



CALM BRIEFING PAPER 2/85

ABORIGINAL RANGER TRAINING - MILLSTREAM-CHICHESTER NATIONAL PARKS

BACKGROUND

Details of a scheme to train Aboriginal Rangers for the Millstream-Chichester National Parks have now been completed.

The scheme was conceived a number of years ago and hopes to achieve the following:

- (a) a means of involving Aboriginal people in land management in places where traditional ties still exist;
- (b) enhancement of National Park management through knowledge of Aboriginal people;
- (c) increasing liaison between the Government and Aboriginal people in the field of conservation.

AGREEMENTS

In setting up the scheme, negotiations have taken place between the Commonwealth and State Governments and the appropriate Aboriginal communities in the Pilbara. The following general conditions have been agreed:

- (1) The Commonwealth Government is providing a Training Officer and will meet expenses of the officer.
- (2) The Commonwealth Government will pay the wages for the trainee Rangers.
- (3) The State Government will provide a demountable building for a training classroom, accommodation for the trainees and the training officer, and will meet general expenses of the scheme (vehicle, equipment, etc). The State Government has also undertaken to employ graduates as Rangers at the base level (currently Ranger Grade 4), at Hamersley Range and Millstream-Chichester National Parks. It is not intended that they be transferred away from these areas.

- (4) Before the commencement of the course, which will last 12 months, there will be a three month work experience phase. This will be undertaken by six trainees, from whom four will be selected for the course proper.
- (5) The six people in the work experience phase, and, subsequently, the four trainees, will be drawn equally from the groups with traditional ties with the Pilbara National Parks. (The people associated with Millstream-Chichester are Injibardi speaking; many live at Roebourne. The people associated with Hamersley are Banjima speaking; many live at Onslow.)
- (6) Although the scheme will be based at the Millstream Ranger Station, the trainees will work and be trained in both parks by arrangement between the Regional Manager and the two Rangers in Charge.
- (7) The work experience and the training proper will be mainly directed towards the teaching of normal ranger skills and values. There will also be some formal segments of teaching by senior Aboriginal people about Aboriginal sites, cultural practices and values, which will be of value for Park management, particularly for visitor education and information. (There will also be opportunities for informal cultural exchange throughout the program.)
- (8) This scheme is a 'one-off'. It may, however, be repeated in future in other regions (e.g. Kimberley) if it proves to be useful.


IMPLEMENTATION

- (1) The work experience phase began at Millstream on 3 October with a barbecue lunch attended by potential trainees, other members of the Aboriginal communities, all Rangers from both National Parks, other representatives of CALM, officers of federal agencies and local guests. The lunch was followed by an informal meeting between staff and new trainees.
- (2) A work program outline has been drawn up for the work experience phase. This will comprise day-to-day operations and projects, including training in skills such as radio operation and safety. A chainsaw operator course has been arranged. Although a five day working week will apply, arrangements may be made to vary days worked, at the discretion of the Regional Manager.

- (3) A liaison committee has been formed and will meet shortly. The committee will comprise two representatives of each Aboriginal community (but others may attend), the Regional Manager Pilbara, the two Rangers in Charge, the Training Officer and the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations Regional Officer. An important initial task for the committee will be the selection of candidates for the training course.
- (4) Candidates for the position of Training Officer have been interviewed and a recommendation has been made to the Commonwealth Public Service Board. It is anticipated that the recommended person will start work in December.

SOME FINAL POINTS

- (1) The scheme will not close off opportunities for existing staff. It is designed to provide an additional dimension to National Park management in the Pilbara and is unrelated to existing numbers and people in the Department.
- (2) Progress with the scheme will be reported regularly through CALM News. Contact me, or Tony Start for further details.
- (3) Conditions of employment will include rules which apply to all National Park staff, for example:
 - (a) firearms will be kept secure in the control of the Ranger in Charge;
 - (b) hunting with firearms will not be allowed in the National Park;
 - (c) pets will be excluded;
 - (d) fires will be allowed only in fireplaces.
- (4) You may use details included in this document to answer any queries or comments from the public (this may be of particular use in the Pilbara Region itself).


CHRIS HAYNES
DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL PARKS

16 October, 1985

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