



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

# NEWSLETTER

NO 1, 2011

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## Starting a new journey

Wayne Bergmann has left the KLC after 10 years at its helm to create an economic future for Kimberley Aboriginal people.

## New economic era for Kimberley Aboriginal people

The Kimberley Land Council has launched the Ambooriny Burru Foundation – a charitable venture to facilitate Kimberley Aboriginal people's engagement in the expanding regional economy.

The KLC, in establishing this Foundation, is fulfilling the long-term vision of Kimberley Aboriginal people to get control of their future through increased opportunities and economic independence.







Uunguu Rangers using the I-Tracker



# Kimberley Rangers look after country using I-Trackers

Rangers in the Kimberley have been using the technologically advanced I-Tracker to help them look after country.

Since the involvement of the Bardi Jawi Rangers in the Turtle and Dugong Project in 2007, rangers in the Kimberley have adopted this technology and are becoming more and more exposed to the use of I-Trackers.

Indigenous land and sea managers right across northern Australia use the I-Tracker to collect, manage and share information about natural and cultural resources for better land and sea management. I-Tracker is a user-friendly, culturally appropriate and scientifically approved way of collecting information.

Several guiding principles underlying the I-Tracker Network include:

**INDIGENOUS** Rangers working under approved local plans with the authority of local Traditional Owners.

**DATA** collected is used to inform community priorities such as day-to-day ranger operations or fee-for-service contracts.

**OWNERSHIP** of the data is clearly defined and agreed.

Ranger groups are using the I-Tracker in the Kimberley for monitoring turtles, dugongs and other marine animals as well as for fire-management and service contracts.

Saltwater Ranger Groups will get more support and training on I-Trackers in the coming months.



## *message from the* Chairmen

Since the KLC was set up 32 years ago – we have grown to become a successful community organisation that works for and represents Kimberley Aboriginal people.

Our people have fought hard and achieved much success.

Providing our children with jobs and a good education is the next thing we need to fight hard for. Our people need to be part of the economy so we don't have to rely on Government or business for hand-outs.

It is for this reason the KLC has set up a new charitable foundation called Ambooriny Burru.

It belongs to all Kimberley Aboriginal people and will be used to benefit our mob.

Setting up this foundation is about realising the next step in the vision of our old people. It is about doing something for ourselves and taking control of our own futures.

The KLC has also established KRED Enterprises which is the economic development arm of the Ambooriny Burru Foundation. It will seek out and develop business opportunities for Kimberley Aboriginal people.

The KLC Board has appointed Wayne Bergmann to lead KRED Enterprises, as he has proven he can achieve good outcomes for Kimberley Aboriginal people.

He is a well-respected leader and we believe he will make KRED Enterprises a success for our people.

Wayne has worked at the KLC for almost 10 years. He has built on the work of those before him and carved out his own path while achieving success for our people.

Wayne is leaving the KLC in a very strong position.

He has worked hard to secure native title for Traditional Owners and under his leadership, the KLC has won some significant legal battles to gain those rights for our people. Almost 50 per cent of the

Kimberley has native title determinations.

Wayne has worked hard to implement a Land & Sea Management Unit which works with Traditional Owners to achieve the environmental outcomes they want to see happen on the ground, while having a strong focus on culture and traditional knowledge.

The Kimberley Ranger Program was initiated under the guidance of Wayne and now employs more than 50 rangers across the Kimberley.

The Land and Sea Management Unit has become the largest sector of the KLC and one of our core activities.

Wayne has been a strong advocate for using Traditional Owners' rights to deliver social and economic outcomes through Agreement-making.

He has worked with various sectors in industry and business to promote the need for Indigenous decision-making based on free, prior and informed consent.

Many Agreements negotiated by the KLC on behalf of Kimberley Traditional Owners have set national standards for agreement-making and what can be achieved for Aboriginal people.

Wayne has guided the KLC to become the professional, well organised, efficient and resourceful organisation that it is today.

Nolan Hunter will take on the role of Acting CEO at the KLC while we conduct a formal recruitment process for the CEO position.

