



NEWSLETTER



SEPT 2018

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

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CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF KLC



Photographs by Michael Gallagher

This month the Kimberley Land Council will officially celebrate 40 years of standing up for the rights of Kimberley Aboriginal people.

Since 1978, the KLC has been there for the Kimberley mob - speaking out and making governments accountable.

There have been many changes since the early days and the KLC looks very different now to how it did back then. But what hasn't changed is our commitment to the Kimberley mob. We have come from humble beginning to become one of the strongest voices in the Kimberley and it remains our mission to look after the interests of our mob.

The celebration at Ngumpan is a celebration for you, our members, the people who make the KLC what it is. The KLC is built on the shoulders of you all - our members are our strength and wisdom.

For more information about the KLC 40th anniversary celebration see page 3.



Looking back
on the KLC

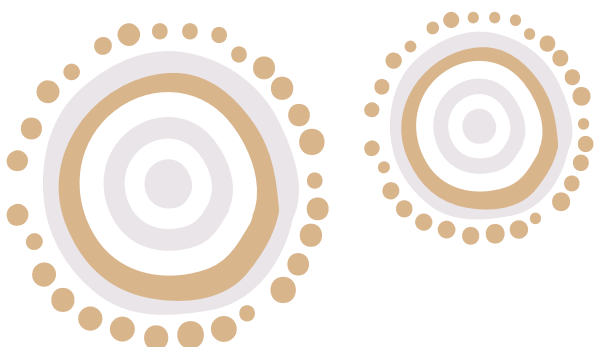
NOONKANBAH DANCERS, INAUGURAL KLC MEETING NOONKANBAH STATION 20 MAY 1978

► 1978 - 40 years ago

First meeting of the KLC

"In May this year there was a big dance festival at Noonkanbah. A pastoral lease, run by Aborigines near Fitzroy Crossing. People came together from all over the Kimberley. Some even came from Groote Eylant and Yirrkala in Arnhem Land. They came to celebrate their culture and their law and to show that it is strong. It was the biggest gathering of Aborigines in recent history."

- excerpt from first KLC newsletter



► 1998 - 20 years ago

Bandaralngadi formed

A new Aboriginal group has formed to represent all Kimberley Traditional Owners affected by West Australian Government plans to dam the Fitzroy River and use groundwater reserves for cotton production. Called Bandaralngadi, the Bunuba language name for the Fitzroy River, the group is made up of representatives of all language groups in the west Kimberley affected by the government plans.



NOONKANBAH DANCERS, INAUGURAL KLC MEETING NOONKANBAH STATION 20 MAY 1978

Message from the *Chairman*



Marboo Ngimbi,

This September we are all coming together for one of the biggest celebrations of the Kimberley Land Council in many years. The KLC's 40th anniversary is a reminder that we are 40 years strong, and that 40 years on the KLC is continuing to work to ensure that our land, law, language and culture is vibrant and long-lasting.

We find that many of the same issues fought for in our early days, such as the protection of Aboriginal heritage and culture, continue to be issues for Aboriginal people today. In Western Australia one of the most prevalent expressions of this is the outdated Aboriginal Heritage Act, which continues to disadvantage Aboriginal people and culture.

We also know that the native title system needs to improve and that the current legislation does not adequately meet the interests of Traditional Owners. The need for Constitutional reform and appropriate regional engagement is also a major priority.

Our big celebration at Ngumpun will be an opportunity to talk about the big issues that face us as a people. We still get told what to do and we still find ourselves not on a level playing field when we talk to governments and industry. This needs to change so that we can truly participate in a remote, modern day economy, keep our culture strong and improve the lives of Kimberley Aboriginal people.

But most of all we must remember that this is a time for celebration. It is important to think about how much the KLC has achieved over the years because of you all, our members, directors and leaders. From the protests at Noonkanbah, to the pivotal Crocodile Hole meeting, our victory

in the High Court against Richard Court's WA Government, all of the native title determinations, the huge strides in land and sea management, and the increasing ability of Kimberley Aboriginal people to exercise their rights.

One of the most exciting aspects of the 40th celebration at Ngumpun will be the recreating of the Noonkanbah march on Monday, 17 September. This is set to be a very special and moving event, with a number of people who were at the original Noonkanbah march taking part.

On Wednesday there will be a bush meeting with all of our members to discuss current issues and to talk about a formal statement to be put to government. This is our time to make a stand and to call on the government to make the changes we need.

I would like to extend my thanks to all KLC members for your support. It has been an incredible privilege to be Chairman of the KLC for the past four years. We have accomplished much in that time, including stopping the State Government from closing our communities, but there is still much work to be done.

That is why coming together for these big meetings is so important. They allow everyone to say what is on their mind, and for us all to come together to speak with one voice, as our elders did 40 years ago, and to continue walking the long road to justice.

