



Karajarri Pirra Warlu (Desert Fire) Project is already showing results

Nigel Jackett



Environs Kimberley and the Threatened Species Recovery Hub are supporting a Karajarri-led project to better understand and improve fire management, cultural knowledge and biodiversity over the inland pirra (pindan savannah) and marangguru (desert dune-field) areas of Karajarri Indigenous Protected Area (IPA). The project involves establishing monitoring sites in at least two areas within the IPA, to be surveyed annually for at least three years.

Jessica Miller and I joined the highly skilled Karajarri Rangers, and scientist Dr Sarah Legge of

the Threatened Species Recovery Hub, to take part in the first of these surveys.

Our camp was situated with an easterly view over the spectacular gorge that is the Edgar Range. Mesas made of yellow, white and purple minerals were scattered below us, where the occasional falcon silently perched.

We carefully picked our sites ensuring they were in differing fire-age classes, and got to work digging holes, laying out drift fences, and securing camera traps to metal pickets. Our aim was to capture ground-dwelling mammals, reptiles and frogs, to measure differences in their abundance and diversity in habitats that had burnt recently, and those that hadn't. Birds were also a key component of the study, and each day we'd listen for calls and note those flying overhead at each of our trapping sites.



Nigel and Bayo digging in sites



Nigel and Pygmy Desert Monitor

The survey provided everyone with a hands-on experience identifying small animals, and connecting with the landscape around them. Although the project is only in its early stages, some reasonably strong results are appearing. Where recent burns had occurred, the ground was much more exposed, with less vegetation cover and less leaf litter. In these areas, diversity and abundance of surface-dwelling animals was generally lowest, and they typically contained the more common species. In contrast, long-unburnt areas showed greater abundance of common species, and were the only sites where rarer species were found, such as the Unbanded Delma (a legless lizard), the Northern Shovel-nosed Snake (a nocturnal burrowing snake) and the Northern Soil-crevice Skink (a small, long, large-eyed lizard).

After our week on country, with everything going to plan, the team was feeling much more confident about telling their Western Browns from their King Browns, and their Sandy Inland Mice from their Delicate Mice. Environs Kimberley looks forward to working with the Karajarri team once again in October.

This project was funded by Western Australian Government's NRM Program and the NESP Threatened Species Recovery Hub.



Kate Golson

Report From The Chair

A fortnight or so before this year's EK annual art auction, back from a long stint away, I ran into Broome artist Ian McConnell, whose work I had come to know through attending the event each year.

Ian was one of the artists who, along with local craftspeople and musicians, helped establish the earliest auction, in 2001. On that night, people congregated at the Gecko Bar in the Palms Resort to bid on 36 works, raising \$3,000 for EK. At the second event two years later, no fewer than 22 musicians and singers took to the stage over the course of the evening.

In 2005, the third auction, the event became an annual gathering in support and celebration of the Kimberley conservation cause. It was also the year when Emily Rohr of Short Street Gallery began submitting serious numbers of works by Aboriginal painters, particularly from Bidyadanga, which became a prominent and regular feature of the event.

Over these years the number of art pieces and patrons had steadily increased so, in 2006, courtesy of Lachie Fraser, EK moved the auction to the magical space of The Factory, a series of gallery areas on Lachie's industrial block.

Here for four years, in a big tin shed transformed into an exhibition hall and auction house, and packed to the rafters, some serious bidding occurred. On occasion, locals were vying against very serious art buyers such as Kerry Stokes, who netted a good share of the bargains.

The diversity of art forms continued to extend so that, as well as paintings, EK had the great pleasure of displaying sculptures, photographs, ceramics, prints, woven baskets, quilts, niche furniture, boomerangs and coolamons, and at least one light-box.

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Letters To The Editor

Environs Kimberley welcomes letters to the Editor. We accept comment and criticism, and print all letters that are not obscene, offensive or libellous. If you have a bone to pick, pick it with us.