We would like to thank Wayne for his leadership and guidance in assisting the KLC to become a strong, successful and respected organisation.

On behalf of the KLC Board and Kimberley Aboriginal people, we wish Wayne well on his new journey and look forward to continue working with him in the future.

**TOM BIRCH & FRANK DAVEY**

# Mayala Traditional Owners

## Invest in their Future

Mayala Traditional Owners have entered into one of the most significant mining agreements to be made in the Kimberley.

The Heads of Agreement is between Mayala Traditional Owners and Pluton Resources for an iron ore mine to be built on Irvine Island. Mayala Traditional Owners have instructed the Kimberley Land Council to continue negotiations in order to formalise the final arrangement.

KLC Acting CEO Nolan Hunter said the agreement would set a new benchmark for its standards in environmental and cultural heritage, employment, training, business and contracting opportunities.

“This will be one of the most significant agreements to have ever been negotiated in the Kimberley. It will set a new benchmark on how development agreements should be negotiated and the range of benefits and opportunities they should provide for Traditional Owners,” he said.

“This agreement has been about finding the right balance between environmental protection and creating life changing benefits for Kimberley Aboriginal people.

“This agreement will enable our people to make meaningful long-term decisions about our future.”

Although the Heads of Agreement is commercial-in-confidence it sets out, in-principle, significant benefits for the Mayala people including:

**CULTURAL** heritage management plans to ensure country is respected and looked after;

**CONTINUAL** engagement between Pluton Resources and the Mayala people in relation to mining operations;

**FUNDING** for governance training, so Mayala people will be able to manage and maximise the benefits from the agreement;

**SIGNIFICANT** business and contracting opportunities for Mayala Traditional Owners;

**GOALS** and targets for Indigenous employment and training at all occupational levels; and

**FUNDING** for a Bardi Jawi and Mayala multipurpose culture, arts and interpretation centre on the Dampier Peninsula.

Mr Hunter said the agreement was an investment in the future of the Mayala people.

“This deal highlights the strength of the KLC in negotiating positive agreements for Kimberley Traditional Owners that will allow our people to enter into the modern economy and create a future for themselves.”





## Economic Independence for Aboriginal people the goal of new Foundation

The Kimberley Land Council has launched the Ambooriny Burru Foundation – a charitable venture to facilitate Kimberley Aboriginal people’s engagement in the expanding regional economy.

The KLC, in establishing this Foundation, is fulfilling the long-term vision of Kimberley Aboriginal people to get control of their future through increased opportunities and economic independence.

“This initiative is extremely important to the KLC as it gives us a chance to fulfil the wishes and vision of Traditional Owners,” Kimberley Land Council Co- Chairs Tom Birch and Frank Davey said.

“The KLC is proud of the work it has done to get back country, look after country and get control of our futures and we will continue to do that. Now we are taking the next step forward, so we can provide our children and grandchildren with the same opportunities as all other Australians.”

The KLC has also established KRED Enterprises which will seek out and develop business and job opportunities for Kimberley Aboriginal people, on behalf of the Foundation.

The KLC Board has appointed Wayne Bergmann to lead these new ventures and is pleased to announce he has accepted the position as CEO of KRED Enterprises.

Nolan Hunter is the Acting CEO of the KLC, while a formal recruitment process for the CEO position is undertaken.

“I am very excited to be starting in this new role, as it provides me with another avenue to continue working

with, and for Aboriginal people in the Kimberley,” KRED Enterprises CEO Wayne Bergmann said.

“With the whole of Australia looking to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, KRED Enterprises provides us with the opportunity for economic independence, meaning our people will no longer have to rely on Government and business hand-outs.

“This is about Kimberley Aboriginal people doing something for ourselves. The successes we have had in the Kimberley have always come from our people working together and that will not change.

“Ambooriny Burru means “people’s land” and the Foundation belongs to all Kimberley Aboriginal people.

“The profits KRED Enterprises generates will be channelled into the Foundation and used for purposes that support our law and culture, land management and economic development. We want to improve the lives of Aboriginal people and create strong communities in the Kimberley.”

