



• GETTING BACK COUNTRY • CARING FOR COUNTRY • SECURING THE FUTURE

PO Box 2145 | Broome WA 6725 | Ph: (08) 9194 0100 | Fax: (08) 9193 6279 | www.klc.org.au



WA Government threatens Aboriginal rights

The State Government has turned its back on Aboriginal people, with recent policy decisions that undermine the rights of our people in Western Australia. Proposed changes to the WA Aboriginal Heritage are discriminatory and ignore the right of Aboriginal people to care for our heritage. Plans to shut-down remote Aboriginal communities will have disastrous flow-on affects that will set our people back generations. The KLC has been standing strong for Kimberley Aboriginal people in rejecting these plans and lobbying for changes that benefit our people. We have participated in protests, met with State Government ministers and recently we joined 70 other countrymen to take a stand on the steps of Parliament to send a clear message to the State Government that we will not accept these policy decisions.

Looking back on the KLC

2004 - 10 YEARS AGO

Karajarri determination

The Federal Court formally recognised the native title rights of Karajarri Traditional Owners in a second determination across 5,000 sq km of mostly pastoral leases and reserves on September 8, 2004.

At the determination, Justice North raised the issue about lack of funding support for Prescribed Bodies Corporate – the bodies that are set up to hold native title on behalf of the people.

KLC CEO Wayne Bergmann, at the time, said it was essential PBCs were provided with resources so Traditional Owners could effectively manage their native title and benefit from their rights. Without proper support for PBCs, frustrations with the native title process would continue.



2009 - 5 YEARS AGO

National Heritage Listing in the Kimberley

Traditional Owners met with the Australian Heritage Council to discuss National Heritage Listing the Kimberley region.

The Traditional Owner Advisory Group, established to research National Heritage Listing, took on the lead role in investigating what important Indigenous, cultural and historic values the Kimberley has and how they are important to the nation.

“We are one mob. Our stories, culture and history – past, present and future – are all interconnected,” Advisory Group member Phillip McCarthy said.

“We are thinking very hard about National Heritage Listing and what it means for our people, which is why we will make the final decision on whether to nominate the whole region.”



Message from the Chairman



It is with great honour and privilege that I take on the role of KLC Chairman. I was fortunate enough to be elected into the position at the KLC AGM alongside the first ever female Deputy Chair Bonnie Edwards. This is a positive step forward in our history and Bonnie brings with her strong cultural values and leadership skills.

I would also like to acknowledge our outgoing leaders, especially Frank Davey and Tom Birch who have consistently worked hard to make the KLC the strong and successful organisation that it is today. So that I can follow in their footsteps and concentrate on fulfilling the role of Chairman at the KLC, I have resigned as Chair of KRED Enterprises and will finish up in the role early next year. I look forward to working with KLC directors, members and staff to continue to achieve strong results in the areas of native title, land and sea management and enterprise development.

My first couple of months as Chairman have been really busy travelling around doing lots of political lobbying. The State Government has launched an attack on Aboriginal people in WA with proposed changes to the Aboriginal Heritage Act and plans to close remote communities. The KLC recently joined about 70 other countrymen from across WA to stand on the steps of Parliament in Perth to send a clear message to the State Government that we reject these changes.

New laws on Aboriginal Heritage will make it harder for us to register and protect sites but easier for industry and mining companies to destroy them. This is not good. Our cultural heritage is strong and alive in the Kimberley and we need to protect it so we can continue to share our rich culture with the next generations. It was great to see more than 800 people at the KLC AGM and KALACC Festival get together to

protest against the changes to the Aboriginal Heritage Act. It is an uncertain time for our people and now more than ever, it's important that we stick together as one mob.

The State Government also plans to shut-down remote Aboriginal communities and force people into towns. This sees a return to the old days when our people were forced off cattle stations. I have been doing a lot of media to make it clear that closing remote communities will have long-term, flow-on effects that will impact us for the worst. We are really concerned that the State Government has not consulted Aboriginal people about this and we will continue to lobby to make sure our voices on this issue are heard.

I also attended international events in Sydney including a global gathering of 300 Indigenous people from across the world to discuss ways to protect culture and nature and share knowledge and ideas. Followed on from this was the World Parks Congress which happens once every 10 years and is about managing protected areas and national parks. About 25 land and sea managers from the Kimberley attended and it was great to see everyone doing their presentations and sharing our stories across the world.

