



**KIMBERLEY LAND COUNCIL**  
getting country back caring for country securing the future

# NEWSLETTER

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## Farewell to an inspirational warrior



Frank Sebastian was one of the visionary founders of the Kimberley Land Council in 1978 and we are deeply saddened by his passing on June 24, 2012.

Mr Sebastian was fondly known to all as Gudjai and he will leave a lasting legacy at the KLC. Gudjai was at the frontline of the Noonkanbah march and was a strong advocate for Indigenous rights.

KLC Co-Chair Tom Birch described Gudjai as a fighter and an inspirational leader.

"Gudjai was one of the founding members of the KLC and he has been instrumental in building our organisation into what it is today," he said.

"He was a strong advocate of land rights as seen in his days as a young warrior protesting at Noonkanbah, and more recently in his fight for native title for all Kimberley Aboriginal people.

"Gudjai was passionate about the KLC. He was a lifetime member of our organisation and an Executive Director right up to the end. Gudjai will always be a part of the KLC family and we are proud to have known this true Indigenous leader."

# Looking Back @ the KLC



## Five years ago: 2007

The Ngurrara native title determination was handed down on November 9, 2007 – recognising an area larger than Tasmania as exclusive possession native title land.

The Ngurrara claim is located in the Great Sandy Desert. Immediately after the determination, Traditional Owners declared the Warlu Jilajaa Jumu Indigenous Protected Area across 16,430 square kilometres of country in the north-eastern section of the claim area.

KLC Executive Director Wayne Bergmann said the native title determination and the declaration of the Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) would assist Traditional Owners to look after their culture and environment

while also generating jobs.

“Being recognised as the rightful owners of our traditional lands means Aboriginal communities can take control of country and of our own future and that is why Traditional Owners work so hard to secure native title,” he said.

“We live in the modern world, and we need to find ways to combine the modern world with our history and culture. Having an Indigenous Protected Area over parts of our land is one way of doing this.

“IPA’s mean communities can combine their responsibilities to country with economic opportunities and create real jobs working for all Australians to protect and care for the environment.”



## Ten years ago: 2002

In 2002, the Kimberley Land Council was working on 32 native title applications. Through its role as the Native Title Representative Body for the region, the KLC, called on the WA Government to negotiate native title determinations through consent rather than litigation and honour its promise for 10 consent determinations in WA by the end of its first term.

The call to the Gallop Labor Government came after the High Court sent the Miriuwung Gajerrong native title case back to the Full Federal Court for a final decision despite recognising native title continued to exist on pastoral and

mining leases within the claim area. The Miriuwung Gajerrong native title claim was held up in litigation for more than a decade.

KLC CEO Wayne Bergmann said he wanted the State Government to set up and support a negotiating framework where the rights, interests, issues and concerns in the claim area could be mapped out and resolved with the Miriuwung and Gajerrong people, pastoralists, miners and others.

“We can’t keep sitting around for years waiting for court decisions. Instead, we have to move forward and find less costly – in money and human terms – and lengthy processes for working out how we share the land,” he said.



## *message from the* **Chairmen**

The KLC has been working extremely hard to progress native title in the Kimberley. We recently celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the Mabo decision, and although Aboriginal people have come a long way in being recognised as the Traditional Owners of our country, there needs to be improvements to the Native Title Act.

The Federal Government announced proposed changes to the Native Title Act as part of the anniversary celebrations, but these reforms do not go far enough and will not reduce the burden put on Aboriginal people to prove they are native title holders.

The KLC Executive Board continues to support reversing the burden of proof as a way to speed-up the native title process. We also call for greater cooperation with the State Government in settling native title claims through negotiation and consent. The KLC has been successful in achieving native title for Kimberley Aboriginal people and 65 per cent of the Kimberley is determined native title land. But there are some people in the Kimberley that have been waiting their whole life for land rights and we are working with these claim groups to settle native title as soon as possible.

In line with the KLC vision, we are working to get back country but we are also looking after our country and the Kimberley Ranger Program is one example of this. Some of our Executive Board members recently travelled to San Francisco to attend the International Funders for Indigenous People Conference to promote our land and conservation activities. While they were there they also worked to establish an international ranger network so we can team up with other Indigenous people from across the world to tackle environmental challenges on a global scale.

People attending the conference were very impressed with our ranger program and this was further evidenced when Daniel Oades, the KLC's IPA Coordinator was chosen by the Federal Government to represent Australia and the Kimberley at the recent Rio 20+ Conference in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. At the conference, Australia put forward the idea of an international ranger network which was warmly accepted.

