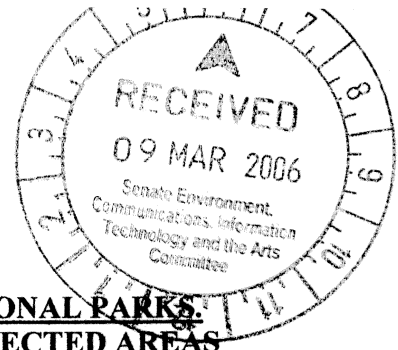


# Waterbird Conservation Group



Correspondence to: The Secretary,

Committee Secretary, Senate Environment  
Information Technology and the Arts  
References Committee  
Department of the Senate  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600



**PUBLIC COMMENT - INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL PARKS,  
OTHER CONSERVATION RESERVES AND MARINE PROTECTED AREAS**

The Group encloses a hard copy of our amended comments, following our initial FAXed comments of 1 March 2006.

In the light of the significance of the Indigenous Protected Areas for conservation (IPAs), we wish to add an important point - that the Inquiry's 'Terms of Reference' have failed to include Indigenous Protected Areas for conservation (IPAs). This is a serious omission and needs to be addressed. The Inquiry should recognize IPAs and continuous management by indigenous peoples, supporting them and funding them.

The Federal Government's policy of co-management of National Parks and engagement of indigenous peoples has been highly commendable. However there are outstanding issues such as where people have been hurt and disaffected, which need to be addressed. Eg appropriating lands in the Gibson and Prince Regent National Parks amounted to taking away these lands from the aboriginal people.

It is important that the traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), the natural and cultural heritage activities (fire, sites etc) and transfer of knowledge of Australia's indigenous people are given due recognition.

The indigenous people of, for example, the Dampier Peninsular, need to be made official rangers so that tourists and opportunistic people do not do appalling things there.

Aboriginal Rangers can be involved as:

- 1) land managers and sea managers
- 2) heritage wardens
- 3) rescue and emergency service workers
- 4) ecotourism leaders

This is particularly important in Marine Parks and Marine Protected areas eg for protection of Trochus shells (Beagle Bay and Bardi country), and early warning of intrusions and offences by illegal fishing vessels.

Such indigenous roles ( Sea Rangers and Land Rangers) need to be institutionalized and made a part of the National Parks system.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'M Wilson', written in dark ink on a white background.

M Wilson  
Secretary  
4 March 2006