

KIMBERLEY LAND COUNCIL NEWSLETTER



FIRST QUARTER | APRIL 2022



Aboriginal people are warned that this newsletter may contain images of deceased people.

MABU NGIMBI,

Jirrilngany Walalakoo

Stand Strong Mob of People

I am very pleased to be leading KLC members alongside the Board, CEO Tyronne Garstone and Deputy CEO Sarah Parriman into 2022.

The beginning of this year has been very different to most. The Kimberley has seen the arrival of COVID-19 and the pandemic has continued to have a significant impact on our operations. The KLC has responded by moving to a 'work from home' model, and I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the KLC team to continue delivering services to our members despite these challenges. KLC staff have been quick to adapt to remote working, and the organisation has continued to operate effectively. The KLC recently hosted the first native title holders' meeting conducted solely using video conferencing technology. You can read more about the meeting on page 5 of this newsletter.

Whilst we continue to ride out the impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic in the Kimberley, I encourage you all to remain safe. If you haven't already, get vaccinated to keep you and your community protected against COVID-19. If you feel unwell with COVID-19 symptoms, get tested, listen to and stay up to date with the latest health advice.

With state borders now open around Australia, Tyronne and I have been able to travel interstate to attend important conferences and meet with other leaders. Most recently we attended the first Uluru Dialogue for 2022 held in Cairns in Queensland. Ahead of May's Federal election, the KLC, Indigenous leaders and other leading land councils from around the nation are calling for a referendum on a First Nations Voice to Parliament.

It's been nearly five years since hundreds of Indigenous people gathered at Uluru, calling for constitutional change, pointing out Indigenous people were being denied a say in laws that affected them. The Uluru Statement was delivered on 27 May 2017. It called for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Since then, the KLC has been at the forefront of the campaign to create a Voice to Parliament, a body which would have a say on laws and policies affecting all First Nations people. Though the Uluru Statement was delivered nearly five years ago, it has not been enacted.



The KLC is calling on Australians to make a First Nations Voice to Parliament an election issue, and will continue to be at the front of the campaign, calling on all parties to make a true commitment to holding a referendum on a First Nations Voice to Parliament within two years.

In March I travelled down to Perth to attend the Fitzroy River Film Festival Screening of 'Voices of the River'. The Voices of the River documentary series premiered online last year, and featured 10 Traditional Owners from around the Martuwarra talking about the importance of protecting the river. It is important the voices of Kimberley people are heard around Western Australia, the nation and the world to ensure the Martuwarra and cultural heritage in the Kimberley is protected.

The KLC continues to campaign for the protection of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage. With the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill (2021) now passed, the KLC will look to ensure there is an appropriate co-design process, where we will continue to advocate for Traditional Owners' right to say no. The KLC will be releasing a special edition newsletter on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill in the next month.

This year we also look forward to the launch of a KLC book celebrating 40 years of the land council's work and advocacy getting back country and looking after country for future generations in the Kimberley.

As we move further into 2022, the KLC will continue to navigate and adapt to changes to ensure we are best placed to be amplifying the voices of KLC members from around the Kimberley, advocating for Aboriginal people and our cultural heritage.

Anthony Watson
Chairperson, Kimberley Land Council



TRIBUTE TO MR DAVEY



The KLC would like to acknowledge the incredible life and legacy of Mr Davey, following the sad news of his passing. We extend our sincere condolences to the Davey family and share this tribute with their permission.

Mr Davey was one of the original supporters of the KLC, and at the forefront of KLC leadership for over two decades. Employed as a field officer with the KLC in the early days, he played an instrumental role organising many of the early meetings and on ground logistics of the KLC.

Later he would serve as a Director, Deputy Chairperson and Chairperson, and most recently he has provided vision and guidance as the Deputy Chair on our Executive Board.

He was a strong campaigner for Indigenous rights throughout his whole life. Last year, Mr Davey and his son Moochoo travelled to Perth to dance and sing outside Parliament House calling for stronger heritage protections and the protection of the Fitzroy River.

We understand that this is a time of sadness and mourning for many. The KLC Board and staff extend their deepest sympathies to his wife Maureen, his children and extended families.

Below we share a quote from Mr Davey during his time as Chairperson in 2013.

“The Kimberley Land Council took me on a long journey all around the place, it taught me a lot about country and I met a lot of people throughout the Kimberley. Today, I look back at how far we have come and at what we have achieved all these years. The KLC, one of our oldest Aboriginal organisations, started with the old people, who everyone said could hardly read or write, but they stood up for their rights.”

—
Mr Davey, 2013.