The year is coming to an end and although there is still a lot of work to do, I would like to thank our directors and staff for their outstanding work in 2014. It's been a big year and we have managed to achieve a lot for Kimberley mob. Keep up the good work and have a safe and Merry Christmas and a happy new year. I look forward to catching you all in 2015.

ANTHONY WATSON



Annual General Meeting review

It was a very successful event with more than 800 people attending the Kimberley's biggest Aboriginal gathering at Jarlmadangah to celebrate culture, discuss issues and share stories.

The desert women came from Mulan and Balgo while Kimberley rangers travelled from Kalumburu and the Gibb River in the north to catch up with their family and friends from the central Fitzroy Valley and the saltwater people from the Dampier Peninsula.

Business was conducted during the day with the Annual General Meetings of the Kimberley Land Council, Kimberley Law and Culture



Centre and Kimberley Language Resource Centre from September 23-25. Changes to the Aboriginal Heritage Act dominated the list of issues along with discussions on economic development, native title and regional governance.

The Language Centre celebrated its 30th anniversary and paid tribute to the long list of people who helped to develop and build the organisation into what it is today and continue to work to make sure Kimberley languages stay strong.

KALACC also hosted the Walalakoo Wirriya Festival in celebration of the Kimberley's vibrant and living Aboriginal culture. Festivities included painting, bush tucker collection and spear making. At night, Kimberley dancers painted up and took to the stage to stomp their feet, kick up the dust and sing into the wee hours.

Land and sea managers from the Kimberley Ranger Network set-up information stalls to keep the community informed about their looking after country activities including biodiversity surveys, knowledge recording and fire management.

Land, language, law and culture provide the foundations for who we are as Kimberley Aboriginal people and our annual bush meeting is fundamental to ensuring our future remains strong.



We say 'no' to Aboriginal Heritage Act changes

The WA State Government is making lots of changes to the Aboriginal Heritage Act that will make it harder for us to protect our cultural heritage and easier for developers to destroy it.

At the KLC we have been really strong in saying to the State Government that we will not accept these changes as they completely ignore the rights of Aboriginal people to be involved in making decisions about our cultural heritage.

Recently, some of our KLC directors and cultural advisers joined about 70 countrymen from across WA to stand on the steps of Parliament in Perth to make it clear to the government that we reject the changes. John Watson presented a petition with 1600 signatures to Labor MP Ben Wyatt and Nationals MP Brendon Grylls before meeting with Indigenous Affairs Minister Peter Collier.

At the KALACC Festival more than 800 people stood together in protest, to unanimously oppose the amendments. The KLC, KALACC and the Language Centre also sent a letter to WA Premier Colin Barnett and Prime Minister Tony Abbott outlining our concerns.

KLC Chairman Anthony Watson said the WA Government needed to re-write the Aboriginal Heritage Act so it included Indigenous people and protected our heritage.

"Our cultural heritage dates back 50,000 years and is among the oldest in the world. It is really important that we are involved in the management of Aboriginal heritage and that it is treated with the same respect as white fella heritage," he said.

The KLC's main concerns with the changes to the WA Aboriginal Heritage Act include:



- Aboriginal people are being left-out of the decision-making process
- Decisions on the importance of Aboriginal heritage will be made by the CEO of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs
- There has been no formal engagement or consultation of Aboriginal people about our cultural heritage
- The appeals process allows mining companies to seek a review of decisions but not Aboriginal people
- Traditional Owners will be forced to publicly list all sites on the Aboriginal Sites and Objects Register or face lesser protection and enforcement.

The WA Aboriginal Heritage Act is outdated and needs to be changed; but changes need to improve heritage protection and empower Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal Heritage Amendment Bill 2014 was read in Parliament on November 27.



Community closures

The KLC has criticised State Government plans to close remote Aboriginal communities, saying it will have devastating impacts.

Premier Colin Barnett has announced plans to close up to 150 remote Indigenous communities. The Federal Government has handed responsibility for funding remote communities to the State Government. There are currently 274 Aboriginal communities in WA that are home to about 12,000 people.

KLC Chairman Anthony Watson said shutting-down communities was discriminatory and unjust.

“This is a big blow and brings us back into those old days, when our people were forced off stations,” he said.

“They say they want to close the communities and make us live in towns but we say where is the housing in towns? Where are the jobs?”

