

KIMBERLEY LAND COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2022



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

MABU NGIMBI,

Ngaryu Marbu ngarnga milliya



I would like to begin by acknowledging the hard-working staff at the Kimberley Land Council. The staff in each of the units; native title, land and sea, corporate services and legal, work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the KLC is meeting its targets each year.

It was fantastic to see everyone come together at the all-staff workshop in October for development and truth-telling. The KLC could not do the work it does without these dedicated staff members.

I would also like to thank all of the KLC members who dedicate your time and energy to the future of our Kimberley region.

Recently, the Kimberley had a big win. The Commonwealth Government announced new heritage protections in response to the Juukan Gorge inquiry.

What this means for everyone here in the Kimberley, is that the Commonwealth will have stronger heritage protections which can challenge Western Australia's weak state heritage protection laws.

Indigenous leaders in Western Australia still have grave concerns that the legal destruction of the sacred rock shelters at Juukan Gorge could happen again under WA's heritage legislation that was introduced last December, despite widespread protesting.

Whilst sometimes it can feel like our wins are few and far between, in a nation where First Nations people still face so much imbalance and injustice, it is comforting to know that slowly, our voices are being heard.

I was fortunate enough to travel to Sydney this November alongside KLC cultural director Irene Davey to see the Uluru Statement from the Heart awarded the Sydney Peace Prize.

CEO Tyrone Garstone speaks more about what a Voice would mean for him on page 17 of this newsletter. I encourage you to think about what a Voice to Parliament would mean for you.

For me, a Voice to Parliament will mean equity. It will mean the hard-fought battles and losses of our elders will be recognised.

Both Tyrone and I have spent a lot of time travelling outside the Kimberley the past few months, away from country and family. We have been carrying your voice, the voice of our members, to Parliament House and to the political leaders of this nation.

Even when we are far away, we are working to improve the lives of the Kimberley Aboriginal people.

Like many, I continue to be saddened, frustrated and angry that our young people are still being locked up in facilities, far away from family and country, that harm not heal.

At the beginning of the year the KLC wrote a letter of support for the Marlamanu centre. On November 22nd, the announcement was made that KRED would be working alongside the Government to make that on-country facility a reality.

Again, this is a small win in a long fight to improve the lives of our young people. There is still so much to be done.

We held a number of large meetings in support of our members throughout the region as the KLC continues to support PBCs through our legal and native title teams. **This year the KLC was proud to provide support to 26 PBCs.**

The KLC successfully held a Special General Meeting in the middle of the year on the new changes in the Rule Book of the organisation. It was adopted and the new changes allow for broader representation of the growing number of PBCs within our region.

We will end the year with 12 Directors meeting in mid-December in Broome, setting a new way forward as we continue to support Kimberley Aboriginal people.

I also look forward to the launch of *The Shield and The Spear*. This book documents over four decades of strong leaders fighting for the rights of our people and helps us to remember why the KLC was started, the hard-won battles, and why we need to keep pushing for better outcomes for our people.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the new Board of Directors, the funders and partners of the organisation, the members, Deputy CEO Sarah, CEO Tyrone and my own family for their constant support.

Have a safe holiday season and happy new year.

Garliya Garliya

Anthony Watson
KLC Chairman

PHOTO: KLC Chairman in Canberra with Minister for Indigenous Affairs Linda Burney, Senator Patrick Dodson, Minister for Environment and Water Tanya Plibersek and Indigenous leaders from the National Heritage Alliance.

KLC WELCOMES FINDINGS OF INDEPENDENT KSDCT REVIEW

The Kimberley Land Council has welcomed the findings and recommendations of an independent inquiry and review into Kimberley Sustainable Development Charitable Trust (KSDCT) undertaken by leading barrister Anthony Power.

The trustee of KSDCT is Kimberley Sustainable Development Pty Ltd (KSD Pty Ltd). The extensive review found the KSDCT had discharged its primary roles and obligations remarkably well, and that its trustee acted independently of the KLC and in the best interests of the KSDCT and its beneficiaries, Kimberley Aboriginal people.

KEY FINDINGS:

- The KSDCT has since its establishment, and on the whole, discharged its primary roles and obligations remarkably well given the passage of time.
- There is no evidence of any wrongdoing by those associated with the KSDCT.
- The passage of time has meant that some of the functions of the KSDCT are no longer as well suited to the purpose for which it was established and that it needs to evolve.
- Recommendations for improvement in the governance and management of the KSDCT and its communication to beneficiaries.

The findings of Mr. Power's review have been presented to the KLC Board and were reported to KLC members at the KLC AGM in August, with the final report also available on the KLC website. The review has also been presented to KSD Pty Ltd and other affected parties.

KLC CEO Tyrone Garstone said the review provides important reassurance and clarity about the operations of the KSDCT and its many years of service to Kimberley Aboriginal people.

"Mr. Power's review shows that the KSDCT has been operating effectively and with integrity for the past two decades," Mr. Garstone said.

"It highlights the important role and purpose of the trust, as well as the steps it can take to continuously improve."

Conducted over the course of 14 months, the review looked at more than 24,000 documents and included 78 interviews.

"The review has made recommendations for improvement around how the governance and communication of the trust can be further strengthened, which the KLC has welcomed," Mr. Garstone said.

"An independent feasibility assessment is now underway to assist beneficiaries and the trustee to make informed decisions and move forward with the recommendations."

The KSDCT was established 20 years ago as a low-cost alternative to commercial for-profit trustees. The primary purpose of the trust is to ensure that the funds under management are preserved and where possible grown, and spent on beneficiaries of the trust rather than operating expenses.

KSDCT is administered by a corporate trustee, KSD Pty Ltd, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the KLC. The trustee is governed by an independent Board.

Mr. Garstone said he hoped the review would address any misunderstandings about the roles and operations of KSDCT.

"The KLC commissioned this review to ensure Kimberley Aboriginal people can have confidence that the KSDCT has been discharging its purpose and functions effectively and in their best interests," he said.

