

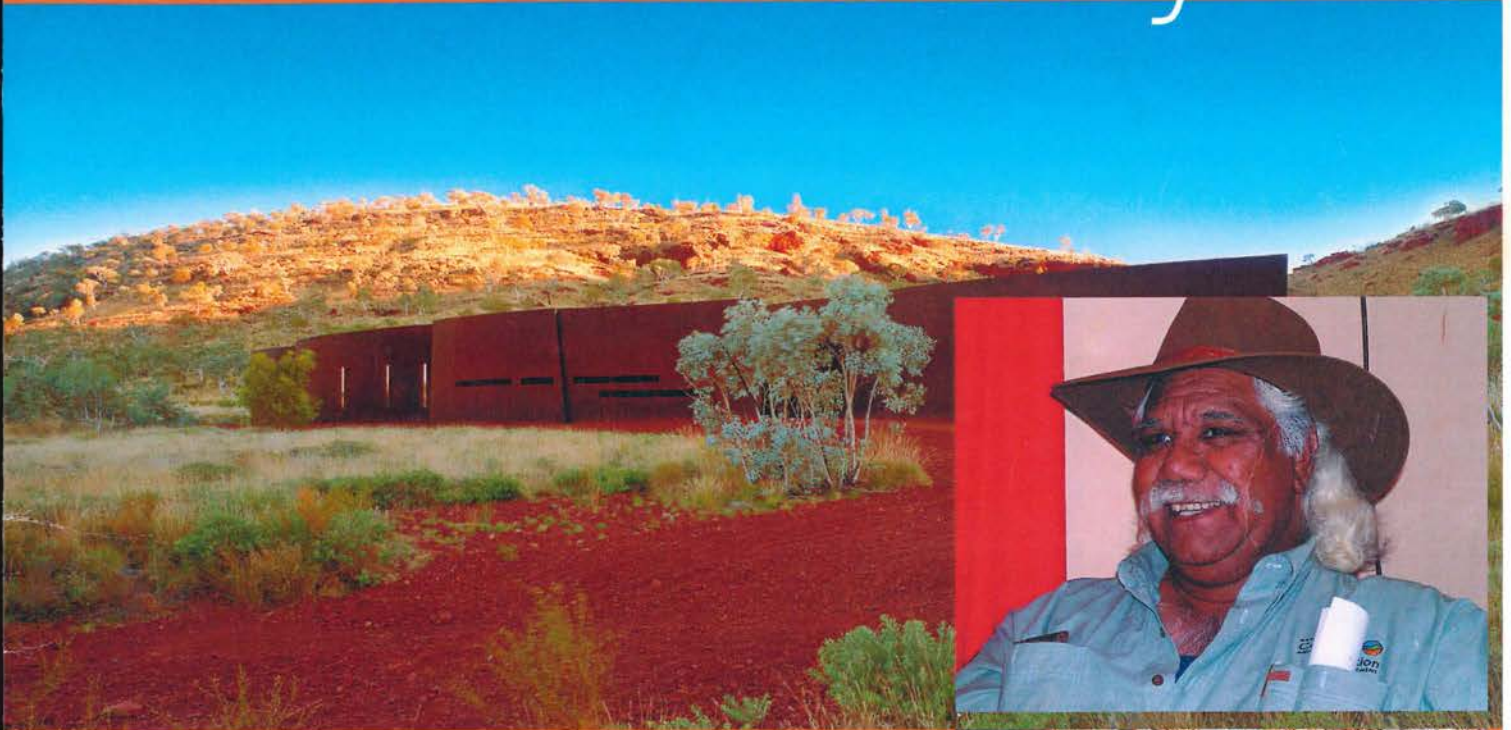
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2003 Premier's Award