“Moving into towns is not good for our people. It makes it harder to access and connect with country, hunt and practice our culture.”

Mr Watson said people were worried and anxious, fearing their community could be on the hit list.

“Nobody knows which communities will close. The State Government hasn’t identified the criteria that will be used to select communities,” he said.

“The flow-on effects of this are going to be long-lasting and will have a massive negative impacts on generations of people living in both remote communities and towns.

“We all need to come together and fight this because the consequences are going to be devastating.”

Mr Watson called on Premier Colin Barnett and Indigenous Affairs Minister Peter Collier to come to the Kimberley so they could see the benefits of community living.

Kimberley mob on show at international events in Sydney

Global Gathering International Indigenous event

Kimberley Traditional Owners joined Indigenous people from across the globe to discuss conserving nature and culture at an international event in the Blue Mountains.

The three-day event brought together about 300 Indigenous people from five continents and 43 countries including Canada, the Philippines, Iran, Senegal, Bolivia, Taiwan Madagascar and Kenya.

The Kimberley was well represented as the KLC was a co-sponsor of the event and sent a group of more than 20 people. The gathering was held in Katoomba in the Blue Mountains from November 9-11 as a pre-cursor to the World Parks Event.

Paruku IPA ranger coordinator Jamie Brown, who comes from Mulan, said the event had opened his eyes to what was happening in other cultures across the world.

"We have been able to talk to other people and it's really opened up my eyes and given me ideas to help my old people and the younger generations. The things that other people are doing will be able to help me in my job as ranger coordinator," he said.

Highlights of the event included networking sessions, field trips to significant sites in the Blue Mountains, and a dialogue day where each continent got to share its story, talk about its struggles, challenges and successes.

Ngurrara women's coordinator Chantelle Murray said lots of the international people were really keen to learn more about looking after country activities in Australia and the Kimberley.

"Many people are doing similar things to us but want to learn more about how we manage our Indigenous Protected Areas, how we use the Cybertracker to record information and how we use that information in our management plans," she said.





World Parks Congress

Kimberley land and sea managers joined 5000 international delegates at the World Parks Congress in Sydney to share stories and inspire solutions about protected areas.

The week-long conference happens once every 10 years and provides a global platform to discuss protected areas and national parks and set the agenda for the next decade.

About 25 Kimberley land and sea managers attended the event to highlight the challenges and successes of natural resource management in our region.

Presentations focused on the Kimberley Ranger Network, Indigenous Protected Areas, Indigenous carbon projects, database management and knowledge recording and innovative literacy and numeracy programs.

Bardi Jawi Indigenous Protected Area coordinator Daniel Oades said the World Parks Congress provided an opportunity to learn and network about best-practice land and sea management.

"These events inspire us to implement new and emerging ideas into our own communities so we can continue to improve on our own conservation efforts on country," he said.

"Expanding and strengthening our local and international networks, and consolidating partnerships with like-minded groups and organisations, has been a key focus for us here at the World Parks Congress.

"Statements made by the IUCN International Union for the Conservation of Nature clearly indicate that Indigenous people, through declaring Indigenous Protected Areas in Australia are among world leaders in looking after their traditional lands and culture."





Qantas backs north Kimberley carbon project

North Kimberley Traditional Owners have sold carbon credits generated through Indigenous fire management projects to Qantas.

North Kimberley groups Dambimangari, Wilinggin, Wunambal Gaambera and Balanggarra have been doing early dry season burning on country to reduce the intensity of late season fires. This reduces polluting greenhouse gas emissions from the smoke and takes care of country. It also enables Traditional Owner groups to develop sustainable businesses through the sale of carbon credits.

The four north Kimberley groups sold the 226,000 carbon credits they had produced across the last two years to Qantas as part of the Federal Government's carbon tax. Since then the Federal Government has changed the laws and gotten rid of the carbon tax. Traditional Owners can still sell their carbon credits but in a different way.

Qantas and Corporations are looking to develop a voluntary arrangement to buy carbon credits from north Kimberley groups in the future as part of a long-term partnership.

Balanggarra Aboriginal Corporation Chair Cissy Gore-Birch said the north Kimberley carbon projects and partnership with Qantas was helping to build remote communities.

"This partnership is empowering our community to develop a strong future, built on traditional knowledge and connection to country. It has created jobs and is driving social change in our communities," she said

"Fire can be really dangerous for our country. Through doing right-way fire and managing it properly we are protecting threatened species and rock art sites while strengthening our cultural values."