"The review has shown KSDCT has discharged its primary roles and obligations very well but like all institutions it needs to keep pace with changing times and circumstances."

"The KLC remains committed to acting with transparency and integrity as we work towards improving the cultural, social and economic well-being of Kimberley Aboriginal people."

"Commissioning Mr. Power's review of the KSDCT is consistent with this commitment as it has provided assurance for Kimberley Aboriginal people that the trust is being properly managed."

2022 AGMS OF KLC, AARNJA, KLRC AND KALACC: OUR TRUTH, OUR VOICE, OUR FUTURE

Thank you to everyone who travelled to Kupartiya in August to take part in the 2022 AGMs of the KLC, AARNJA, KLRC and KALACC.

It was a fantastic few days and although the event ended a day early due to poor weather conditions, it was filled with important discussions with our members and colourful celebrations of culture on Gooniyandi country.

This year saw the first Kimberley youth gathering event hosted by Empowered Young Leaders. Congratulations to all the young leaders who took part.

Thank you to the community of Kupartiya for hosting, to all our members and directors who travelled to take part, to all the staff and volunteers for their hard work supporting the event, and to Eva Nargoodah for her wonderful AGM artwork design representing this year's theme 'our truth, our voice, our future'.





“WE ARE HERE TO PROTECT THE RIVER THAT HAS SUSTAINED US FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS”

KIMBERLEY ABORIGINAL LEADERS CALL FOR PROTECTION OF ANCIENT RIVER

Kimberley leaders gathered on Gooniyandi country to call for the protection of the Martuwarra Fitzroy River in August, marking one year since the WA Government received a record-breaking 43,000 submissions calling for its protection.

The leaders gathered at the joint Annual General Meetings of the Kimberley Land Council, Kimberley Language Resources Centre, Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre and Aarnja at Kupartiya Community. Throughout the meetings the proposed development of the river was highlighted as a major concern for Traditional Owners.

Known as the lifeblood of the Kimberley, the river spans over 700km in length and sustains the country of Traditional Owner groups right throughout the region. The Martuwarra is national-heritage listed for its significant values, and the fresh water from the river supports healthy coral reef, mangrove, fish and wildlife populations throughout the Kimberley.

The WA Government is considering whether to allocate vast amounts of ground and surface water from the Martuwarra Fitzroy river for proposed dam and irrigation projects.

The KLC and Kimberley Traditional Owners are calling for the entire length of the Martuwarra to be protected, and damaging large-scale irrigation proposals to be rejected.

KLC Board Member and Nykina man Robert Watson said it is important the Government acknowledges and responds to the concerns of Traditional Owners at a critical moment in time for the Kimberley.

“We are standing here calling for the protection the river that has sustained us for thousands of years.”

“We’re at the brink after 150 years of pastoralism, we’re now moving into the bigger phase of agriculture along the river, and the impacts could be astronomical, if we don’t get the balance right.”

Walmajarri Elder, Mr. Joe Brown sang in language in support for the Martuwarra during the KLC’s AGM, highlighting the river’s protection as his top concern.

“I’ve got concern about the future of this river. I was born in the river, and my father came from life in the bush. That river is our main water source. What are we going to do if it is destroyed?”

KLC CEO Tyronne said the message from Kimberley Traditional Owners is united, the river must be protected.

“Our members hold serious concerns about the future of the Martuwarra Fitzroy River and its tributaries. Plans for large-scale irrigation will lead to irreversible damage for the river.”

“Kimberley Aboriginal people have native title rights throughout the entirety of the river. Our concerns about the future of this significant river system must not be ignored and we have never consented to the extraction of water from the river. We continue to oppose the development of the river and its floodplains,”

“Our connection to the Martuwarra, the lifeblood of the Kimberley, is through our culture and its protection must be Australia’s priority.”



CHANGING LAWS AND POLICIES

The KLC is continuing to respond to several government consultation processes regarding laws and policies that impact Aboriginal people.

It is important that PBCs and KLC members are aware of the law and policy making occurring at both the State and Commonwealth levels.

Current issues the KLC has been responding to include:

STATE

ACH Act co-design

The WA Government is undertaking phase three of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act (ACH Act) co-design process. The KLC has very strong concerns about the co-design process because:

- The submissions made by KLC and other stakeholders are not being adequately included in the development of the regulations, policies and guidelines.
- Each phase of the co-design process goes ahead before there is any feedback on the submissions made in the previous phase.
- The process seems to be stakeholders, in particular TOs, being told they will be listened to but then being told their concerns can't be addressed because the law has already been passed by Parliament.

The KLC also has significant concerns about the content of the regulations, policies and guidelines being developed in the co-design process. These concerns include:

- Traditional Owners are not the final decision makers about development or other activities that impact cultural heritage, because this power is given to the Minister and the government's Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Council.

- Insufficient funding is available (through government funding or cost recovery) for Local Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Services (LACHS) to properly perform their functions in the interests of Traditional Owners.
- The ACH Act gives rights to people who are not native title holders and calls these people "Knowledge Holders". This is not consistent with the Native Title Act and the outcomes of native title determinations, and may cause uncertainty and conflict.
- The due diligence assessment process as outlined in the draft ACH Management Code is proponent-led, and therefore does not recognise that Aboriginal people should be the primary decision makers with respect to their own cultural heritage.
- The time provided to PBCs/Traditional Owners/LACHS to respond to notices and negotiate agreements is not long enough for culturally appropriate decision making.

Final submissions on the ACH Act guidelines and regulations are due on January 6, 2023.

Land and Public Works Amendment Bill

The WA Government recently sought feedback on the draft Land and Public Works Amendment Bill. The Bill includes a new land tenure option called a diversification lease. A diversification lease can be granted for any purpose. For a diversification lease to be granted the appropriate future act process under the Native Title Act must be completed. This would occur via an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA).