Leadership in Equity and Diversity



Dan-joo Dabacaan

CALM's Mentored Aboriginal
Training and Employment Scheme



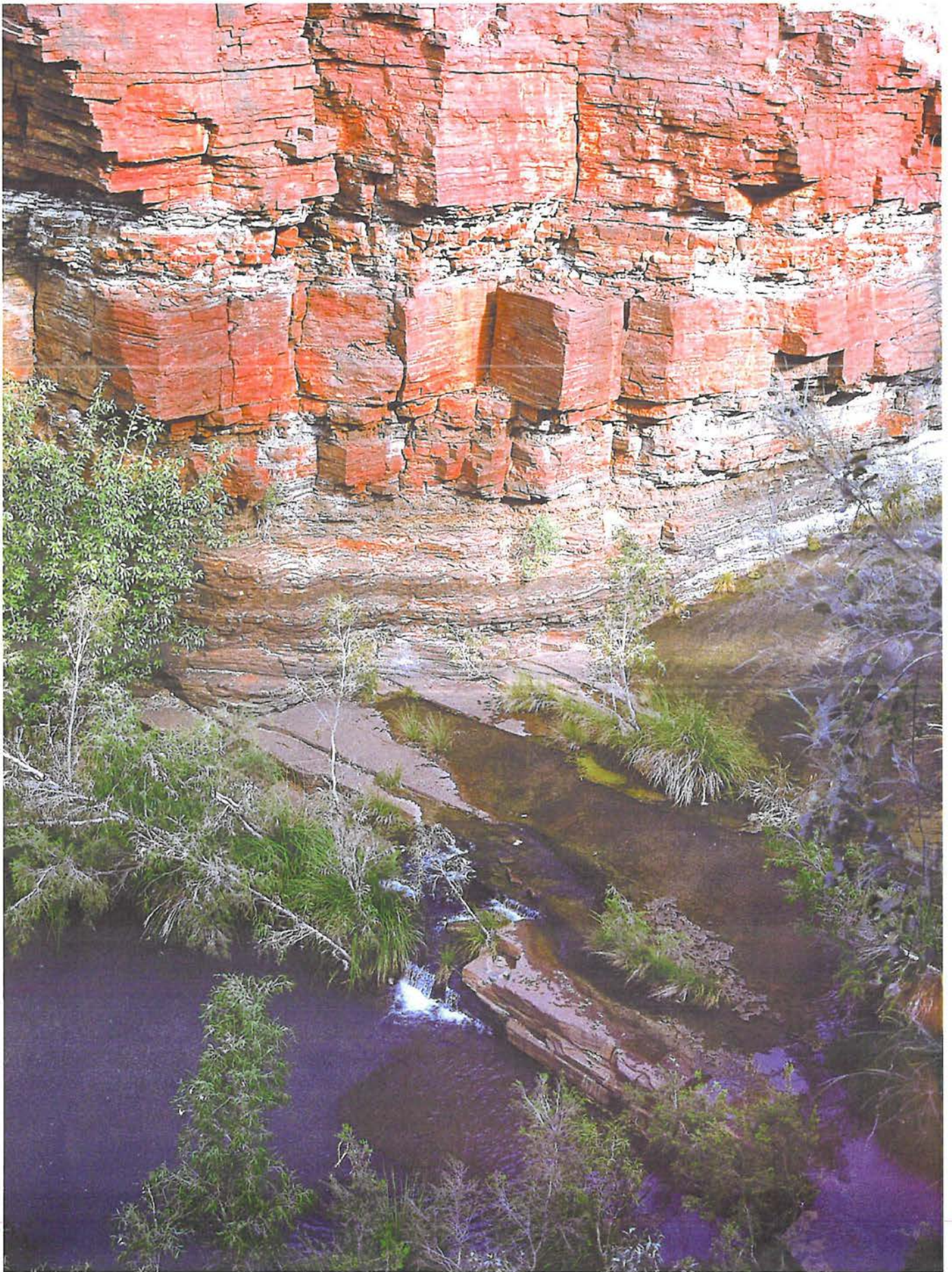


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Front cover (main) The Karijini Visitors' Centre.
(insets from top) Maitland Parker, the Ranger in Charge, Karijini National Park. He is also a representative on the Karijini Park Council.
Trainee Mark Ungchango at Mitchell River National Park.
Above (top to bottom) CALM staff Beth McKernan, Vernon Wright and Alex Bowley at Mitchell River.
A young CALM Bush Ranger in the field.
Left facing page Vernon Wright at Mitchell River.



Executive summary

'Dan-joo Dabacaan' – meaning 'together, steady, steady' – describes the Department of Conservation and Land Management's approach to ensuring that Indigenous people are strongly represented – and involved – in conservation and land management employment.

The Department recognises the unique role and expertise that Aboriginal people can have as both 'traditional owners' with a cultural responsibility to care for country, and as managers of conservation lands and waters for the State.

In order to achieve a just and equitable Aboriginal employment outcome on conservation lands and waters, the Department has initiated the Mentored Aboriginal Training and Employment Scheme (MATES). This is a multi-faceted employment and training program in conjunction with non-government training providers and land management organisations.



This bold approach has seen the Department embark on a 10-year plan to ensure Aboriginal people make up 10 to 15 per cent of its full time workforce.

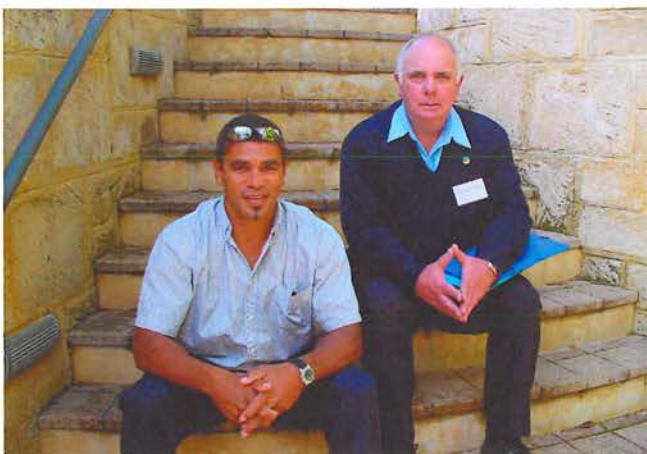
The Federal Department of Employment and Workforce Relations has welcomed the MATES program and committed \$1.2 million over five years to the initiative.

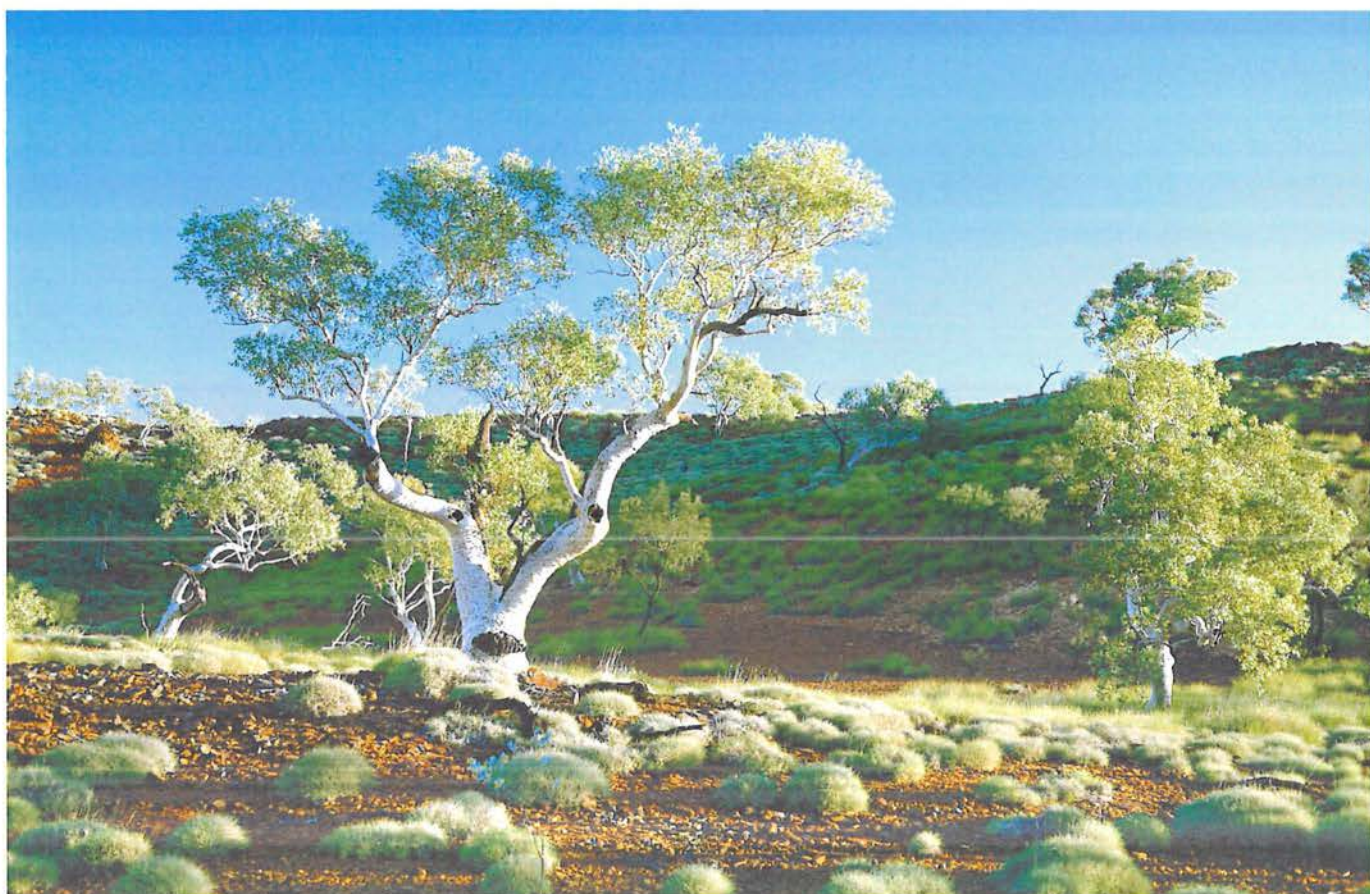
CALM also instigated processes to develop joint management of many parts of the conservation estate – a State Government priority in terms of reconciliation, resolution of native title and provision of long-term, secure employment for Indigenous people.

