



## Kurungal Traditional Owners celebrate native title determination after 18-year wait

The Kurungal people have settled an 18 year legal challenge over the native title of their traditional land. More than 100 people gathered at Ngumpan on Tuesday 1st December 2015 for the on-country ceremony and greeted the announcement with cheers and emotion. After almost two decades, the determination was handed down by Justice Gilmore, who agreed the Kurungal people have been waiting too long for a resolution. Continued on page 4.



# 2015: A year of reflections at the KLC

## Community Closures

The KLC lobbied hard in 2015 against the State Government's plan to close Aboriginal communities. The KLC urgently called on Premier Colin Barnett and the State Government to meet with us, to sit down and talk about the issue. We know we can help to build better communities, without having to close them, and throughout the year, have fought hard to have a voice on this issue.

## United Nations

Our Chairman Anthony Watson and CEO Nolan Hunter went to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York in April, 2015. It was significant for the KLC to be able to raise international awareness about the forced closure of Indigenous communities and changes to the WA Aboriginal Heritage Act, at such a high-profile, global platform like the United Nation.

## KLC New office complex

The KLC celebrated the opening of its new office complex in Broome, cementing the strong and permanent future of Kimberley. "This building symbolises our proud history and serves as a reminder of what Kimberley Aboriginal people have been able to achieve in the past 37 years," said CEO Nolan Hunter.

## COP21: Paris

KLC proudly presented on climate change concerns and responses at the UN Climate Change conference in Paris. KLC Chairman Mr Anthony Watson was selected as the Australian representative to the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change, the peak body representing Indigenous views in the climate change discussions. Read more on Page 6.





# Message from the Chairman



**As we come to the end of another busy year for the Kimberley Land Council, it's a good time to look back at the challenges we have faced, and the many successes that we have achieved.**

After years of talking, planning, and working, this year the KLC moved into its own, purpose built building in Broome. We now operate from a fantastic new building that includes our offices, our warehouse, and our resource centre. Kimberley Aboriginal people can be proud of this building, because it shows that we are here to stay, and that we have an important place in the future of the region.

Getting back country is a key part of our vision, and so it was pleasing to see the Kurungal mob finally get their Native Title recognised. This happened on 1 December, exactly 20 years after the claim was first lodged. It took too long, but the Kurungal mob can be pleased with the result, and proud of their determination and courage to get their country back.

Early in the year, the State Premier said his government would close remote Aboriginal communities. No consultation or warning; just an announcement. And former Prime Minister Abbott backed him up, saying governments couldn't support the 'lifestyle choices' of Aboriginal people. This was a slap in the face for our people.

But I'm pleased to say we didn't just sit back and take it. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the Kimberley, in WA, and across Australia, spoke up about this poor decision. The KLC organised a delegation to go to New York to address the United Nations about the proposed closure of remote communities. In the end, the State Government backed down, and put in place a consultation process to look into a wide range of matters relating to Aboriginal people and remote communities. This is what they should have done in the first place.

Our Land and Sea Management Unit continues to achieve outstanding results. Our Ranger program is going from strength to strength, providing real jobs for our people, looking after their own country. And we've assisted and worked with some North Kimberley groups to develop savannah burning businesses that help reduce greenhouse gasses and fight climate change.

We took this story to the Climate Change conference in Paris, showing the world that Indigenous people have

an important stake in the climate change debate, and that we can lead the way in developing initiatives that not only look after the planet, but also provide job and business opportunities to our people.

Behind the scenes, we have put in many hours travelling across the state and the country to talk to our mob, and to talk to politicians, high-level government workers, business people, and the broader community. We are constantly promoting the rights and interests of Aboriginal people, and looking for ways to deliver real social and economic change for our people.

None of these things could have been achieved without the fantastic work of all our staff. Whether they are the receptionist, field staff, finance staff, legal, native title, or corporate services, land and sea staff, managers, or even just casual workers, everyone has made a contribution to our success during 2015. On behalf of the Board of the KLC, I say a strong thankyou to our staff.

The Board of Directors have also been central to the operations of the KLC in 2015. Most of our Directors sit on many other boards or work with many other groups, whether it be Kimberley organisations like KALACC or the Language Centre, or with their own communities. The hard work of our Directors makes a great contribution to our organisation and to the region, and I thank them for that.

One thing is sure – the challenges never stop at the Kimberley Land Council. We've still got plenty of work ahead of us. But if you look at what we've achieved in the past 12 months, and in the past 38 years, you can see that we can be confident about 2016 and beyond.

From the Board of Directors of the Kimberley Land Council, I would like to wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas holiday. Take care if you are travelling, look after your families and friends, and enjoy the break.

I look forward to 2016, and to the KLC continuing to play an important role in the lives of Kimberley Aboriginal people.

**ANTHONY WATSON**







*"Native Title can be a long and difficult process, but are increasingly seeing claims determined by consent between the different parties."*  
Tyronne Garstone





# Kurungal land owners celebrate legal recognition of their land after almost two decades

*For members of the Kurungal claim, this determination has been a long time coming," said Kimberley Land Council Deputy CEO Tyrone Garstone.*

"It is a testament to their determination and courage. To have waited so long has been challenging, but today Kurungal people will look as much to the future as to the past."

