

## SUBOUTPUT 1

### 1.1 Administer and issue permits for access/closures to or through Aboriginal land and sea.

The CLC issued approximately 3500 permits during the year. The great majority of these were permits to transit through Aboriginal land.

The CLC carried out comprehensive consultations and provided subsequent advice in relation to six permit applications or permit related matters, associated with research activities on Aboriginal land.

There was a level of media attention to the issue of permits after a journalist failed to attend a Supreme Court sitting at Yaralin, an isolated Aboriginal community which is not located on Aboriginal land.

This gave rise to a complaint in the form of a letter to the Northern Territory Government signed by the journalist concerned and a number of other journalists advocating changes to the permit system to make exceptions for the media.

In the case of the CLC there is no record of any application by a journalist to enter Aboriginal land to report court proceedings, and the CLC has no knowledge of a journalist ever seeking to enter Aboriginal land in its region for the purpose of reporting court proceedings.

The truth of the issue is that it is only high-profile court cases which attract media attention and there have probably been no such cases in remote communities in the CLC's region.

In its response to a Northern Territory Government request for comments on the issues raised

by the letter the CLC confirmed its view that the justice system must be open to scrutiny and public access to court proceedings is an essential part of accountability of the system.

While noting that the CLC could not think of a reason why any genuine application to enter Aboriginal land to report judicial proceedings would be refused, the CLC did not support changes to the present system.

#### **Mpwelarre Aboriginal Land Trust- Road construction**

Early in 2005 traditional land-owners of Mpwelarre Aboriginal Land Trust, south of Alice Springs, told the CLC that a road was being constructed over part of the Land Trust.

They had not given permission for a road to be constructed. Upon inquiry it turned out the Northern Territory Department of Infrastructure Planning and the Environment (DIPE) had arranged for the road to be constructed to modify the route of the Finke Desert Race.

From discussions between the CLC and DIPE representatives it became clear that the location of the route on the Land Trust was due to inadvertence arising from lack of familiarity with land tenure in the region.

In early 2006 DIPE agreed with the CLC to restore the land by appropriate rehabilitation measures. A representative of the Department also formally apologised to the traditional landowners.

#### **Access for surveys, research filming and photography**

Under new issue-based protocols established and applied during the year, the CLC reviewed proposals, conducted traditional owner consultations and facilitated collaboration as required for scientific research, environmental and conservation-based projects

on Aboriginal Land including:

- A biological survey of the War-rabri ALT by NT Parks and Wildlife
- A biological survey on the Ahakeye ALT by NT Parks and Wildlife

- A program for survey, monitoring and management of the endangered Slater's Skink on Aboriginal land in the Finke River catchment area;

- An aerial survey of the wetlands and waterbirds in the Northern Tanami Desert by Wetlands International;

- A CSIRO project regarding the commercial wild-harvest of bush foods.

- In respect to Uluru - Kata Tjuta National Park (UKTNP):

- carried out traditional owner consultations and other measures for 18 on-park permit applications in relation to filming and photography, research, major events and other purposes including 20th anniversary celebrations for the handback of title

- conducted traditional owner consultations for 7 off-park permit applications for access to the adjoining Katiti and/or Petermann Aboriginal Land Trusts by tour operators, researchers and others

- carried out consultations with traditional owners for off-park access to the adjoining Katiti and Petermann Aboriginal Land Trusts by UKTNP Park staff for a range of identified management purposes eg. fire management, weed and feral animal management, flora and fauna surveys, emergency search and rescue

- research being undertaken by two PhD candidates from Desert Knowledge CRC in relation to provision of improved land management practices in the North West Tanami region by the Lajamanu-based Wulain Ranger group.

- Completed consultations with eastern Warlpiri traditional owners