



NEWSLETTER



SEPTEMBER
2017

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

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Biggest ranger forum ever

Indigenous rangers travelled thousands of kilometres from locations all across northern Australia for a massive ranger gathering in the Kimberley in August.

Held at Pender Bay on Bardi country, the three-day Kimberley Ranger Forum was a celebration of everything it means to be an Indigenous ranger and the vital role they play protecting the environment and maintaining culture.

Read more on page 10.



PROTESTERS TAKING TO THE STREETS OF SYDNEY DURING THE 1988 BICENTENARY (PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY NEWSPIX)

Looking back on the KLC

► 1987 - 30 YEARS AGO

Bicentennial protest

At the final KLC meeting for 1987, people gave their support to a plan to send 15 people to Sydney to partake in protests during the Bicentennial celebrations.

Spokesmen and women stressed the protests would not be violent, acknowledging the fears many of the people had about confrontation. In addressing the meeting Chairman Frank Chulung said:

“People from overseas and people from different states... gudia from all over Australia, will be surprised by what their own people been doing to Aboriginal people, not 200 years ago, but things that have been done in living memory.”

► 1997 - 20 YEARS AGO

Ngurrara claim

The Ngurrara claim is for the traditional country of the Mangala, Walmajarri, Jiwarliny, Wangkajungka and Manjiljarra. The claim is over country in the Great Sandy Desert. The plenary for the claim was held in July 1997.

A representative of the WA Government listened as many people spoke up strongly for country. People sat around and stood on a large 8x10 metre canvas, painted by artists in the Ngurrara claim. The painting is a map of the claim area.

People used the painting to explain to the Native Title Tribunal and to the government how it is they can speak for country and how they belong to country.



A SECTION OF THE NGURRARA CANVAS. PAINTED BY NGURRARA ARTISTS AND CLAIMANTS, COORDINATED BY MANGKAJA ARTS RESOURCE AGENCY, MAY 1997

Message from the Chairman



It's been another busy few months for the Kimberley Land Council, leading up to our main event of the year – the combined annual general meetings of KLC, KALACC, KLRC and Aarnja.

As always the combined AGMs are an important chance for us all to get together, share our stories, make our voices heard and progress the work of the land council.

This year the AGMs coincide with the 'Jalalay KALACC Festival' which means KALACC will be staging some amazing performances and cultural activities throughout the week-long event. If you see me at the AGM please come up and say hello. I look forward to seeing you all there.

Last month, I was extremely proud to attend the Kimberley Ranger Forum at Pender Bay on the Dampier Peninsula. The event was staged by the Kimberley Land Council together with the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources.

More than 250 Indigenous rangers from all across the top end of Australia came to the big bush forum. It was

inspiring to see so many of our land and sea managers together in the one place, learning from each other, sharing stories and celebrating the role of Indigenous rangers.

I would like to say a big thanks to everyone who attended the event, the KLC staff who worked so tirelessly to stage such a wonderful meeting and Kevin George for allowing us all to camp at his block.

I also recently attended the Garma Festival in East Arnhem Land with KLC CEO Nolan Hunter. The main topic of conversation was constitutional reform and how our mob can get government to commit to supporting the recommendations of the Uluru Statement.

Unfortunately the Federal Government did not make any strong commitments at the meeting, so we must now continue to push our leaders to recognise and respect the wishes of our people.

In other news, the roll out of the cashless welfare card is continuing to be a cause of concern for many of our mob. At the July board meeting a number of KLC

directors expressed their frustration and worries about the card's effectiveness to Senators Jacqui Lambie and Skye Kakoschke-Moore. The Senators were in Kununurra to hear from community members about the rollout of the income management card.

Since then there have been multiple politicians travelling to the region to talk about the card. The KLC has concerns about its roll out, minimal consultation and the continued demonising of Indigenous people and communities.

Lastly, I encourage everyone who is at this year's AGM to pay a visit the KLC history project stall. The history project is part of our upcoming 40th anniversary celebrations. Joe Fox is leading this project and would love to hear from you, especially if you have any information, photos or stories about the KLC that you would like included. Don't miss out on making your contribution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Anthony Watson'.