- @EnviroKimberley
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Thanks for helping us to protect the Kimberley environment





Marilyn Tabatznik and Francesca Guzzetta at the second event at the Palms in 2003

Throughout these years, the organisers built and extended EK's collaborations with the Kimberley Aboriginal art centres, and the inclusion of more and more these artworks was the main reason for the move, in 2010, to Mick Connolly's Convention Centre.

The 2015 auction was the most financially successful and largest gathering to date, with over 600 people attending, which earned EK some \$57,000.

EK would like to acknowledge the contributions of all the people who have made the event possible over the years, with a special nod to those who drove the earliest ones.

Art Auction

















Saturday 12th June 2010

New venue:
Broome Convention Centre, 19 Frederick Street (next to Aarli Bar)

Doors open/preview: 3pm Auction starts: 7pm Entry: \$5



enviroNS
KIMBERLEY

An
EnviroNS Kimberley
fundraiser

Bar, delicious food, & live music from 5pm
Harry Jakamarra & friends
Generously supported by
the Broome Advertiser & Troppo Sound

Images courtesy of the artists @: * Short Street Gallery # Old Lockup Gallery

For more information ring Christine at EnviroNS Kimberley on 9192 1922

It is hard to imagine EK's journey without the art auction, and the certainty and independence that it has brought. How else would we have been able, in 2000, to employ Director Maria Mann, a step integral to the organisation's sustainability and growth?

In 2019, the room shone with a collection of wonderful works, which took auctioneer Chris Maher more than three hours to move through. Coordinator Tess Mossop has more to say about this.

Congratulations are due as well to Director Martin, and to Mal, Lu and the Kimberley Nature Project team for their funding successes this year. These mark a turning point for our organisation after a particularly lean period, during which the Commonwealth's support for conservation was effectively dismantled.

Art Auction

Saturday 13th June 2009

Broome Factory, 9 Farrell St Gates open for preview at 4.00pm
Auction starts at 7.00pm





For more information ring Christine at EnviroNS Kimberley on 9192 1922

SURPRISE BEQUEST

We at EnviroNS Kimberley were grateful and deeply touched to receive an unexpected bequest from the estate of deceased long-term member, Sandy Trevor. Sandy was a quiet supporter of EK, and it is only through her kind posthumous donation that we have come to realize what we must have meant to her.

**Thank you, Sandy.
We will remember you.**



More tips to improve the sustainability of our daily lives without too much effort.

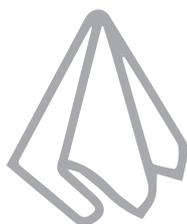
IN PRAISE OF THE HANKY

I have always been a fan of handkerchiefs, although most people seem to have abandoned them in favour of tissues. Tissues have their place — in hospitals and doctors' surgeries, for instance. However, they are not nearly as versatile as hankies. A single tissue doesn't serve much purpose at all; if you blow your nose in it, the exudate goes straight through. You need a handful of tissues at a time (only men are thought to need larger, thicker tissues to manage the contents of their larger schnozzes). A good large hanky, on the other hand, is more absorbent, although a severe cold will soon soak through a dozen of them — or a whole box of tissues.

But think of the other benefits of hankies: they can be called on in many an emergency. A decent-sized hanky makes an acceptable bandanna or sweat-rag. When you fall off your bicycle and cut your shin, you can tie a hanky around the injured limb to staunch the blood flow till you get home, and prevent your socks from being ruined. If you forget your hat, you can improvise the age-old Englishmen's fashion statement by tying a knot in each corner — especially recommended for men with bare scalps. If your dog shapes up to another dog and you forgot to bring a lead, you can tie one end of your hanky to his collar and drag him away. If you receive a lot of coins as change and haven't got a coin purse, you can tie them up in your hanky. If you come out of the pub and find your windscreen fogged on the inside, you can use your hanky to wipe it (I dare say you could do that with tissues as well — but not just one of them). If you wash clothes with a hanky in someone's pocket, your washing won't come out covered in little white smidgens of paper that have to be picked off painstakingly, as it does if you make the same mistake with tissues.

True, hankies are made of cotton, the production of which uses a lot of water and chemicals, while tissues, unless recycled, are made of trees and bleach. But hankies can be used over and over and over again, whereas tissues end up in the bin or down the loo.