The Bill presents both opportunities and risks for native title holders. While the KLC welcomes the potential positive economic impact that the Bill's diversification leases may create, we hold significant concerns that the legislation, in its current form, does not provide for the empowerment of First Nations or equal opportunity for native title holders to participate and prosper.

Disappointingly, stakeholders were given just two weeks to respond to the draft Bill. The KLC raised several concerns in its submission including:

- The need for the Bill to include provisions that stop compulsory acquisition of native title rights if agreement is not reached between native title holders regarding an application for a diversification lease.

- The Minister has too much decision-making power in the granting of diversification leases. The Minister should have a list of criteria they must consider before granting a diversification lease.
- The draft Bill does not include a process to ensure that PBCs can become the holders of diversification leases where appropriate and assistance should be made available to PBCs wanting to apply for a diversification lease.
- The Bill does not outline how native title holders will be adequately resourced to engage with third parties in ILUA negotiations.

The WA Government has a unique opportunity to create real and long-lasting positive change for Aboriginal people through an improved land tenure regime. However, this can only be achieved if the legislation:

- Includes mechanisms that empower native title holders to take-up the opportunities of diversification leases.
- Supports native title holders' ability to make free prior and informed decisions.
- Ensures agreement making of the highest standard that delivers real benefits.





Biodiscovery Bill for WA

The WA Government is seeking feedback on a Biodiscovery Bill for the State. Biodiscovery is the act of undertaking research and analysis on genetic resources, such as native flora and fauna, and identifying components of value. The outcomes that are produced by biodiscovery may have a commercial or scientific value. For example, using natural compounds found in a native plant to create new medicines or cosmetics.

The Biodiscovery Bill will regulate biodiscovery activities carried out on WA genetic resources and set out a framework for benefit sharing with the State when they are used for a commercial purpose. The WA Government has said that the Bill will also make sure that Aboriginal people get benefits when certain types of research into native plants and animals makes money when traditional knowledge was shared with the researcher and used in the research. As a result, the views, input, rights and interests of Aboriginal people should be at the forefront of the legislation’s development, design and drafting.

The KLC attended an initial workshop regarding the new Bill and identified a number of concerns, including a lack of clear communication and information sharing about the Bill, inadequate representation and participation by Aboriginal stakeholders and poor facilitation. The KLC also made a submission to the WA Government outlining some of the key issues for the WA Government to consider, particularly the need for the Bill to recognise that Traditional Owners:

- have rights in their traditional knowledge of genetic resources;
- can hold those rights collectively;
- can enforce those rights through an appropriate agency (i.e. the PBC); and
- must be resourced (through the PBC) to enforce their rights by consulting and negotiating with researchers and government.

COMMONWEALTH

Application of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Australia (UNDRIP)

The Commonwealth Government Joint Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs is conducting an Inquiry into the application of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in Australia.

The committee, which is headed up by Senator Patrick Dodson, is looking into the international experiences of the implementation of UNDRIP, considering options for improving adherence to UNDRIP principles in Australia, and assessing how the implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart can support the application of UNDRIP.

The KLC made a submission to the Inquiry focusing on the areas of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, native title, and heritage protection. The KLC identified many areas where the current laws of Australia fall short of the standards required for the Australian Government to meet its obligations under UNDRIP. The KLC’s full submission can be accessed by visiting www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees

Standalone legislation to protect and commercialise Indigenous knowledge

The Commonwealth Government is looking to draft legislation that would protect and commercialise Indigenous knowledge, and has been seeking the views of Indigenous people to assist in this process.

The KLC provided feedback to the Government based on its strong history of supporting and strengthening the rights of Kimberley Aboriginal people to claim intellectual property in their heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions.

The KLC’s experience is useful given the potential breadth and scope of the legislation, and its significant impact and interest to Aboriginal people. The KLC raised a number of issues in its submission, including how broad the legislation could be, the need to recognise the commercial value of Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous knowledge in cultural heritage and the complexities of enforceability and benefit sharing.

KIMBERLEY LAND COUNCIL WELCOMES NEW HERITAGE PROTECTIONS

The Kimberley Land Council has welcomed the Commonwealth Government's announcement to legislate new heritage protections in response to the Juukan Gorge Inquiry.

On November 24, the Commonwealth announced it will legislate new protections for Indigenous heritage sites following Rio Tinto's destruction of a sacred rock shelter at Juukan Gorge last year.

The government has accepted all but one recommendation from last year's inquiry, including to legislate new cultural heritage protections and review the Native Title Act.

KLC CEO Tyrone Garstone said a national standard is vital to the future protection of Aboriginal heritage.

"This is an integral step towards truth-telling. This is the nation acknowledging it is sacrilege to destroy our heritage."

"The destruction that occurred at Juukan Gorge was not an isolated incident. Here in the Kimberley, we have had countless sites desecrated and destroyed with those responsible often facing no consequences."

Mr Garstone said it is important that the Commonwealth legislation delivers real change and gives choice and decision-making to Traditional Owners.

"The response signals there will be an improvement to cultural heritage protection across the country. It will ensure there is a minimum standard that can be consistently applied throughout Australia."

"We have grave concerns regarding Western Australia's Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation introduced last year. WA's weak heritage protection laws would not prevent another incident like Juukan Gorge. The sooner the Commonwealth protections can be implemented, the better. We will be calling for the Commonwealth to intervene."

KLC Chairman Anthony Watson represented the Land Council in Canberra for the signing of the First Nations Heritage Protection Alliance Partnership with Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek, Minister for Indigenous Affairs Linda Burney and Senator Patrick Dodson.

The partnership will be key to guiding the reform process, with the government committing to the principles of free prior and informed consent, truth telling, open dialogue and genuine consultation.

Mr Garstone acknowledges the role the First Nations Heritage Protection Alliance will play in the Commonwealth Government's commitment to strengthening Commonwealth laws in relation to heritage.

