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Greening Australia excited by the release of 13 new ALEP Learning Guides

The Aboriginal Landcare Education Program (ALEP) started at Greening Australia in the Northern Territory in 1994. ALEP's training is based around practical community projects and employing Aboriginal staff is central to the ALEP philosophy. ALEP focuses on increased employment and healthy lifestyle options for young Aboriginal people, but ensures the whole community from children to elders are included in the projects.

The ALEP Learning Guides were first developed for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the Top End, but with the addition of local resources (such as local plant identification books) are very applicable to all areas of Australia.

Greening Australia has just released its second series of ALEP Learning Guides and there are thirteen new training units for sale. The units of competency are frequently used within Certificates I to III in Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management courses. As such they cover, where possible, the elements, performance criteria and required skills and knowledge of each unit.

The principal goal of these resources is to support the learning process; the intent is that they will be used in an interactive manner with learners rather than as self-paced study guides. The structure and sequence have been designed to follow the logical steps of the practical tasks wherever possible. Concepts are introduced and then consolidated with group discussion and/or practical activities.

Volker Mischker, one of the developers of the guide and an ALEP Trainer, considers that these guides provide a sound technical foundation, however, he strongly encourages trainers to complement the guides with additional, authentic resources from relevant industry texts and websites. "The guides can be used in part or in their entirety but trainers should always link them to practical activities to strengthen the students understanding," said Mr. Mischker.

Mike Clark, Pilbara Program Manager for Greening Australia went on to say that genuine consideration was given to the level of language used in the guides. "The goal has been to find a balance between simplifying the language to an accessible level and ensuring that the vocational concepts are addressed. It is hoped that with appropriate support these texts can provide an opportunity for students to strengthen their language, literacy and numeracy skills as well" he said.

Greening Australia also engaged Aboriginal people in the development of these ALEP Guides to ensure that they are suitable for use within a program based on Aboriginal pedagogies.

This learning guide series was developed as part of Greening Australia's Indigenous Training Program that is funded through their partnership with BHP Billiton Iron Ore. "BHP Billiton is proud to support Greening Australia to provide valuable conservation and land management training to communities throughout the Pilbara" said Gavin Price, Head of Environment, BHP Billiton Iron Ore.

The guides are available for sale individually or in a set from the Greening Australia website www.greeningaustralia.org.au. If you would like any further information about these guides or any of Greening Australia's other programs please contact info@greeningaustralia.org.au, or phone (08) 8947 3793 to order.