The establishment of these ventures does not change the role or function of the KLC. The KLC will continue to carry out its core responsibilities in the areas of native title, land and sea management and agreements.





# Starting a new journey

John Watson, Wayne Bergmann and Joe Brown

I have stepped down from my role as CEO of the KLC to take up a new position as CEO of KRED Enterprises, the economic development arm of a new charitable foundation called Ambooriny Burru. The Foundation is a Kimberley Land Council initiative and for the benefit of all Kimberley Aboriginal people.

I have been at the KLC for almost 10 years and it's been an amazing journey. I was 31 when I walked in the doors and I don't think anything can prepare you for the pressure and the struggle that comes with carrying the hopes and aspirations of everyone on your shoulders.

It has been an incredible time and I've been extremely privileged to have had such strong leadership, cultural leadership behind me while our great team of staff have enabled us to achieve many things.

I have taken up the role of CEO of KRED Enterprises which is a subsidiary company of and owned by Ambooriny Burru Foundation.

Ambooriny is a Bardi word for people and Burru is a Nyikina word for land. The KLC Executive Board considered many names and were happy with the two different language names being used.

I believe there's never a real good time to leave such an important organisation so I will remain a director on the KLC Board and during that time I will continue to play a leadership role in the final stages of the

Kimberley LNG negotiations and the Dampier Peninsula Land and Sea Planning Project which will come out of the Kimberley LNG negotiations.

KRED has nothing to do with the LNG negotiations; I want to make this clear so there is no confusion. I will retain my role in the LNG negotiations as a KLC Director through the KLC. I will continue to act on the instructions of Traditional Owners and do what they want me to do – as I have always done. There is no conflict of interest and KRED and the Ambooriny Burru Foundation have no connection to the negotiation process.

KRED Enterprises will operate on the same values and aspirations as the KLC. We will do things with the informed consent of Traditional Owners.

We are going to be very commercially focused. The first priority is to start creating a capital base and we are at the moment representing Traditional Owners in negotiations with companies. We are looking to set up a supply base to support offshore development at Point Torment and start up Joint Venture partnerships with several companies to pursue other opportunities.

I think this is a really big game-changer for how Aboriginal people have conducted business and it gives us a chance to be part of the solution in taking control of our futures. This will allow our people to be more than just mere participants, receiving royalties.

I want Aboriginal people to be part of the economic engine room for this region and to determine economically how this region should grow.

We received no government funding to set up KRED Enterprises; it has been established through the KLC. We are in the process of recruiting people to the board with the necessary expertise and skills to get this project going. Peter Harold, the CEO of Panoramic Resources, will be our first independent director and Anthony Watson will be our first chair.

The concept of Aboriginal people being economically independent has been talked about for a long time. Our old people were talking about it 30 years ago, the KLC Board talked about it in 2002. Today, in 2011, we are not talking about it anymore; we are making it happen.

This concept goes beyond me and is way bigger than me. It is about the collective words of many of our old leaders. I have been given the privilege and opportunity to do this on their behalf.

The Ambooriny Burru Foundation is going to be for the benefit of all Kimberley Aboriginal people. It will focus on some of our priorities that often get missed out like land management, culture, language, dealing with suicides and dealing with youth programs and education. This is not to take away the responsibility of government to deal with these things, but it will enable us to focus on some of these things and deal with our issues, our way.

Working at the KLC has been an incredible journey. I have seen our staff grow from 23 when I first started to 40 - before I had the difficult task of having to reduce our staff by half, as a result of litigation - and now we have more than 120 people.

Making sure our people are in the strongest possible position, to get the strongest native title outcome has been taxing and hard on us all. But we made it, we won and native title was recognised in all matters that went before the Court.

I have had to ask the KLC Board for support many times, especially when it came to making tough decisions like closing down offices and centralising our staff in Broome.