Our Bardi Jawi Rangers have also been setting the standard worldwide for their expertise in dugong tagging. Some of the rangers recently travelled to Abu Dhabi at the request of the United Arab Emirates Government to teach local rangers about how to tag dugong for research. The rangers spent 11 days training local rangers on how to assemble satellite tags, track dugong and install the devices that enable monitoring using computer technology.

There has been much happening in the Kimberley at the moment, and as always we have many meetings planned so we can continue to engage with native title claim groups and keep Kimberley Aboriginal people informed about important issues and activities that are happening on your country.

The KLC, KALACC and KLRC Annual General Meetings will also be happening at Gambanan on the Dampier Peninsula from September 25 to 27. It is an election year for the KLC and the KLRC, so please start thinking about who you want to represent your claim group.

All that the KLC has been able to achieve in its history and will continue to achieve in the future is because of inspirational leaders like Gudjai. He was a friend to all and will leave a lasting legacy at the KLC.

**TOM BIRCH & FRANK DAVEY**





# Farewell to a true Indigenous leader: *Frank Sebastian*

Frank Sebastian was one of the visionary founders of the Kimberley Land Council in 1978 and we are deeply saddened by his passing on June 24, 2012.

Mr Sebastian was fondly known to all as Gudjai and his legacy at the KLC will never be forgotten.

Gudjai was a fighter, a strong man who stood up for the rights of Kimberley Aboriginal people. He was at the frontline in the epic land rights battle at Noonkanbah, where as a young man, he took on an international mining company.

Gudjai was one of the Kimberley's leaders and he stood strong and proud as he carried the banner at Noonkanbah, fighting for the right for Aboriginal people to be able to make decisions about their own country.

Kimberley elder and KLC special adviser John Watson, was also there at Noonkanbah, standing side-by-side with Gudjai.

"I can only say in 1978, him and I carried that flag when we demonstrated against that mining company AMEX," he said.

"They were strong people at that meeting, as you can

see in that old photo of people marching behind the banner. A lot of them passed away, and those young people you see running around as part of that photo: they had their own children and they carry that with them.

"I'm going to miss him; when we were on Yawuru country, he always welcomed us."

The KLC was born out of the land rights battle at Noonkanbah and Gudjai was one of the organisation's inspiring leaders. He has been at the KLC from the beginning and continued to be an Executive Director of the KLC right up until the end.

"He committed himself to the KLC. He was one of the founders of the KLC. If I was one of the founders of an organisation like the KLC, I would be the proudest man ever because the KLC is working with all Kimberley Aboriginal people and is getting what the people want," KLC Co-Chair Frank Davey said.

"He stood his ground. No-one could move him. He was a fighter. He was serious about a lot of things – about land and his own people. But he could also joke; and he will be fondly remembered for that as well."



Gudjai was a land rights activist and fought hard to get native title for his mob – the Yawuru people. He was the first named applicant on the Rubibi native title claim, which took more than 10 years to be determined and was followed by a long appeals process.

At the determination hearing on April 26, 2008, he spoke of the long fight he had been involved in to get native title.

“History hasn’t always been kind to Yawuru people. We had no say when our land, our home, was taken from us, and we were pushed towards the edges. But we stayed strong and true to our culture,” he said.

“We have always cared for our country, and followed our traditions and customs. The Yawuru world has changed over the last two hundred years, and we have changed along with it. But we have never forgotten who we are, or where we belong.”

Irene Davey, and old friend of Gudjai’s, said he was a determined man, who helped make it possible for Kimberley Aboriginal people to get their land back through native title.

“He was a highly respected man. He was one of the founding members of the KLC, he loved the KLC and he was the KLC through and through. He believed in what the KLC does and he understood the people,” she said.

“He was really passionate about land rights and letting the right people speak for country. He was really strong in believing that people need to do what they have to do because they have a right to do that - he respected other people’s opinions.

“He was a great friend of mine and we are going to miss him, really miss his ways and how he was with people. He was a friend to young and old, a friend to everyone.”

The Board and staff of the Kimberley Land Council extend their deepest sympathies to the McKenzie, Sebastian and Edgar families. We will miss him, but we are all proud to have known this true Indigenous leader.

Note: Photo permission has been granted by the family and images are used only to honour his memory and share his story.



# Karajarri & Nyangumarta

On Friday May 25, the Federal Court handed down a native title determination to the Nyangumarta and Karajarri communities across shared country near 80 Mile Beach in Western Australia.