NGARRAWANJI PRE-INCORPORATION MEETING FOR NEW PBC

KLC's first native title meeting held solely by video conference

Congratulations to the Ngarrawanji native title holders on the successful pre-incorporation meeting for their new prescribed body corporate in March.

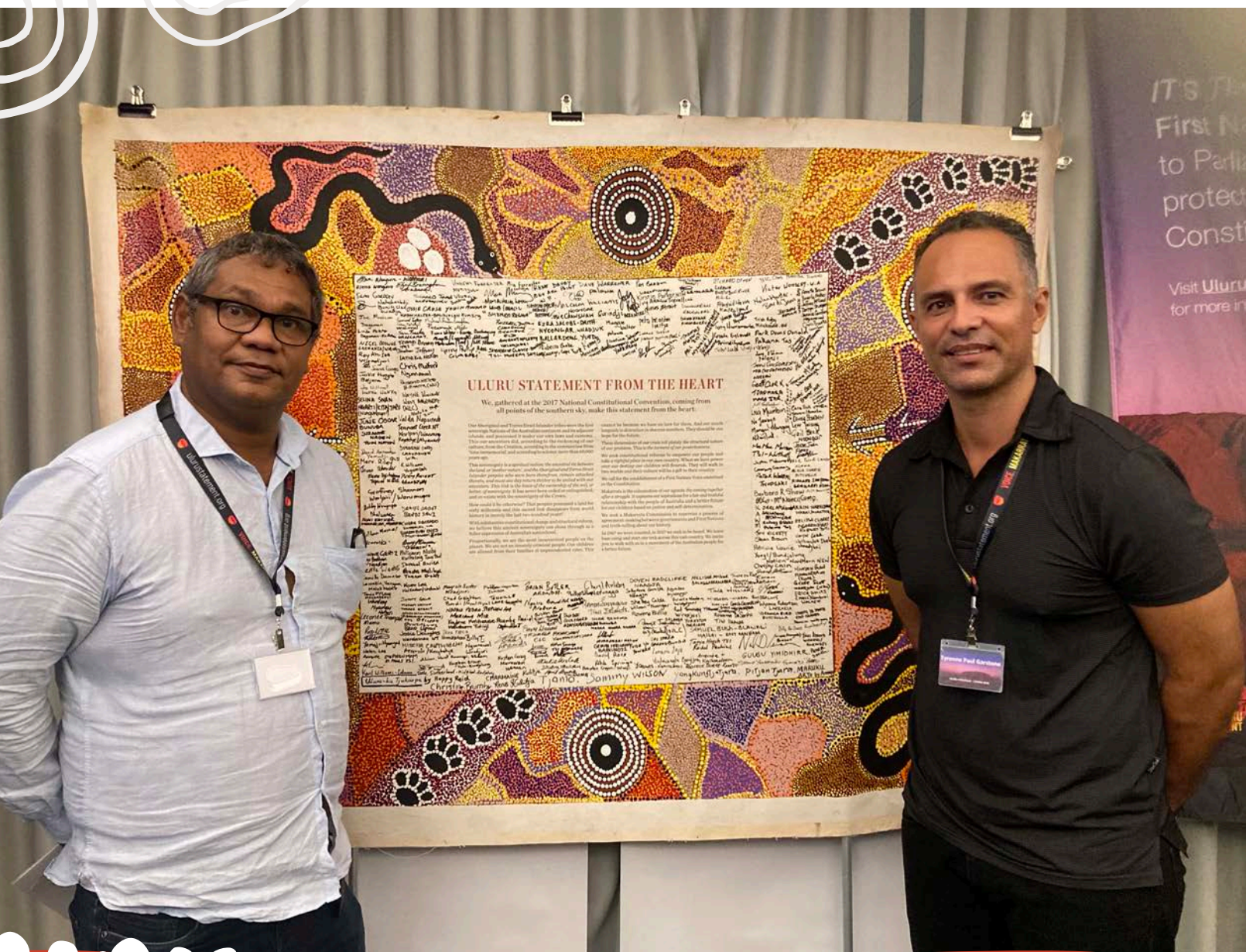
The meeting was a big success especially as it was the first native title holders' meeting the KLC has held solely using video conferencing technology.

It was great to see such good attendance, with participants making comments, discussing issues, and asking questions as they would in a face to face meeting.

With COVID-19 in the Kimberley, the KLC may conduct more meetings online in our efforts to keep our community and staff safe. We know not everyone has access to a computer or a smart phone – the KLC will always make sure we provide options for people to participate.

