

The Ningaloo Pastoral Stations [Ningaloo, Cardabia, Warroora & Gnoraloo] in a united approach, formed an association known as NINGALOO REEF OUTBACK COAST ASSOCIATION (NROCA). NROCA, frustrated at lack of government "management" of the Ningaloo Marine Park beaches along this 200 km stretch of coastline successfully campaigned for Natural Heritage funding to implement important management practices and rehabilitation measures.

\$650,000 was expended by these four stations on this project and contrary to what government would have us believe, and what the media continue to distort – campers along this coastline are very carefully managed by the pastoral leaseholders, and have been for the last 10 years. In fact, to a large degree, the campers themselves are the champions of the sustainable environmental management of this area.

This voluntary management taskforce does not cost the taxpayer one cent and as such is an extremely valuable resource to this nation.

The following press release was put out by the Chairperson of NROCA (Leonie Horak, now McDiven) in response to a front page Sunday Times story in which false accusations were attributed to a State Government Minister...

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MEDIA RELEASE

Minister Alanah MacTiernan has been reported in recent media as saying:

Some pastoral properties along the Ningaloo coastline are "*making an absolute fortune*" from charging access fees to visitors. This is a fabrication of reality, and an apology and retraction is in order.

The Minister relates the situation to the days of "Kings in Grass Castles" - Patrick Durack coined this phrase in 1878. Things have changed a lot in Western Australia over the past 125 years. Today, this arid rangeland is drought declared and there is scant grass to build any sort of castle.

Why has the Minister singled out 2 pastoral leases when dozens of others in the State are also targetted by CALM, and many of these allow access to visitors ?

Here are some FACTS so that people will really know ***the truth about what is going on UP HERE.*** Those who haven't been able to come and see for themselves.

* Warroora and Cardabia stations were bought at public auctions there were no govt. bids to buy these properties for the conservation estate. Warroora was bought for the sole purpose of keeping the land in it's nature state for future generations to enjoy; Cardabia, to return the indigenous people to their land. Ningaloo has been in the pioneering Lefroy family for generations. Gnaraloo is Japanese owned, not Malaysian. **All Ningaloo stations are passionate about what the community wants & listen on a daily basis to their opinions.**

* Warroora does not charge \$8 per day, it charges \$5 per day access or \$25 per week (children free), Cardabia charges similarly.

* Lease fees are set by government; leases are run under government guidelines and subject to government inspections

The government sets the rules & checks whether there is degradation or not, perhaps they don't do inspections on CALM controlled land.

* Pastoral lessees pour millions of dollars into conservation and rehabilitation property management (One of the Ningaloo stations has injected in excess of \$2m (from independent outside sources) in recent years into the property - all reported in the Pastoral Board's mandatory annual report) and hundreds of visitors have spent 1,000s of hours working to repair past degradation, both natural and man made. **All of this has cost the government nothing, whilst returning a tidy sum to regional development.**

* Chemical toilet disposal units and rubbish pits are provided and managed. Fragile areas are fenced off. 4WD tracks are being rationalised and rehabilitated.

* The Ningaloo stations do not think they have a monopoly on coastal tourism, nor do they think CALM has a monopoly on what is the best way to look after the environment.

* Two families on one of the targetted stations had a combined annual income of \$31,000 over the past financial year, and many other family members work for no monetary recompense. (Are the battlers on the Nullabor any better off Minister ?)

Right now some of the Ningaloo Stations are well advanced into their overdraft limits - why would they pay 9.35% interest when on the Minister's maths, they could just pull half a million out from under the bed ?

* One of the Ningaloo stations "made" \$84,000 in this past year from tourism and \$45,000 of this amount came from Shearer's Quarters accommodation, NOT visitors camping on the supposedly CALM controlled 40 metre strip.

The Minister has declared her hand in the media **prior to any negotiations taking place; prior to hearing the voice of the people through the heavily funded media campaign to promote "Future Directions"; prior to any public release of reports from purpose built committees looking into the Ningaloo coastal region.**

If, as the Minister declares "We have no intention of making money out of this - we believe we can do it within the sums currently being asked and do it better" **Why then does it cost \$79 (1-2 people) to camp in the neighbouring Cape Range National Park ? Why** are CALM unable to manage the strip of land along the coast that they have had for the past 13 years (where all the people camp) ??

Why too, are most of the committees (set up by government) sworn to secrecy when they were invented for the purpose of supposedly having stakeholder input to represent the broader community ?

The general public have the right to ask "**WHY ?**" but more important than anything is the **FACT:**

Here along the Ningaloo coastline we have the opportunity to SET WORLD'S BEST PRACTISE and the Ningaloo Stations are willing to sit down and talk with government about how this can best be done.