The Nyangumarta/Karajarri joint determination resolves two overlapping claims of the Nyangumarta and Karajarri peoples, two different tribal groups who share traditional laws and cultural connection to the area. Justice North handed down the Federal Court's decision at an on-country determination at Anna Plains Station.

The Kimberley Land Council and the Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation acted on behalf of the Karajarri and Nyangumarta claimants to negotiate native title across 2,000 square kilometres of land and sea country across Anna Plains Station, a portion of Mandora Station and 80 Mile Beach, in the East Pilbara and West Kimberley regions of WA.

Kimberley Land Council Executive Board Member and Karajarri Traditional Owner Anthony Watson said the Nyangumarta/Karajarri joint native title determination highlighted how two tribal groups could work together to achieve land rights.

"This determination is about co-operation and respect for each other. For these two groups to come together, acknowledge their shared interests in this country and achieve a successful native title consent determination is very powerful," he said.

"Native title provides our people with rights; rights to enjoy our country and make decisions about what happens on our country. We welcome today's determination."

Nyangumarta Traditional Owner Margaret Rose said: "Years ago, this country was shared between the two groups, from way back. Native Title brought conflict because we each had to prove that land



# peoples get joint native title rights

was ours. But through strong connection to country, we were able to show how both groups are connected to the land together.

“This brings hope that other groups can follow this example and share country in a happy spirit. It’s appropriate that this is happening in reconciliation week.”

Karajarri Traditional Owner Thomas King said the determination was the final step for his people in securing native title across all their traditional country.

“All our land and sea country is now covered by native title. This shows the commitment and determination of our people to pursue land rights. But native title is about more than land rights, it’s about finally being recognised as the traditional owners of our country,” he said.

“Our people have a great connection to country. Our law, language and culture are vibrant and alive. We want to leave a lasting legacy for our children and with today’s native title determination we can achieve that.”

The determination is comprised of mostly non-exclusive native title rights, permitting Traditional Owners to hunt, fish, gather, access and conduct ceremonies on their ancestral lands.

Simon Hawkins, CEO of Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation, congratulated the groups on their achievement.

“The Nyangumarta and Karajarri people should be very proud; this is a positive achievement for everyone. This is a historic day, and a cause for celebration,” he said.





# Bardi Jawi Rangers





# travel overseas to share dugong tagging expertise

The KLC Bardi Jawi Rangers travelled to the United Arab Emirates in April to share their expertise in dugong tagging techniques with rangers in Abu Dhabi.

The 11-day knowledge-exchange was organised by Charles Darwin University, the KLC and the Abu Dhabi Environment Agency Department.

Bardi Jawi head ranger Philip 'Bibido' McCarthy said the experience was unique and he was proud that his ranger group, from One Arm Point, had been recognised for its expertise in dugong tagging and research.

"It was just an amazing experience for us to come from a remote little area in the Kimberley and to go assist and train these people in this quite big, different area, with a totally different culture, in the Persian Gulf," he said.

"We never thought that we'd have the opportunity to tag dugong somewhere else. Travelling to Abu Dhabi and working over there was quite an eye opener and it was an amazing trip."

Mr McCarthy said the Bardi Jawi Rangers were singled out to assist the Abu Dhabi rangers because of their expertise in the field and ability to safely capture dugong and tag them with satellite trackers. The local rangers can now use the technology to better understand the migration patterns of these animals as well as the distances they travel.

"We caught three dugong ourselves, and successfully trained a local ranger who caught and tagged a dugong himself on the last day. The trip

was a great success, not only for us but for them as well," he said.

Bardi Jawi Ranger Dwayne George said it was great to work with international rangers and was the start of a partnership between the two groups to share knowledge and expertise. He said much of the trip focused on teaching the Emirates rangers about the technology and how to use it.

Mr George, who is highly-skilled in safely capturing dugong, said they used a spotter plane to help them locate the endangered species.

"Once you have located the dugong, you follow it for a while to tire it out and then you jump on the tail, but you've got to hold it tight and grip it, because the dugong will try to take you under and fight you," he said.

"You have to keep hold of the tail until it gets tired and then you can clip on the harness. Then you pull it alongside the boat with the harness and put a pool noodle underneath its pectoral fins to help it keep upright and breathing, and then you can put the tag on.

"It's a good feeling when you successfully tag a dugong. And it's fun. It's one of the things I love to do as a ranger."

The Bardi Jawi Rangers have been tagging dugong in waters around Bardi Jawi Country since 2006, as part of a program with Dr Richard Campbell and Dave Holly from Edith Cowan University, the Western Australian Department of Environment and Conservation and the Kimberley Land Council.