Is using hankies going to save the world? Of course it isn't. Neither are any of the other tips you've been assiduously following in Living Green over the years. We do them because of our need to do something towards rectifying the disaster that the world is now in, and if enough of us lived 'sustainably', for want of a more persuasive word, it could make some difference. But what we really need is a revolution. It's heartening to see the young take up metaphorical arms against climate change. Our hope lies with them. Meanwhile, never leave home without a hanky.



Ruminating with MAD COW



I read recently a disturbing article about Chevron's efforts to 'move to safety' the wildlife from the vicinity of its planned gas-processing facility near Onslow in the Pilbara.¹ Clearing the 1,000-hectare site entailed the destruction of 158 large termite mounds. As we should know, termite mounds are significant refuges for many species of wildlife, which use or enlarge the numerous air-conditioned tunnels behind the strong ramparts to hide in and, in some cases, make nests and reproduce.

To honour its pledge to 'save' the wildlife, Chevron destroyed the termite mounds slowly, one by one, allowing a team of zoologists to catch or trap the non-insect inhabitants: the geckos, skinks, snakes, mice, echidnas and others whose home this was, and relocate them. Each mound took about three hours to process. The surprising yield of the whole enterprise (presumably not just from the termite mounds) was more than 30,000 animals. This takes no account of the millions of termites themselves, of course, which were destroyed along with their mounds, most of them probably crushed or eaten by predators. The lives of individual termites may not be of great account to human beings, but their collective absence from a former site, along with that of their mounds, would have a profound effect on its ecology — which hardly matters now, given that the entire 1000 hectares will become an industrial wasteland.

What troubled me most about the report was that it could be read as a 'good news' story — PR for the mining company ostensibly 'saving' wildlife. But there is unlikely to be any follow-up for all those displaced animals, so we won't know their fate.

Individual animals don't just choose a home the way we buy real estate. Their populations disperse to fit the ecological niches available. As we can guess from the numbers of animals found in and around the termite mounds, there are not many vacant apartments. The same is true everywhere — the country adjacent to Chevron's site, where the animals were to be released, is no different. Every nook and cranny will be occupied. Where, then, will the 30,000 displaced reptiles and mammals go?

An optimistic zoologist said he thinks about 70% of the ones that weren't killed during the course of the excavation (we don't have figures for those) will survive. He bases this estimate on nothing — there is no science to back it up. On the contrary, wildlife relocation, even with close monitoring, has a checkered history. Relocated animals seldom succeed in establishing themselves in a new environment. When first released, they are unfamiliar with the area and have no shelter from predators. All the accommodation is taken, and food supplies are limited. Attempts the newcomers make to establish themselves are likely to be resisted violently. Most of them will die before they find a new home.

The main message I took from this story is not how good Chevron is at protecting wildlife (however pure the motives), but how terribly destructive landclearing is — for mining, agriculture or anything else.

¹ ABC Pilbara 25/7/19

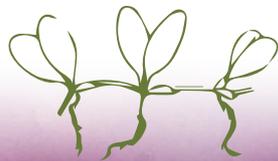
The Great Seagrass Dance-Off of 2019

Fiona West



One starry night in May, Sarah, an events manager at Broome's Mangrove Hotel, heard raucous laughter coming from the beautiful ballroom overlooking Roebuck Bay, and popped her head in to check that everything was ok. What she saw left her doubled over,

laughing. 'You don't know hilarious until you've seen a room of seagrass volunteers dancing,' she chuckled. The Seagrass Volunteer Celebration & Collaboration Evening was a chance to thank our volunteers and an opportunity for them to provide ideas and feedback to the project.



A sea hare releases purple dye as a defence mechanism.