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

Anthony Watson



June Oscar named NAIDOC Person of the Year

The Kimberley's June Oscar, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, has been named NAIDOC Person of the Year at the National NAIDOC Awards.

Commissioner Oscar received the award in recognition of her work championing the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, especially women and children, and her tireless work to preserve Indigenous languages.

Commissioner Oscar dedicated her award to her mother and grandmother – fierce and independent Bunuba women.

“Because of them, my ancestors’ spirits and knowledge drove my determination to learn and succeed, while never relinquishing any aspect of my Indigenous womanhood.

“The NAIDOC awards are wonderful recognition. This is an absolute honour, particularly this year, with the theme ‘Because of Her, We can’.”

As the first woman to be the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, June Oscar has been carrying out national talks with First Nations women, with the Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) project.

“I accept this NAIDOC award with the full responsibility of carrying your voices, and I am committed to making what you say count.

“Let me tell you that this year I hear you, I hear our Women's Voices our Wiyi Yani U Thangani. You are here, you are not silent, you are not invisible. Our voices are rising loud and clear.”

A message to KLC members about the Wrong Skin podcast and associated media reports

Dear KLC members,

Some of you may have heard about a podcast called Wrong Skin. The podcast focused on the Kimberley and talked about many different issues, including the Kimberley Land Council and the way our organisation works with Traditional Owner groups and progresses native title.

The podcast included many mistakes and did not properly tell the story of the KLC. As a result, our organisation has issued media statements to Fairfax – the company that produced the podcast. We have also written a legal letter to Fairfax about the defamatory content in the podcast. Defamation is when something is published that damages the reputation of a person or organisation by saying or writing bad things about them that are not true.

As one of the largest Aboriginal organisations in the Kimberley we are used to a high level of scrutiny. The KLC is audited annually and we regularly report back to government and other funding providers about our performance. We have done very well in these audits and we believe this type of examination is important to make sure we are doing our job right.

At the KLC we welcome discussion from the media and others about native title and issues affecting our people. This type of debate helps the KLC to improve the work that we do and pushes government to do better on issues that mean the most to us as a people.

Unfortunately, the podcast Wrong Skin instead delivered an unbalanced and inaccurate portrayal of how native title works and the way the KLC operates. It sought to undermine the Aboriginal

leaders, Aboriginal culture and the organisations that unite us all.

Many of the views broadcast in the podcast stem from a native title system that does not always work in the best interests of Traditional Owners across Australia. We know that for some of our members and Kimberley Aboriginal people, it is a system that may have let them down.

Despite this disappointment, we must remember that native title has delivered a lot – negotiating power and importantly a seat at the table. We have come a long way since the Mabo decision in 1992.

But these rights will only stay strong if we fight for them and that is what the KLC promises to always do. We will always stand up for the rights of Kimberley Aboriginal people and we will always speak out on issues that affect our mob.

The KLC believes that the Government of Australia not only needs to respect and uphold our current native title rights but our politicians need to make them tougher so they can better meet the interests of our people.

In our fortieth year the KLC remains as strong as ever. We will continue to progress native title claims in the Kimberley, we will continue to support Indigenous rangers to work on country and we will continue to work with PBCs to ensure they are strong organisations.

The KLC will continue walking the long road to justice.

Yours Sincerely,

Tyrone Garstone
Acting CEO

To read the KLC's full media statements, including corrections of inaccurate and misleading statements please visit www.klc.org.au



Unmarked remains given new home

The Gooniyandi rangers have taken on one of their most important jobs to date - assisting with the repatriation of unmarked human remains from the banks of the Fitzroy River.

The project, which has been led by the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre (KALACC) involved the removal of the remains of Aboriginal people from the Old Pioneer Cemetery that had become exposed or were at risk of being exposed due to erosion and flooding.

Over many months the rangers, KALACC and the Fitzroy community have worked together to ensure the work has been undertaken in the right way with the right people involved.

The project commenced in April 2017, when initial checks of the site found that several remains were at immediate threat of further erosion and being lost.

Before any work was conducted, Traditional

Owners from surrounding language groups came to smoke the area as many different people were buried at the site after they were brought into Fitzroy Crossing from surrounding communities, stations and missions.

Ranger Coordinator Kyle Raina said the Gooniyandi ranger team was then selected to complete the delicate task of removing the first seven remains.

“From previous work and training, as well as cultural trips with elders that the Gooniyandi rangers have undertaken, it was determined that they possessed all the skills required for the role,” Kyle said.



Grave sites
on the banks
of the Fitzroy
River

“After being taught how to conduct the work they were able to assist in the removal of the first seven remains.”

Following further studies of the site, meetings were held and community members were notified that the project would begin again in October 2017.

“The Gooniyandi rangers felt very committed to the work being done and were eager to continue with their involvement to ensure it was done in the right way,” Kyle said.