Left facing page Dales Gorge, Karijini National Park.

Above Dorothy Ward from the Patjarr Community (left) walking in the Gibson Desert Nature Reserve with CALM's Goldfields reserves officer, Sarah Adriano. Photo – Ian Keally.

Below left Aboriginal trainee recruit and former AFL star Dale Kickett with his CALM mentor, District Fire Co-ordinator Kevin Pollock. Photo – Sue McKenna





Above Snappy gums in Karijini National Park.
Photo – Cliff Winfield.

The integration of traditional land management practices is also important in managing sensitive conservation areas, especially in areas such as the Goldfields, Pilbara and the Kimberley.

This initiative contributes to the State Government's Equity and Diversity Plan for the Public Sector Workforce 2001 – 2005. (*See attachment: Draft CALM Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Management Plan.*)

Dan-joo Dabacaan

'Together, steady, steady' conveys that CALM and Indigenous people need to progress things co-operatively and gradually over the long term. This is the way to achieve truly sustainable outcomes that meet the Government's policy commitment to meaningful involvement of Indigenous people in the management of Western Australian's conservation estate.

The 'mentored' approach conveys that learning will be undertaken 'on-the-job' by the trainees. But it also has the added benefit of providing ongoing opportunities for CALM's mentor staff to learn from their trainees and understand better the values, concerns and needs of traditional owners in caring for country.

Therefore, what emerged as an employment equity and diversity initiative is evolving and leading cultural change within the organisation so that it can be better skilled in meeting the social, economic and environmental needs in Western Australia.

Dan-joo Dabacaan and the Mentored Aboriginal Training and Employment Scheme:

- is a multi-faceted training and employment program that aims to achieve a 10 to 15 per cent representation of Indigenous people in CALM's workforce;
- is a first in providing training and long-term employment opportunities in conservation land management for Indigenous people throughout the State;
- has seen the employment of a number of Aboriginal people as trainee national park rangers, wildlife officers, forest officers and Aboriginal heritage officers;
- has engendered greater dialogue and co-operation between Government and Aboriginal people in regard to land management activities;



Above A CALM Bush Ranger out in the field with his group leader.



Above Karijini Visitor Centre.

Below Aboriginal tourism program at Yanchep National Park.

Below right CALM's Indigenous Heritage Unit's Acting Manager, Koodah Cornwall, demonstrates Aboriginal culture to a young person at a Perth garden show. Photo – Rhianna Mooney.

- fosters greater understanding of Aboriginal culture and history and their connection with land;
- educates CALM employees on issues relating to Aboriginal people and land management conservation activities;
- will increase scientific knowledge of the biodiversity of Western Australia through the incorporation of Aboriginal traditional knowledge, history and interpretation;
- provides mentoring and role-model programs for Aboriginal youth;
- assists Aboriginal people to gain greater educational qualifications through scholarships and study assistance programs;
- provides teachers and educators with resources to increase Aboriginal cultural awareness in students – Indigenous youth represent more than 10 per cent of CALM's Bush Ranger Cadet program;
- provides people with the opportunity to experience first-hand Aboriginal culture through guided walk tours, dream stories and cultural ceremonies; and
- provides Aboriginal people with opportunities to incorporate cultural values in nature-based tourism activities with the aim of fostering greater understanding and appreciation.



Introduction

The Department of Conservation and Land Management is a major regional employer for the Government and is strongly committed to its Equity and Diversity Plan for 2001 – 2005.

CALM directly employs 24 full time equivalent Indigenous people in its day-to-day management activities. An equivalent number of Indigenous people have been employed through alternate arrangements with Aboriginal corporations as a result of initiatives to provide training and development enterprises such as the Geikie Gorge Boat Tour. Aboriginal employees are predominantly located in regional, field-based positions.

CALM recognises that without an active targeted long-term strategy, it is unlikely to achieve its aim of ensuring a 10 to 15 per cent representation of Aboriginal people in its workforce.

It has embarked on a bold 10-year multi-faceted program to reach this goal. This is an action plan that seeks to achieve the target of 50 Aboriginal employees/trainees (FTEs) by December 2004 rising to at least 100 additional Aboriginal employees (FTEs) within 10 years.

