

Inquiry into Natural Resource Management and Conservation Challenges

Dear Senator Siewert

My name is Rod Garlett; I am a Ballardong Noongar man (Traditional Owner and Caretaker of Sacred sites) from the GULGULGA RIVER (Wheatbelt/Avon Catchment region). I was the NRM Aboriginal Facilitator for the Avon Catchment Council for 4 years based in NARRJUK (Northam).

I saw the new change occur in the Avon Region when the new \$\$\$ budget came into play, it was a sad time for the genuine landcares, the ones who hearts had been pushed aside, this was about progress, and we started to see it take its shapes: with new office materials, new carpets, new cars (ford xr6's for nrm program??), and of course new higher wages, that actually skyrocketed!!:

I mean how do you justify putting an accountant in the position of CEO of a catchment council, when they had no knowledge of NRM, yet alone landcare, but this was done by the State NRM body? There were too many times when friends just looked after friends or you got the consultancy because you knew someone.

EQUALITY, needs to happen in this program, if we want a bigger brighter future for people across the land.

But I truly believe that this program is our people's only means of continuing our cultural responsibility in caring for the land, Aboriginal people really need to be respected and appreciated for the knowledge we have in caring for the land, our Elders carry the keys to making things right out on the land, the only true carers of this land, the traditional ways have still been taught to our people and the knowledge has been handed down to the next generations, it's a CULTURAL RESPONSIBILITY.

I'm so sorry that I could not be at the inquiry, so I just want to add some dot points that I hope will be taken into consideration for the future of the NRM program:

- Proper wages for Aboriginal Managers.
- Suitable vehicles attached to Aboriginal positions.

- Aboriginal manager's package.
- Yes, give the title of Managers; they are managers of the Aboriginal programs.
- Make office staff do office business, and not interfere with decision making processes, and adhere to confidentiality laws!
- **ELLIVATE RACISM IN NRM PROGRAM!!!**
- "Doing it our way" approach and respected.
- 50% of Catchment Council business needs to be Indigenous.
- 99 year land leases for Indigenous NRM.
- **PRIORITY OF ABORIGINAL ELDERS ON CATCHMENT COUNCIL BOARDS.**
- Aboriginal NRM subgroups across all Catchment Councils.
- **ABORIGINAL NRM land purchases for families to go back to country.**
- **ABORIGINAL REPS ON NATIONAL NRM BOARDS (not white fulla representing our voice).**
- Government recognition of traditional ways of Caring for Country, not just in the north or the desert.
- **ABORIGINAL NRM CENTRE, based in all States and Territory.**
- **ABORIGINAL NRM Knowledge needs to be owned by Aboriginal people and not brought off through copyright laws.**
- **CATCHMENT COUNCILS NEED TO IMPLEMENT EQUALITY OF SERVICE DELIVERY, BETWEEN FARMERS/ABORIGINAL PEOPLE not one sided affair all the time.**
- **MORE OWNERSHIP OF NRM PROGRAM BY ABORIGINAL PEOPLE!!!!**
- Aboriginal people need to be employed to NRM position according to their connection to that land/country.
- **TRADITIONAL OWNERS NEED PROPER RESPECT AND NOT TOKEN PROMISES!!!**
- Mother nature will continue to punish the whiteman if he don't stop and listen to the Blackman of this land!
- **NOONGAR MAAMAN TO SPEAK FOR HIS COUNTRY!!!!!!**