“The Traditional Owners came down and did a smoking ceremony and talked in language to the remaining deceased to explain that where they were buried was in danger from

the river and that the people working had come to help move them to a safe place.”

The difficult and at times emotional task continued for the next two months during the hottest part of the year and the rangers’ involvement was a key factor in ensuring that all the remains were successfully removed before the start of the wet season.

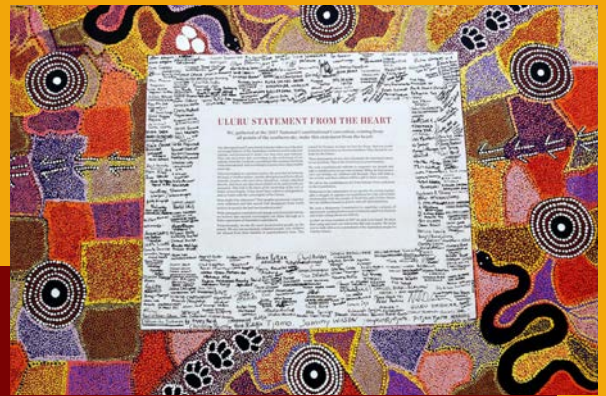
Throughout the project, KALACC worked closely with the Fitzroy community to ensure that appropriate cultural supervision occurred at all times. Cultural supervisors were present to ensure that all of the work conducted by the rangers was done in the right way. Bunuba rangers also assisted in the process.

The final stages of the project are now underway with the reburial of the remains, this time on higher ground, far from the reach of the Fitzroy River. The buried remains will be marked with crosses and code numbers, with the hope that future DNA testing will be able to identify the living



Uluru Statement
from the Heart

Senator Patrick
Dodson



Leaders speak up for Voice proposal

A new parliamentary report has put the proposal by First Nations people for a Voice in the Constitution back on the Australian political agenda.

The Joint Select Committee into Constitutional Recognition, led by Senator Patrick Dodson together with MP Julian Lesser, released its report in July highlighting the clear preference of Indigenous people around the country for a Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

In the lead up to the release of the report, the Kimberley Land Council together with KRED Enterprises presented to the joint select committee and provided a submission to assist the group in formulating its interim document.

In the submission, the KLC and KRED, stated their support for the recommendations outlined in the Uluru Statement from the Heart, including the establishment of the Voice and a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations, as well as truth-telling about Australia's history.

The submission called for the First Nations Voice to be represented in the form of a national body, or 'voice group' that would advocate for Aboriginal people but would not be subject to the popular politics of the time.

In addition, the submission stated that the Voice must lead to economic advancement and improved social outcomes for Aboriginal

people. And that it should be able to advise on the policies, systems and structures that currently result in a continuation of the status quo for Aboriginal people.

The joint select committee was formed following the rejection of the Voice proposal by former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull in late 2017.

The decision of the former Prime Minister disappointed and angered many of the people who had been a part of the regional dialogues held across the country to discuss Constitutional reform and the gathering in Uluru which produced the historic Uluru Statement.

According to the latest report, the Voice proposal has very strong support, but there remains "disparate views on how a Voice should be established, what its structure should be and how it should operate". During the next few months the committee will undertake further consultations before delivering a final report to be released in November.

To read the committee's interim report in full, please visit the Parliament of Australia website <https://www.aph.gov.au/>

ALT divestment

- what you need to know!

One of the WA Labor Government's promises to Aboriginal people in the last state election was a commitment to divest the Aboriginal Lands Trust Estate within eight years (two terms of government).

The Kimberley Land Council has been talking to PBCs and members about what this means and how this might work. The State Government has also been talking to different groups about different properties and areas of land it believes can be divested (given back) over the coming months and years.

ALT divestment affects all PBCs and native title groups differently, but there are many common aspects as well. The KLC wants to make sure that all groups can benefit from ALT divestment. To do this we believe there needs to be a regional approach to divestment, with adequate resourcing, including for consultation processes, land-use planning, governance arrangements and business plans.

Regional coordination on this issue could result in a number of benefits, including the opportunity to drive a new form of land tenure, strengthen and protect native title rights and ensure the long-term sustainability of PBCs.

Some PBCs and native title groups have also identified risks in relation to divestment of land, particularly land that may not have been looked after adequately or may pose a liability.

There have also been some concerns raised about the State Government not talking to the right people with the right authority about divestment. This is another reason why a regional approach is needed to ensure that the government goes about giving land back the right way.

The KLC is preparing a proposal for the State Government outlining how it can start to progress this work further. We will continue to keep KLC members updated. In the meantime if you have any questions or concerns about ALT divestment please contact the KLC on 9191 0100.



Noonkanbah
photos by
Michael
Gallagher



The Beginning

of the Kimberley Land Council

Celebrating 40 years of the Kimberley Land Council
Walking the long road to justice

In 1978, senior leaders called all Aboriginal people to come to the first official meeting of the Kimberley Land Council (KLC) at Noonkanbah. Our mob came from everywhere - they jumped in the back of utes or hitched a ride across the Kimberley to make it to Noonkanbah to speak up for Aboriginal land and for Aboriginal rights.