We'd like to extend a big thanks to the legal and native title teams for pulling it all together, and of course the KLC's awesome IT team for making sure the technology worked so the meeting could run smoothly!







KLC CHAIR AND CEO ATTEND THE FIRST ULURU DIALOGUE MEETING FOR 2022



It's time for a referendum on a
First Nations Voice to Parliament.

The Kimberley Land Council and Indigenous leaders from around the nation are calling on the next Australian government to hold a referendum on a First Nations Voice to Parliament within two years.

It's been nearly five years since hundreds of Indigenous people gathered at Uluru, calling for constitutional change, saying Indigenous people were being denied a say in laws that affected them.

The Uluru Statement was delivered on 27 May 2017. It called for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Since then, the KLC has been at the forefront of the campaign to create a Voice to Parliament, a body which would have a say on laws and policies affecting all First Nations people.

Though the Uluru Statement was delivered nearly five years ago, it has not been enacted.

This April the KLC participated in the first Uluru Dialogue meeting for 2022, held in Cairns, alongside a strong representation of Land Councils from around the country.

There, the Uluru statement leadership asked Australia's politicians to make an Indigenous Voice to Parliament an urgent election issue.

KLC CEO Tyronne Garstone said a First Nations Voice to Parliament must have bipartisan support.

"It's time for Australia to accept this opportunity to stand alongside First Nations people. We are asking voters to make their support for a First Nations Voice to Parliament protected by the Constitution known."

"Ahead of the upcoming election, write a letter to your local member to say why you support the Uluru Statement from the heart."

"We need to see a true commitment from both parties for a referendum on a First Nations Voice to Parliament."

"The timing is right and the timing is now."

Show your support for the Uluru Statement. Write a letter to your Federal MP via this link: <https://ulurustatement.org/take-action/write-to-your-mp/>





WOMEN IN FIRE FORUM



The Kimberley Land Council hosted **50 Indigenous women rangers** from 13 different ranger groups within the Kimberley Ranger Network in Broome last month for the very first Women in Fire Forum.

Held at the Liyan-ngan Nyirrwa Cultural Wellbeing Centre, the meeting covered topics, such as women in fire leadership, GIS mapping with Indigenous Mapping Workshop Australia and presentations from rangers about early season fire management. It was an important way to acknowledge the key role that women play in early season fire activities, as well as understand the barriers and challenges that they face.

Looking to the future, rangers identified training and capacity building, regional and national fire projects, and developing external partner support for the Kimberley Ranger Network as key priorities.

It was awesome to have KLC fire and technical staff in the room, as well as project partners Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Department of Fire Emergency Services - Bushfire Centre of Excellence, Bush Heritage, Indigenous Desert Alliance, Environs Kimberley, Desert Support Services and WWF Australia.

We look forward to building even more momentum for Indigenous women in fire, with future events that focus on developing practical skills in the field and understanding of the very important cultural aspects of conducting fire in the Kimberley.

The Women in Fire Forum was made possible with funding from the Commonwealth Government Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources and WWF-Australia.



WOMEN RANGERS CULTIVATE RARE TREE ORCHID

Bardi Jawi and Nyul Nyul female rangers have learnt how to cultivate a rare native tree orchid thanks to a new training program offered at North Regional TAFE in Broome.

The once abundant cymbidium canaliculatum tree orchid is now extinct in many areas of the Kimberley due to the illegal collection of the flower, altered fire regimes and other environmental changes.

The orchid program is part of a collaboration between North Regional TAFE and Curtin University to help local communities rebuild wild populations of the rare flower.

John Curtin distinguished professor Kingsley Dixon contributed to the training. He said he enjoyed teaching the rangers and was glad they found the exercise of value.

"The questions they asked indicated they were ready to do some deep dives into propagation theory, which is so encouraging," he said.

The advanced training aims to give rangers the skills to grow the Kimberley tree orchid and reintroduce it into the wild in areas where the flower used to thrive, such as the Dampier Peninsula and along Gibb River Road.

Nyul Nyul ranger Lilian Lawford said the rangers were given baby orchids and experimented with different techniques to duplicate and grow the plants locally as part of their training.

"It was really interesting to learn more about orchids and we are interested now to record where they still are on country," she said.

The program will work with Aboriginal communities in the Broome and Derby regions to develop a seed collection, propagation and replanting program.

Another key aspect of the program will be to seek out and obtain seeds of the rare apple-green variety of the orchid that has been hard hit by illegal collectors.

The flowers cultivated by the program will be supplied to local nurseries in hopes that collectors can get the orchids without damaging their wild populations.