We have been through some tough times and have been under incredible pressure. I thank the Chairs and board members for believing in me. I am thankful for the privilege to have been able to run the Kimberley Land Council, raise national awareness on a lot of issues and to create different opportunities for Aboriginal people. It's been an important time for us but I now need to take another journey, another

step forward. I am interested in focusing on economic activities because I believe that if Aboriginal people do not catch this wave of the resources boom - if we don't position ourselves - that we will get left behind in the wake.

The triple bottom line model that business and government talk about - the environment, people and the economy - has not worked for us. This is why KRED Enterprises is important. Governments and companies are good at the economy side; environmental organisations argue about the environment but when it comes to the economy, we get left behind.

I will argue for all three principles from the Aboriginal side. I will ensure that our people are recognised for our role in the environment and our need to be part of the economy so we can improve our wellbeing as a people.

I can only work with the support of Traditional Owners, the KLC and native title groups across the region but I think the opportunity is there and is really exciting.

It has been an incredible privilege to work very closely with you all, especially the senior people, who despite all the pressure and the difficulties times, have maintained very strong principles and values about our place in the Kimberley and our cultural responsibilities.

I hope we all continue to look after each other and I hope that I can take some of the values I have learned in the past 10 years with me on our new journey.

*Wayne Bergmann*



Wayne Bergmann and Tommy May with the King and Queen of Sweden



# Federal Court

## makes native title ruling

GOOLARABOOLOO Jabirr Jabirr Native Title Holders have recommenced gas negotiations after the Federal Court approved their decision making authority.

The February decision from Justice Gilmour comes after a lengthy court battle and paves the way for the KLC to take instructions from the native title claim group on their native title affairs and gas hub negotiations.

Wayne Bergmann, who was KLC Executive Director at the time, said the decision showed the KLC had acted appropriately when conducting business and associated meetings.

No application to replace the Applicant has ever been scrutinised to such a degree and required so much evidence to be provided to the court. Numerous claimants were called to provide evidence.

"This is a very significant outcome in regards to the decision-making authority of the group and it shows that the KLC has acted properly, transparently," Mr Bergmann said.

"This is a lengthy decision, for what is generally a procedural step in the native title process. For a hearing to be this lengthy and for a Federal Court Judge to spend so much time on a decision of this nature is very unusual.

"This case, I think, will set a precedent and show the way for how all native title claims should conduct their decision-making when there is an internal conflict."

The Federal Court hearing follows a decision the Goolarabooloo Jabirr Jabirr people made at a meeting in August 2010 to replace the Applicant Cyril Shaw and Joseph Roe.

The Federal Court came to Broome in early

December to hear evidence in the case after Mr Roe challenged the decisions made by the claim group at the authorisation meeting and asserted the claim group had membership issues.

Mr Bergmann said while the S.66B application was being processed the KLC could not take instructions from the claim group on any matters, including gas negotiations.

"This paves the way for the new Named Applicant to be in a position to bring negotiations to a conclusion, of which they will then have to take back to the whole native title claim group for authorisation," he said.

"This decision is about what people want. It's not about individuals, it's not about external groups, it's about Traditional Owners for the area making decisions about who should be their representatives."

After the decision, Mr Bergmann called on Premier Colin Barnett to abandon the compulsory acquisition process to take land at James Price Point, earmarked for a gas proposal.

"I think this begs the question, what is the need for compulsory acquisition? The Premier used the justification he needed to provide certainty for Woodside, the Proponent and other joint ventures," he said.

"Now that the authority and the decision making process has been resolved by the Federal Court there is no basis for the Premier to continue with the process of compulsory acquisition. The Premier should immediately withdraw this."

Traditional Owners are continuing negotiations with the State Government and Woodside for a proposed gas processing facility at James Price Point.





# The Kimberley in Flood

wet season 2011





# Bardi Jawi Rangers

## become specialist marine unit



Bardi Jawi Rangers conducting patrols at Cape Leveque

The Bardi Jawi rangers are set to become a professional marine unit charged with the mission to look after country while being capable of assisting police in sea rescues.

In preparation for the rangers to take control of a fully equipped patrol and rescue vessel, funded by DIA, Lottery West and FESA Volunteer Marine Rescue, they went on a knowledge exchange trip to Perth to work with marine rangers from the Department of Environment and Conservation.