Today, 40 years later, Kimberley Aboriginal people still stand together as one mob, with one voice.

The KLC was formed by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people, and our voice remains strong. In our 40th year we are walking the long road to justice.

1978

First meeting of the KLC.

Held at Noonkanbah the meeting brought together representatives from all across the Kimberley.

"On the first day of the meeting all the representatives of the different communities (more than 30) talked about their own situations and experiences and about the benefits they would get from joining together and sharing their common experience and making their voices one voice, and they decided yes, they would set up a Land Council. And so the KLC arrived."

- KLC newsletter 1978

"Aboriginal people should be positive. We must stand up. Must have courage to do for our country."

- Jimmy Bleundurr
KLC newsletter 1978

1980

Police move in to rig convoy access. A protest is led by Cox and Nipper by the KLC, National Conference, trade of Churches and

Kimberley Aboriginal blockade the road to hold up the convoy transporting the Noonkanbah. Arr

The Noonkanbah national and inter

1979

Protests against AMAX drilling at Noonkanbah.

KLC organises to send a delegation to the United Nations.

2001

The first positive determination of native title in the Kimberley is reached by consent with the Tjurabalan people in August 2001.

"That day there was just people everywhere, there was a makeshift bough shed, and for dancing everything was made, men's, women's...everyone was painting and dancing, and all the judges were there with their migs on. There was just all Tjurabalan people there, they had a big dance, all dances for the lake, for country and that. About two weeks after I think they declared the IPA."

- Shirley Brown, Desert Lake, art, science and stories from Paruku, 2013

2002

The 10th anniversary of the Mabo decision - one of the most significant moments in history for Indigenous people in Australia. In the 10 years since Mabo, the KLC has fought hard to secure native title for Aboriginal people.

2003

The KLC turns 25.

Since the Noonkanbah meeting in 1978, Kimberley Traditional Owners have managed to get control or access over a large part of the Kimberley. On our 25th birthday, Aboriginal people now hold 30 per cent of the pastoral leases in the Kimberley, and Aboriginal reserves make up 14 per cent of the Kimberley.

- KLC newsletter 1978

2008

The KLC celebrates its 30th anniversary.

At the direction of elders from 13 different native title groups with country along the Kimberley coastline, the KLC convenes the Traditional Owner Taskforce to investigate possible sites for a single LNG hub. The taskforce is a significant development, recognising people's rights to free, prior and informed consent, as well as a culturally correct decision making.

"We are the native title holders of Australia. We are the Traditional Owners of this country. We have been mucked around and we have come here to explain ourselves to you and also to bring the concern that we feel about our land, our culture and the language that is tied to native title, which belongs to us."

- Ivan McPhee, Chairman, KLC

1998

The 20th anniversary of the KLC is held at Noonkanbah. As part of the celebrations, the KLC hosts a conference on the issues that face Aboriginal people and the Kimberley region. The conference is facilitated by Patrick Dodson. The year 1998 also marks the beginning of the organisation's land and sea unit.

"The Kimberley Land Council Conference - Our Place, Our Future - sought to bring people together, to place their views on record and to find points of agreement for a vision of how the Kimberley should look in the years to come."

- Patrick Dodson, introduction, 'Kimberley: Our place our future'



1981

During the 1980s a number of groups moved from towns, missions and government settlements to small settlements on their traditional lands, this was called the Outstation Movement.

"The KLC has been pushing in relation to the outstation movement, protection of sites and Aboriginal self-management on missions; these have now become positive elements of Government policy."

- John Watson, KLC Chairman, KLC newsletter, 1981

1991

500 Kimberley Aboriginal people attend a very important bush meeting at Crocodile Hole. From this meeting the Crocodile Hole Report is released emphasising that Aboriginal organisations need to work together and not let external forces divide and rule them.

Noonkanbah march image (front): Michael Gallagher

Frank Chulung
KLC Chairman
1978



John Watson
KLC Chairman
1981

1993

The KLC is appointed under the Native Title Act of 1993 to assist Aboriginal people making native title claims to the Federal Court.

The KLC plays a crucial role in the negotiations over the Act and becomes a vehicle of self-determination for Kimberley Aboriginal people.

1994

The Western Australian Government refuses to recognise the Federal Government's Native Title Act and passes its own law. In the High Court the KLC successfully argues that the WA law is discriminatory and it is thrown out.

1997

The KLC is working on 13 major claims for a determination of native title.



Peter Yu
KLC CEO 1990



2010

The KLC hosts the first Kimberley Ranger Forum at Home Valley. More than 150 rangers exchange ideas and strengthen skills.

