

Media Release:

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Desert Park Sharing Stories on Indigenous Employment

The Alice Springs Desert Park (ASDP) has been invited to share their success stories on managing a program of sustainable employment of Indigenous people at the upcoming 'Closing the Gap in Urban Indigenous Communities' conference in Sydney, 19-20 October 2010.

ASDP Indigenous Employment & Training Coordinator Jodie Clarkson will present a paper to the conference, providing delegates with tips to improve access and sustainability.

"The Desert Park was invited to speak at the conference because of our ongoing success in the area of Indigenous employment since prior to opening the park in 1996," Ms Clarkson said.

"Out of nearly 50 staff at the Desert Park we currently have 10 Indigenous people employed covering a multitude of roles including as guides, horticulturists and zoo keepers.

"The Desert Park has won two Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE) Equity and Diversity awards in 2002 and 2005, and three of our Indigenous apprentices have won Group Training NT Apprentice of the Year awards.

"Indigenous people represent 32 per cent of the Northern Territory population and the Alice Springs Desert Park aims to have a workplace that reflects the diversity of our community.

"In the short term we aim to increase the number of our Indigenous employees from 20 per cent to 25 per cent by December 2012."

Ms Clarkson said the Desert Park will share methodologies, perspectives, challenges, barriers and success stories at the conference.

"The Desert Park has learnt a lot over the past 14 years in regards to sustainable Indigenous employment and other organisations are keen to learn from us," Ms Clarkson said.

"There are important lessons in developing sustainable relationships with local elders and communities, being creative with recruitment processes, creating flexibility, dealing with challenges promptly and together as a team, building self-esteem and skills, setting clear goals and high expectations, giving regular feedback and most importantly, seeking to understand before we seek to be understood.

"Sustainable employment of Indigenous people is integral to our core business at the Desert Park and depends upon the quality of our relationships and the effectiveness of our communication.

"We look forward to sharing our experiences at the conference and hearing from other people across Australia on how we can all help 'Close the Gap' for Indigenous people."

Ends

Media Note – for more information / interviews contact Jodie Clarkson on 0419 827 804

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