Seagrass volunteers are the heart and strength of our community project

As part of the evening's fun, volunteers were challenged to come up with the best seagrass-monitoring-inspired dance moves. With the Beach Boys' song 'I Get Around' setting the scene, our volunteers rose to the challenge, like strands of *Halodule uninervis* rising gloriously from the mud. There was the classic move of undulating arms, which imitated strands of seagrass waving back and forth in the water. This was hysterically punctuated with suggestive squats, as the dancers mimicked crouching up and down to examine the quadrats out in the field. Then there were the graceful seahorse moves with puffer-fish cheeks, and the energetic struts forward as dancers simulated winding in our 50m tape measures with gusto. The most artistic dance move was when one group of dancers suddenly dropped to the ground and curled up into little motionless balls. They were being sea cucumbers. Of course! Thank you to everyone for attending this event, for the valuable feedback during the workshop and for your creative dance skills!

A week later, everyone took to the meadows for our May monitoring event. At the Port site, we noticed more tiny fish than usual darting in the intertidal puddles. Meanwhile a sea hare elicited oohs and ahhs as it squirted fluro purple ink around it. The ink is a nifty defence mechanism that messes with its marine predators' sense of smell. At our Demco site, laughter returned as one of our regulars, Mitch, discovered that he is becoming incredibly popular with intertidal animals. It started when a decent-sized shrimp jumped onto his lap to try give him a cuddle. Next, a sea snail climbed resolutely up his leg, not taking no for an answer. Then a sea worm affectionately wound itself around his foot. When a sea snake started making a bee-line for him, we started to wonder if he was a Benthic-Invertebrate Whisperer. Unused to such attention, Mitch left the Demco site feeling a little jumpy, but very loved. At Town Beach Di came across another sea snake, inside her quadrat. That is a first for our project, being able to record in our data: "Quadrat 1, Transect 2: 1xsea snake."

Thank you so much to all our partners and volunteers for supporting one of the most powerful long-term datasets for one of the most important bays in the world. Be sure to keep an eye out for the new dance sensation sweeping the globe — the seagrass dance — coming to an intertidal meadow near you.

The Broome Community Seagrass Monitoring Project is funded by Coastwest, Parks and Wildlife Service — Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Kimberley Ports Authority and Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, jointly managed by Environs Kimberley and Parks and Wildlife Service — Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, and supported by project partners Nyamba Buru Yawuru and Seagrass Watch.



Crunchtime for the Martuwarra Fitzroy River

Martin Pritchard, Director



The struggle to protect the Fitzroy River and its tributaries like the Margaret is now getting to a crucial stage.

Traditional Owners developed the Fitzroy River Declaration in 2016, which included the concept of a buffer zone along both sides of the the River and its tributaries, where no mining, oil, gas, irrigation or dams is allowed. EK strongly supports this position. A hundred prominent scientists signed the Fitzroy River Science Statement, calling on the McGowan Government to protect the River with a buffer zone.

Two pastoral companies (Liveringa, Nerrimah and Fossil Downs leases — Gina Rinehart, Gogo lease — Harris Family from NSW) have put forward plans to take 375 billion litres of water per year from the rivers. This is 100 billion litres more than the two million residents of Perth and the South West consumed in the 2016–17 year.

The McGowan Government is deliberating on whether the future of these National Heritage-listed rivers will include allowing pumps and channels to take water from them, as is the practice in the Murray Darling Basin.

While the main case being put forward by the proponents of industrial agriculture is jobs for locals (Gina Rinehart's Hancock Agriculture – 100 jobs, the Harris proposal – about 20 jobs) and economic development. This is a promise that has been made but failed to materialise in the North over many decades. The Business Case for the Gogo proposal states that, while the company will endeavour to employ locals, workers from its east-coast operations would set up the development, and foreign labour – backpackers – would be employed in the operational phase if no locals could be found. When asked in early 2018 how many Aboriginal employees were working at Gogo, the answer was 'None'.

Approximately 10% of people employed in agriculture in the Shire of Derby West Kimberley are Aboriginal: a total of 15 full-time equivalent employees. Despite the \$360 million pumped into Ord Stage 2 by Premier Barnett, only 60 jobs were created. Each job cost taxpayers \$6 million.

The modern economy

We know that industrial-scale irrigation causes irreparable damage to ecosystems through the destruction of vegetation and animal habitat, releases huge quantities of carbon into the atmosphere, so contributing to climate change, threatens groundwater-dependent plants and animals, and can pollute rivers, groundwater and wetlands with fertiliser and toxic chemicals. A recent report by the University of Western Australia has shown that irrigation is economically risky. The report says that irrigation enterprises are '...likely to be mostly unprofitable, create a poor return on public investment and create few jobs.'

