 3102