The Bardi Jawi Rangers is one of 13 KLC-facilitated Indigenous ranger groups which look after country across the Kimberley using a mix of traditional knowledge and western science.

Bardi Jawi Ranger Trevor Sampi said the purpose of the week-long trip was to look at how other organisations manage visitor access, threatened species, interaction with the public, asset management, data collection and the use of technology.

“It was a very rewarding experience. The work that is involved in managing and maintaining a boat and marine equipment was great to see and opened my eyes to the responsibilities we will have when we get our own boat,” he said.

“DEC operate as a very professional unit and it has

set the standards which we aim to achieve as a successful Indigenous marine ranger group.”

Mr Sampi said the rangers assisted DEC with cultural awareness training while also sharing their traditional knowledge and skills in land and sea management.

“Our people have been looking after and managing country for a long time and it is important to use this information and our knowledge in today’s modern world while also using western science and technology,” he said.

Bardi Jawi Ranger Dwayne George said commissioning a specialist marine vessel provided the group with many opportunities including the potential to become the first Indigenous volunteer marine rescue group under the guidance of FESA.

“To be the first Indigenous volunteer marine rescue group to work with FESA is part of a vision our group has been working towards for a couple of years,” he said.

“Bardi Jawi country is on the Dampier Peninsula. We are surrounded by sea country and islands, and our waters are known for powerful tides and currents.

“The ability for our ranger group to carry out patrols and conduct search and rescue operations would not only help our community but allow us to make



sure our country is looked after in the best possible way.'

Mr George said in order to make the vision of the ranger group a reality they had been working with the Fremantle Water Police to learn the specialised skills needed to conduct marine search and rescues.

"The Water Police do such an important job and to be able to help them in any way while helping keep our community safe is a great thing," he said.

"The next step for our group is to keep working hard to learn the skills we need so when we get our boat later this year we can do our job professionally."

KLC Acting CEO Nolan Hunter said the Bardi Jawi Rangers were leading the way in looking after land and sea country.

"This ranger group highlights the success of the Kimberley Ranger movement and the benefits they provide in using their knowledge and skills in looking after and managing country," he said.

"The Bardi Jawi Rangers will be our first group to commission a boat and the opportunities this provides to them and the community are endless."



Dugong tagging



# Cultural protection focus of site studies

Goolarabooloo Jabirr Jabirr Traditional Owners will play an ongoing role to ensure site studies at James Price Point include cultural direction and protection.

As site studies ramp up for the proposed LNG Precinct at James Price Point, Traditional Owner Monitors will work alongside State Government and Woodside staff.

Traditional Owner Monitors work under the instruction of the Environment, Culture and Heritage Team (ECHT) which provides cultural guidelines for how all non-ground and ground disturbing work should occur.

Traditional Owner Monitor workers receive professional training. Each person must pass a health and safety medical to ensure they are fit enough to be on board vessels and at hazardous worksites on the ground.

Employees also undertake Tropical Basic Offshore Safety Induction and Emergency Training (TBOSIET)

to equip them with knowledge in emergency evacuation procedures.

Traditional Owner Negotiating Committee member Mary Tarran said Traditional Owner Monitors have a vital role in upholding the cultural and environmental standards set by the ECHT.

“I think it’s fantastic to see Goolarabooloo Jabirr people out on country making sure our culture and environment is looked after properly, especially with all these surveys and tests going on at the moment,” she said.

“Personally, I’m very proud of what the Traditional Owner Monitor group has achieved so far. Participants work with professionalism and integrity in what can be very hot and difficult conditions.

“In the future we’ll be making these positions full-time and adding extra training components which will help grow the Traditional Owner workforce and enhance our skills.”





Wunggurr Rangers control feral pig problem

# Wunggurr Rangers

## work to eradicate feral pig problem

The Wunggurr Rangers are on a mission to control the feral pig problem surrounding the Fitzroy River Catchment and manage the environmental damage the pests are causing.

In order to diminish the feral pig problem, the eight-member Wunggurr Ranger team has been gaining specialist skills in the field.