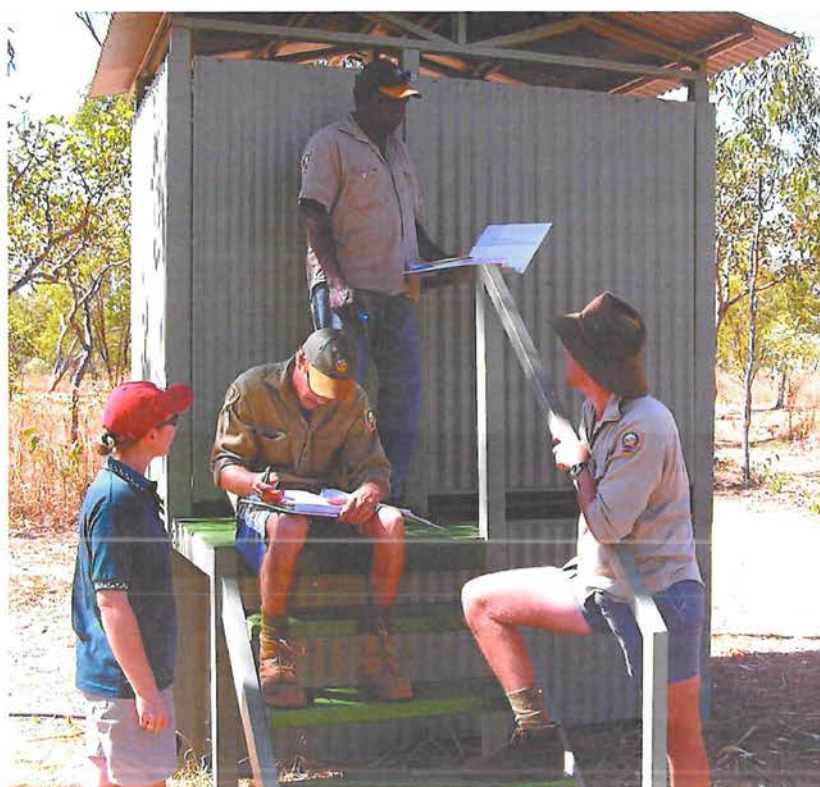
To achieve this goal, it has implemented three key strategies for training Indigenous people to meet minimum entry-level qualification requirements.



The first strategy applies to remote locations where trainees will be co-located with skilled mentors for the duration of their training. Training will be delivered and monitored by CALM's professional training staff. The Department has an intake of six Indigenous trainees a year, providing 36 fully qualified Indigenous field officers over six years. The Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations is providing funding assistance for this strategy.

The second strategy applies in urban settings where trainees undertake formal group traineeships through Aboriginal corporations. CALM has entered into agreements with registered Aboriginal training organisations and the Department of Education and Training to arrange training services to Indigenous people seeking employment opportunities in conservation and land management.

Above CALM's Aboriginal trainee graduates 2003 with the Minister for the Environment, Dr Judy Edwards (front) and CALM's Acting Executive Director, Keiran McNamara (right) at the graduation awards ceremony recognising their achievements.



Above CALM's trainees adding to national park facilities this year.

Below A young CALM Bush Ranger learns about amphibians.



CALM has committed funding support for an annual intake of up to 12 Indigenous trainees in Albany and is committed to providing employment outcomes to the successful graduates. Wider application of this strategy aims to provide up to 60 fully qualified Indigenous officers within eight years.

CALM's professional training staff monitor and progressively review these arrangements to ensure adequate mentoring and opportunities are provided to the participants in hands-on conservation and land management operations work.

Each recruit entering under either of these strategies undertakes mentored training and employment for up to three years enabling future appointment to a range of occupations including national park ranger, park maintenance worker or conservation officer, among others.

The Department expects to expand the program to integrate training and employment programs with other agencies such as the Department of Agriculture, Indigenous-owned farming and pastoral companies and local government authorities.

The third strategy is to use the National Indigenous Cadetship Program to support tertiary students and provide opportunities for Aboriginal people in professional areas within CALM and to provide future management recruits.

It is envisaged that at least three scholarship cadets a year will be offered work experience opportunities factored into semester breaks. The scholarship program is to run for a minimum of seven years producing up to 15 tertiary-trained Indigenous people for employment in the Department.

The training component for the whole program will cost \$12 million over 10 years, with up to \$2 million available from Commonwealth programs. Additional funds of up to \$2 million will be sought from the private sector to augment the Department's funding.

Under **Dan-joo Dabacaan** – 'together, steady, steady' – we will see a growing number of Indigenous people employed and involved in conservation management for generations to come.

Category specific indicators

The extent to which CALM's Mentored Aboriginal Training and Employment Scheme (MATES)...

1 "Achieves significant results or improvements in workplace diversity, specifically for Indigenous Australians, people from culturally diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities, youth and women in management positions."

- The MATES program is a first in providing long-term employment and training opportunities for Indigenous people in land management activities.
- It has resulted in the employment and training of 24 Indigenous people in a variety of occupations this year.
- The Department has Aboriginal trainee employees located throughout the State, including four based at Kalgoorlie, two at Denham in the World Heritage listed Shark Bay; two at Ngauwudu (Mitchell Plateau) in the Kimberley; two at Karijini National Park in the Pilbara; two at Yanchep National Park; two in the Department's Aboriginal Heritage Unit at Kensington; two at Busselton; one in Esperance and one in the Perth Hills District.
- The Southern Aboriginal Corporation, Great Southern Group Training and CALM have partnered to provide 10 trainee positions in Albany for three years.
- Under the program regional traineeships provide Aboriginal people with the opportunity to be educated close to their homes, ensuring family support and quality of life.
- Other Aboriginal cadets in the program have been appointed to the Department's People Services Branch, the Midwest Regional Office, the Financial Services Branch, the Science Division and the Marine Conservation Branch.
- The Department has employed Indigenous people in the dedicated positions of Aboriginal Employment and Development Officer and Aboriginal Training Officer to co-ordinate the programs.
- Another Indigenous person has been employed in the role of Indigenous Liaison Officer for the South West and is based at the Department's Manjimup office.
- The Department has employed and trained six Aboriginal people in the Collie region as a seasonal fire crew. Two of these have been selected to continue as trainees with the Department.
- The program recognises traditional owners' connection with the land and seeks to use their knowledge and involvement in day-to-day management of conservation lands and waters through employment and training.