"Indigenous voices and decision-making will be critical to this legislation being developed in the right way. There will be a higher law that can protect Aboriginal culture and heritage, and this will benefit those states and jurisdictions that have inadequate protection."



STRONG WOMEN SHARE AND CELEBRATE THEIR VOICES ON COUNTRY

The Kimberley Land Council proudly supported the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre Women's Culture Camp held on Bardi country in September.

Many inspiring women from throughout the Kimberley traveled long distances to camp at Gumbanan.

Women of all ages shared stories and took part in important discussions about regional issues over three days.

In the evenings the women celebrated culture with traditional cook ups, dancing and yarning circles.

Women rangers contributed to panel discussions and got together in break-out sessions to continue work on a strategic plan for the Kimberley Women's Ranger Network.



The strategy aims to help women rangers thrive by focusing on finding solutions to challenges faced by women in community. Rangers had a particular focus on workshopping how to build the number, skills and capacity of women rangers throughout the Kimberley.

The workshop was facilitated by KLC's Women Ranger Development Coordinator, Jackie, and a consultant, Leah, from Conservation Management.

The KLC would like to thank all the women ranger groups for their participation and engagement during the sessions, and The Thin Green Line Foundation for supporting the Women's Ranger workshop.

Thank you and well done to KALACC and all the volunteers who made the Women's Culture Camp an amazing few days on country.



VOICE TO PARLIAMENT

Kimberley Land Council Chair Anthony Watson and Cultural Director Irene Davey proudly attended the Sydney Peace Prize on November 18, representing the KLC's ongoing support for a Voice to Parliament.

The KLC congratulates First Nations leaders, Pat Anderson AO, Professor Megan Davis and Noel Pearson who accepted the prize on behalf of the many Uluru Dialogue leaders who worked tirelessly to deliver the statement in 2017.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart was awarded the Sydney Peace Prize for 'bringing together Australia's First Nations Peoples around a clear and comprehensive agenda; for facilitating healing and peace within our Nation; and for delivering self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, enabling Australia to move into the future with unity and confidence.'

In 2017, the KLC hosted one of the first Regional Dialogues in Broome, as part of the Referendum Council's First Nations constitutional dialogues.



The KLC then sent a delegation of Kimberley Aboriginal people to Uluru who played a role in developing the historic Uluru Statement from the Heart.

In the photo above you can see Irene pointing to her signature on the original Uluru Statement from that convention.

Both KLC CEO Tyronne Garstone and former CEO Nolan Hunter continue to actively be involved in supporting and promoting the Uluru Statement.

The KLC continues to advocate for the full adoption of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, including an Indigenous Voice in the Constitution, by the Australian Government.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart is the outcome of a robust, culturally legitimate process that represents a consensus view of First Nations across Australia.

It is an invitation to Australian people to walk with First Nations Peoples to create a better future.



What does a Voice to Parliament mean to you? KLC CEO, Tyronne Garstone

The Uluru Statement from the Heart is the only First Nations-led process that affirms the position that has been put forward by many First Nations leaders over the past century; that First Nations people need to have a direct say on laws and policies that impact their lives.

A Voice to Parliament will signify a shift in the nation's values, a shift towards shared prosperity. The idea that we all do better, when we all do better.

It will mean a greater level of accountability and advocacy for First Nations people in the regions. First Nations people will have the ability to have a real say around legislation and policy development on programs that impact the lives of First Nations people in this country.

It will act as a safeguard for First Nations people. It will ensure Australia continues moving forwards, not backwards.

A Voice will help all of Australia ensure that the services provided and the programs funded for First Nations people are tailored to meet the needs of the communities on the ground.

A Voice will mean a better future for our young people, with a heavier focus on preventative rather than punitive measures, like on country, Aboriginal-run and led initiatives. It will mean stronger commitments and real outcomes for First Nations wellbeing, with a focus on remote housing, economic development, training pathways, education, language and identity.

A Voice will be a new platform to connect with the Australian government and the Australian people that will see meaningful change for a better future of shared prosperity.

KLC CEO ATTENDS THE UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

In November, the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt hosted the 27th session of the Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC (COP 27), with a view to paving the way for future ambition to effectively tackle the global challenge of climate change.



KLC CEO Tyronne Garstone represented the Kimberley at COP27, joining leaders and industry from over 200 countries around the world.

In a panel facilitated by The Nature Conservancy North Australian Program Director, David Hinchley, Tyronne called for greater recognition of the role First Nations people can play in climate change mitigation.

"First Nations people have been managing country the right way for thousands of years. World leaders must recognise both the value of Indigenous land management and the disproportionate impact climate change is having on First Nations communities."

"In order to properly address the climate emergency the world is facing, First Nations people must be given a greater say in the global climate change response. They must be recognised for their ongoing contribution and their projects must be supported."

Tyronne also used the opportunity to highlight Indigenous land management in the Kimberley.

"Kimberley Rangers and Traditional Owners can play a powerful role in driving natural climate solutions, both through mitigation and adaptation when supported by an appropriate and enabling environment of good policy, institutions and infrastructure."

The KLC would like to thank The Nature Conservancy for supporting the KLC to attend COP27.

Looking forward, Tyronne says the KLC will continue to call for better legislation that enables Traditional Owner participation in clean energy development.

"I want to ensure Traditional Owners are shareholders not just stakeholders in the green energy revolution."



HISTORIC GATHERING OF NORTHERN AUSTRALIAN LAND COUNCIL CHAIRS AT CAPE YORK

In November, at the invitation of the Cape York Land Council, Kimberley Land Council Chair Anthony Watson attended the Atambaya and Gudang Yadhaykenu Native Title Determinations in Injinoo, Cape York Peninsula.

This significant occasion marked the return of more than 120,000 hectares of ancestral homelands to Traditional Owners in the northern region of Cape York.