The Wunggurr Rangers, facilitated by the KLC, work to look after country covering more than 60,000 square kilometres along the Gibb River Road.

Head Ranger Lloyd Nulgit said the group, through its partnership with the Department of Water and the University of Western Australia, had been learning how to monitor and assess waterways for pig and cattle damage.

"Feral pigs are not a new pest. These beasts can grow to weigh a couple of hundred kilograms and cause relentless damage to the environment," he said.

"Since our training we have been out on the job assessing the area along the upper Fitzroy River Catchment and have found there to be damage to country. The biodiversity along the edge of the river is suffering from the trampling of hooves."

The group, Mr Nulgit said, also underwent training in Darwin to learn how to assess and predict

environmental issues that are likely to have an impact on the Kimberley in the future.

"We are concerned about the influx of Gambar grass - a weed that spreads quickly and invades country, destroying native grasses," he said.

"It also creates massive fuel loads which have the potential to spark disastrous wildfires, which cause extensive damage to country and kill native animals and plants.

"Our job now is to stop the spread of this invasive weed while working to eliminate the problem into the future."

Mr Nulgit said the group had also been working to implement management plans to control the feral pig problem.

"At the moment our work has involved using I-trackers, an information storing GPS device, to track and record the feral pig population, so we can see where they feed and gather but also to see if their numbers are increasing or decreasing.

"By obtaining this information we can start to put in management plans that will reduce the number of feral pigs in the area, while restoring the biodiversity of the sensitive Fitzroy River catchment."



# Dampier Peninsula

## Land & Sea Planning Project



The Kimberley Land Council has started a new planning project called the Dampier Peninsula Land & Sea Planning Project (DPLSPP).

The KLC was asked by the State Government, in the middle of last year, to consult with Traditional Owners and other Indigenous stakeholders on the Dampier Peninsula about land tenure reform and land use planning.

The KLC is taking a big picture approach towards this project to ensure there is effective management and it provides the best possible outcomes for Traditional Owners. As a result we are also considering the implications for land and sea management, governance and native title. Coordination with other planning activities on the Peninsula is also an important part of the project to avoid duplication and issues 'falling through the cracks'.

Some of the specific areas to be covered as part of the planning project include: land tenure reform, land use planning, economic development, conservation and heritage protection, infrastructure and service delivery, land and sea management (including access management), natural resource

protection and the sustainable longevity of the Dampier Peninsula.

One of the important aims of the project is to bring all Traditional Owner groups together to identify and work on areas they have in common and where joint efforts can support real outcomes. Planning will also happen for each Native Title Claim area so that the independence of each group will be respected and accounted for.

A Traditional Owner Steering Committee (TOSC), made up of four representatives from each Native Title Claim Group, is being formed to guide and assist with planning and the sharing of information across the Dampier Peninsula.

The DPLSPP is committed to produce an Implementation Framework Agreement on how to work with government (State and Federal) and will provide recommendations to the State for a Dampier Peninsula Planning Strategy. The first phase of the project involves identifying and securing a long-term plan with commitments for the Dampier Peninsula and its people. In following years the focus will shift to implementation and more detailed planning where required.





So far, the project has reviewed all past and current plans, studies and activities related to the Peninsula to avoid, where possible, duplicating or repeating what has been done before. Studies looking at the current and possible future economic and business opportunities on the Peninsula have provided important input into the planning process.

Similarly, the information and priorities coming out of other consultations such as Remote Service Delivery (RSD) and the Aboriginal Social Impact Assessments (ASIA) associated with the proposed LNG precinct at James Price Point, will be integrated into planning actions where appropriate.

Initial consultation to inform people about the project and to seek nominations for the Traditional Owner Steering Committee has occurred with Bardi Jawi, Nyul Nyul, Nimanburru and Goolarabooloo Jabirr Jabirr groups. Further consultation with these groups as well as Nyikina Mangala and Djabera-Djabera will take place from March to May so the steering committee can be finalised. Consultation with the steering committee, native title working groups, claim groups and community groups will happen between May and September. From the

consultation, the first phase of reports will be produced and submitted to Commonwealth, State and Local Governments by the end of the year.

