

In Central Australia, the flexible employment program has engaged participants from Alice Springs as well as remote communities including Ntaria, Amoonguna, Titjikala, Santa Teresa, Walkabout Bore, Upanyali, and residents from outstations serviced by Ingkerreke and Tjuwanpa Resource Centres. Over the past year, these workers have contributed to projects such as prescribed burning, flora and fauna surveys, weed management, fencing and the maintenance of park infrastructure and walking tracks. To date, joint management has resulted in 16 new positions for traditional owners, including permanent ranger positions, trainees and school-based apprentices.

The Parks and Wildlife Service intends to further increase the participation of traditional owners in its workforce and, through mentoring and structured training, ensure that these employees have the opportunity to progress through the ranger ranks to park manager positions in the future as their capacity and experience develops. A recent highlight was the award given to Graeme Talbot Junior as the Northern Territory School-based Apprentice of the Year. Graeme is Indigenous and works as a trainee ranger at Fogg Dam.

Today, I introduce a further amendment that will implement the full extent of the intended outcomes of the joint management provisions of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*. The amendment will address a technical and operational issue which has arisen through the leaseback of parks and reserves from Aboriginal and Park Land Trusts. In the case of 13 of the 17 parks and reserves listed in schedules 1 and 2 of the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act*, the area of land leased back to be a jointly managed park has changed. These changes to the park area have come about through adding areas such as:

- former stock routes located within, or adjacent to a park;
- closed roads;
- areas of park previously subjected to Aboriginal and/or native title claims and not able to be declared; and
- adjacent areas of land, long proposed and agreed for inclusion in the parks.

For all intents and purposes, these additional areas have been managed by Parks and Wildlife rangers and, to the general public, would be considered as part of the existing Parks Estate.

Some areas which contain principally non-park interests, such as an Aboriginal Community Living

Area, public roads and road reserves, corridors for transport, and areas for the supply of utilities were excluded from the grant of title. The consequence of these additions and exclusions is that the parks do not qualify as the same area of land to be re-declared as required by section 24 of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*. The amendment will now allow the declaration of park status over the entire park area in a single process. Declaration as a park is required prior to the implementation of joint management plans and for the application of park by-laws, which ensure the safe and effective management of the natural and cultural values of the park.

The amendment will extend to other parks outside of those scheduled under the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act* which, consistent with section 23A of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*, are now able to be managed under these joint management provisions.

The bill expedites the process of park declaration for areas of Aboriginal-owned land which are leased back to the Northern Territory to be jointly managed national parks. Title to these areas is granted to land trusts on the basis that they be leased back as jointly managed parks and reserves.

Public consultation will be welcomed during the planning phase in the development of any draft joint management plans, which will be tabled in the House prior to gazettal and adoption.

Madam Speaker, I commend this bill to honourable members and table the explanatory statement to accompany the bill.

Debate adjourned.

GEOHERMAL ENERGY BILL (Serial 22)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr VATSKALIS (Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources): Madam Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Geothermal Energy Bill is to create an enabling framework to facilitate and regulate the exploration and extraction of geothermal energy resources in the Northern Territory. The framework for this bill is based on existing models established by the *Northern Territory Petroleum Act*, *Mining Act*, and *Mining Management Act*. Parts have also been utilised from the Victorian *Geothermal Act*. This model was adopted because operations associated with exploring and extracting geothermal energy, primarily drilling deep within the earth, are similar