Kimberley Land Council Chair Anthony Watson joined Mr Richie Ah Mat, Chair of Cape York Land Council, Mr Samuel Bush-Blanasi, Chair of the Northern Land Council and Mr Ned David, Chair of Gur A Baradharaw Kod Torres Strait Sea and Land Council (GBK) at the determinations.

This historic gathering of the Chairs of the four major councils anticipates the formation of an alliance representing the majority land and sea country owners across Northern Australia, creating a powerful voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to fully realise the potential of the world's oldest continuous living culture.

Photo Caption: Mr Anthony Watson, Chair of the Kimberley Land Council, Mr Ned David, Chair of Gur A Baradharaw Kod Torres Strait Sea and Land Council (GBK), Mr Richie Ah Mat, Chair of Cape York Land Council, Mr Djawa Yunupingu, Senior Gumatj Clan and Mr Samuel Bush-Blanasi, Chair of the Northern Land Council.



KLC ATTENDS THE FIRST EVER OCEANIA RANGER FORUM, HELD IN ROTORUA NEW ZEALAND

Supported by the International Ranger Federation, the forum brought together ranger professionals and conservation workers to discuss topics of common interest and concern, in an international networking and professional development event. Delegates from Australia, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Papua New Guinea attended, including KLC Land and Sea Manager Daniel Oades, together with Gooniyandi Ranger Virgil Cherel, as well as Angie and Clifford from the Ngururpa IPA Rangers.

The theme of the forum was 'Inclusive Conservation'. Inclusive conservation is an approach for accommodating and balancing different visions for protected area management and for achieving socially relevant, economically productive and environmentally sustainable outcomes in protected areas.



Thanks to Daniel for sharing his experience and insights from the forum in the interview below.

What did you do at the forum?

The Delegates took in Traditional Maori Welcome Ceremony and cultural tourism products, understood the context of settlement in New Zealand on the local Maori People and the impacts of introduced species on their natural environment and species as well as the efforts to rectify these impacts through conservation efforts. We heard from delegates from Samoa, Solomon Islands, PNG, Australia and Local Maori on their conservation projects. The discrepancy in support of conservation by different governments was glaring and some communities are managing country as volunteers with just the passion to protect country against huge opposition or social factors, so it was great to see this Forum also raise funds directly for those communities to get their rangers practical things we expect in Australia, like uniforms and boots.

What did you take away from the forum?

That there could be future regular Oceania forums adding value to our already established networks here in Australia and this would feed into the International Ranger Scene. Also, that we need to continue to invest in management of feral and introduced species into the long term as we done so much damage to country and species at home, it was shocking to hear of all the devastation that Australian

animals introduced to New Zealand have done to their wildlife particularly to their birds. The capacity building of Maori tribes (Iwi) by the NZ government was interesting and the planned divestment of responsibility of to those communities definitely of interest as well as the respect built in the Department of Conservation with Maori.

What was the highlight?

Seeing the impact of support from the Forum for the only female ranger from the Solomon Islands. She was quite emotional seeing so many rangers and particularly female conservation workers so it looked like that was going to give her a lot of drive to continue her work in her home country. Another highlight was the scenery of hills and lakes and the connection to Maori stories of the land.

The International Ranger Federation (IRF) is a non-profit organisation established to raise awareness of, and support, the critical work that rangers do in conserving the world's natural and cultural heritage. Founded in 1992, the IRF has members from over 50 countries, on six of the seven continents.



REMOTE SCHOOLS CELEBRATE NEW KLC TWO WAY SCIENCE PROGRAM

Yakanarra and Djugerari Remote Community Schools outside Fitzroy Crossing came together in October to celebrate the successful implementation of the Kimberley Land Council's Two-Way Science Program alongside Traditional Owners and the Ngurrara Rangers.

The KLC's Two-Way Science program, launched earlier this year, connects Indigenous Rangers with schools to deliver two-way science projects that are culturally responsive, utilise best-practice western science and deliver sound educational outcomes. The program uses both classroom activities and learning on country.

For this project, the KLC worked alongside the Ngurrara Rangers and Traditional Owners to co-design a program about using camera traps to survey animals at important cultural and ecological sites

Over the past few months, the Ngurrara rangers Sumaya, Regina and Emily have been sharing their knowledge and expertise by supporting the students to head out on country, set camera traps and conduct a native and feral animal survey.

Back in the classroom, the students recorded native animals like emus, dingoes, eagles and kangaroos in the images. Many feral animals like cattle, pigs and cats were also caught on camera.

The students analysed a month worth of data from from the camera trap images to create scientific graphs and a large mural. This prompted many discussions about the impacts of feral animals on country, and in particular, the impact of cattle on nearby springs.

To acknowledge the huge amount of work that made this project a success, the KLC surprised everyone with special two-way science t-shirts featuring a troopy - the vehicles used to transport the students from the classroom to the bush.

This project was a team effort and the KLC would like to thank the Ngurrara Ranger team, Djugerari and Yakanarra schools, the Department of Education and most importantly, the community members and elders who guided and fully supported this project.

More exciting two-way science projects are planned for both Djugerari and Yakanarra and other remote community schools in the Kimberley, like Ardyaloon and Beagle Bay so stay tuned.

Thank you to the National Indigenous Australians Agency for funding the program.

HUNDREDS OF DESERT RANGERS COME TOGETHER AT ULURU

Over 400 people from 50 Indigenous Desert Ranger groups across Australia travelled to Yulara to take part in the Indigenous Desert Alliance Conference in November.

Six desert ranger groups from the Kimberley travelled very long distances to join in three days of learning and regional networking; Karajarri, Nyangumarta, Ngurrara, Paruku, Ngurra Kayanta and Ngurrurpa as well as staff from the KLC.

Over the three days the rangers presented and took part in field trips to understand more about Uluru joint management, threatened species, fire management and two-way co-mapping workshops.

At the conference the Ngurrurpa rangers presented and shared learnings on their work on night parrots, Nyangumarta spoke about two-way science and Ngurrara spoke about fire in the desert.