It is the KLC's intention to facilitate an engagement through the DPLSPP that sets a foundation and secures an implementation pathway that maximises the long-term prospects for self-determination and for Aboriginal People of the Peninsula to have greater control over their lives and futures.

**If you would like more information about the project and where there will be opportunities to get involved please contact:**

**Tiffany Labuc**  
**Mail: PO Box 2145 Broome, WA 6725**  
**Telephone: 08 9191 8000**

# Water

## WATER PROJECTS

The Kimberley Land Council water team includes two Indigenous Community Water Facilitators, covering the west and east Kimberley and a Project Officer. Water, particularly freshwater is a diverse topic that overlaps with areas of policy, culture, rights, livelihood, environmental protection and health. The KLC is actively working towards establishing Kimberley Aboriginal People's rights to water for both economic advancement and the preservation of living cultural heritage.



## DRINKING WATER PROJECT

We all need good quality, clean water to drink. This project uses two community water planning tools to create Drinking Water Management Plans in cooperation with small communities across the Kimberley. We look at the drinking water system (things like bores, pumps, tanks and pipes), identify the risks, and figure out how to manage those risks in order to keep the water good to drink.

Community water supplies are not just important for household use. Reliable water can be essential to activities such as tourism, fire fighting, vegetable gardens and more.

The Kimberley Land Council works with the Department of Water, the Centre for Appropriate Technology, and Arup consulting firm on this project. The project is part of the National Water Commission's activities under the National Water Initiative.

Contact Kat Taylor, Project Officer: Kimberley Drinking Water Project: [kat.taylor@klc.org.au](mailto:kat.taylor@klc.org.au) or phone: (08) 9194 0108

## EAST KIMBERLEY WATER FORUM

The Kimberley Land Council water team hosted the East Kimberly Water Forum in Kununurra at the end of last year.

Experts in Indigenous water issues attended the event and made presentations on the importance of water in Kimberley Aboriginal culture, water rights under various regimes in Australia, water planning processes, water management in other northern Australia Indigenous communities and the impacts of climate change in the Kimberley region.

Traditional Owners from numerous groups within the east Kimberley were also able to engage in productive, in-depth discussions throughout the day. Some important recommendations came from the meeting including an agreement to set up a reference group on water issues in the east Kimberley.





Agnes Armstrong gets seeds from a waterlily bulb



Maggie Jones eats waterlily seeds



Black plum fruits at wrong time

# Miriwoong Seasonal Calendar

Kimberley Aboriginal people are experiencing the impacts of Australia's phenomenal weather patterns, triggering the creation of a seasonal calendar to track the changes.

The Miriwoong Traditional Owners from the Keep River – an isolated community in the far north east Kimberley near the Northern Territory border have created a web-based seasonal calendar as a tool to gauge the impacts of climate change on country.

The KLC worked with Traditional Owners to develop the interactive seasonal calendar which is hosted by the Mirima Language Centre and linked to the Bureau of Meteorology website. The calendar shows the three seasons of Miriwoong country as well as the plants and animals that thrive during these times.

KLC Acting CEO Nolan Hunter said the seasonal calendar project showed the intricate knowledge Aboriginal people possessed in relation to environmental changes on country caused by climate and water.

"Indigenous people have a different understanding of climate through their intimate knowledge of the country. We need to integrate Indigenous traditional

knowledge with western science so we can validate changes to the environment but also work to develop strategies in which to combat climate change impacts," he said.

The first phase of the project involved Traditional Owners travelling out on country to observe and document the change of seasons through recording seasonal indicators, such as the flowering of plants.

Mr Hunter said the second phase of the project would involve Kimberley Aboriginal rangers using the seasonal calendar to track and monitor the impacts of climate change on country through documenting changes in traditional weather indicators.

"Our rangers are at the frontline and we hope through this project, they will be at the forefront of monitoring and tracking climate change impacts on country," he said.

