



CSIRO Centre for Arid Zone Research

(CAZR) in Alice Springs, in conjunction with Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre, wants to develop partnerships for research on issues that are important to Aboriginal people and Aboriginal organisations in desert Australia.

Jocelyn Davies has been contracted by CSIRO during 2004 to work on this project. She is talking to representatives of Aboriginal organisations and other agencies about research priorities and partnership approaches.

The **aims** of *Engaging Indigenous Partnerships* are:

- to build capacity for collaborative research involving Aboriginal and other organisations;
- to strengthen research networks and linkages between CSIRO, other Desert Knowledge CRC partners, Aboriginal organisations and associated agencies;
- to build awareness and support for Aboriginal research priorities.

This project was the idea of Margaret Friedel and Mark Stafford Smith, both scientists at CAZR. They have involved representatives of some Aboriginal organisations and government in early talks about the project. Jocelyn is following up with more detailed talks and information sharing.

Jocelyn Davies is a geographer with wide experience in research, policy development and education for recognition of Aboriginal rights and for effective involvement of Aboriginal people in natural and cultural resource management, particularly in arid regions of Australia.

She also has a background in community based planning and protected area management. In recent years most of her work has been for the Native Title Unit of Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement, South Australia and the University of Adelaide. As well as her current work for CSIRO, she works for Desert Knowledge CRC as co-leader for governance research.

CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation)

CSIRO is a national organisation that uses science to find the best possible outcomes for people, the environment and industry (see www.csiro.au). Most CSIRO research is carried out in collaboration with other organisations both in Australia and overseas.

The Alice Springs Centre for Arid Zone Research (CAZR) is a regional laboratory of CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems Rangelands and Savannas Program.

Its 10 scientists and support staff study desert/arid land environments and natural resource management including socio-economic and policy aspects. This research aims to contribute to better planning for sustainable habitation of inland Australia. (see www.cazr.csiro.au) Some current CAZR research is already important to Aboriginal people, The *Engaging Indigenous Partnerships* project will bring Aboriginal priorities more directly into CAZR's research.



What will result from the Engaging Indigenous Partnerships project?

This is a scoping project, which means it will not provide 'all the answers'.

The project will develop one or more on-going 3-5 year research projects that:

- are important to Aboriginal people
- fit in with CSIRO's expertise in central Australia, which includes natural resource management and regional development
- have strong support from Aboriginal organisations and other relevant people and organisations, including research funding bodies.

As part of developing these new research projects, permission and agreements about procedures and benefits will be negotiated for any research that seeks to involve Aboriginal community members or traditional owners, that will be requesting access to traditional knowledge, or that might affect cultural resources and values.

CSIRO is already involved in some Desert Knowledge CRC funded research projects that have participation by Aboriginal organisations and people. These include bush tucker industry development, an 'Outback Atlas', and a survey of natural resource based enterprises in desert Australia. The research projects that develop from Engaging Indigenous Partnerships might involve new research directions or they might add new dimensions to other current research.

The Engaging Indigenous Partnerships will also result in:

- better awareness and skills for collaborative research amongst CSIRO staff and amongst Aboriginal organisations.

- a draft report (due end November 2004, for feedback by project participants), a final public report (due end February 2005) and a shorter paper for publication, covering what has been learnt through the project.

How will the *Engaging Indigenous Partnerships* project develop?

1. Informal talks with representatives of Aboriginal organisations, government agencies and research funding bodies. (May-July 2004).

These will be about:

- priorities for research on issues that are important to Aboriginal people of central Australia.
- issues involved in forming research partnerships.

2. Regular liaison and discussions with the people and organisations who are most interested in being part of future research partnerships. (August-October 2004)

3. Working Group or Steering Committee to develop specific research proposals and funding bids. (November 2004 to February 2005)

Management of information and knowledge

The project has safeguards to make sure there is a balance between sharing information in order to build partnerships, and keeping restricted or sensitive information confidential. Further information about management of information and knowledge is available for project participants and other interested people.

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Feedback on the *Engaging Indigenous Partnerships* project

If you wish to discuss the project with an independent person or make a complaint about the way the project is being conducted, contact the Secretary of the Central Australian Human Research Ethics Committee at the Centre for Remote Health, Alice Springs on 08 8951 4700.