Anthony Watson
Chairman



KIMBERLEY LAND COUNCIL CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER NOLAN HUNTER, NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY, BROOME

KLC CEO delivers prestigious Nulungu lecture

Kimberley Land Council Chief Executive Officer Nolan Hunter delivered the annual Nulungu Reconciliation Lecture at Notre Dame University in Broome in August.

The lecture, titled 'valuing Indigenous people in climate change' focused on the relationship between Indigenous people and the land, and how that is helping to address climate change worldwide.

Attended by more than 100 people, the lecture is a key event in the Notre Dame University calendar and has previously been delivered by WA Treasurer Ben Wyatt and Senator Patrick Dodson.

In the speech Mr Hunter said Indigenous people have an obligation to look after their land.

"Across the Kimberley, Aboriginal people are well placed to understand the effects of climate change on the land," he said.

"They are responsible for looking after nine Indigenous Protected Areas, four of which link together to create the largest Indigenous-owned conservation corridor in northern Australia.

"There are 72 dedicated IPAs in Australia protecting over 64 million hectares, including

some of Australia's rarest and most fragile environments.

"These IPAs make up over 40 per cent of Australia's National Reserve System. Australia's National Reserve System aims to protect 17 per cent of bioregions in Australia by 2020."

Mr Hunter discussed the role of the KLC in advocating for the recognition of the value of Indigenous knowledge.

"Last year, I was invited to speak at COP22 in Morocco about cultural and ecological knowledge," he said.

"I talked about how other countries can use the traditional knowledge of Australia's Indigenous people to reduce the impacts of climate change in their own backyards.

"Our wish is to see greater acknowledgment and value placed on Indigenous knowledge and projects, such as traditional fire management and savanna carbon initiatives."

Mr Hunter's full speech is available at www.klc.org.au



GARMA FESTIVAL 2017 OPENING CEREMONY

PM's Garma appearance falls short

Indigenous Australians have been left with a sense of uncertainty following the Prime Minister's lack of commitment to constitutional reform at this year's Garma Festival.

According to Kimberley Land Council CEO, Nolan Hunter, there had been hope among attendees that Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull would make some form of commitment about the process going forward, a commitment which was not forthcoming.

"People were expecting to see what commitments could be made about constitutional reform and the Uluru Statement's recommendation for a voice in the Constitution," Mr Hunter said.

"While the Leader of the Opposition expressed great support, the Prime Minister couldn't give any kind of a commitment except that he'd need to go back and talk to his party and Parliament.

"The PM was signalling that he didn't have enough details besides the notion of having a 'voice' enshrined in the Constitution.

"It's a bit of a double-edged sword. We are mindful that if you pack too much into a referendum proposal it won't get up because

you need a majority of voters in a majority of states to vote yes."

Despite the lack of commitment at Garma, Mr Hunter has urged the government to maintain momentum, calling for a referendum within the year.

"A referendum can't happen in five, 10 or 20 years," he said. "If it doesn't happen soon the opportunity will be lost."

Mr Hunter is a representative on the working group that has been tasked with taking the recommendations of the Uluru Statement forward after the Referendum Council finished its work earlier this year.

The constitutional reform process so far has been a combined effort of many local and national Indigenous leaders.

Mr Hunter attended the 2017 Garma Festival with KLC Chairman Anthony Watson.



Save the date!

The KLC's 40th celebrations will coincide with the 2018 AGM!



Ngumpun Community

Date to be confirmed

Featuring performers, launch of the KLC history book, short films and more. It will be a celebration like no other!



NOONKANBAH PROTEST MARCH, 1978

KLC history project

To celebrate next year's 40th anniversary of the Kimberley Land Council, we have started a history project to record events from 1978 to the present day.

There are two main parts to the project – a book about the history of the KLC, and an online portal where people can look at photos, documents, recordings, and videos that relate to the KLC and to the people of the Kimberley.

