



MEDIA RELEASE

Tjanpi Desert Weavers at the Alice Springs Desert Park

The award-winning Tjanpi (pronounced 'J-um-Py') Desert Weavers are set to provide visitors to the Alice Springs Desert Park with the chance to learn more about basket weaving next Tuesday.

Park guide manager Adam Macfie said the Tjanpi Desert Weavers, who won the prestigious 22nd *Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award* in 2005, had exhibited nationally and internationally and next Tuesday's workshops would be a great delight.

"The Tjanpi Desert Weavers have built a strong reputation for the quantity and quality of their work during the past decade and the opportunity people have to learn from these women shouldn't be missed," Mr Macfie said.

"Not only did they win the Telstra Award two years ago, which is Australia's leading Indigenous art award, but they have again entered a strong field of entries for this year's Award."

Mr Macfie said the Desert Park workshops will run every 30 minutes from 10.30am to 1.30pm on 24 April, with visitors having the opportunity to sit with Anangu women and try their hand at basket weaving.

He said visitors would also be able to buy baskets made by the Tjanpi Desert Weavers.

Tjanpi Desert Weavers began in 1995 as a result of a basket-weaving workshop at Papulankutja (Blackstone) in Western Australia, which built on Anangu traditions of creating objects from natural fibres for ceremonial, medicinal and modesty purposes.

With the support of the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council, Ngaanyatjarra women taught their skills to women in nearby communities in the Territory, South Australia and Western Australia.

Tjanpi fibre art is now firmly embedded in Central and Western desert culture and is highly valued for its capacity to keep culture strong, maintain links with country, and provide meaningful employment to the keepers and teachers of Tjanpi.

Baskets are usually made from tjanpi (native grass) and raffia or wool, and are sometimes decorated with native seeds or emu or bush turkey feathers.

While collecting tjanpi, women visit their traditional homelands and sacred sites, teach children about their country, and hunt and gather food for their families.

Ends

Media Note – For more information contact Adam Macfie on 8951 8728

Issued: 9am Friday, 20 April 2007