In contrast, Aboriginal-led enterprises in the Fitzroy River catchment have the potential to access global markets estimated to be worth \$245 billion. In some markets, like Gubinge and Aboriginal tourism, industry growth is

constrained by supply rather than demand. In the past 10 years both State and Federal governments have put in more than \$500 million to subsidise the irrigation and beef industries in the Kimberley, and less than \$1 million for Aboriginal-led market sectors.

A buffer zone – the only way to guarantee the future health of the Martuwarra Fitzroy River and its tributaries

History tells us that, once you open up rivers to large-scale water extraction, there is no going back. There is no doubt that a conservative government would be highly likely to ratchet up pumping in the future. In the case of the Martuwarra and Margaret Rivers, the State Government has flagged that 300 billion litres a year could be pumped or channelled out of them. They have also left the door open to a buffer zone, where no water would be extracted directly from surface-water flows. This would not preclude taking groundwater, provided that it wouldn't damage groundwater-dependent ecosystems.

The choice is clear: to open up the Fitzroy catchment's rivers to large pumps and channels or protect them into the future. The McGowan Government and its Ministers will be remembered for the choice they make.

If you would like to send a message to the McGowan Government about protecting the Fitzroy and its tributaries, go to the EK website and send a letter to the Premier, or direct to him at 5th Floor, Dumas House, 2 Havelock Street, WEST PERTH WA 6005, Email wa-government@dpc.wa.gov.au

Quick Facts

Native Title Groups who signed the Fitzroy River Declaration in 2016 want a buffer zone along both sides of the River to protect it from fracking, mining, irrigation. A buffer zone would protect the National Heritage-listed Rivers and floodplains.

In 2017 the two million residents of Perth and the South West used 284 billion litres of water.

'The Kimberley Like Nowhere Else' Alliance supports the Traditional Owners and their proposal for a buffer zone along the River.

The leaseholders of Gogo pastoral lease, NSW cotton and beef farmers, the Harris family, have put forward a plan to clear 8,000 hectares of land for irrigation, and propose to take 50 billion litres a year from the Margaret River.

The leaseholder of Fossil Downs, Liveringa and Nerrimah pastoral leases, Gina Rinehart, proposes to take 325 billion litres of water a year to irrigate 21,500 hectares of land to grow cattle fodder.

The McGowan Government was elected with a promise to implement National Parks along the Fitzroy River north of Darngu (Geikie Gorge) and east along the Margaret River. It also promised a Management Plan to protect the River. Since the election, it has committed to a Water Allocation Plan.

46 critically endangered Sawfish die at Liveringa pastoral lease

Late in 2018 unsubstantiated reports came to us of mass Sawfish deaths at Liveringa. Following confirmation from the McGowan Government, Member for Mining and Pastoral, Robin Chapple MLC, asked a series of questions in the WA Parliament. Included with the answers was a report by Murdoch University of the mass Sawfish deaths (see EK website for a copy). The report said that 46 critically endangered Sawfish had died in two pools that had been cut off from Blina Creek, a tributary of Snake (Uralla) Creek, which is fed by the Fitzroy River.



Photo: Damian Kelly.

To find out more we put in a Freedom of Information Application to the Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development (DPIRD). The information revealed that the Liveringa leaseholders, DPIRD and Murdoch University, swung into action to try to save the Sawfish. It was too late, and only two were able to be translocated to Snake Creek. According to the report it was '...unclear as to why these sawfish became trapped...'

We found that DPIRD didn't want the story to go public. 'I am trying to prevent this issue getting out into the media,' said Ellen Smith, acting regional manager of DPIRD, in an email sent in the days after the rescue mission. 'If it does go to the media, then it will probably just prevent station staff from reporting it in the future.'

The whole incident, and the attempt to bury it, raises the question of accountability around a globally threatened species. Why is it not mandatory to report deaths of a critically endangered species?

