

NEW NATURE RESERVE: ABORIGINES IN CHARGE ONCE AGAIN



In the Northern Territory of Australia, to the happiness of all Aborigines, a huge nature reserve has been created on an area of 20,500 square kilometers. More importantly, the Aborigines themselves will be in charge of its conservation and protection.

Recently, an agreement was signed between the Australian Environment Minister Peter Garratt and the Aborigines, which not only creates a new Indigenous Protected Area in the Northern Territory, but it also secures the Aborigines the right to take care of it. **A new reserve, twice the size of the beautiful Yellowstone National Park in the U.S. has been created east of the Kakadu Natural Reserve.**

The Warddeken and Djelk Reserve brings hope to the Aborigine community. They have been living in this area for at least 50,000 years and have suffered a lot of unfair treatment in the past centuries. Now, they are in charge and have a unique opportunity to reconnect with their land and do the work they inherently love to do. They will be able to practice their own ancient land management techniques, such as burning to eliminate the risk of major wildfires, and hunting wild animals in order to control their numbers.

The region has an immense natural and cultural value. The terrain is unbelievably diverse, featuring impressive sandstone gorges, pristine rivers, tropical savannah and coastal wetlands. There is a variety of endemic plants and rare animals found nowhere else. The Aborigines left their ancient trace on thousands of rock art sites.

Such heritage should not be left unprotected. Not only will it remain in the right hands, but the program will help fight poverty and poor health which worry the Aborigine communities. There are now 137 Aboriginal groups expected to manage the reserve with the help of local indigenous rangers. The entire project will be funded by the Federal Government. Finally, after decades of fighting, it appears that sense has returned on the field of politics and hope has been restored for the Aborigines.

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