"Aboriginal people are connected to the land through our culture, law and dreaming. We have the responsibility to look after our land, just as it looks after us. Our country connects people to the past, present and future."

- Kevin George, Bardi Jawi Senior Cultural Ranger



2013

Kimberley Indigenous Protected Areas create one of the largest Indigenous conservation corridors in Australia.

2015

WA Premier Colin Barnett announces the closing of 150 remote Indigenous communities.

The KLC leads a strong campaign against community closures arguing that forcing Aboriginal people out of remote communities is attempted assimilation, separating Aboriginal people from land and culture. The KLC sends a delegation to the United Nations in New York.

"Community closures is a really serious issue. If the State Government closes our communities it's going to have long-term impacts on our people. We don't want to be kicked off our country again. We know moving us off our land doesn't work. Where would we go?"

- Anthony Watson, KLC Chairman



2017

Kimberley Aboriginal people have a say on Constitutional reform. The Broome dialogue is hosted by the KLC. A delegation of five leaders from the Kimberley travel to Uluru for historic talks. First Nations people tell the Referendum Council they don't want recognition if it means a simple acknowledgment. 250 delegates adopt the 'Uluru Statement from the Heart'.

Australia celebrates 25 years of native title.

"In the 25 years since Mabo we have fought hard to secure native title for our people and we are proud to say that the Kimberley is now 80 per cent native title determined. While the anniversary is an important milestone, it's also a stark reminder of the challenges that still lie ahead when it comes to native title rights in Australia."

- Nolan Hunter, KLC CEO



2011

The KLC drives the West Kimberley National Heritage Listing, which recognises more than 19 million hectares of the Kimberley its environmental and cultural significance to the nation.

2018

The KLC celebrates 40 years.



40 Kimberley Rangers made their way to Burketown, Queensland, for the Northern Australia Ranger Forum.

Strength in numbers - the KLC Kimberley Ranger Network

Ranger groups across the Kimberley are well known and hugely respected.

From Gooniyandi rangers involvement in sawfish monitoring, Wilinggin fire walks, Bardi Jawi turtle and dugong monitoring, Kija rangers huge efforts in managing damaging wildfires, Paruku rangers discovery of the once thought extinct night parrot to a rapidly growing women rangers network... the list of great outcomes goes on!

Behind these outcomes is an incredible bunch of dedicated staff who work alongside rangers to support it all happening. These staff are employed by the KLC and sit within the Land and Sea Management Unit which

includes the Cultural Enterprise Hub. Support staff provide crucial services that enable the day to day and strategic running of individual ranger groups. Beyond core service delivery, another one of the key things that these staff deliver is the Kimberley Ranger Network.

In essence the Kimberley Ranger Network exists to bring rangers together from across the Kimberley to support each other in the work all people involved in land and sea management do.

This includes sharing of knowledge, supporting each other through a position of collective strength and unity, delivering outcomes efficiently due to economies of scale and providing truly landscape scale outcomes.

While facilitated by the KLC, the Kimberley Ranger Network extends far beyond groups that have contracts with the KLC.

In July 2018, 27 rangers completed fire suppression training on the Dampier Peninsula. Of these 27 rangers, roughly half were from groups not connected to the KLC. This training was organised and run by Kimberley Ranger Network/LSMU support staff and would not have been possible without this assistance.