There is also the as-yet-unanswered question of whether the pumping of billions of litres of water from Snake Creek played a role in the lowering of water levels in Blina Creek, leading to Sawfish becoming trapped. 'The Kimberley Like Nowhere Else' Alliance is calling on the Minister for Water, Dave Kelly, to investigate the deaths. Go to the website to send a letter to him calling for an investigation:

www.likenowhereelse.org.au/help



Dead Sawfish on Liveringa pastoral lease. Photo: Facebook

Irrigated crops and chemical use

Irrigated crops in the Kimberley are a magnet for insects. In the early 1970s, insect plagues killed off cotton in the Ord. Crops, including sorghum and corn to feed cattle, grown at Liveringa and Gogo pastoral leases, have been sprayed with chemicals like Lorsban to kill insects. Chlorpyrifos is the active ingredient in Lorsban; it is closely related to nerve agents used in World War II. Studies have shown that exposure to Chlorpyrifos can interfere with children's brain development and is associated with reduced IQ and working memory among children.

There is no safe exposure level of the chemical, which has been known to contaminate food.

Around 250,000 people around the world die from pesticide self-poisoning every year; thousands of these deaths are from Chlorpyrifos.

Product name: LORSBAN™ 500 EC Insecticide Issue Date: 22.06.2016



Signal word: **DANGER!**

Chlorpyrifos is banned in many countries, including Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia and Sweden.

It is highly toxic to birds and reptiles (think of Bush Turkey and goanna) and it is 'very highly toxic' to fish and aquatic invertebrates (think Barramundi, Catfish and Cherabin). Runoff from irrigation areas often reaches rivers, as happens in the Ord River catchment.

Atrazine

Atrazine is another chemical that has frequently been used in the Fitzroy Valley to control weeds. It was banned in Europe in 2004 because it stays in the environment for a long time and is poisonous to wildlife. It is still used in the USA and is one of the most common contaminants of drinking water. According to some scientists, Atrazine disrupts male reproductive development, and researchers have found that 'Atrazine chemically castrates male frogs and even changes the sex of some of them.'

If fodder crops for cattle, like sorghum and maize, were to expand, it is likely that Atrazine use would increase significantly and lead to groundwater and surface-water contamination.

Looking after language and culture helps look after country

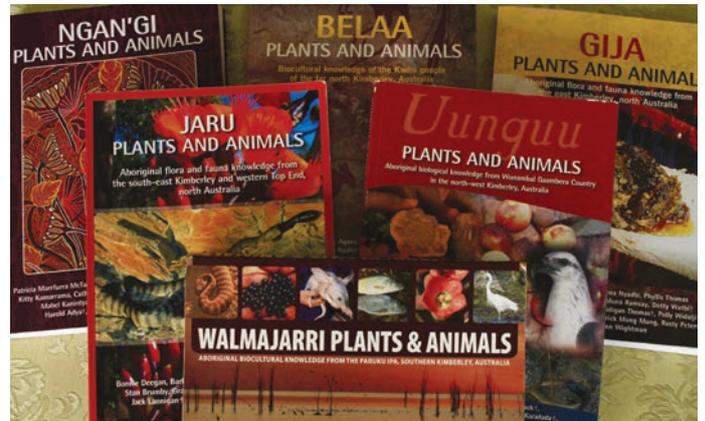
Malcolm Lindsay



We realised a long time ago that to protect the Kimberley environment, right-way Aboriginal partnerships are essential. Not only are Aboriginal people the landowners, local experts, knowledge keepers, feet on the ground etc., but conservation projects are more successful if they use the best parts of western science and traditional culture.

But, just like the ever-growing list of endangered and threatened species and ecosystems, many Aboriginal groups' language and knowledge are also endangered. Along with the efforts of Aboriginal people continuing to teach and re-awaken language and culture, scientists can play a role as well. We are always working with our Aboriginal partners to learn from them and keep their culture and language strong through our projects where we can, whether it's learning about country and species, using language names on data sheets, bringing elders and kids on field trips to allow the transfer of knowledge across generations, or working with groups to document their animal and plant knowledge in biocultural books.