The book will be produced in partnership with Magabala Books, and will be a 'personal account' of how and why the KLC was formed, what people were involved, the activities of the KLC and achievements made. It will be in the words of the people involved, with materials coming from the archives, interviews and other sources.

The KLC has engaged Joe Fox to pull the book together. It will be launched at the 2018 AGM.

The second part of the project, the online portal, is currently under construction. When finished, it will allow people to use their computer, smartphone, or tablet device to look through KLC's photo collection, documents like old newsletters, media releases, booklets, reports, and audio and video recordings of KLC

people and events. Access will be controlled so that sensitive information is restricted where necessary. The online portal will be built up over many years and will eventually include all of KLC's public historical and new images, documents, and recordings.

The online portal will also be launched at the 2018 AGM.

▶ DO YOU HAVE PHOTOS, OR STORIES ABOUT THE KLC?

If you have any information, photos, or stories about the KLC that you would like to see included in the history project, please contact Joe Fox on 0417 901 722, email joe.fox@klc.org.au, or call the Broome KLC office on 9194 0100.

Both of these projects are funded by a generous grant from Lotterywest.



KLC BOARD MEMBERS WITH JACQUI LAMBIE AND SKYE KAKOSCHKE-MOORE IN KUNUNURRA, JULY 2017

Cashless debit card questioned

Kimberley Land Council Directors met with Senators Jacqui Lambie and Skye Kakoschke-Moore at their quarterly board meeting in Kununurra last July.

In the region as part of a three-day tour of the East Kimberley investigating the cashless debit card, the Senators were keen to hear the views of KLC Directors.

The KLC Board voiced its support for measures that assist people to overcome substance abuse issues, but had diverse views about any real benefits of the card following its roll out in Kununurra and Wyndham.

Kimberley Land Council Director Marianne Skeen raised concerns about the level of consultation with local communities.

"This card has been forced on communities with little or no consultation with the people who are most affected," Ms Skeen said.

"In Halls Creek, the government tried to impose the scheme on the community before it was rejected by the Shire.

"This is another example of governments making decisions for us, not with us."

Fellow KLC Director Greg Tait questioned the decision to limit the trial to areas with a high proportion of Indigenous residents.

"Substance abuse is not just an Indigenous issue," Mr Tait said. "These problems affect all Australians from all walks of life.

"If the government really wants to know if this card works and can make a difference they should target all types of communities."

KLC Chairman Anthony Watson said there remains no clear evidence of the card's success in the East Kimberley.

"This card is a band aid solution, which does not go to the heart of addressing the real systemic issues of alcohol and drug abuse," Mr Watson said.

"Indigenous people make up just 3 per cent of the Australian population. Yet time and again our people seem to bear the brunt of government policies and programs aimed at addressing issues that affect the entire Australian community."

Earlier this month, the Federal Government announced an extension of the cashless debit card to the Goldfields region of WA.



NYIKINA MANGALA COUNTRY

Kimberley TOs take on mining company and win

In a major win for Traditional Owners, an Australian mining company will be forced to pay court costs of around \$200,000 for exhibiting what has been described as “thoroughly unreasonable conduct” in relation to a native title claim.

In 2013 Oil Basins Ltd challenged the connection of Nyikina Mangala Traditional Owners to their lands.

Oil Basins Ltd lodged the challenge despite the State Government having already accepted the connection of the Nyikina Mangala people and without the company having any evidence stating otherwise.

The actions forced the start of trial proceedings before the company suddenly changed its mind, reversing its opposition to the validity of the native title claim.

In November 2014 Justice Gilmour ordered that Oil Basins Ltd pay the Nyikina Mangala people’s costs because of its “thoroughly unreasonable conduct”.

In July, the Full Federal Court of Australia dismissed the third consecutive appeal by Oil Basins Ltd against the original costs order made by Justice Gilmour.

The Kimberley Land Council has been representing the Nyikina Mangala people throughout the long running court proceedings.

Chief Executive Officer Nolan Hunter said the judgment is an important win for native title holders in the region.