KLC's Land & Sea Manager, Daniel Oades was also involved in broader discussions with other land councils in attendance. They spoke about working on development of the Indigenous ranger sector and what supports are needed to strengthen and sustain Indigenous land-management.

It's the first time since the event has taken place since 2019 due to COVID, and the value of getting rangers together in the one place sharing knowledge can't be underestimated.

Thank you to the Traditional Owners of Uluru, the Anangu people, the Yankunytjatjara and Pitjantjatjara for hosting, to IDA for coordinating and to all the desert rangers for the work they do caring for country.



WOMEN RANGER EXCHANGE: QUEENSLAND



A group of Kimberley women rangers and KLC staff set off on an exchange to Tropical North Queensland to learn from the Girringun rangers in October.

Women from Karajarri, Bardi Jawi Oorany, Nyul Nyul & Dambimangari ranger groups, alongside KLC's women ranger development coordinator, Jackie Wemyss, ecologist, Marlee Hutton and regional ranger manager Emma Sibosado took part in the ranger exchange funded by WWF Australia.

The Girringun rangers are based in Cardwell, 200 km south of Cairns. The rangers work across the Girringun Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) which covers over 1.2 million hectares in far north Queensland, including parts of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, the Great Barrier Reef and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

The Kimberley women spent three days with the Girringun rangers showing them around their beautiful fresh and saltwater country. The rangers had an incredible experience visiting country with very different landscapes to the Kimberley, whilst taking the opportunity to build new relationships with other strong women caring for country.

The rangers discussed the similarities of their work, learned about Girringun's Traditional Use Marine Resources Agreement (TUMRA) and developed an understanding of land tenure and joint management in Queensland.

A great partnership has been formed and we look forward to hosting the Girringun women in the Kimberley soon.

Thank you to Girringun Aboriginal Corporation, WWF and all the women rangers who took part.



Balanggarra and Kija Rangers take part in remote first aid training at Home Valley

REMOTE FIRST AID TRAINING

Kimberley rangers travel and work in some of the most remote places in the country.

Each year, it's vital the rangers take part in ongoing training programs so they can operate safely and effectively in the Kimberley bush.

To provide the rangers with the skills necessary to manage a medical emergency in the field, the rangers regularly undertake training in Remote First Aid.

During these training events, practical realistic scenarios are created, where rangers get to practice their skills and work as a team, with the focus on keeping each other safe.

The Remote First Aid training sessions are a necessary part of the rangers operations but also provide an engaging team building opportunity.

Lots of fake blood, make up and good acting is used to make the training as realistic and fun as possible.

Thank you to Home Valley Station & Balanggarra Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC for hosting the session in the East Kimberley.





RANGERS FIGHT LATE SEASON WILDFIRES

The Bardi Jawi, Nyul Nyul and Kija Rangers have made an enormous contribution to fire management in the Kimberley this year, helping to suppress over 30 late season wildfires

Working alongside the Department of Fire and Emergency Services WA, the rangers have spent countless days and nights fighting fires to keep their country, infrastructure and communities safe.

This time of year, late dry season wild fires can cause significant damage to wildlife and pose a big threat to communities.

Rangers are highly skilled in fire management and take part in extensive training through the KLC's fire program.

Women rangers have also been taking an active role in fire management following training at the women's fire forum held earlier this year for the Kimberley Ranger Network in Broome.

The rangers have been fighting the fires from both the ground and the helicopters, and have been successful in extinguishing multiple fires early, diverting fire from communities, roads and important cultural areas.

The KLC would like to thank the rangers for their work keeping country and community safe.

The KLC would also like to thank Rangelands NRM for supporting the KLC fire program for the Bardi Jawi, Nyul Nyul and Kija Rangers.



INDIGENOUS SALTWATER ADVISORY GROUP ANNUAL FORUM

In December the Indigenous Saltwater Advisory Group (ISWAG) met for the 3rd Annual Forum at the Yawuru Liyan Ngan Nyirrwa Centre bringing together nine Kimberley marine Ranger and Traditional Owner groups to share information about their marine management activities over the past 12 months.

ISWAG is led by Nyamba Buru Yawuru Senior Project Officer Dean Mathews and Daniel Oades, Kimberley Land Council Land & Sea Manager, who also co-ordinated the marine network.

Funding has just been received this year from Parks Australia to support a part-time coordinator position at Yawuru. Science partners and funding bodies were invited to join and presentations were made on key collaborative projects.

Funding opportunities and key Traditional Owner research and monitoring priorities were identified. ISWAG is expecting 2023 will be a busy and exciting year with technology and capacity building, turtle, dugong and seagrass being among the priorities.

The KLC would like to acknowledge the following partners that made this event possible: Nyamba Buru Yawuru, Parks Australia - Marine Parks Grants, Department of Biodiversity Conservation & Attractions (DBCA) and NESP Marine and Coastal Hub (National Environment Science Program), Full Circle Foundation and Millepede Foundation for their ongoing and valued support.

If you would like more information about the ISWAG program please contact the ISWAG Secretary, Mandela Yu on 9192 9600.





CELEBRATING KIMBERLEY RANGERS

KLC staff presented and shared updates and learnings on ecology, fire management, carbon, safety and training and development activities.

Rangers also took part in break out sessions to discuss challenges, brainstorm solutions and strategise for the future.

Guest speakers including former Karajarri ranger and The Indigenous Marathon Foundation Graduate Wynston Shovellor-Sesar Shoveller and Tonii (Wajayi) Skeen from Empowered Young Leaders spoke about well-being initiatives and youth leadership opportunities.

The KLC was proud to recognise the hard work of rangers with the annual ranger leadership and achievement awards presented by KLC CEO Tyronne Garstone and Daniel Oades on the last day.

Congratulations to all the rangers who received awards!

Thank you to all the Kimberley rangers for your dedication to caring for country. Kimberley rangers are leading the way in Indigenous land management.