Bardi Jawi Oorany ranger Tiayana Edgar said she found it interesting learning about different plants and how to grow them.

"I reckon we could do more research on the orchids and try grow some in our nursery," she said.

"I hope our nursery can look as good as the TAFE nursery and have more plants so we can rehabilitate more areas of country for the future."

Local care and maintenance of the reintroduced species along Gibb River Road will be supported by three major stations, with the program wrapping up in 2026.

Bardi Jawi Oorany ranger Vivien Hunter said she and the other rangers who took part in the training program were passionate about growing plants and caring for country.

"This course helped us to do that work better and understand the nurturing needed to grow orchids," she said.



FUNDING BOOST FOR INDIGENOUS RANGERS!

The has KLC welcomed the recent announcement that jobs in Aboriginal land management will be doubled under an expansion of the **Indigenous ranger program**, which received a **\$636 million funding boost**.



KLC CEO Tyrone Garstone said the funding is reflective of the success of Indigenous land management around Australia.

"The funding reflects the excellent work that ranger groups do on country and is an acknowledgement of their invaluable contribution, not only to the environment but also their communities," he said.

"These programs empower local people to look after country in culturally appropriate ways."

"Ranger groups play the central role in managing some of Australia's most pristine and fragile landscapes, but the benefits reach deep into communities with employment and positive social change. It's a win-win for all Australians."

Indigenous rangers look after nearly half of Australia's protected areas and most of the Kimberley region.

"The KLC looks forward to continuing to develop the Kimberley Ranger Network as a world leader in Indigenous land management."



RANGERS WORK TO PRESERVE BILBY HABITATS IN FITZROY CROSSING

The Kimberley is one of the few areas in Australia where bilbies are found and Indigenous rangers are helping to protect them.



The Gooniyandi Rangers recently worked in partnership with Traditional Owners, the KLC fire team and ecologists from the KLC, and Environs Kimberley to conduct important research and protect bilby habitats.

Traditional fire management promotes healthy habitats for native animals. Burning small areas early in the year when the weather is cooler reduces the severity and damage caused to habitats and food sources by late season wildfires.

The KLC fire team works in partnership with Traditional Owners, Indigenous ranger groups, State Government, pastoralists, DFES and a range of other stakeholders to conduct early season burns each year.

After the Gooniyandi rangers heard there had been bilby sightings by Traditional Owners on a block near Fitzroy Crossing that was due to be burned, a team of ecologists from KLC and Environs Kimberley planned to join the rangers to conduct a post burn bilby survey of the area.

The low intensity of early season fire does not harm bilbies, they burrow deep underground to keep safe. With the controlled burn clearing dense vegetation, the rangers and Traditional Owners were easily able to identify bilby tracks and burrows.

The team successfully set up cameras to the opening of 4 active bilby burrows that will remain there collecting data for vital research over the next month.

The rangers also conducted vegetation surveys of nearby areas that had been burnt over previous years led by Environs Kimberley. These surveys will help scientists understand more about vegetation rehabilitation after fire and how it impacts bilby food sources.

Bilbies are listed as vulnerable to extinction. The work done by Indigenous rangers learning more about where bilbies are found, monitoring trends in their populations and determining best practice land management are important ways to conserve bilbies in the wild.



NEW KLC PARTNERSHIP: QANTAS GREEN TIER PROGRAM

The Kimberley Land Council is proud to be a partner of the Frequent Flyer division of Qantas through its new Green Tier program.

Frequent Flyers who choose to give back to the KLC will be supporting a proven success story of Indigenous-led conservation, and positive cultural, social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal people. Making a donation will also count towards the goal of attaining Green tier.

From the desert to the sea, the KLC works with prescribed body corporates, ranger groups and KLC members to create a better future through native title, conservation, advocacy and economic development.

A core focus of our work is the support of more than 100 Indigenous rangers from 18 different ranger groups through the KLC facilitated Kimberley Ranger Network (KRN). The KRN plays an important role in helping Kimberley Aboriginal people to realise their aspirations to look after and manage country through a combination of traditional cultural knowledge, western science and modern technologies.

From the development of the very first ranger group in the Kimberley 15 years ago, to the thriving interconnected network we see today, Kimberley rangers are leading the way in Traditional owner-led land and sea management.

We thank each and every Qantas Frequent Flyer for their contribution to the KLC and Qantas for choosing us as a valued partner.

These contributions will directly assist us deliver real environmental, social and economic outcomes, and a better future for Aboriginal people.

Visit the [QANTAS website](#) to find out more.