“The judgment sends a clear message to companies that wish to question, hold up or thwart native title processes that they can face severe monetary consequences,” Mr Hunter said.

“For the Nyikina Mangala people, we hope they will feel vindicated by this ruling and that this long-running matter can finally be resolved.”

The Nyikina Mangala people applied in 1998 to be recognised as the native title holders of their traditional country. Their consent determination was handed down in May 2014.



MORE THAN 400 PEOPLE GATHERED AT PENDER BAY FOR THE KIMBERLEY RANGER FORUM, AUGUST 2017.

Biggest ranger forum ever

Indigenous rangers travelled thousands of kilometres from locations all across northern Australia for a massive ranger gathering in the Kimberley in August.

Held at Pender Bay on Bardi country, the three-day Kimberley Ranger Forum was a celebration of everything it means to be an Indigenous ranger and the vital role they play protecting the environment and maintaining culture.

Hosted by the Kimberley Land Council, in partnership with the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, the Kimberley Ranger Forum had a focus on biosecurity, with Indigenous rangers playing an ever increasing role as the eyes and ears of the remote north.

Kimberley Land Council Chief Executive Officer Nolan Hunter said 60 different Indigenous ranger groups and a total of 400 people attended the forum.

“Aboriginal people have a strong spiritual connection to country, a customary obligation and a responsibility to care for the land,” Mr Hunter said.

“The success of the Indigenous ranger program is based on its strong link to people’s cultural values and their native title rights and interests.

“For over a decade Indigenous rangers have cared for country and culture.

“Now, more than ever, their work is having an impact, not only in their own communities, but all over Australia.”

With more than 10,000 kilometres of coastline, islands and river inlets across northern Australia, Indigenous rangers are on the frontline to protect Australia’s biosecurity.

Bardi Jawi ranger Azton Howard conducts biosecurity work along the Dampier Peninsula coastline, checking the water for debris, and surveying plant and animal health.

“Timber, insects, floats, wreckage from boats, goods cast overboard and a huge amount of plastics have been removed from the Kimberley coast thanks to this work,” Azton said.

“This is helping to keep our country and the rest of Australia healthy and protected from diseases and pests.

“We are the eyes and ears of the north and without Indigenous rangers this work could not and would not occur.”









Journey to Walkali

AERIAL PHOTO CREDIT TO QUINTON MILNER PAKAM CREW

In May this year 50 Traditional Owners travelled from the Fitzroy Valley, Balgo, Billiluna, Halls Creek and Mulan communities on a major return to country trip to Walkali, a remote outstation in the Great Sandy Desert.

The bush trip had been planned for several years and was able to happen with the support of the Yiriman Project, the Paruku Rangers and the KLC.

Arriving at Walkali was very moving for everyone, some people had not visited in over 30 years and for others it was their very first time. Walkali is culturally significant to the Traditional Owners as it has many important sites and dreaming links to the Seven Sisters.

The week was spent undergoing cultural practice and knowledge sharing, storytelling, painting, making clapsticks, hunting and singing. Traditional Owners also had the opportunity to view their country from the air and visit sites using the helicopter.

The Traditional Owners would like to continue visiting Walkali for healing purposes.





West Kimberley update

Bindunbur Native Title Claim

The final hearing for the Bindunbur (Nyul Nyul, Nimanburu and Jabirr Jabirr), Jabirr Jabirr/Ngumbarl and Goolarabooloo Native Title Claims was held on the 28th and 29th of June in Perth. The Judge heard the final oral submissions on extinguishment.

The KLC organised a live audio feed for people in Broome who wanted to listen to the court proceedings. The Judge will now write up his decision – this may take around 12 months.

While we wait for the decision, the KLC will be talking with family groups about what kind of governance people want and how to set up PBC/s for the area.

Mayala Native Title Claim

Dr Kingsley Palmer has been engaged to complete a connection report for the Mayala Native Title Claim. Dr Palmer has now completed this research and report. This will be a major step forward for the Mayala claim.

