

Dr Stuart Field

AMOSC

The engagement of indigenous sea rangers in supporting oil spill response in remote Australia

Indigenous Sea Rangers are fast becoming a significant resource in remote northern Australia for a range of on ground monitoring and response activities. Federal and State agencies alike have recognised the potential of these groups as an effective resource for a range of remote area monitoring and response programs including biosecurity, fisheries and border security operations. With a growing number of groups gaining experience in a range of remote reconnaissance and sampling activities they are establishing themselves as a ready resource for application to other tasks.

Given the remoteness of the northern Australian coastline, oil spill monitoring and response activities in this region can be logistically complex and expensive. Collaborations with Indigenous sea ranger groups spread across the region has been recognised as a potential resource for reconnaissance, first strike response activities and support for ongoing operations in the region.

Through engagement and training programs, the Australian Marine Oil Spill Centre, in collaboration with member companies, is looking at potential opportunities and interest of these groups in supporting oil spill response activities in these remote regions. This initiative, in combination with the existing response commitments of the groups, highlights the importance of the groups to provide remote response capability.