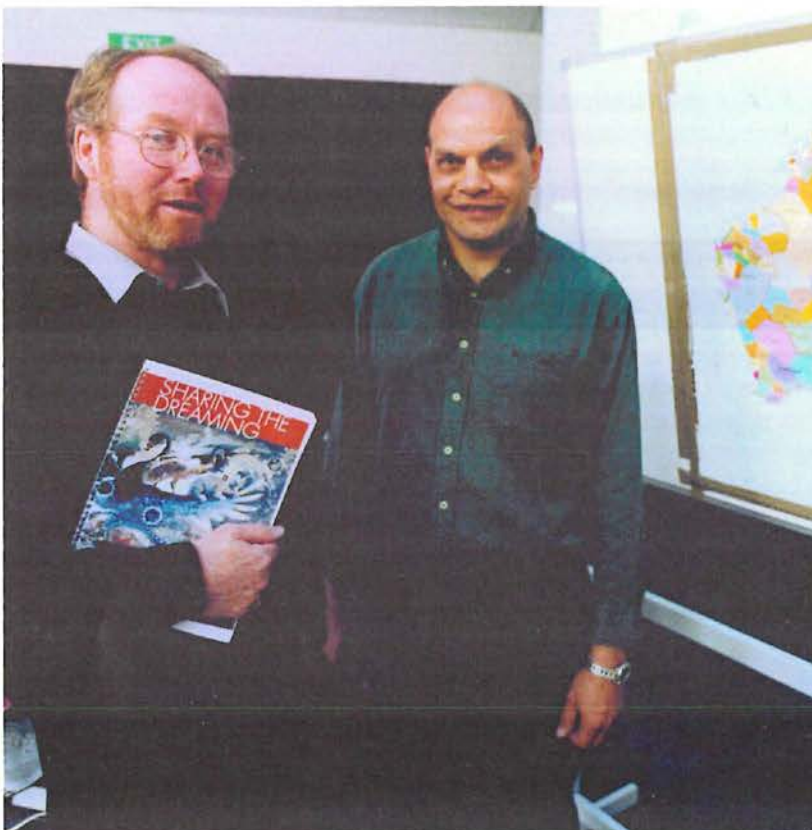
Above Aboriginal trainee ranger Dale Kickett.

Below CALM Acting Executive Director, Keiran McNamara (left) and Ken Hayward from the Department's Indigenous Heritage Unit at the first Cross Cultural Awareness Training Course.

- The program is part of the Department's whole approach to Indigenous culture, which has included initiating a proposal for amendments to the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984 (CALM Act) to include reference to Indigenous people and joint management in the Act.
- CALM fosters greater understanding of Aboriginal culture in fellow workplace employees by providing cultural awareness workshops for staff members. (*See attachment Cross Cultural Awareness Training – Sharing the Dreaming, given to all*

CALM staff who undertake cross cultural awateness training. The booklet was written and produced by the Department with extensive involvement of Aboriginal staff.)

- The program also has engendered greater support and co-operation with Aboriginal groups.



Category specific indicators

The extent to which CALM's MATES Program...

2 "Demonstrates leadership and commitment to the management of workforce equity and diversity."

- CALM has embarked on a multi-faceted plan to ensure a 10 to 15 per cent of Indigenous representation in its workforce. This action plan seeks to employ at least 100 people of Indigenous heritage within 10 years. This plan demonstrates a bold and decisive approach to ensuring equity and diversity.
- It is the first program of its kind in the public sector that incorporates a wide range of training opportunities for Aboriginal people with a view to long-term employment within the Department.
- The program provides employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal people in regional areas – some in remote areas recognising Indigenous culture and connection with the land.
- The program recognises and incorporates the unique expertise and values of Aboriginal people in conservation and land management activities.
- The Department has initiated proposals to amend the CALM Act to incorporate reference to Indigenous people and joint management.



- The Department fosters greater understanding and support from its work force by providing employees with Cultural Awareness Workshops.
- The Department has employed a dedicated Aboriginal Employment and Development Officer, an Aboriginal Training Officer and an Aboriginal Liaison Officer.
- The Department has collaborated and formed partnerships with non-government agencies, Aboriginal Corporations and the Commonwealth Government to ensure its program delivers the best outcomes and the best training.

Above CALM Aboriginal trainees, left to right, are Ross Lynch, Anthony Richardson, Darren Mason and Luke Stokes.

Category specific indicators

The extent to which CALM's MATES program...

3 "Develops innovative solutions to achieving improved equity and diversity in the workforce."

- The Department has joined forces with Aboriginal Corporations in a unique partnership that will see trainees educated by the corporations and employed by the Department.



Above CALM Indigenous Heritage Unit staff stand near rainbow serpent artwork at the Swan View Senior High School.

- CALM has developed and released an Indigenous Ownership and Joint Management Consultation Paper (see attachment) that indicates how the MATES program integrates with the broader policy and outcome aims of Government.
- The Department has incorporated Aboriginal input and involvement in a number of management activities throughout the State including Purnululu National Park's listing as a World Heritage Property, Yadgalah Corporation's role in the management of the Shark Bay World Heritage Property, the creation of an Aboriginal Karijini Park Council, and input into biological studies in the Pilbara and the management plan for the Burrup Peninsula. These have all provided innovative solutions to management of conservation lands.

- CALM has established the innovative Indigenous Heritage Unit, which is committed to fostering greater understanding of Aboriginal heritage and culture within and outside the Department with flow-on benefits for education and training.

General indicators

The extent to which CALM's MATES program...

1 "Is consistent with, and promotes the organisation's mission and goals."

CALM's mission is:

'In partnership with the community, we conserve Western Australia's biodiversity, and manage the lands and waters entrusted to us, for their intrinsic values and for the appreciation and benefit of present and future generations.'

This mission is transformed into the following simple strategic directions and goals:

- conserving biodiversity;
- creating sustainable community benefits;
- maintaining community involvement and support; and
- improving the way we do business.