Unclaimed Area

There is an area of country between the Nyikina Mangala, Yawuru and Karajarri native title determination areas that has not yet had a native title claim lodged over it.

The KLC facilitated a meeting earlier this year between representatives of the Nyikina Mangala, Yawuru and Karajarri groups to discuss how they would like to proceed.

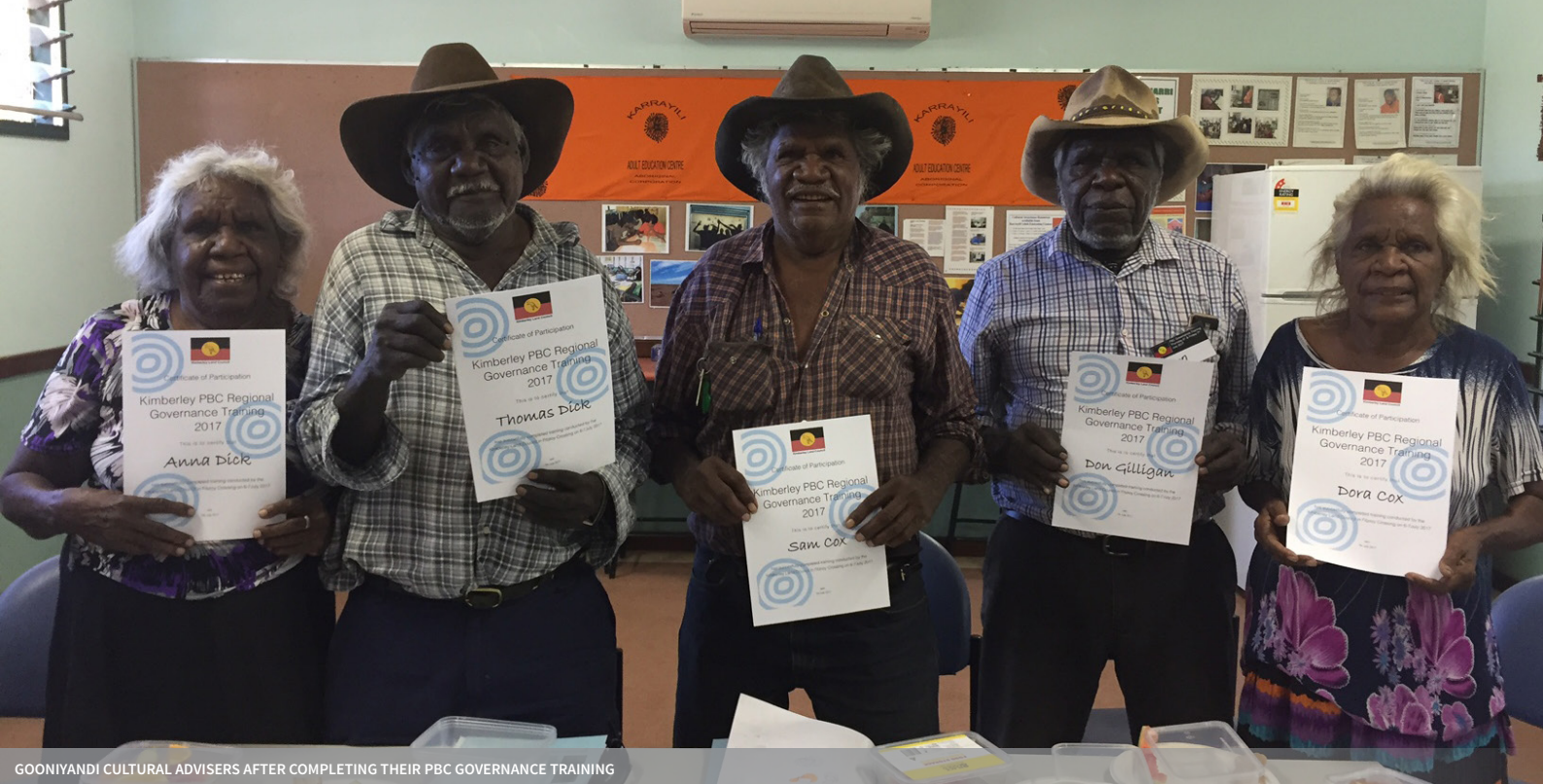
An anthropologist will be engaged to undertake the research for a connection report over this area in the preparation for a new native title claim. The work for a new native title claim is being done now because the KLC has been informed by the Department of Lands that an application for a pastoral lease has been made over this unclaimed area.