"We want to ensure our people have the knowledge needed to adapt to the change of their environmental surrounds so our country remains strong and healthy and our culture and language has a vibrant future."





Kimberley Futures meeting



Kimberley Futures is growing stronger and moving forward.

With the support of the peak Aboriginal organisations across the region

The Kimberley Futures Advisory group meeting in November 2010 developed a model for regional governance based on cultural boundaries and respect for the connection between people and country.

The Advisory group made recommendations for short-term outcomes and a long-term vision for the future.

A statement of intent was written by the group to send the message that Kimberley people are serious – the time is right to build up this long held vision for a Kimberley Aboriginal regional authority.

The recommendations from the Advisory meeting have provided the Kimberley futures team with new energy and a clear workplan for 2011.

The team has met with Aboriginal organisations and government, talking up for the idea of a regional authority and asking for feedback on the model.

More consultations are planned for this year.

“You’ve got to believe things are going to change; if you don’t believe then what hope is there?”

- Marty Sibosado



# Traditional Owners oppose perpetual leases for pastoral stations

The KLC is concerned by the State Government's plans to introduce legislation for perpetual leases on pastoral stations.

KLC Acting CEO Nolan Hunter said Kimberley Traditional Owners would oppose any move by the State Government to introduce perpetual leases, as it would put native title rights at risk.

"This has the potential for mass extinguishment of native title. The State Government is robbing Traditional Owners of their land rights," he said.

"The State Government is reverting to the heavy-handed days of the Court Government – in its colonial approach to native title, unwillingness to negotiate with Aboriginal people, and refusal to acknowledge our rights to country.

"This latest display by the State Government shows its contempt for native title values, and once again highlights its willingness to appease other groups such as miners and pastoralists, while actively diminishing the rights of Aboriginal people.

"The State Government must recognise its responsibility to ensure everyone is treated equally and fairly. The proposal for perpetual leases on pastoral leases is trampling on the ability of Aboriginal people to access and use their traditional lands in accordance with their rights under the law.

"If this new legislation is passed, it will invite a return to the old days, when hostility was high and pastoralists locked Aboriginal people out of their traditional lands. We have worked hard to build new positive relationships, and we won't stand by as the State Government destroys them.

"Any move to use native title as a bargaining chip to strip Aboriginal people of their rights will not be tolerated. Linking native title determinations to land tenure reform, access and agreements is not a requirement of the Native Title Act. It is trying to rewrite people's native title rights in a way that is not consistent with the Native Title Act.

"This battle has been fought – and lost – in the past, when the Court Government challenged the validity of the Native Title Act in WA.

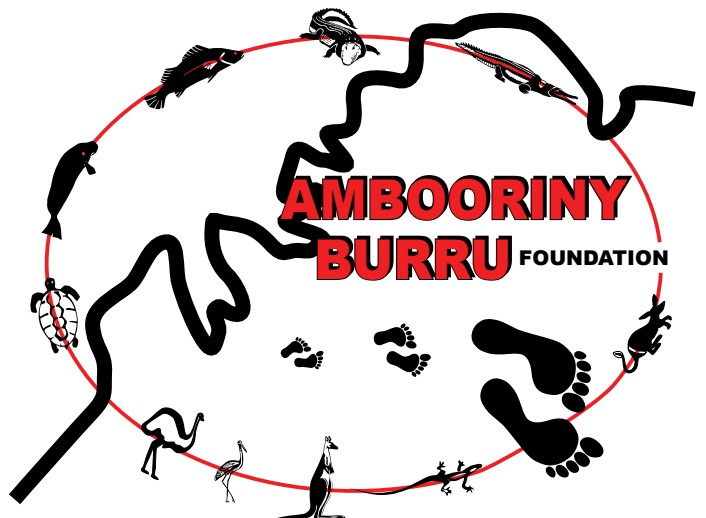
"We will not stand by and watch as the State Government attempts to take away the hard-won rights of Aboriginal people before we even have a chance to enjoy them.

"I urge the State Government to work with Aboriginal people to settle native title issues – so it is not a lost opportunity, but a benefit to us all."





# 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



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