



MEDIA RELEASE

Watarrka National Park Fire Management Training Workshop

The central Australian environment and Indigenous traditional owners of two of the Territory's premier parks will benefit from a fire management training workshop held recently at Watarrka National Park

The 15 trainees, Traditional Owners of Watarrka National Park and Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve, learned about fire planning, personal safety, the use of fire equipment and the ecology of fire and weather assessment.

The practically-based accredited training was a collaborative effort between the Parks and Wildlife Service and the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education.

Fire training participants from the Rainbow Valley area said much was gained from the workshop that ran over four days (April 10-13).

They said the training gave them the skills to not only work with Parks and Wildlife Service rangers on the parks but the confidence to control fire around their homelands.

Watarrka National Park senior district ranger Chris Howard said the training is a win-win for all involved.

"With their new skills, these Traditional Owners will now be able to work with Parks and Wildlife Service staff on prescribed burning during the winter," Mr Howard said.

"This is the way forward, working together and mixing traditional land management ideas with scientific approaches."

Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education conservation and land management course co-ordinator Rebecca Freshwater shared Mr Howard's sentiments.

"Batchelor has a great partnership with the Parks and Wildlife Service, training Indigenous people so they can be actively involved in park management programs," Ms Freshwater said.

"We currently have four Parks and Wildlife Indigenous ranger trainees undertaking studies with us.

"We have a further 85 Indigenous students also involved in Joint Management, either through Flexible Employment Projects or Park-based training.

"The conservation and land management training program incorporates western land management concepts with traditional land management."

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Media Note – For more information contact Chris Howard on 8956 7488 or Rebecca Freshwater on 8951 8370. Accompanying photos must be source referenced (Rebecca Freshwater, BIITE) if published.

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