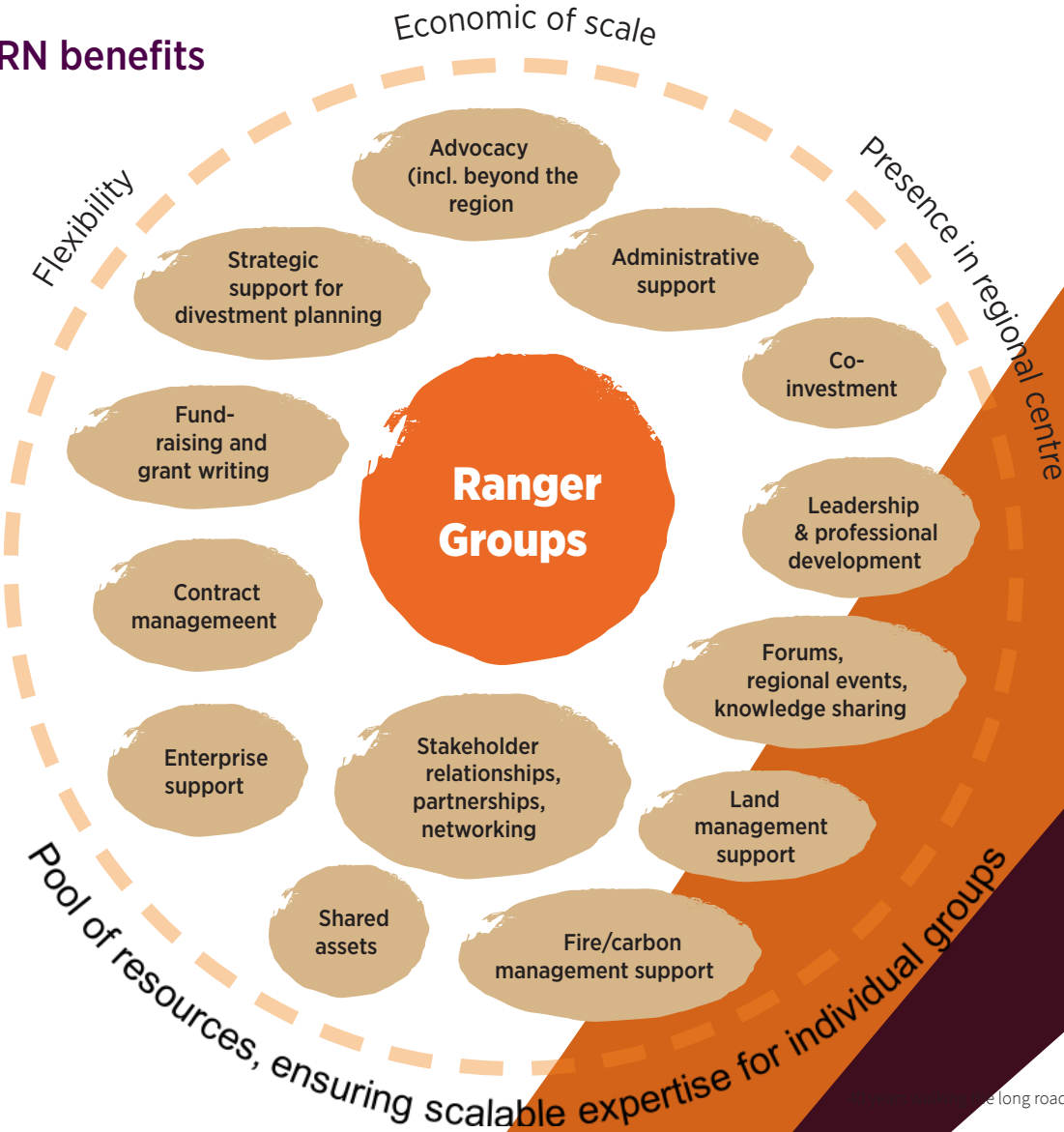
In September 2018, approximately 40 rangers from across the Kimberley traveled to Burketown by bus, to attend the 2018 Northern Australia Ranger Forum.

The logistics and negotiation with the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources have been both time intensive and complex.

Due to the absolute importance that the KLC and the Kimberley Ranger Network places on rangers being connected both across the Kimberley and across the nation, the KLC support staff have taken this on to ensure that all rangers across the Kimberley have access to this great opportunity.

The above stories represent just two of many examples of the strength of networks and the importance of having the KLC support the Kimberley Ranger Network. The KLC is committed to continuing this important role and assisting both individual ranger groups and the Kimberley Ranger Network to continue to grow.

LSMU and KRN benefits and services





Camera trap image of a Scaly-tailed possum captured by the Kija rangers.

Indigenous fire management supports rare finches and spots elusive possum

The east Kimberley's Kija Rangers have recorded the first sighting of a Scaly-tailed possum (*Wyulda squamicaudata*) within Kija country for over half a century.

The Indigenous ranger group had been undertaking early season prescribed burning, funded by Rangelands NRM through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, when they made the exciting discovery.

Working with Kimberley Land Council fire coordinator Richard Whatley and WWF's Alexander Watson, rangers Imran Paddy, Leon Cherrabun and coordinator Glen

Murray, set up camera traps in strategic locations in the Saw Ranges during breaks from burning.

The aim was to capture images of threatened species, such as the Gouldian finch, but the team received a big surprise when in addition to recording Gouldian finches, an elusive Scaly-tailed possum appeared on one of the camera films.



Kija Rangers undertake controlled burns around rest stop areas with DFES



Kija Rangers undertake night burns with DFES

Kija Ranger Coordinator Glen Murray said the sighting, the first in 58 years on Kija country, highlighted the importance of Indigenous land management and strategic early season prescribed burning.

“This is the first recorded sighting of a Scalpy-tailed possum on Kija country under active ranger management,” Glen said.

“We now have video evidence that this elusive species is present in the Saw Ranges after half a century of not being seen in the area.

“This is certainly in part due to the improved land management practices, such as early season fire management, conducted and encouraged by the Kija rangers.”

A key aspect of ranger work is early season fire management, which aims to reduce the impact of large wildfires in the late dry season and protects important habitat and cultural sites.

Glen said strategic fire management, based on traditional Aboriginal methods, had been a major focus for the year.

“Good prescribed burning creates more mixed fire ages at the end of the dry season, which then protects vegetation and wildlife, as well as cultural sites and values,” he said.

