Clare Martin
CHIEF MINISTER

12 April 2005

PERMANENT EMERGENCY RESPONSE FOR KINGS CANYON

A permanent Northern Territory Emergency Service response facility will be established in Watarrka National Park at King’s Canyon Resort for the first time, Chief Minister, Clare Martin, announced today.

The Territory Government has allocated $200,000 a year with the first funding allocated in Budget 2005.

The money will be spent fitting out the old ranger station, at the gates to the Watarrka National Park, and on going wages, communications equipment, maintenance, accommodation and training.

“More than 260,000 people visit the Watarrka National Park each year, and it is one of the jewels of Central Australia’s tourism industry,” Ms Martin said.

“We have committed $38M over three years to sealing and upgrading the Mereenie and West MacDonnell Loop roads to provide a better experience and reduce the number of accidents - this new initiative is a further boost to service delivery and community safety in this important tourism region.

“This facility will help tourists and locals and is another way we can keep the Territory moving ahead.”

Mr Graham Missen, an Alice Springs NTES volunteer with 14 years experience, was today named as King Canyon’s first permanent NTES member. He will live and work in the community and will be responsible for co-ordinating the local response to emergency incidents.

Mr Missen will train local Volunteers and Volunteer units in the broader area such as Kulgera, Hermannsburg (Ntaria) and Mt Ebenezer, in emergency response skills, including road accident rescue, land search and vertical rescue.

In addition to working with Parks and Wildlife staff in the Watarrka National Park, the Emergency Service post will be able to assist the Bush Fire Council during emergencies, and will provide the local community with basic Motor Vehicle Registry services.

“The local community has called for a permanent, co-ordinated emergency response service, and my Government has listened as part of our commitment to building safer communities,” said Ms Martin.

“Watarrka National Park and King’s Canyon is an important drawcard for Central Australian tourism industry, and the new Emergency Services facility will be an enormous assistance to the tourism operators, tourists and the local community.

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