One biologist who has made this his job for the past 37 years is Glenn Wightman, an ethnobiologist with the



A selection of Glenn's books

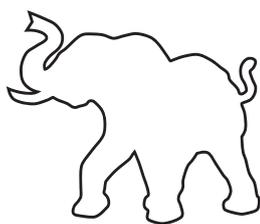
Northern Territory Government. Environs Kimberley was lucky enough to host Glenn for an event: 'In conversation with Glenn Wightman' at the 2019 Corrugated Lines Writers Festival. When we first asked Glenn to speak, he was hesitant. "I am not an author; all I have done is scribe and make cups of tea for old people." Modest as he is, Glenn has co-authored biocultural books with 252 Aboriginal contributors, detailing plant and animal knowledge associated with 48 Aboriginal languages in the wet-dry tropics of northern NT and WA.

Despite a busy Writers Festival, the event was standing room only. The entertaining conversation with Glenn and the audience covered topics such as Intellectual Property, the importance of large thermoses of tea, Glenn's progression from being approached by groups to doing regional audits, how he came to work in the Kimberley and the importance of using the best parts of traditional and western knowledge systems for conservation. The speaking event was followed by an open meeting of linguists and scientists from the Kimberley, kicking off an audit for the languages of the region, to help focus efforts to support undocumented language groups here.

For those further interested in this topic, some of the books Glenn worked on are available at the Kimberley Bookshop or through the Batchelor Press (eg www.batchelorpress.com/node/380). Environs Kimberley and the Bunuba people will be launching their book: **Yarrangi Thangani Lundu, Mayi Yani-u: Bunuba trees and bush foods** in Fitzroy Crossing in September.



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We need your help

We need a hand to protect the Kimberley again this year — can you help?

The EK market stall is starting up again at Easter and we are desperately looking for new volunteers! Can you spare a couple of hours a month for a good cause? We need help on our stall at the Broome Courthouse Saturday markets, or driving the market trailer.

Volunteering on EK's stall is a great way to get to know what's happening in our region and help us inform the community. Anyone can help and training is provided. And it's fun.

If you can help out, please let Tess know: (08) 9192 1922 or admin@environskimberley.org.au



Concert for the Kimberley 2019

Tessa Mossop

The annual EK Concert for the Kimberley, now in its third year, has become a popular and vital awareness-raising event that helps fund our work to protect the Kimberley.

This year Kimberley virtuoso Stephen Pigram headlined the concert and was joined by a vibrant mix of friends and family including Bart Pigram, Ngaire Pigram, Michael Pigram, Michael Manolis and Andy Reid. The concert also featured the wonderful Albert Wiggan, Tanya Ransom and Wil Thomas, joined by special guests Harry Jakamarra, Elwood Gray and Kevin Jones.

We are incredibly fortunate to have performers of such stature here in our hometown of Broome, all of whom generously donated their time to put on this special night.

EK sends a huge thank you to all the musicians, Mick Connelly and all the staff at Broome Chinatown Convention Centre for the venue and production, Little Waroeng for the food, all the wonderful volunteers, to everyone who came along and supported the night, and to Damian Kelly for the superb photos! Here's a few for you...



Stephen Pigram. Photo: Damian Kelly



Mick Manolis, Stephen Pigram, Michael Pigram and Ngaire Pigram. Photo: Damian Kelly.



Albert Wiggan . Photo: Damian Kelly



Kevin Jones, Elwood Gray, Wil Thomas, Harry Jakamarra and Tanya Ransom Photo: Damian Kelly.

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A search for Night Parrots with the Nurrara Rangers

Nigel Jackett

It was a chilly, breezy dawn when I met our pilot, Roger, at Derby Airport. Following the necessary safety briefing, we loaded my swag, song meters (audio recording devices) and all my best cold-weather gear onto the back seats of our spacious Squirrel helicopter. We were to fly south-east from Derby across the Great Sandy Desert, to our base camp 450 kilometres away at Kuduara (Well 46) along the Canning Stock Route.