A photograph of a man with a white beard, wearing a blue short-sleeved button-down shirt, light blue trousers, and a dark hat. He is standing on a reddish-brown rock formation in a vast, arid landscape with sparse green shrubs and a clear sky. The text 'Nyikina Mangala say 'no' to uranium' is overlaid in large white letters with a black outline on the right side of the image.

# Nyikina Mangala say 'no' to uranium

## Call to mining companies to respect Aboriginal decision-making

The Nyikina Mangala people have called for a ban on uranium exploration and mining on their country but under Australian law they are powerless to stop it.

The native title claim area, which includes country from Derby to the Fitzroy Valley, is resource-rich and as a result is almost completely covered with exploration and mining tenements.

Coal and gas exploration is the focus for many of the companies, but it is uranium the Nyikina Mangala people want nothing to do with.

However, under the Native Title Act, Aboriginal people have no power to say “no” to exploration and no right of veto over mining on their land. Instead they rely on the good will of mining companies to respect their decisions.

Nyikina Mangala elder John Watson said it was

shameful that Aboriginal people could have native title rights but no right to say “no” to resource exploration or mining on their country. He said it was disappointing that uranium companies were ignoring the Nyikina Mangala people’s pleas to leave their country alone.

“We don’t want uranium in our country, in the Nyikina Mangala area because it’s bad stuff.

“Go away. No means no.

“We really think it’s a bad thing, no uranium mining or exploration in our land.”

There are currently several applications for uranium exploration on Nyikina Mangala country but there could be more as resource companies do not have to disclose to the native title party what minerals it is exploring for.





Mr Watson said the Nyikina Mangala people have refused to consult with uranium companies wanting to explore on their country.

“We want to send a clear message to uranium companies that we want nothing to do with them,” he said.

“We have a little bit of voice now and we understand what mining companies and the Government are doing. They’re not listening to us; we make a lot of noise but they’re not hearing us. Most of these uranium companies are getting exploration tenements even though we keep saying “no”.

“We don’t like to be mined no matter how they want to do it; it’s not our law to let people do that mining, that uranium mining. We have special places.

“If something happens to those special places the

strength of that area will be no more. Our cultural belief, our cultural connection is important which is why we are trying to have heritage claims over those areas to protect those songs, stories and beliefs that have been passed down to us.

“That’s our land and we should speak for our land. We have the right to do that.”

Annie Milgin said she was opposed to uranium exploration and mining because she feared the negative impacts it would have on country.

“What’s going to happen to our next generation, we need to think about the kids. When we are gone what’s going to happen to the next young ones?” she said.

“Uranium, it’s scary for us. It’s not right. People should be listening to us when we say we don’t want it.”

# Mabo Anniversary

## timely for review of Native Title Act

The Federal Government recently announced proposed changes to improve the native title system in a bid to settle all claims within the next 20 years.

To coincide with the 20th Anniversary of the historic Mabo decision, Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin and Federal Attorney General Nicola Roxon outlined the changes the Government wants to implement to make the native title process faster and cheaper.

The proposed changes include guidelines for good faith negotiations, making Indigenous Land Use Agreements more flexible, establishing agreements about historical extinguishment, making native title payments tax free, and creating new access arrangements for parks and reserves.

KLC CEO Nolan Hunter said although he welcomed any reforms, the proposed changes did not go far enough.

"The Federal Governments reforms are merely minimal changes. They will not speed up the native title process by reducing delays or lessen the burdensome cost of getting land rights," he said.

"The KLC has and continues to be a supporter of reversing the onus of proof. The current native title system works against Aboriginal people, who have to prove they have an unbroken connection to country dating back to sovereignty. When you have a history that is based on oral traditions this becomes a long and difficult process.

"In the Kimberley, many of our people walked off the desert only 50 years ago but we still have to go through a complex and bureaucratic process to prove we are the traditional owners of our country. This process can take up to 14 years and puts undue stress and pressure on Aboriginal people while creating angst amongst families."

Mr Hunter said the rights awarded to third parties were given priority over Indigenous considerations and could often cause extensive delays to the progression of native title claims.

"The rights of third parties to object to native title often take precedence, causing long delays to the process. It is so easy to challenge native title law. Five native title claims in the Kimberley have been determined through the litigation process at a huge human and financial cost. We won all of those native title cases," he said.