Qantas' Head of Environment, John Valastro, said the partnership with Traditional Owners made perfect sense and would help to offset emissions and benefit local communities.

"Qantas is especially proud to be playing a small part in the revival of Aboriginal traditions with a heritage dating back thousands of years, and which are now being combined with modern scientific knowledge."

KLC welcomes new leadership

For the first time in the history of the KLC a woman has been elected to the position of Deputy Chair.

Jaru woman Bonnie Edwards was elected to the top job at the KLC AGM and board elections on September 24. She will join the newly elected Chair Anthony Watson, who has a strong background in community, cultural and enterprise development.

Bonnie, who is a qualified interpreter, said she was both shocked and excited to take on the role.

"Wow, being the first woman to be elected Deputy Chair, is not something I thought would happen when I woke up this morning," she said.

"I'm really proud and honoured to have been elected to this position."

Newly-elected Chair Anthony Watson has followed in his father's footsteps. John Watson is a founder of the KLC and served as Chair from 1981-1986 and 1991-1993.

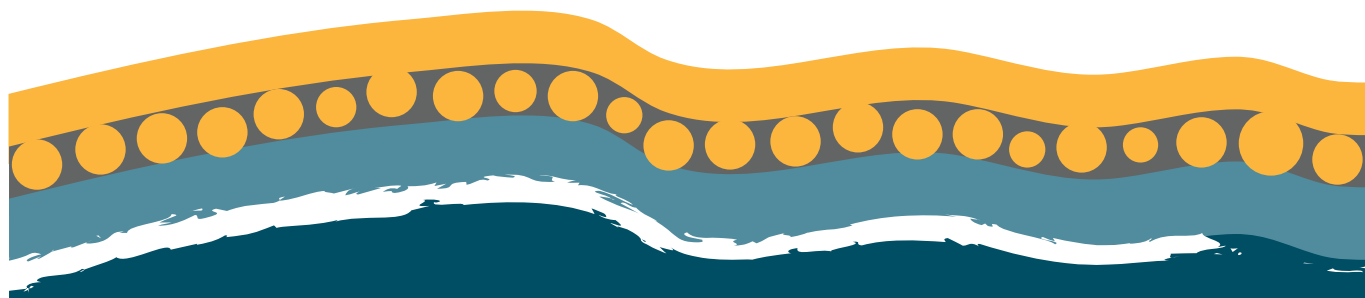
"It's fantastic to have been elected Chair of the KLC. I look forward to the challenge and continuing on with the great work that our elders started to make our organisation strong and successful," he said.

We would like to welcome our newly-elected directors to the KLC board including: special advisers Maria 'Marmingee' Hand and Peter Murray and directors Phillip McCarthy, Bobetta Albert, Andrew Daylight, Dwesmond Wiggan-Dann, Minetta Farrer, Catherine Goonack, Ismahl Croft, Rosie Nunguu, Elizabeth Lulu and Gabriel Noda.

We would also like to acknowledge the commitment, dedication and wisdom of our retiring leaders, who have helped to shape the KLC into the successful organisation it is today.

A special thanks goes to Chair Frank Davey, special advisers Joe Brown, Joe Davey and Wayne Bergmann and directors Frankie McCarthy, Lennie Hopiga, Marty Stevens, Mervyn Street, Patsy Bedford, Percy Bulgardie, Serena Samuel and Shirley Purdie.





empowered

COMMUNITIES

The KLC has partnered with Aarnja Limited to keep the Empowered Communities momentum moving forward. Keep a look out for the team in the New Year as we will be travelling to a town near you. For more information contact David Wirken on ceo@aarnja.org.au or 0403 070 863.

What is Empowered Communities?

Empowered Communities is a proposal for reform of the relationship between governments and Aboriginal communities in a way which will give Aboriginal leaders:

- a 'seat at the table'
- a greater say about how government funding is spent in communities and what programs operate.

Under Empowered Communities, Aboriginal people and government will be on an equal level so we can decide our future. Local leaders will work with communities to drive change and make sure funding is spent on resources, programs and services that are needed to stop waste and benefit those that need help the most.

Why Empowered Communities?

Empowered Communities is being led by Aboriginal leaders who think the gap is not closing fast enough

in Aboriginal communities, and they want to do something about it.

