



MEDIA RELEASE

Territory Scientists Contributed To 2006 ABS Yearbook

Two Territory scientists have contributed to a series of articles about deserts published in the 2006 Australian Bureau of Statistics "Year Book Australia".

Chris Pavey and Catherine Nano attended last Friday's official book launch at ABS House in Canberra along with about 50 other invited guests. Their article Desert Wildlife of Australia featured in the book's first chapter.

"Last week's launch was an interesting experience that each of us thoroughly enjoyed," Dr Pavey said. "To be invited to contribute to such an important publication was a nice surprise."

The ABS approached the Alice Springs-based pair in the middle of last year asking that they write an article about desert wildlife in Australia to coincide with this year's United Nations International Year of Deserts and Desertification.

The article describes the diversity of desert life and details some of the adaptations of plants and animals to extreme heat, aridity, salinity and fire in Australian deserts.

The pair, who each has worked for the biodiversity conservation unit within Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts for over five years, each said it was an enjoyable experience to prepare an article for a general readership rather than a purely scientific audience.

"The ABS kept it fairly open-ended on what they wanted from us so we decided to focus on a range of interesting biodiversity topics that covered both flora and fauna," Dr Pavey said.

"Most of it is textbook information, but we included some new research findings where appropriate. We felt it was important to explain some of the amazing features of desert plants and animals without being overly technical."

Ms Nano said writing the article gave the pair a good opportunity to synthesise what they had learnt during their time in central Australia.

"We found the experience to be really worthwhile and the ABS came back to us to say they were grateful for our contribution and that it provided a valuable perspective on desert environments," Ms Nano said.

"We are both fascinated with desert ecology and value our opportunity to be working in this environment."

The year book also covers relevant topics such as tourism, health, education and training.

Media Note _ For more information contact Chris Pavey and Catherine Nano on 8951 8249.

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