Today's determination is expected to lead directly to an Indigenous Land Use Agreement between the Traditional Owners and the leasees of Christmas Creek pastoral station.

"Traditional Owners will enter into an agreement with the pastoral leaseholders that will secure access to the station, allowing people to exercise their Native Title rights and interests, whilst allowing the ongoing operation of the station," said Mr Garstone.

The Traditional Owners and the pastoralists sat together, and in good faith negotiated this agreement. "This is a great example of parties working together under the Native Title system, to achieve outcomes that everyone can be happy with."

As one of the Kimberley's last 'long standing' Native Title claims, today's determination of the Kurungal claim marks a significant point in the Native Title process in the region. It will bring the total area where Native Title has been recognised to more than 80% of the Kimberley.

"Native Title can be a long and difficult process, but we are increasingly seeing claims determined by consent between the different parties. This is delivering cultural, social, and economic benefits," said Mr Garstone.







# KLC at the United Nations Climate Change conference in Paris

*The Kimberley Land Council sent a delegation to the Paris Climate Change Conference (COP21) and associated events during Thursday 26th November and Wednesday 7th December 2015.*

KLC Chairman Mr Anthony Watson was selected as the Australian representative to the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change, the peak body representing Indigenous views in the climate change discussions.

"Indigenous people must form part of the global solution to climate change," said Mr Watson.

"The world's Indigenous people are in a unique position in terms of their vulnerability to the effects of climate change, and in finding solutions to mitigate climate change. We must have a place in discussions."

"Governments need to provide tailored support for Indigenous people to respond to climate change, in both developing and developed countries. We will be encouraging the Australian Government to take an ambitious approach in responding to climate change, in line with international best practice," said Mr Watson.

In the Kimberley, Indigenous people are working to establish social enterprises using traditional knowledge and practices to deliver greenhouse gas abatement. Managed fire regimes that reduce hot, late season fires deliver carbon emissions reductions, and also provide economic and social benefits to remote Indigenous people and communities.

The Kimberley Land Council has been working with Traditional Owners of the

north Kimberley to develop the North Kimberley Fire Abatement Project, and will be sharing its experiences of this project during the trip to Paris.

"We presented at a number of events in Paris, including the Indigenous People and Climate Change Conference (organised by UNESCO), the Global Landscapes Forum, and in the Indigenous Pavilion of the main United Nations Conference of Parties 21 (COP21)," said Mr Watson.

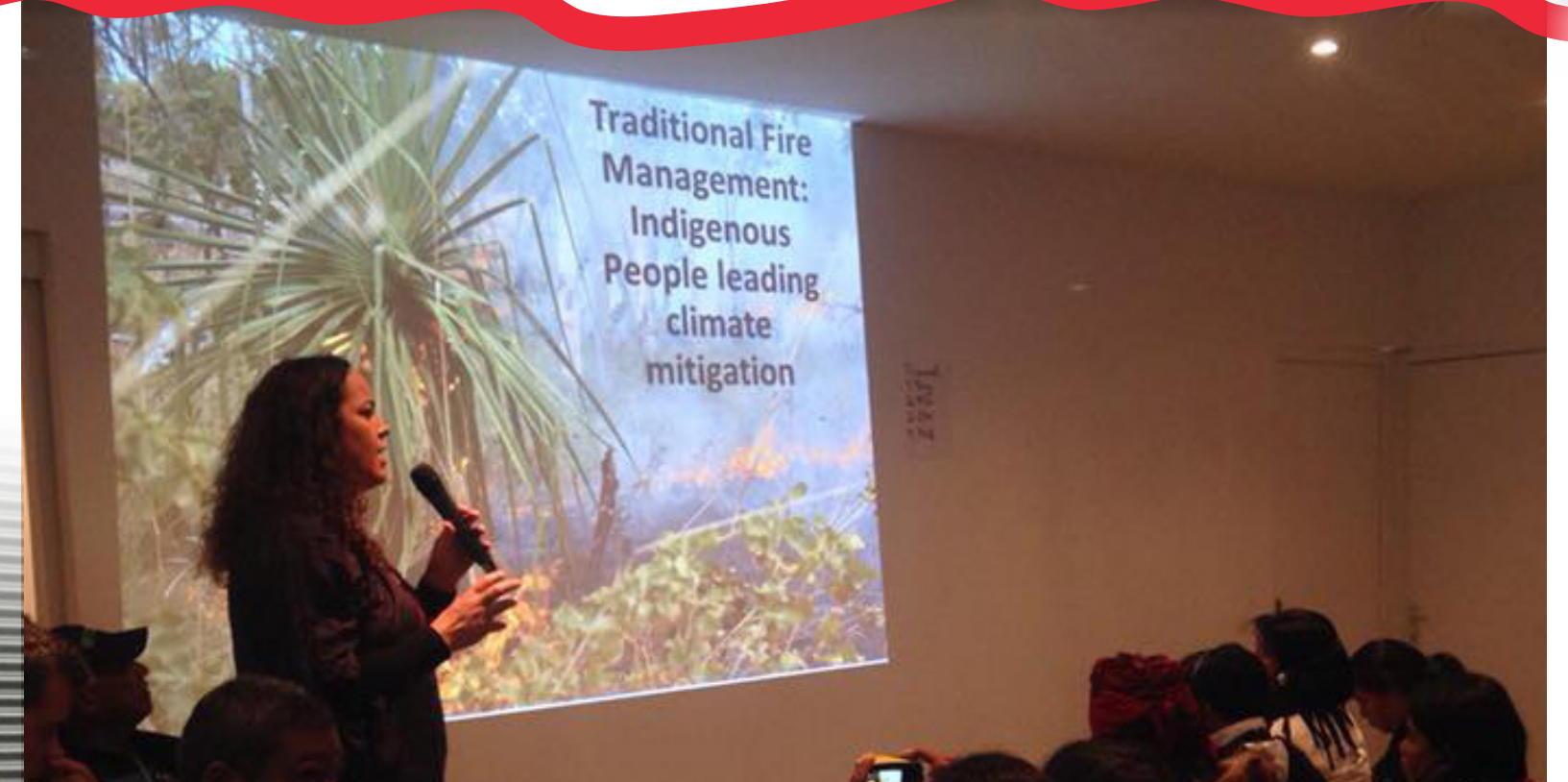
"This was a great opportunity for us to share our knowledge and experience, and to encourage actions to manage the impacts of climate change on the world's Indigenous people."