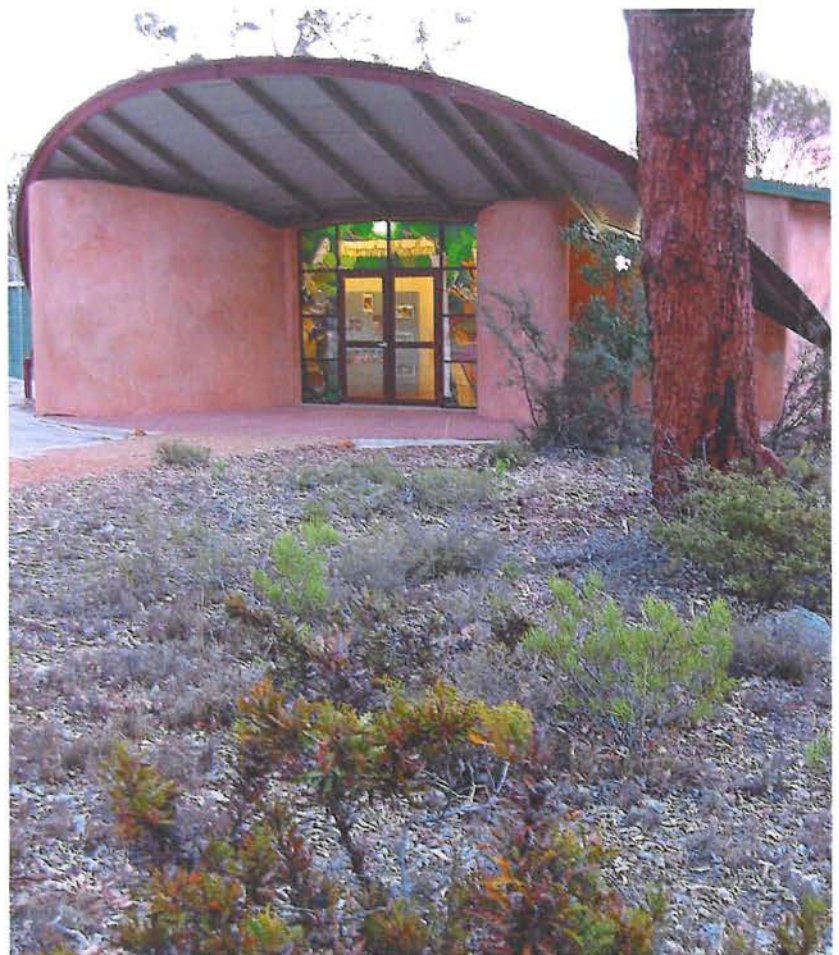
The settings within which CALM operates have changed significantly since the CALM Act was enacted. The most significant legal change has been the recognition of the existence of native title and the introduction of the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993. But this area of law is still developing and High Court decisions such as *Mirriuwung-Gajerrong* (Ward) and *Yorta-Yorta* continue to give clarity to legal rights and interests. Unfortunately that clarity is failing to deliver 'natural justice' in the eyes of Aboriginal people.

The State Government shares this concern and is increasingly looking to CALM to help deliver social justice outcomes within its sphere of operations.

Clearly Dan-joo Dabacaan and the MATES program are initiatives strongly grounded in CALM's four strategic directions and goals. We are of the view that MATES will:

- lead to significant biodiversity conservation outcomes both on and off the CALM estate;

Below Barna Mia Visitor Centre at Dryandra Woodland, near Narrogin. Animals at the sanctuary are referred to by their Nyoongar names.



- deliver sustainable benefits for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities through economic, social and environmental results;
- have the strong support of most of the community and visitors to the CALM estate, who want to see Aboriginal people 'caring for country' on behalf of everyone; and
- improve the way we do business with Aboriginal people and engage them in conservation land management with CALM.

Inherent in the major objectives of the Department is the need for equity and diversity in its workforce. CALM recognises that the achievement of its responsibilities, functions and objectives as described in the CALM

Act can be attained and enhanced by the participation and contribution of Aboriginal people.

The program is consistent with CALM's EEO Policy, to promote employment opportunities for Aboriginal people and ensure the absence of discrimination in CALM.

The program gives Aboriginal people equitable access to employment and career development opportunities within the Department, and provides training opportunities which allow their employment and/or participation in occupations to be related to the functions and operations of the Department.

The program incorporates other Departmental objectives including involvement of Aboriginal people on the management of conservation lands and waters, which is a significant factor in ensuring conservation of biodiversity values.

Below Fire awareness training...Mike Cantelo, one of CALM's district fire co-ordinators (left) with trainee Darren Mason.



General indicators

The extent to which CALM's MATES program...

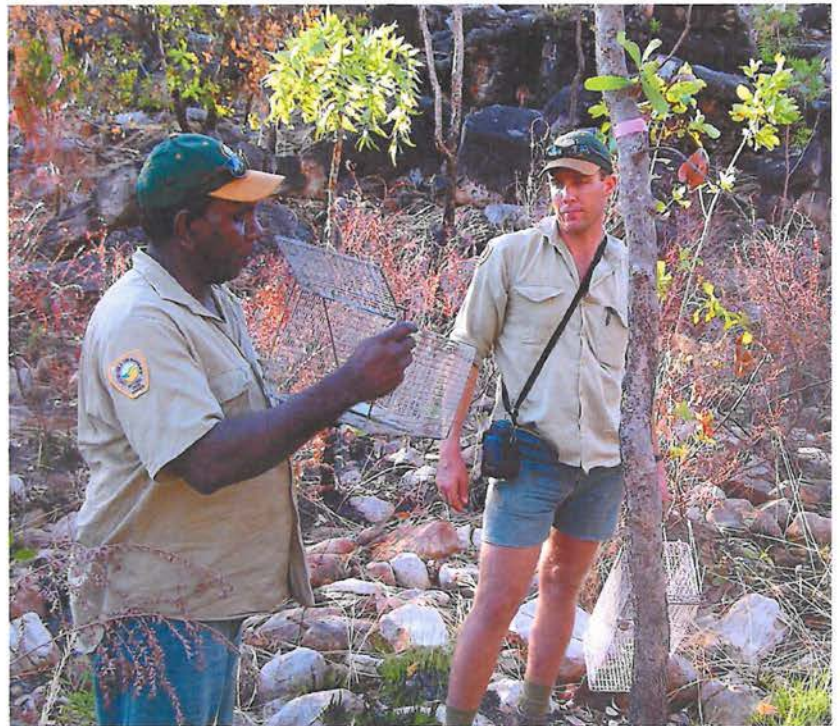
2 "Results in a high standard of customer service."

Customer service is a key priority for the Department in managing the lands and waters entrusted to it. Part of the Department's mission is to ensure a high standard of customer service through the provision of management that ensures conservation of the State's natural assets. It also means the provision of employment and training opportunities for all Western Australians, and in turn, cultural groups.

It also seeks to provide people with access to the State's natural attractions and to give people the opportunity to experience these environmental values first-hand. A high standard of visitor services and facilities is a key priority in managing conservation lands.

CALM believes it delivers a high standard of customer service in these regards, in particular Aboriginal training and employment.

- People can participate in a number of Aboriginal walk tours, dream stories and cultural activities under the guidance of a trained/trainee Departmental Aboriginal Officer at a wide range of locations throughout the State.
- Aboriginal people can become involved in the management of conservation lands in a variety of ways, through volunteers programs, traineeships and employment.
- CALM has initiated a scholarship program to provide Indigenous people with the opportunity for tertiary study.
- CALM provides a high standard of public input and community co-operation in managing conservation lands through partnerships with local Aboriginal groups such as the Karijini Park Council.