"As it has been 20 years since the Mabo decision and the introduction of native title, it is quite timely for a proper review of the Native Title Act to see if we can make changes to the current system that will be of benefit to all parties and work to make the process more timely and effective."

KLC Co-Chair Tom Birch said the Mabo decision was a powerful moment in Aboriginal history and praised the bold stand Eddie Mabo took in the battle for land rights.

"Despite the complexities of the native title process, native title is highly symbolic to Kimberley Aboriginal people as it provides our people with recognition, rights and interests," he said.

"The strong connection of Kimberley Aboriginal people has been recognised by the Federal Court of Australia. As a result, more than 65 per cent of the Kimberley is determined native title land.

"I just hope that in the next 20 years Aboriginal people can continue to work with the State and Federal Governments to improve the native title process so that we can see more native title claims determined by consent and in a timely manner."



# KLC AGM 2012

It's that time of year again when the three leading Indigenous organisations of the Kimberley – the Kimberley Land Council, the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre and the Kimberley Language Resource Centre – come together for their Annual General Meetings.

The AGM's will be held at Gambanan on the Dampier Peninsula between September 25 and 27. This year is an election year for the KLC and the KLRC. It is important KLC members come to the AGM with an idea of who they want to elect to the Executive Board to represent their native title claim group. The KLC Executive Board meets four times a year and directors are elected for two years.

The AGM is an important time for business but it is also a celebration of unity and a time for old friends to catch up. The AGM also provides us with a chance to reflect on the previous 12 months – and assess our positive achievements and outcomes while prioritising the tasks and challenges ahead.

For more information on the AGM please contact:

Kimberley Land Council - 91940100

KALACC - 9191 5317

Kimberley Language Resource Centre - 9168 6005



# Endangered Black-footed Rock Wallaby

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# found in the Edgar Ranges

The KLC-facilitated Nyikina Mangala Rangers have photographed four elusive Black-footed Rock Wallabies in the Edgar Ranges, using hi-tech sensor cameras.

The Black-footed Rock Wallaby, which is endangered, is extremely shy and largely nocturnal, hiding in the rocks during the day and coming out to forage at night.

Nyikina Mangala Ranger Coordinator Terry Marshall said it was the first time his ranger team had used the movement and heat sensor cameras out in the field to search for the Black-footed Rock Wallaby.

“Our old people told us that the wallabies were in the Edgar Ranges, so we thought we’d go out and check that they were still there – to make sure we hadn’t lost them,” he said.

“The wallabies only feed at night and they spook really easily. You only see these guys on their own; they’re not like the big reds which travel in pairs.

“It’s a good thing that we found them. The main threats for the Black-footed Rock Wallaby are

damage to its habitat from wild fire, overgrazing and predators such as wild dogs.

“This was our first trip using the sensor cameras and conducting formal spotlight surveys. It would be good if we could set more cameras along the range so we can start to monitor these rare wallabies and find out how many there are, where they can be found and what they need to survive.”

The Nyikina Mangala Rangers have started a partnership with WWF to monitor and record rare and threatened animals on country.

The KLC-facilitated Nyikina Mangala Rangers have also been busy with fire management, conducting controlled burns on-country, as well as weed management – including removing patches of Parkinsonia and Rubber vine to keep country healthy.

The Kimberley Ranger Program is funded through the Department of Sustainability, Environment Water, Population and Communities as part of the Working on Country Program.





# Goolarabooloo

The Goolarabooloo Jabirr Jabirr native title claim group will meet on August 7 and 8 to discuss what they wish to do with the native title claim; keep it, amend it or end it.

The meeting is being held after the Goolarabooloo Jabirr Jabirr Applicant instructed the KLC to organise the meeting so the whole claim group could decide whether it should split and lodge individual native title claims or if it should remain together as one group.

This follows the resolution of a previous meeting on February 22 this year, when the claim group resolved to remove apical ancestors Paddy Roe (Goolarabooloo), Chimbere Sitocay and Nyobing Babere (both Yawuru). The effect of this was that only the Jabirr Jabirr people would remain as members of the native title claim group.

The WA State Government and Woodside objected to the amendment of the native title claim. As a result, the KLC, in May, called a meeting of just the Jabirr Jabirr members of the native title claim group. At that meeting, the Jabirr Jabirr people did not support amending the Goolarabooloo Jabirr Jabirr native title claim but did support discontinuing the whole native title claim, so both the Goolarabooloo and Jabirr Jabirr people could pursue individual native title claims. Both the Goolarabooloo Families and Walman Yawuru group supported this.