"It was also an opportunity for us to demonstrate our solidarity with the people of France in these very difficult times."





Ari, Nolan and Minister Hunt at the United Nations Climate Change conference



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# Bardi Jawi Oorany ranger group present at the *Changing Freshwater Landscape* conference in New Zealand



*The Bardi Jawi Oorany ranger group has recently returned from an exciting trip to New Zealand, where they presented at the Changing Freshwater Landscape Conference in Wellington.*

Before arriving in Wellington, the group spent three days on the South Island, where Gail Tipa, a Maori woman and member of the Ngāi Tahu tribe, hosted the Oorany group and took them to various streams and rivers in the area. Gail demonstrated to the group the impacts of commercial activities on our freshwater ecosystems.

Gail explained that unfortunately, due to many streams being straightened and cleared of vegetation, many freshwater systems have been disrupted. According to Maori traditions, ancestors gave streams and rivers curves, many which have now been straightened and cleared of vegetation to make way for dairy cattle and sheep farms.

This has impacted greatly on the cultural values of the local people who are looking for solutions to manage streams and reduce the amount of pollution entering the water.

At the conference, Debbie, Elaine and Michelle gave a presentation discussing how freshwater is important to Bardi Jawi people, and the similarities in the values of Bardi Jawi people, Maori people and Pākehā (people of European descent) in regards to protecting rivers, streams and wetlands.

The group also visited several marae (Maori cultural houses), where they were given a traditional welcome, and had the opportunity to speak in Bardi language to describe where they had come from and to say thank you.

The women also visited the Te Wānanga o Raukawa, a tertiary educational institution teaching Maori trades, language and arts, as well as certificates in social services and IT. The institute prides itself in supporting students not only to learn new skills, but to grow their own cultural identity, through studies into their own Maori tribes.





A group of Jarlmadangah school students and staff are posing for a photo in front of a large historical photograph. The students are wearing various casual clothing, including a 'NEW YORK' baseball jersey, a 'NYPD' t-shirt, and several Indigenous Australian caps. The historical photograph in the background shows a group of people on a beach, with a sign that reads 'NO TIMBER! SACRED LAND'. The scene is set in a room with orange walls and a wooden floor.

# Jarlmadangah school students visit the KLC office in Broome

Jarlmadangah school students visited the KLC office in Broome on Monday 7 December to learn what we do at the KLC and to meet our staff. It was an absolute pleasure to give the students a tour through the office and to provide a brief overview of our various departments. We hope the students were inspired by what we do here at the KLC and wish them all the best on their future endeavours throughout school and beyond.



# Flatback turtle monitoring underway at 80 Mile Beach

*Karajarri Rangers have been working with Department of Parks and Wildlife staff at 80 Mile Beach Marine Park for the past two weeks monitoring flat back turtle populations during their nesting season.*

The work involves counting the turtle tracks in the morning along a 6km stretch of 80 Mile Beach and recording data on cybertracker.

The rangers have also installed 20 remote cameras to monitor predation on the nests. The cameras will stay in place for two and a half months over the incubation period.

They also have placed three satellite transmitters on the females to track their movements after they lay eggs.

The turtle names are Jinmankurr, Mankurna and Tina.

Karajarri Rangers would like to thank DPAW staff and Anna Plains Pastoral Station for their help with this project.

Visit [seaturtle.org](http://seaturtle.org) to follow them online.









Wishing you  
a Merry  
Christmas

and a very  
Happy New Year



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



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