Above CALM employees in the field trapping animals for research and monitoring.

General indicators

The extent to which CALM's MATES program...

3 "Demonstrates commitment to continuing improvement in management practice and is periodically evaluated for effectiveness."

CALM continually strives to improve and strengthen its policies and plans, as part of its corporate objectives.

- CALM's professional training staff monitor and progressively review employment and training strategies to ensure adequate mentoring and the opportunity to participate in hand-on conservation and land management are met.

Below CALM employees in the field trapping animals for research and monitoring.



- The Department is actively involved in facilitating effective work practices and has developed an on-line program for Good Working Relations.
- CALM has a commitment to reach and surpass accreditation standards for employment and training and actively pursues Government policy objectives.
- The Department's Indigenous Heritage Unit provides support and advice to CALM's non-Indigenous staff about ways of working with Aboriginal organisations and groups throughout the State to ensure all parties' expectations and needs are being met in a harmonious way.
- Liaison with educational institutions and the Department of Education and Training is continuous, ensuring up-to-date and adequate mentoring and training services and that the Department's program meets all criteria.
- CALM has commitments with our partners to regularly review and report on the progress and implementation of the program with the view to maintaining its 'best practice' principles.

General indicators

The extent to which CALM's MATES program...

4 "Is a role model for Public Sector or the community of Western Australia."

The program is a good example of how the Public Sector can incorporate Aboriginal people and their culture and traditional ownership into Government activities.

Not only does the Department provide a multi-faceted employment and training program, it has incorporated Aboriginal people and their values into a wide range of Departmental activities and services to provide a whole of Department approach, engendering greater understanding and support.

MATES is a practical application of a range of strategies that meets the special needs of Aboriginal people living in remote communities through to those in towns and cities. The 'mentoring' approach to training overcomes some of the deficiencies of more traditional institution-based methods.

CALM's MATES program also is a 'capacity builder' so that in future, Aboriginal communities will be able to assist with the management of other lands outside the CALM-managed conservation reserve system. It also will help foster contemporary business and land management practices.

- The Department's Administrative Staff Seminar was centred on the Department's Indigenous employment strategies and included talks from Aboriginal women on Aboriginal culture and incorporated hand-on activities such as string making and cooking.
- CALM's Bush Ranger Cadets has more than 10 per cent representation of Indigenous youth.
- A park council was created at Karijini National Park, resulting in more effective land management and the provision of business opportunities in nature-based tourism for local Indigenous people.
- A biological survey of the Pilbara commenced late last year and involved meetings with traditional owners to gain insight into historical knowledge.



Above CALM Bush Rangers from the Wongutha CAPS school, near Esperance.

Below The official opening of Karijini Visitor Centre.
Photo – Nigel Higgs





Above CALM Wildlife Officer Trevor Walley (left) with Balga TAFE students at the Naragebup Rockingham Regional Environment Centre. CALM takes part in and leads educational programs at the centre. Photo – Rhianna Mooney.

Below right CALM's Indigenous Heritage Unit staff.

- CALM's Indigenous Heritage Unit provides guided walk tours of important Aboriginal sites around Perth and also provides school students with opportunities to experience traditional Nyoongar activities at school or in the natural environment.
- Presentations of Aboriginal culture are made at educational institutions around Australia by the staff from the Indigenous Heritage Unit.



General indicators

The extent to which CALM's MATES program...

5 "Promotes where possible, public private partnerships, multi agency, or intergovernmental collaboration in the provision of 'joined up' services."

CALM has a number of partnerships with private groups, other government agencies and community groups in the delivery of its Aboriginal employment and training program.

- CALM has joined forces with organisations such as the Goldfields Land and Sea Council, the Department of Education and Training and the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations in creating and implementing its employment strategies.
- It has entered into agreements with registered Aboriginal training organisations such as Great Southern Group Training to arrange training services for Indigenous people.
- CALM, in partnership with the Pilbara Development Commission, is facilitating better visitor infrastructure and providing a stronger tourism base in the Pilbara. This was the prelude to applying the MATES program in the management of Karijini

National Park. New cultural tourism business opportunities will flow from these initiatives.

- It has liaised with education institutions such as Murdoch University and the University of Western Australia for presentations on land management practices and Aboriginal issues in conservation areas.
- It has initiated public input through the release of the Indigenous Ownership and Joint Management Consultation Paper.
- CALM has collaborated with the Commonwealth Government on Aboriginal employment in World Heritage listed sites.
- CALM has also formed a partnership with the Perth Area Consultative Committee to assist small business throughout Perth to develop an insight into local Aboriginal culture.
- The Department has developed partnerships with a number of Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) throughout the State, which involve integrating CDEP workers into training with CALM.

General indicators

The extent to which CALM's MATES program...

6 "Provides value for money or has been implemented in a cost effective manner."

CALM's approach to the learning and development opportunities described in this submission has been to identify and work with existing strengths in the Department's 'learning culture', to use its corporate knowledge and skills to develop each initiative, and to contract consultants and facilitators to add value to the programs.

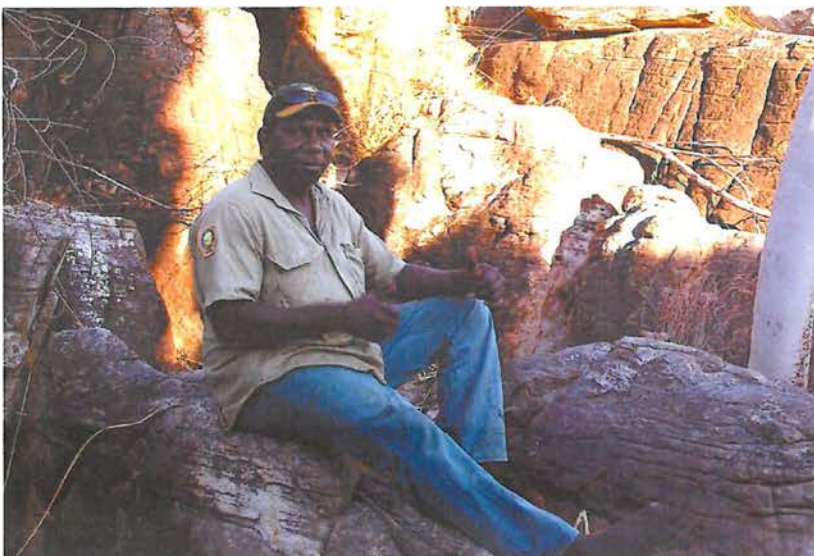
This has meant that these programs have been delivered cost effectively as follows:

- The Department, as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) has the capacity to deliver, assess and issue qualifications under the Conservation and Land Management Training Package.