# Jabirr Jabirr

## native title meeting

The WA State Government and Woodside objected to the proposed discontinuance and served Breach Notices and Suspension Notices on the GJJ Applicant in relation to the Browse LNG Project Agreement. These notices put at risk all the Traditional Owner benefits that were negotiated as part of the Browse Agreement.

Under this extreme pressure from the State Government and Woodside, the Goolarabooloo Jabirr Jabirr Applicant, decided they could not and would not make decisions about the native title claim as they could have severe consequences. The Goolarabooloo Jabirr Jabirr Applicant decided they needed to consult with the entire Goolarabooloo Jabirr Jabirr claim group about what needed to be done.

Three options will be presented to the Goolarabooloo Jabirr Jabirr native title claim group at the meeting in August. These include amending the claim, discontinuing the claim or affirming the claim as appropriate for the native title claim area.

The decision of the Goolarabooloo Jabirr Jabirr native title claim group will not put the Browse LNG Precinct Project Agreement at risk.

MEANWHILE the KLC Regional Solutions Unit, which hosted the Browse LNG Project, has closed due to funding for the unit not being renewed. As a result, the KLC's ongoing involvement in many of the activities relating to the Browse LNG precinct will no longer be possible.

As the KLC is the solicitor representing the Goolarabooloo Jabirr Jabirr native title claim group, it will continue to have obligations to provide advice in respect of matters that affect native title rights and interests in the Goolarabooloo Jabirr Jabirr native title claim area. Therefore, the KLC will continue to advise the Goolarabooloo Jabirr Jabirr native title party of its obligations under the Browse LNG Precinct Project Agreement. The extent of the KLC's involvement will, as with all its work, be subject to the funding and resource requirements of other native title claims and projects.

The KLC will continue to provide legal advice to the native title group on heritage matters in line with the Heritage Protection Agreement signed with Woodside and the State Government. The KLC will be working with the Goolarabooloo Jabirr Jabirr Applicant and the Environmental and Cultural Heritage Team to ensure the views of Traditional Owners are properly considered as part of State and Commonwealth approval processes for the Browse LNG Precinct.

# Rio 20+ Earth Summit

## Daniel Oades: my story

**The Rio 20+ Earth Summit is a United Nations conference that brings Indigenous delegates from across the world together to discuss sustainable development. At the Summit, Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard launched the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Land and Sea Managers Network based on the successful ranger model in the Kimberley and northern Australia. She also launched the One Place, Many Stories: Our Country booklet which focuses on National Heritage Listing in the West Kimberley. KLC employee Daniel Oades was one of two Indigenous people chosen to represent Australia at the conference.**

On June 18, I headed off from the Broome Airport to join the Australian delegation at the Rio 20+ Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. I was full of anticipation for the trip as the purpose of heading over was to launch the International Indigenous Peoples and Communities Traditional Knowledge Network and it was my first visit to South America. I was scheduled to talk alongside Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Environment Minister Tony Burke, and I was a touch nervous about what I was required to do.

With a quick overnighter in Sydney, it was off to the international airport to meet up with my colleague Melissa George, who is from North Queensland and the Chair of the Indigenous Advisory Committee. I am also a part of the committee and our role is to advise Minister Burke on Indigenous issues.

The next stage of the trip included flights to Auckland, Santiago, Buenos Aires and then finally RIO!! Along the way we had one vomiting kid, free airport beer in Santiago and I had to pay \$100 to enter Buenos Aires in Argentina, so we could pick up Melissa's bag before we rushed through the airport and customs to catch out next flight. We also had a pre-flight emergency



when a passenger had an epileptic fit. It was an epic journey but we got there and were happy to see our mate Bruce at Rio Airport to pick us up.

Upon arriving at the hotel and getting out of our taxi, it was quickly evident that the red carpet wasn't for us and we were kindly moved off it. We then settled in and met some other Australian Government workers and enjoyed some of the local food and drink before going to bed. We stayed at the Royal Tulip, San Conrado and had the African nations and the Iran Delegation, including its President stay at our hotel along with our own Prime Minister. The security presence was everywhere and with more than 170 nations attending, there were lots of VIPs to look after.

The next morning we had a fair bit of waiting around and thought it best to work on our speeches and have them approved. Due to Minister Burke being unexpectedly held up in Parliament, answering questions on Commonwealth marine parks, Prime Minister Julia Gillard took on a more central role in launching the international network.

When driving to the Rio 20+ summit convention centre, which was huge, the international flavour of the conference became apparent. There were side events happening everywhere and we made a beeline for the Australian Office where we met other delegates who helped us prepare for the Australian launch. That afternoon we met with international delegates including the New Zealand Maori, Norwegian Sami and South American tribes from the Amazon who were supporting Australia and becoming involved in the network initiative.