“The country is burnt via on-ground and aerial operations to install a mosaic of fire breaks and diversity in fuel loads. This prevents the extent and intensity of late dry season bush fires, which can be hugely destructive and can wipe out important habitat.”

In other land and sea news, the Paruku Rangers have captured images on a sensor camera of a Spectacled Hare Wallaby on the Paruku IPA.

The rangers have confirmed the presence of a species that has seen significant decline across northern Australia. Although there is anecdotal evidence that Spectacled Hare Wallabies existed on and around the IPA, this image is the first confirmed sighting of a Spectacled Hare Wallaby in the Great Sandy Desert this side of the NT border in 20 years.



Spectacled hair wallaby

Remembering Crocodile Hole

In 1991 the Kimberley Land Council organised a bush meeting at Rugan in the east Kimberley. More than 500 Aboriginal people from across the Kimberley attended.

The meeting, which is now known as 'Crocodile Hole', is looked upon as one of the most significant gatherings of Kimberley Aboriginal people in modern times. The meeting occurred just before the historic Mabo decision and following the failure of land rights to be passed in Western Australia in the 1980s.

Today, Kimberley Aboriginal people still refer to Crocodile Hole and the Crocodile Hole report, which set out key recommendations on a range of issues and serves as a blueprint for how business should be done in the Kimberley.

At the meeting, Senator Patrick Dodson who was the Executive Director of the Kimberley Land Council at the time, gave an important opening address setting the tone for many of the discussions ahead.

On the KLC's 40th anniversary, it is important to reflect on these messages to see how far we have come and what still needs to be done to set a new direction for the future.

John Watson - Chairman of the Kimberley Land Council during the Crocodile Hole meeting in 1991



More than 500 Aboriginal people attended the 1991 Crocodile Hole Meeting



Conference introduction excerpt - Patrick Dodson, Executive Director KLC and Conference Convenor

We are here to deal with the many and varied issues that we grapple with each day and I hope that out of this meeting will come directions for the future.

How do we get control over things that currently tend to control us? All sorts of people, bodies and structures are set up to make up the rules that govern and control the directions of our lives. These are the rules that the Western Australian and the Commonwealth Government and their departments make. These include the rules that govern Aboriginal affairs, like ATSIC.

The aim of this meeting is to get everyone into groups so that you can talk about what is of interest to you and what you think are the really important values, purposes and rules that govern over things that relate to government plans. Issues like use of country, use of areas that Aboriginal people have got connections to and the role of organisations that we all belong to.

It is a time to think about where Aboriginal people in the Kimberley have got to after all these years of gadiya dominating and controlling our lives. Where do we stand and where do we go? Because you know each day there are officers in Perth and in Canberra who run around and make plans, send out messages and have studies and reviews. They have flying trips of people who come over here and look at things, and you wonder what they are doing.

Aboriginal people still wonder and worry for their country, for their society, for the future generation and for the current generation. This is a time for us to think about our own selves. Us as a People.

There are many problems and we might not solve one of them in the next few days but hopefully out of it we will work out some ways, clear direction and who should take on these responsibilities to continue to create unity amongst us, to keep us clear about what it is we want to do and to make sure that Aboriginal people aren't put to one side as has happened and continues to happen.

There are gadiya that write about blackfellas every day of the week. They write reports trying to explain what we like, what we need and why we don't get what we want. They try to explain everything. The whole lot. And yet we are still waiting for something to happen.

We see mining companies drive in and out. They go to places which we can't go to. They can go onto a station and peg out their lot, put their drill down, dig around, pick up rocks and go away.

If someone wants to go and visit their country, look for tucker, visit their sacred place and camp there, some bloke might say you can't go there. You might get shot. Or a policeman might come and move you from there. So we have got to go back to the start. Who is the owner of the ground? Who belongs to the country? Whose rights belong to the country and how do we bring those rights square in front of the gadiya government?

This is a time to measure up what this country has become after 200 years of gadiyaising it. They have done some good things but they have ruined a lot of things too. How do we continue to make sure that we're going to survive in the future in a healthy way, with a fair share of what comes out of the country, with control over the way we want to live, and with the freedom to do things we want to do.

Today is the day of this meeting for us to concentrate on those things that make us strong - our society and our culture. What makes us strong as a people? That's the main theme of today's work.

Tomorrow we will talk about who put the fences up and locked us out. What blocks us from doing the things we say we like to do. There are some things obviously we can't do because of our own laws, our own rules. But there are other things that aren't our laws that stop us from living our own lives, our own freedom to be the People we want to be.

And so we will talk about those things tomorrow.

This meeting flowed on from the work of some other people. This has come from people who studied things, wrote things up, made recommendations to government and like a lot of things that are recommended to government it goes somewhere and that's usually to the public servants that serve government. That is another area of politics and another area of control, because they are the people who have the job to advise government about how to do things and whether they think it is a good thing to be done.