On completion of the traineeship, graduates will receive Certificates II, III and IV in Conservation and Land Management, issued by the Department. The Certificate IV qualification is the prerequisite for a National Park Ranger position with the Department.

- The Conservation and Land Management Training Package was developed by the Lands, Parks and Wildlife Industry Reference group, on which CALM is represented, and is nationally endorsed by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). The package is specifically designed to accommodate on the job learning by suitable qualified workplace trainers and assessors. The Department, as an RTO, has more than 60 workplace trainers and assessors throughout the State who can assist with the provision of training and assessment.
- As an RTO, the Department attracts external funding opportunities to deliver units of competence within the Conservation and Land Management Training Package.
- The Department's programs enable block-release training that is aligned to off-season park visitation.

Below Trainee Mark Ungchango at Mitchell River National Park.



- It is envisaged that in the future, with more Indigenous people employed in the Department, we can use their cultural knowledge and experience in joint management practices.
- Greater cultural awareness of our staff in the longer term will assist in the integration of Department outcomes with Aboriginal reconciliation and the resolution of native title claims.
- As the number of full time Aboriginal employees increases within the Department, there are increased opportunities for mentoring both within and outside the Department.
- As we progress, there is potential for Indigenous people in remote communities to take a greater role, responsibility and pride in caring for country and community on behalf of CALM and the Western Australian community.



Above CALM trainees out on the job, creating new facilities for national park visitors.

General indicators

The extent to which CALM's MATES program...

7 **"Demonstrates commitment to the simultaneous achievement of social, economic and environment improvement."**

The employment and training program provides a range of benefits to all Western Australians. Indigenous people not only gain better access to training and employment in land management, they also have gained greater long-term opportunities.

The wider public also gains significantly because they are given a greater opportunity to understand and learn about Indigenous heritage and culture, and the ties it has to the land.

Through the program, the Department has worked to provide Indigenous people with access to training and employment in regional – and sometimes remote – areas, so they are not separated from families and their support network.

This whole-of-Department approach to incorporating Aboriginal culture and involvement into land management has seen simultaneous improvement of social, economic and environmental outcomes.

The Department benefits by gaining knowledge and insight into traditional knowledge and land management practices, which provide greater understanding when planning and implementing conservation strategies.

Socially, Indigenous people are given the opportunity to take an active role in land management and become involved in other business enterprises focusing on nature-based and cultural tourism, providing further economic benefits.

Our youth also learn about conservation management and Indigenous culture, promoting greater understanding and awareness, just as CALM staff have gained greater insight by attending cultural awareness workshops.

The Department believes there are only gains to be made when action is taken to actively pursue a greater representation of Indigenous people in its workforce. This equity and diversity will pave the way for more effective and better-delivered strategies for management of land conservation in the future.

Case studies

Progressive career path of Chontarle Pitulej

- Study at Joondalup TAFE
- Certificate III in Heritage and Interpretative Tourism
- Employed as a guide by CALM at Yanchep National Park
- Formal Traineeship with Aboriginal Tourism, Education and Training Unit
- Studying Certificate II and III in Tourism
- One of five finalists in the Hamersley Iron Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year, Training Excellence Awards
- Trainee Indigenous Heritage Officer with Indigenous Heritage Unit for CALM
- Studied and graduated with a Certificate IV in Land Management
- Co-opted as the female Indigenous representative for Interpretation Australia Association on their executive committee.
- Awarded Trainee of the Year by CALM
- Awarded the June Craig Award Scholarship – internal scholarship run by CALM for female staff seeking to further their studies.

"This position has provided me with the high level of skills and ability to enhance both my personal and professional development within the Department. I have achieved and developed better relationships with our Indigenous communities both statewide and nationally."

Women's business with community groups – by Marissa Maher

"My role for the Indigenous Heritage Unit involves me going out in the community and liaising with elder Aboriginal women and gaining knowledge of Women's issues such as important sites and cultural knowledge of such a rich and living culture. I take time out and sit down with the old people and they show me and teach me of such sites and knowledge of cultural ways that were once practiced thousands of years ago. I follow proper protocol in which I ask permission of elders whether or not I can tape record the information and photograph such sites, as this is respect to them and my ancestors before me. I then hand them a copy back as so they can teach their younger females in their family of such information."



Above CALM Indigenous Heritage officer Chontarle Pitulej with primary school students.

Below Marissa Maher with a group of school children.



I find this very rewarding as this will help me in my job protect such important sites from being desecrated from the public and in helping CALM staff that are unaware that such sites are even there. Also this allows the elders to then take their family to the sites and also keep the tradition alive and teach the younger ones about respect and what that site means to the women. The information gathered helps me to then turn it into a program in which I teach a program Women's Issues in which I only teach females, I give them a taste of important information into the Aboriginal traditional world, that I only am trusted to share to share with women."



Above Ray de Jong.

Right facing page
Karijini National Park.
Photo – Western Australian
Tourism Commission

Karijini National Park— by Ray De Jong

"Having come from the private business sector less than 12 months ago to take up the position as Business Manager for CALM within the Pilbara Region, I have found the diversity of its workforce most encouraging.

As a business proprietor representing several international surfwear companies over the past seven years, it was a privilege to have been able to sponsor and support one of the most recognised Indigenous surfers within Australia and the world, Ken Dann.

Being new to the government and my position with CALM, I was most impressed and proud of how CALM's workforce included and trained many indigenous staff. Having a sound knowledge of Aboriginal culture and traditions through the sponsorship of Ken Dann and other life experiences, I recognise the dedication and commitment of CALM in employing Aboriginal people. I feel that CALM recognises and values the knowledge and wisdom that Aboriginal people have of the land and the sea.

I also believe that the traditional landowners recognise and value CALM in its joint management role to conserve and manage the lands that they are responsible for.

The joint management of Karijini National Park and the Karijini Visitor Centre, along with the future plans and visions of both CALM and the traditional landowners, is a joint management that is, (in my opinion) 'how things should be done!'

I commend the CALM staff and directors for their vision and the commitment they have."