As we were about to launch the initiative, more and more people started to come into the event including ministers from other countries and the media. Just before the start of the event the room was packed and they had to close the door to people.





The Australian Ambassador started proceedings, before handing over to the Brazilian traditional owners to welcome everyone and open the event.

The first speaker was the New Zealand Environment Minister, followed by Norway and the Sarmi. Prime Minister Julia Gillard was then introduced and spoke about the good work Indigenous rangers were doing in Australia and the wealth of knowledge Traditional Owners had. She then officially launched the International Indigenous Peoples and Communities Traditional Knowledge Network.

Soon after it was my turn to speak, and in my speech I discussed the importance of sharing knowledge at local, regional and international levels and used the example of the Bardi Jawi Ranger Dugong tagging project from back home in the Kimberley.

I believe it was well received but it all happened so fast. At the conclusion of the speeches we mingled with other supporters of the network and then posed for photos with the Prime Minister.

In the next couple of days we did some media interviews for Australian radio. We also discussed the functions of the international network with supporting nations and thought about ways we could showcase it at an important conference in Darwin next year.

Other highlights of the trip were taking in the sites of Rio de Janeiro including Christ the Redeemer, Copacabana Beach and Sugarloaf Rock while tasting the local food and drink. After a final dinner with the Australian Delegates at a Brazilian BBQ, which I'm sure my Kimberley mob would love, it was time to pack up and travel all the way back to Australia. Again travelling was an adventure and although we missed scheduled flights we still made our connecting flight back to Sydney. It was a relief to finally get on the Qantas Jumbo headed for home in Broome, after what was a whirlwind adventure and amazing experience.

## Daniel Oades Staff Profile

Daniel Oades is a Bardi Jawi man from the Dampier Peninsula. He has worked at the Kimberley Land Council for the past six years and has taken on various roles as the Bardi Jawi Ranger Coordinator, Acting Land and Sea Manager and Regional Indigenous Protected Area Coordinator.

Daniel works to positively promote the use of Indigenous knowledge to look after and manage Kimberley country and has extensive experience working in conservation and land management through the Kimberley Ranger Program.

He is a member of the Federal Government's Indigenous Advisory Committee which advises Environment Minister Tony Burke on matters of Indigenous importance.

Daniel is working with the Federal Government to promote the work of Indigenous ranger groups and set up an international network as a way to share knowledge and foster partnerships.



# KLC travels to San Francisco

A contingent Of KLC Executive Directors travelled to San Francisco in May to attend an Indigenous conference and promote Aboriginal values of the Kimberley.

The International Funders for Indigenous People Conference aims to foster relationships between Indigenous Peoples and philanthropists. The theme of this year's conference was: Toward a Better World: Strengthening Indigenous Sustainability.

KLC CEO Nolan Hunter said our organisation attended the event along with KRED Enterprises with the aim of forming an international ranger alliance with other Indigenous people across the world, so we could set up a strong network in which to tackle environmental challenges on a global scale.

"This is the big vision the KLC has been working towards – setting up an International Ranger Alliance," he said.

"The conference was fantastic and enabled us to network and share ideas with other Indigenous tribes from across the world. We also talked to many philanthropic organisations and gained an insight into what programs and activities they support. Everyone seemed extremely impressed with our ideas," he said.

KLC Co-Chair Frank Davey said the KLC was leading the world in its conservation management activities, implemented through the Kimberley Ranger Program which hosts 13 ranger groups across the region and employs 60 full-time Aboriginal people.

"We learnt a lot about the experiences and challenges

of other Indigenous people across the world and shared stories about our activities and programs. In terms of conservation management and our ranger program we are well in front of the rest of the world," he said.

"Aboriginal people in the Kimberley are really moving forward and other Indigenous people want to know about what we do and want to learn from us. Our ranger program is the best; people from all over the world want to know about it."

Special adviser Irene Davey said the highlight of the trip to San Francisco was participating in a march in Golden Gate Park against alcohol and drug abuse. She said the walk was a great idea that she hoped to adapt to the Kimberley to support various projects and raise awareness of issues within communities.

"The problems we face are global and Indigenous people the world over are experiencing the same issues. We spoke to many people about the ways they are dealing with them and some can be adapted to other countries and some can't," she said.

"But the walk I attended is something that we could do. We don't do anything like that and we should.

