



MEDIA RELEASE

Humpty Doo Rice Memorial Opens In Darwin

A memorial to the men and women who worked on the Humpty Doo Rice Project in the 1950s and 1960s was officially opened today.

The memorial is located about 60km southeast of Darwin at the base of Beatrice Hill, below Windows on the Wetlands which overlooks the Adelaide River.

Windows on the Wetlands manager Stuart Traynor said visitors to the area would freely be able to read about the project which was a very significant event in Territory history.

“Folklore would have it that magpie geese, with a strong appetite for the rice, were to blame for the project’s eventual failure but this is not entirely true,” he said.

“The main problems included low rice yields, variable wet seasons, lack of fresh water, high overheads and inadequate capital funding.

“This memorial commemorates the strong contributions made by the men and women involved at the time. One of them, Ted Kilpatrick, has written a book about the project.”

Mr Traynor said the aim was to advance the development of northern Australia by growing and exporting rice to South-East Asia.

“I remember learning about it as a primary school student in Wollongong in 1964. It certainly made the national agenda in the early 1960s,” he said.

“At its peak the project had more than 2000 hectares of rice under cultivation and managed to export 3300 tons to Hong Kong in 1959/60 but as time went by it became increasingly harder for the project to continue.

“The original company, Territory Rice Limited, went into liquidation in 1960 and a second company, Rice Development Pty Ltd, managed to keep it going a further four years.

“One of the more famous original investors was American television star Art Linkletter who hosted the well-known show *Candid Camera*. So it certainly captured the imagination of a few high profile people.”

Mr Traynor encouraged Territorians and travellers to view the new memorial and the nearby visitor centre which is open daily between 8am and 7.30pm.

Media Note – For more information contact Stuart Traynor 89887219

Ends

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