Empowered Communities is about giving Aboriginal people the power to fix the disadvantage and dysfunction in our communities. The reforms will put us in the driver's seat so we can decide what changes need to happen to the way funding is spent and what services and programs are provided in communities so we can make sure:

- children attend school every day, are on time, and are school ready;
- children, old people and sick people are cared for, looked after and safe;
- all adults that can, go to work or do training;
- people follow the rules set by Homes West to look after your home, maintain it and pay the rent; and
- people do not commit domestic violence, alcohol and drug offences, or petty crimes.

Aboriginal communities that 'opt-in' to be a part of Empowered Communities will be responsible for driving change and making sure the reforms are followed by all community members so we can create better futures for the next generation.

Empowered Communities is not 'one-size-fits-all' – services and programs will be changed to the meet the needs of each different community.

To make sure the reforms are successful it is really important that Aboriginal organisations support communities and help to deliver programs and services.

Our Kimberley vision

Empowered Communities can help us to realise our vision for the Kimberley. We want to use our strong cultural foundations to:

- build our Aboriginal enterprises;
- create jobs for our people;
- generate wealth and improve wellbeing in our communities; and
- achieve positive social reform across the region.

How will Empowered Communities work in the Kimberley?

Empowered Communities is an 'opt-in' reform movement. 'Opt-in' means that communities can choose to be a part of the reforms if they see the benefits and want to be involved. Being a part of Empowered Communities will not be forced on anyone.

As part of Empowered Communities there will be Regional Agreements between Aboriginal communities and the governments that provide funding and services to those communities. The Regional Agreement will be supported by a governance structure that will be made up of boards to represent each of the different Empowered Communities regions.



Representatives of each of the regions will be elected to their board and will be responsible for negotiating with governments and other service providers.

The idea for a Regional Agreement came from the Aboriginal leaders involved in Empowered Communities and not from government. The Regional Agreements will record details of program and funding commitments that will assist Aboriginal leaders in the Kimberley end waste and drive change in the areas most in need.

What happens next?

A lot of work has already been done by Aboriginal leaders to decide how Empowered Communities might work, but to make sure it is really successful Aboriginal communities need to be involved and commit to the reforms to make sure change happens.

The Empowered Communities team needs your feedback and ideas on:

- the key issues affecting your community and how they should be addressed;
- the Aboriginal organisations and groups who are best placed to assist in re-establishing the social norms in your community; and
- how the Empowered Communities reforms might work in your community.

Kimberley Ranger 2014 Smackdown

Kimberley rangers transformed into culinary chefs, builders and treasure hunters at this year's literacy and numeracy Smackdown challenge.

The fiercely competitive annual event is a celebration of language, literacy and numeracy in the workplace and sees rangers battle it out in activities designed to challenge team work, communication and problem solving.

About 60 Kimberley rangers participated in the two-day event held at Corkbark, south of Bidyadanga and hosted by the Karajarri Rangers.



The event highlight was the camp oven cook-off with the Bardi Jawi Rangers taking home the top prize for their yummy honey-soy chicken dish. The Kija Rangers came behind in a close second with their bbq ribs.

A Cybertracker GPS treasure hunt took rangers on an adventure as they used the GPS device to log data and track down secret hiding spots. At each secret hiding spot, the rangers had to find different pieces of fishing gear that they then had to use to catch a fish for extra bonus points.

Other activities included building a sand toboggan, writing a song and producing a film clip and ranger's revenge; where rangers won points for hitting targets of ranger coordinators and KLC staff members.

The Nyul Nyul Rangers, in continuing on with their solid track record at this event, were the overall winners of the Smackdown, taking home the trophy for 2014.

The Workplace, English Language and Literacy Smackdown challenge is a joint initiative between the Kimberley Land Council and the Kimberley Training Institute and highlights the importance of learning in a fun and friendly environment.





KLC building update

Our new KLC building is taking shape and it looks as though staff will be able to move in by May next year.

Lock-up stage has been achieved and the solar panels, a feature of the environmental design, have been installed on the roof.

Car parking and landscaping still need to be complete but will be finished along with building construction by March 2015. This will be followed by another month for fit-out and furniture installation and we are hoping staff will be able to move into the new building by the end of April.

We would also like to acknowledge the strong support from our funding partners, the Commonwealth Government through the Regional Development Australia Fund, the State Government from Royalties for Regions, Lotterywest and the Indigenous Land Corporation.



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.