By doing the work now, native title claimants and the KLC will have more time to consider and talk together about any future native title claim.

Edarrbur (Rubibi #18)

A meeting of the Applicant held on 28 August 2017 decided to wait to receive Barristers advice regarding the role of the Commonwealth as an intervener before proceeding. Negotiations towards a consent determination in 2017 are continuing.





GOONIYANDI CULTURAL ADVISERS AFTER COMPLETING THEIR PBC GOVERNANCE TRAINING

Central Desert update

The Central Desert team is continuing to progress significant native title work in the region.

A major highlight was a recent five-day trip into the Great Sandy Desert as part of ongoing research for the Yi-Martuwarra Ngurrara (YMN) claim.

KLC staff members, together with Traditional Owners Maliki Hobbs, Elsie Dickens, Penny K Lyon, Julia Lawford, Sammy Costaine, Jean Tighe, Wendy Waye and Edgar Pike, and consultant anthropologist Daniel Vachon took part in the trip.

Travelling for five days and four nights on country south of Fitzroy Crossing, the group visited important sites in the eastern part of the claim, around Christmas Creek, the Bulka Hills and the Great Sandy Desert.

The research trip will help Dr Vachon prepare his expert opinion report for the YMN claim.

Other highlights for the Central Desert team from the past six months include YRYG claim meetings and research, a productive Warrwa claim group meeting at Bungarun near Derby, regional PBC governance training, as well as mediations over claim boundaries and overlapping native title claims.

Members of the Central Desert team also participated in the National Native Title Conference in Townsville and at the Kimberley Ranger Forum, Pender Bay.



Ranger jobs transforming lives

Many Kimberley Land Council members will be aware of the inquest into Aboriginal youth suicide currently occurring in the Kimberley.

The inquest into 13 youth suicides has been a traumatising experience for many and has highlighted the significant work that still needs to occur to help young Aboriginal people in the Kimberley.

In his recent Nulungu Reconciliation speech, Kimberley Land Council CEO Nolan Hunter said traditional advertising and campaigning to prevent suicide, while well-intentioned, had not been working.

"It is a sad reality that suicide rates among Indigenous people in the Kimberley are among the highest in the world," Mr Hunter said.

"According to a report in the Medical Journal of Australia, between 2005 and 2014, there were 125 suicides in the Kimberley - 102 were Indigenous people.

"Despite the best efforts of advertising and campaigning and political strategies, this does not change the rate of suicide in the Kimberley."

However, one initiative that is changing lives and transforming local young people is the Indigenous ranger program.

Many Indigenous ranger groups in the Kimberley work with local youth, inspiring them

to attend school or consider conservation and land management as a future career.

Rangers are also now working with youth involved in the juvenile justice system to help them get back on track, gain employment and build confidence.

"The Indigenous ranger program enhances a person's cultural connection and their ties with country," Mr Hunter said.

"It provides accredited training, new skills and future opportunities, developing young people and their belief in themselves.

"This strengthens the internal wellbeing of the young person, their identity and their desire to work, contribute and be a part of their community."

Other community initiatives are also making important strides to support youth.

The Kimberley Land Council will continue to monitor the inquest closely.

The KLC would like to extend its condolences and support to members who have been impacted by suicide.

A close-up portrait of Veronica 'Bono' McKeon, an elderly woman with grey hair and glasses, smiling gently. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with trees and a fence.

Vale Veronica 'Bono' McKeon

- Written by Nevanka McKeon

Veronica McKeon was a very proud and passionate Nyul Nyul lady who lost her short battle with lung cancer on 26 April of this year. She was only 57 years young.