Dr Coombs is one of the people who organised that east Kimberley study and brought together all the research appears that people wrote up and made recommendations. There was a meeting held in Kununurra after that study finished to again talk about similar types of issues. This meeting is a continuation of those discussions.

Gadiya keeps coming. New waves of them fly in from Perth and make a city. They start from places like Perth and end up in the Kimberley. Their ideas are often developed in places like Melbourne and Canberra. They can drop in with a parachute and land here and then they want to create what they left behind. That's happening now and it's what they have been doing all the time.

In the meantime our people get shifted out to the fringe. Little bit of sugar here, a few crumbs there but no proper recognition of the people or their rights.

Gadiya are frightened when they see a mob of Aboriginal people like this. Policemen want to know what is going on. The politicians want to know what's going on because they are frightened that you might all change your minds next time the voting comes around. You might do that. That's for you to decide.

There are issues for you to talk about, where do you get power and how do you exercise it. Because that's what the gadiya got and that's what he wants to hold on to. How do you shake it away from him so that he has got to start to negotiate? That means that he sits on that side of the table and you sit here.

Instead of him asking you and picking your brain and getting your ideas and informing him, helping him to become an expert, we tell him the experts are sitting down here. The People.

If you would like to view a full copy of the Crocodile Hole report please contact the KLC on 9191 0100.



Karajarri, Nyikina Mangala and Yawuru important information

The Kimberley Land Council will convene a meeting on Wednesday November 21, 2018 to authorise a new claim over the currently unclaimed Vacant Crown Land located between the Karajarri, Nyikina Mangala and Yawuru native title determination areas (SEE MAP).

The Kimberley Land Council will convene a meeting on Wednesday November 21 2018 for Traditional Owners to decide whether to authorise a new claim over the currently unclaimed unallocated Crown land located between the Karajarri, Nyikina Mangala and Yawuru native title determination areas (SEE MAP).

The Kimberley Land Council began preliminary anthropological research to lodge a claim over this area in 2015. The results of this research identified the area as one that was likely traditionally shared between Karajarri, Nyikina and Yawuru peoples. Based on this preliminary research the KLC approached PBCs representing the three groups – Karajarri Traditional Lands Association (Aboriginal Corporation) RNTBC, Walalakoo Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC and Yawuru Native Title Holders Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC – requesting a meeting of senior knowledge holders to discuss how to proceed based on the preliminary research.

Since this initial meeting representatives of the three groups have met as a working group to discuss lodging a new claim over the area. The working group has guided the KLC and the consultant anthropologist, Dr Daniel Vachon, on how best to carry out further research. In 2017 the working group reached a consensus that the three groups

should work together in any research trip on country as well as work towards the common goal of protecting the native title rights and interests in the area against future act pressures.

Dr Vachon finalised his fieldwork in May 2018 and completed his report in August 2018. His final opinion underlines his original opinion: The country was traditionally shared by the three language groups. Dr Vachon's final findings were shared with the working group and, after much discussion, the working group recommitted to working together and support the authorisation of a new shared claim over the area. The working group felt that a shared claim was the best way to protect the native title rights and interests in the currently unclaimed area.

Based on this direction, on 21 November 2018 the KLC will hold a meeting for members of the Karajarri, Nyikina and Yawuru native title groups to decide whether to authorise an application for a native title claim over the currently unclaimed area between Karajarri, Nyikina and Yawuru country. The KLC is currently developing ways to get this story out to the members of each of the three groups prior to the November meeting to ensure people are aware of the proposed new claim.

For further information about the proposed new shared claim direct any enquires towards Justin Lincoln, Senior Anthropologist, at the Kimberley Land Council

Celebrating World Ranger Day



Imran Paddy, Kija Ranger

On July 31 2018, people around the globe celebrated World Indigenous Ranger Day. Here in the Kimberley we acknowledged the important event by featuring one of our long serving Kimberley rangers Imran Paddy. Imran is a Kija ranger who last year travelled to Kenya as part of a ranger exchange program and is also a past winner of the KGT Safety Recognition Award.

In recognition of World Ranger Day, Imran answered a few questions about why he loves being a ranger in the Kimberley:

My favourite part of the job:

Fire management. We go out and burn the land, protecting areas from big fires and regenerating areas which provides food sources for wildlife. Looking after land as old people did. Our fire operations allows us to employ Kija people to work on their traditional areas. It's hard work, but is also fun and rewarding to complete properly.

The biggest challenges:

Right now, funding cuts have been really hard with my group. We have gone from seven to just two rangers, including myself, in the last six months. We can't do the amount of work we were doing in the past. More rangers would make everyone's job easier and we'd be more productive.

My message on World Ranger Day:

Without rangers there'd be no country, no wildlife. Rangers are as important as the President of the United States!



Imran Paddy and Kija Ranger crew



ICN: 21

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.

