

Media Release:

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West Macs 'Think Tank'

Representatives from the tourism industry will meet with Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service officers tomorrow in Alice Springs to take part in a 'think tank' focused on the West MacDonnell National Park Joint Management plan.

Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service have spent the past 18 months working with Traditional Owners of the park toward preparing a Joint Management Plan.

Senior planner Jonathan Vea said the industry workshop will mirror planning discussions held with Traditional Owners.

"We'll have representatives from various sectors of the tourism industry including tour operators, accommodation providers, helicopter operators, hire care companies, school groups/outdoor education, filmmakers, retailers, mountain bikers, in addition to the Central Land Council, and government agencies including Tourism NT and Department of Business, Economic and Regional Development," Mr Vea said.

"Involving Traditional Owners and the tourism industry from the start is really important as it helps ensure stakeholders views and needs are considered throughout the process.

"We'll be mirroring planning processes carried out by Parks and Wildlife Service and Traditional Owners over the past 18 months, where we will be seeking perspectives, ideas and fresh insights from specialists within the tourism industry who are familiar with the park, for consideration when preparing the draft management plan."

The West MacDonnell National Park stretches 161kms west of Alice Springs, and includes popular tourist sites such as permanent waterholes; Ellery Creek Bighole, Ormiston, Redbank and Glen Helen Gorge.

The draft joint management plan for West MacDonnell National park will go out for public comment 2008/09.

Ends

Media Note – for more information contact Jonathan Vea on 8951 8245 or Andrew Bridges on 0401 115 729

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