

ABORIGINAL ATTITUDES TO CONSERVATION IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

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Aboriginal land comprises about 32% of the Northern Territory, with a further 16% under claim. In the CLC area, which corresponds fairly closely to the "arid zone" the proportion would be higher, and most of it is spinifex desert.

Management in a practical sense has to come to grips with the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (1976), Aboriginal freehold land, and Landowners, and the role of Land Councils as set out in the Act.

Aborigines have a widely acknowledged spiritual and cultural affinity with land. It was also their economic base. In most areas it is still their only economic base, and many Aborigines may wish to use their land for pastoralism, tourism, mining etc.

Traditional Landowners do not regard their land as *de facto* National Park. European land managers and conservationists must acknowledge the right of Aborigines to make decisions about the use of their land.

If society wants conservation as a land use on Aboriginal land it will have to pay.

Research and management proposals must budget time and money for thorough consultations through the Land Councils, and commit funds for Aboriginal training and employment.

Management, including Spinifex management must come from the Traditional Landowners, and not be imposed by Governments or Conservation Agencies.