"We could do a walk from Ardyaloon to Beagle Bay and follow in the steps of the old people walking across the country. Each community talks about the same problems and the problems alcohol and drugs have had on our life and why don't we walk against it and say we don't want it?"





## *The stories you weren't supposed to hear ...*

San Francisco is a long way from the Kimberley, with its bright lights, bustling city, millions of people and big airports. So needless to say, the trip overseas was an adventure for our KLC delegates, some of whom had never been overseas.

KLC Executive members and staff that travelled on the trip included Frank Davey, Nolan Hunter, Irene Davey, Merle Carter, Butcher Wise, Peter Murray, Wayne Bergmann, Ari Gorrington, Sonia Leonard, Maureen Davey and the Bardi Jawi dancers.

For Butcher Wise it was definitely an expedition that started when his bags got lost on the way to San Francisco. But with his Kimberley cowboy style, the Americans loved him, thinking he was a film star whenever he walked into the room.

Mr Wise had many encounters in San Francisco, where he quickly learned to use chopsticks or risk going hungry.

But the most interesting experience for Mr Wise, was when he was walking down the street after the conference.

"I had my cup of tea because it was cold outside and I walked passed this man on the street and he had a cup in his hand and was holding it out to me. I thought he wanted some tea, so I went to pour some in," he said.

"But he didn't want my tea; he wanted money because he was a beggar, so I had to give him some

dollars instead. It was pretty funny."

It was also Merle Carter's first trip overseas and it wasn't long before she ran into trouble. Sitting at the San Francisco airport lounge waiting for her next flight towards home, Merle had some spare time so decided she would venture outside for a quick cigarette – but once outside she couldn't get back in.

Airport security assisted Merle and she made it to her terminal but her absence did not go unnoticed.

"I had caused panic amongst the rest of the group and Ari was stressing and went to look for me," she said.

"I was fine though. When I heard Ari had gone looking for me and I saw her walking towards me, I quickly walked up and said sorry for causing you stress, so she couldn't growl at me."

But it wasn't until the group went to visit the Christensen Fund that they found a piece of home in the form of Jimmy Pike paintings hanging on the wall. It was a special moment for Peter Murray, who is the grandson of Jimmy Pike.

And of course KLC Co-Chair Frank Davey couldn't travel to the USA without a quick detour to Las Vegas.

"You win some and you lose some," was all he said about his luck at the casino.

# RARE DOLPHINS FOUND IN THE NORTH KIMBERLEY



Indigenous rangers teamed-up with WWF-Australia to scour the north Kimberley coastline in a bid to uncover the secrets of rare and threatened dolphin species.

The Kimberley Land Council-facilitated Balanggarra Rangers worked with WWF scientists on a three-day survey trip to conduct research on the Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphin and the Snubfin Dolphin, which was recognised as a new species (*Orcaella heinsohni*) in 2005.

During the survey trip the group found and recorded pods of Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphins, but found no Snubfin Dolphins, despite confirmed sightings of pods in the past. This highlights just how rare and threatened this unique species is.

“This research trip was extremely important. We need to find out more about the Snubfin Dolphin so we have the information to be able to protect and manage it into the future. Because so little is known

about this species, every bit of information counts,” WWF-Australia’s Alexander Watson said.

“The rangers are out here regularly and they have the responsibility for Sea Country management so we have been working with them for the past four years to build the information base for understanding and managing inshore dolphin species.”

Balanggarra Ranger James Birch said the survey trip was an important step in finding out more information about threatened dolphin species.

“We travelled more than 350km across the Cambridge Gulf in search of the elusive Snubfin Dolphin but were unable to find any. This shows the vastness of land and sea country Balanggarra Rangers manage and how rare this species is. Numbers are low and more research needs to be done so we can work to manage and protect them,” Mr Birch said.





“We did however encounter pods of Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphins and recorded their location, numbers and behaviour patterns. We also took photos so they can be included in a dolphin identification database.

“As rangers, this trip was really important for us as it gave us the opportunity to better understand the specifics of conducting marine surveys and marine mammal encounters. We are at the frontline of conservation and biodiversity projects in the Kimberley and this trip has been invaluable in finding out more about rare dolphin species so we can help protect them into the future.”

WWF-Australia, the Balanggarra Rangers and the KLC will continue to work in partnership on Snubfin Dolphin research projects into the future.





# Kimberley Land Council

The Kimberley Land Council welcomes donations to support our activities – donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible. The Kimberley Land Council acknowledges the financial support provided by the Commonwealth of Australia and the Government of Western Australia.



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