WELCOME DANIEL OADES

The KLC is excited welcome Daniel Oades into the role of Land and Sea Unit (LSMU) Manager. The extensive experience and organisation knowledge Daniel Oades brings to the role will see the KLC continue to support Kimberley rangers to lead the way in Traditional Owner-led land and sea management.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Due to COVID-19 in the Kimberley, Kimberley Land Council offices and workplaces are temporarily closed to all non-essential visitors.

This arrangement is in line with the KLC's organisational COVID-19 Response Plan and follows the majority of KLC staff moving to working from home arrangements in February.

Members and the wider community can continue to contact staff via the KLC reception phone line on (08) 9194 0100 or via email reception.bme@klc.org.au. Individual staff members can be reached via their direct mobile numbers and emails.

During the office closure essential visitors will only be accepted into KLC workplaces upon presentation of acceptable proof of COVID-19 vaccination. Social distancing and mask wearing requirements remain in place.

We thank you for your patience and understanding during this time.

FITZROY RIVER FILM FESTIVAL IN PERTH

In March the KLC co-hosted the Fitzroy River Film Festival alongside the Kimberley Like Nowhere Else to continue to raise awareness about the importance of protecting the Martuwarra Fitzroy River. KLC Chair Anthony Watson travelled down to Perth to attend the screening and represent the Land Council.

The Voices of the River documentary series premiered online last year, and featured 10 Traditional Owners from around the Martuwarra talking about the importance of protecting the river. It is important the voices and stories of Kimberley people are heard around Western Australia, the nation and the world to ensure the Martuwarra and cultural heritage in the Kimberley is protected.

SAVE THE DATE



25 May 2022

KLC Special General Meeting

There will be a special members' meeting on 25 May 2022 for KLC members to make a decision on whether or not to approve changes to the KLC Rulebook. The KLC will send out a formal notice with more details on the proposed changes, time and location for the meeting soon.



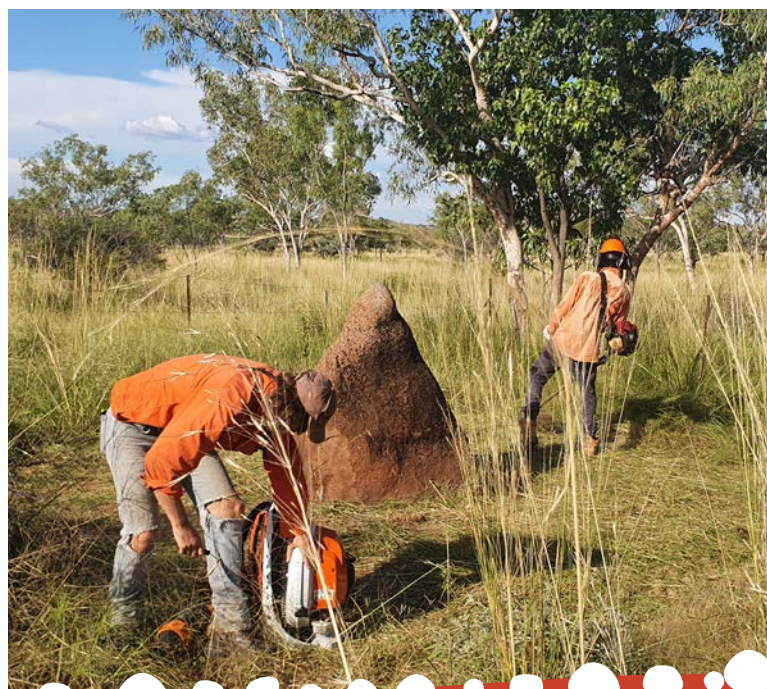
RIGHT WAY FIRE PROGRAM

The KLC, in partnership with the Kimberley Ranger Network, has begun the 2022 “Right Way Fire Program.” Indigenous Rangers from around the Kimberley have been putting their fire training into practice with landscape scale early season fire across the Kimberley.

The fire program has experienced a few delays with the onset of COVID-19 in the Kimberley, but the KLC fire team have been travelling extensively since February completing consultations and beginning both ground and aerial operations with the Kimberley Ranger Network. So far this season prescribed burning has been completed with Nykina Mangala, Ngurrura, Nyangumarta and Karajarri.

The KLC is continuing to work alongside Kija, Nyaliga and Balangarra completing early season aerial burning. Conditions in the East Kimberley have been challenging this year, and the fire team remains focusses on infrastructure protection burning.

Fire operations across all Kimberley Ranger Network groups will continue throughout May, June and July.



KIMBERLEY LAND COUNCIL

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The Kimberley Land Council welcomes donations to support our activities. Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

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