Over 120 rangers from the Kimberley Ranger Network gathered in Broome in December to debrief on what has been a big and exciting year.

Each ranger team gave a presentation on their work and on-country trips from throughout the year. These stories give a true insight into the incredible work rangers do in some of the most remote areas of Northern Australia.

Land and Sea Manager Daniel Oades also provided an update on Indigenous Salt Water Advisory Group developments, after their 3rd annual meeting was held at Yawuru in December.



Kimberley Ranger Network Recipients of the Leadership and Achievement Awards

THE SHIELD AND THE SPEAR: KIMBERLEY LAND COUNCIL RELEASES 40TH ANNIVERSARY BOOK



Former KLC Chairman, Mr Tom Birch, reading The Shield and The Spear at the Croc Cafe in Wyndham

“The Shield and the Spear captures over four decades of struggles, challenges, protest and achievement from our leaders. Today, the KLC is proud to have achieved native title recognition across 97% of the Kimberley.”

- KLC Chair, Anthony Watson

The Kimberley Land Council shares over 40 years of history, protest and knowledge in new illustrated book

From on country meetings in the Kimberley, to the High Court of Australia, to the halls of the United Nations: for 44 years the KLC has been the political voice for Kimberley Aboriginal people.

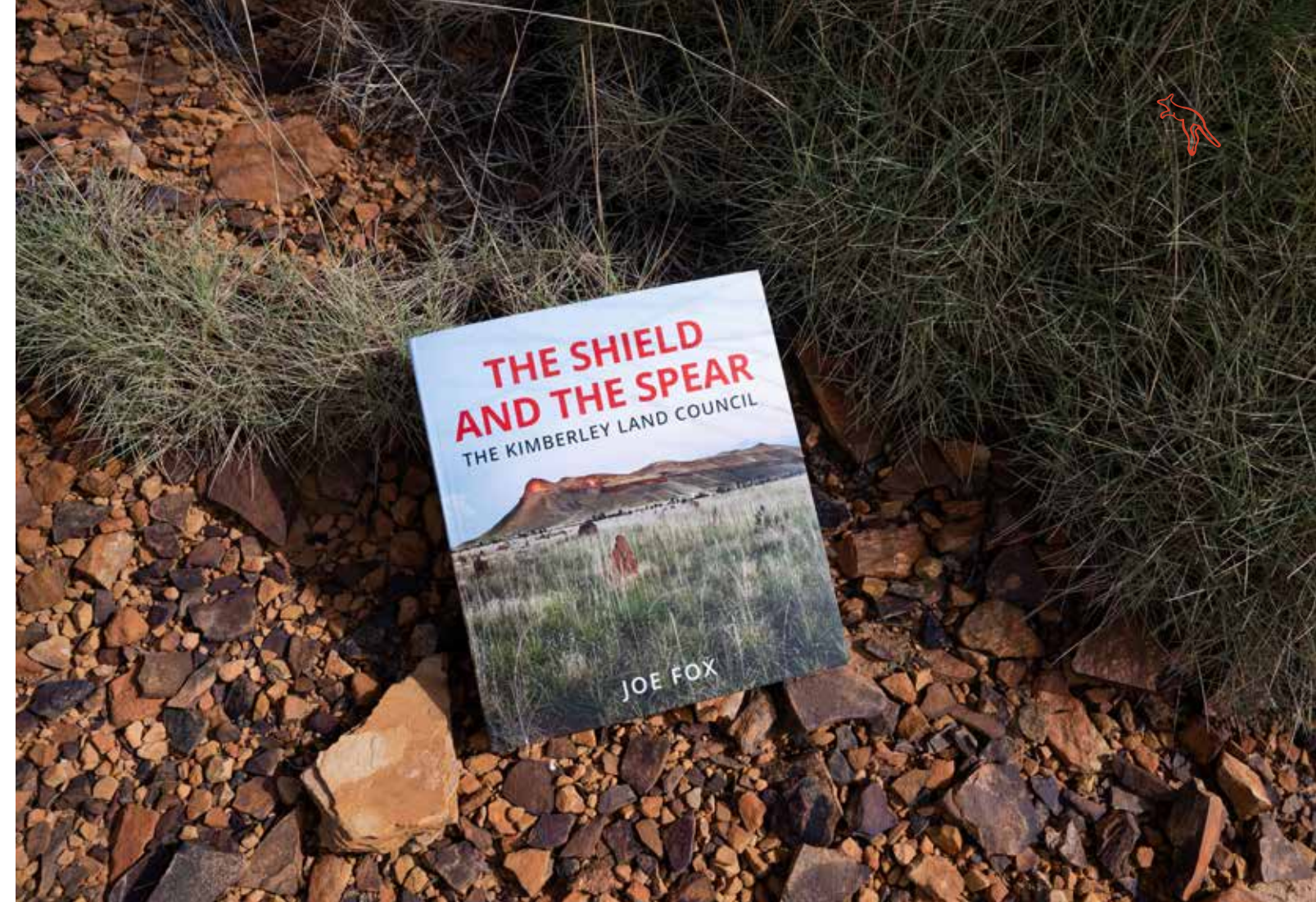
The Shield and The Spear, released by Magabala Books on the 1st of September, is an illustrated coffee table book filled with never-before-seen interviews, eyewitness accounts and photos that tell the KLC's incredible history.

In April 1978, leaders from Aboriginal communities across the Kimberley met in the river bed at Malliyarn Pool in Noonkanbah. From that meeting a Cultural Festival was organised in May 1978, at which a new organisation – The KLC – was officially formed and launched.

The KLC was formed as a political land rights organisation. Today it is the peak Indigenous body in the Kimberley region working with Aboriginal people to secure native title, conduct conservation and land management activities and develop cultural & economic business enterprises.

The Shield and the Spear brings our stories together, in a book that we can give back to our community, with the messages and voices from our elders before us. Here in the Kimberley, we must remember that we are standing on the shoulders of giants.