Days earlier I'd received an invitation from the Nurrara Rangers to join them in a search for Night Parrots in the desert. I was told the primary use of the Squirrel was for the Rangers to practise fire management, but the strong winds forecast meant that some fire work would be restricted, therefore there would be spare helicopter time to search for Night Parrot habitat.

Flying across the desert was an incredible experience – sand dune upon sand dune, always aligned east to west. We stopped at Kurku, a Nurrara Ranger outpost south of Fitzroy Crossing. Four drums of A1 jet fuel awaited us, and while Roger hand-pumped the fuel, I did a quick bird survey. Zero species. I think my ears hadn't had time to adjust from the flurry of chopper blades to the soft sounds of sand-dune country.

We arrived at Kuduara after three-and-a-half hours of flight time. The Men and Women Rangers were already there with elders, and had established a lovely camp close to the Well. An ever-boiling pot of water sat above the fire pit, inviting us to cups of tea. A curious Red-capped Robin perched in a small eucalypt beside us, enjoying the fire's warmth – or perhaps the insects attracted to it.

The Rangers wouldn't be burning today because of the wind. This gave us an opportunity to conduct cultural surveys, and deploy the song meters if we saw Night Parrot habitat. After counting several camel herds from the air, we soon spotted a dry salt-lake with beautiful rings of long-unburnt spinifex, a necessity for Night Parrots. Large plains of samphire surrounded the spinifex clumps, providing the perfect natural barrier to uncontrolled wildfire.

At times the hummocks of spinifex were too tall to see over – they were very old, and very complex. The Rangers explored for Night Parrot roost tunnels, scats and feathers, and we set three song meters along one side of the lake. We planned to leave these devices recording all night long in the hope of capturing the bell-like chimes of these endangered birds. It was very exciting for us all.



On our final morning, soon after sunrise, we returned to the lake and retraced our steps to the song meters. It had been 1.8 degrees at 6am, and we were frigid. I pictured being a Night Parrot, huddled in its hummock, enjoying the trapped warmth of the previous day's sunshine. We reached for the devices, and wondered if we were holding their wonderful calls in our hands.

These audio calls will now be analysed – part of the great efforts from the Rangers of the Great Sandy Desert to find and manage Night Parrots, as

supported by Environs Kimberley and the Kimberley Night Parrot Working Group.



Nurrara Rangers looking for Night Parrots amongst the spinifex. Photo: Nigel Jackett



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EK's Annual Art Exhibition

Tessa Mossop

This year's 16th annual EK Art Auction was another huge success, with a brilliant collection of art from across the Kimberley and over 100 pieces on sale to a bustling crowd of enthusiastic supporters.

The standard of the art at this year's event was exceptional and included pieces by the late Eubena Nampitjin, Mabel Juli, Rammy Ramsay, Helicopter Tjungurrayi, Jacky Cheng, Donny Woolagoodja, Helen Norton, Jeanné Browne, Clifton Bieundurry and Sobrane Simcock, amongst many others.

This year's art raffle was also a huge success, with a record number of tickets selling well in advance of the draw. There were lots of disappointed people on the night with the stunning Sereena Nowee piece going to lucky winner Jane Thorn with ticket 56 – congratulations, Jane!

The annual Art Auction continues to be EK's main fundraising event and a huge thank-you goes to all the artists and art centres who contributed pieces, and to everyone who supported it by coming along on the night. Also, to everyone whose generosity and effort made the event possible once more, including all the fantastic volunteers, Chris Maher for his tireless auctioneering, Mick Connelly, the Broome Chinatown Convention Centre and Art House for their generous support, Bex Youdale, Lucy and Pampila for the music, Kevin Smith for the photos and Marilyn Tabatznik for curating such an impressive show.



The Auction in action . Photo: Kevin Smith



There was fierce bidding for 'Monsoon Vine Thicket' an exquisite piece by Jeanne Browne. Photo: Kevin Smith



Pampila (Hanson Boxer) performing. Photo: Kevin Smith



EK Art Auction 2019. Photo: Kevin Smith

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The EK gift fund is a public fund and is listed in the register of Environmental Organisations under item 6.1.1 subsection 30-35 (1) of the income Tax Assessment Act 1997.



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