Veronica was born in the Broome Native Hospital to her proud parents Albert Dann, a Nyul Nyul man, and Nellie Dann (nee Yeeda), a Gija woman. Along with her parents, brothers and sister and extended family, Veronica grew up in Beagle Bay until the late 1960s.

Living in Beagle Bay was a happy time for Veronica or 'Bono' as most people affectionately knew her by. Veronica had many fond memories of growing up on country. She enjoyed going fishing and hunting with her Dad and family including her Mimi and Guloods.

She loved her family with all her heart and she loved and gave unconditionally to everyone and everything. She would do almost anything for those she cared about. Veronica was a passionate, caring, strong, kind and knowledgeable lady.

Veronica commenced youth work in the early 1990s and worked tirelessly for and with the youth of Broome and their families for many years. In 1993 she was the founder of a youth dance group Modern Dreamtime Dancers who performed not only in Broome, but around the Kimberley region and at various interstate and international conferences, events and festivals.

Veronica also had a deep love and pride for her country. She was a fighter, not afraid to stand up for what she believed in.

In 2009, Veronica moved back to country to live at Loongabid, a longing she held for many years. During this time, Veronica worked nonstop, contributing towards her family heritage. She also worked with KRCl mentoring and committing to ongoing community projects in Beagle Bay.

Veronica was always a community minded person and this couldn't be more evident than her being one of the founding members responsible for establishing the Nyul Nyul Rangers through a CDEP project.

It was always Veronica's dream to have native title recognised. The greatest legacy Veronica could leave is for all her and her family's hard work to be recognised. She made her family promise that they would continue to work towards this goal.

Veronica McKeon leaves behind a husband of 34 plus years, four kids and six granddaughters.

Veronica served as a KLC Director for Nyul Nyul.

Jules celebrates 10 years at KLC

East Kimberley Native Title Officer Julia Campbell will this month celebrate her 10 years at the Kimberley Land Council.



JULES CAMPBELL

Known to most as Jules, she joined the KLC Kununurra office back in 2007 and since then has been a valuable member of the team assisting Traditional Owners in the region.

Jules had the following to say about her time working at the Kimberley Land Council.

Why did you want to work for the KLC?

My grandmother was my biggest inspiration. Travelling with her, learning about our culture, our land, and travelling with the KLC, made me realise her love for her country. The KLC works in taking people back on country and talking to them, really listening to them, so I thought wow, these KLC people really care.

Why is native title important to you?

Native title protects our land, our spirit, it is very important for us to get native title for our future generation. Our children will have the right to practise our law and culture, return back to their ancestors' homeland, their homeland. Recognition empowers us and enables us to become strong.

Has there been a particularly memorable moment for you in your time with the KLC?

I started with the KLC after our determination (Willinggin). It put a lot of strain on my grandmother but we finally got it and that was my most memorable moment. But during my time with the KLC, the Balangarra Determination was just as memorable, an historic day I was happy to be there to celebrate with the Balangarra people.

What is your biggest hope for the future?

For traditional lands to be given back to the Traditional Owners, for the children to learn more about their law and culture, respect for each other and keeping our culture alive.

Anything you'd like to add?

I love my work!

JULIA CAMPBELL & THE EAST KIMBERLEY TEAM

Jules works in the KLC Kununurra office with NTSU Region Manager (East Kimberley) Rob Tusntall, Native Title Officer Sarah Mack, Field Officer Kelwyn Gore and Administration Officer Nikki Carlton.

To contact the KLC Kununurra office, please phone 9194 0190.



ROB TUSNTALL



SARAH MACK



KELWYN GORE



NIKKI CARLTON

1978 40 years of history 2018



Help us record the history of the KLC

**Got any story to tell? Got any old photos?
Know any people from the old days?**

The KLC is putting together a book on the history of the KLC, in time for our 40th Anniversary celebrations in 2018.

We'd love to have your help in telling our story.

To be involved, please see Joe Fox at the AGM.

Or you can contact him on 0417 901 722, email joe.fox@klc.org.au.

Or call the office on 1914 0100.



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.