In our journey, this is going to be the first volume of many to come, as we continue to fight for a better future for Kimberley Aboriginal people.



“This book captures that for over 40 years the KLC has been consistent with the vision and values of the Traditional Owners who first fought for our land rights at Noonkanbah.”

“The KLC will remember those hard-won battles, and continue to work with native title holders and Kimberley Aboriginal people to ensure their rights stay strong for generations to come.”

- KLC CEO, Tyrone Garstone

Told through firsthand contributions from the people who were there, the reader is taken on a journey through historic Indigenous land rights battles such as the Noonkanbah blockade in 1979, the formation of the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre (KALACC) and the Kimberley Language Resource Centre (KLRC) in 1984; the formation of Magabala Books in 1987; and the controversial James Price Point gas hub dispute.

Magabala Books editor Margaret Whiskins says: *“this book is of national significance as it represents the social and cultural history of Indigenous rights and land rights in the Kimberley and Australia. Essential for all Australians to know our past and celebrate our future.”*

The book is roughly chronological and the reader hears unmediated accounts of what happened.

The KLC would like to thank the author, Joe Fox and Magabala Books for the countless hours he spent working on the project.

The Shield and The Spear is available for purchase from Magabala Books.



SHARING LEARNINGS IN CANADA

The Kimberley Land Council was recently invited to attend the Emerald Edge Network, Cross Regional Gathering, hosted by Nature United, the Canadian affiliate of The Nature Conservancy [TNC].

Delegates from Australia included Ricky Archer, CEO of NAILSMA and KLC Deputy CEO, Sarah Parriman, supported by Kristina Koenig of The Nature Conservancy Australia.

The Emerald Edge is the largest intact coastal rainforest system in the world and spans the coastline from Oregon through Washington state, British Columbia Canada in to Alaska. The coastline is under pressure from unsustainable timber production as well as the impacts of climate change, and First Nations are actively asserting increasing authority and control.

The gathering was designed to explore the intersection of Indigenous-led stewardship, natural climate solutions and community well-being.

Sarah shared with the gathering the experiences of Kimberley Aboriginal people in Indigenous-led conservation and the powerful role that our Rangers and Traditional Owners can play in driving natural climate solutions. Also the importance of a representative organisation like the KLC in influencing and driving systems change that enables TOs to engage in these important activities caring for country and our communities.

The KLC has worked in partnership with TNC over many years across a range of conservation projects, and the opportunity for us to share our knowledge and experiences as well as to learn and connect with other First Nations across the world through these types of partnerships is important.

We thank TNC Australia for supporting the KLC to attend this event and to hold these important discussions. We look forward to ongoing dialogue with our friends on the Emerald Edge.



KLC STAFF COME TOGETHER FOR TRUTH TELLING

Over 100 Kimberley Land Council staff members came together in Broome in October for the first all staff workshop in over two years.

"Truth-telling" was the theme for the three day workshop held at the convention centre in Broome.

All staff engaged in open and honest conversations about how the KLC team can continue to work together to achieve positive outcomes for Kimberley Aboriginal people.

The KLC has a large and diverse team working from offices and ranger bases right throughout the Kimberley. All staff events take a lot of coordination, but are important as they provide an opportunity to connect, reflect and strategise.

The KLC could not do the work it does without our dedicated employees, and over 40% of the KLC team has been working for the KLC for five years or longer.





RECOGNISING YEARS OF SERVICE

Long-serving staff members of the Kimberley Land Council were recognised for their commitment to the organisation in a ceremony held after the all staff workshop. Thank you to all the staff who work hard behind the scenes help the KLC work towards a better future for Kimberley Aboriginal people.



19 YEARS
Anna Mardling



17 YEARS
Patricia Cox



16 YEARS
Daniel Oades

19 YEARS
Anna Mardling

17 YEARS
Patricia Cox

16 YEARS
Daniel Oades
Sarah Parriman

15 YEARS
Michael Carter

14 YEARS
Erika Blades
Tiffany Labuc
Albert Cox

13 YEARS
Anne Sigley

12 YEARS
Mervyn Maher

11 YEARS
James Brown
Bradden Latham-Ferstl
Regina Manado
John Hamilton

10 YEARS
Phillip Mccarthy
Kevin George
Damon Pyke
Trevor Sampi
Caroline Stillman

9 YEARS
Kristy Tobin
Sharon Scoble
Paul Treacy

8 YEARS
Meredith Brown

7 YEARS
Anthony Watson
Justine Toohey
William Bin Kali
Janet Hudson
Nahtanah Tang Wei
Gemma Acland
Catriona Webster
Kevin Dougal

6 YEARS
Scott Cox
Liyana Parriman
Arun Sidharthan
Zynal Cox
Preston Cox
Johana Mcdonald

5 YEARS
Karen Dayman
Virgil Cherel
Callista Barritt
Neil Hamaguchi
Jamal Bin Sulaiman
Mirrika Councillor
Ashley Mumford



14 YEARS
Albert Cox



14 YEARS
Tiffany Labuc



11 YEARS
James Brown



11 YEARS
John Hamilton



11 YEARS
Regina Manado



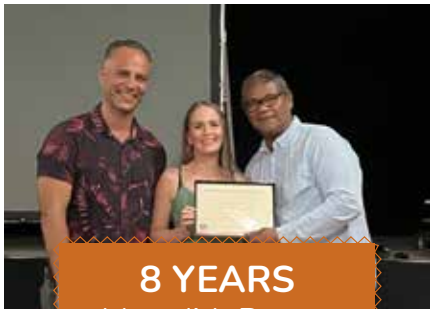
10 YEARS
Phillip Mccarthy



10 YEARS
Damon Pyke



9 YEARS
Kristy Tobin



8 YEARS
Meredith Brown



7 YEARS
Justine Toohey



6 YEARS
Scott Cox



5 YEARS
Neil Hamaguchi

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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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