

Fracking protest greets Community Cabinet in Broome



Community protest for a Frack Free Kimberley during the Community Cabinet in Broome. Photo: Damian Kelly

Climate change was a major concern at the McGowan Government Community Cabinet meeting in Broome at the end of July. The Premier and Cabinet Ministers were met by a large protest calling for a ban on fracking in the Kimberley.

Community disquiet is increasing as a proposal to frack 20 wells near the Fitzroy River at Noonkanbah, by Texan oil and gas company Black Mountain, has been submitted to the Environmental Protection Authority. The project would emit 1.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide in one year, equivalent to the pollution of half a million cars over the same period.

People came to the protest from communities more than 150km away to voice their opposition to fracking. The Premier and Ministers were greeted by loud calls for a 'Frack Free Kimberley'.

The community resolve on this issue is getting stronger. There's no way people are going to accept the Kimberley being industrialised by the oil and gas industry and polluted by fracking. Mangala woman Carla Banks spoke publicly about her Country. 'Our old people kept it protected and we want to keep it protected. We don't want no poison chemicals and polluted water. We want to save our water' (Ngaarda Media).

Inside the meeting we asked the Premier if he was concerned about the large volume of carbon emissions that would come from fracking the Kimberley, and whether he thought it would be better not to frack in the first place. Climate scientists have calculated that if the Kimberley's Canning Basin were fully fracked it would emit more than double Australia's Paris Agreement carbon budget. The Premier's response was that the pollution in India from burning coal could be relieved by burning gas instead.

The Premier does not seem to accept that there would be nationally significant carbon pollution from fracking the Kimberley for oil and gas, and he's not taking responsibility for it.



'We don't want no poison chemicals and polluted water. We want to save our water'. L-R Shane Hughes and Carla Banks. Photo: Damian Kelly

Western Australia is planning to spend more than a billion dollars on a desalination plant in Perth because of a drying climate caused by burning fossil fuels. It's time the McGowan Government accepts that fracking the Kimberley is incompatible with a safe climate.

Premier McGowan can expect protests regularly on his visits to Broome.



Report From The Chair

Natalie Davey

In my short time as EK chair, I have been amazed at the loyalty, passion and dedication of the staff and Board members. I thank you all for the support I have received and the encouragement by the community for our organization and our goals. The stories in this newsletter provide a great snapshot of the range of EK's achievements, some going back to our beginnings, and worked for in partnership with other conservation groups, Aboriginal organisations, Custodians and the wider community. So many wonderful accomplishments.

Congratulations to the Gooniyandi mob for all the hard work gone towards protecting the Margaret River in the New Warlibirri National Park. An achievement worth celebrating and, as Pat Lowe said, is a vindication of the position Traditional Owners took twenty-five years ago to protect the Fitzroy and its tributaries from destructive dams. I look forward to a new National Park on Bunuba Country soon.

It was great that the Minister for the Environment and Climate Action Reece Whitby come to the office to congratulate us on our recent success in getting a Lotterywest grant. This is for a new three-year project working with groups across the desert to prevent damaging fires. This shows that we are being recognised and valued by the West Australian Government.

It is great to be acknowledged, and there is still much work to be done. Case in point: the McGowan Government policy allowing fracking in the Kimberley means that we must continue the fight to protect Country. The McGowan Government Community Cabinet meeting in Broome last July was greeted with a well-attended protest against fracking. It is great to see the campaign for a 'Frack Free Kimberley' being taken to Perth, and I look forward to seeing the 'Fighting Giants' film out here in Fitzroy Crossing.

In more good news, the Bardi Jawi, Mayala and Dambimangari Traditional Owners have secured marine parks over their Sea Country in the Buccaneer Archipelago. We are very proud to have helped achieve this through our work as part of the Kimberley – Like Nowhere Else Alliance. We have been working for decades on marine park protection, and this is another outstanding win.

Congratulations to all the EK Team and volunteers on another successful Art Auction and a special thank you to the artists who make it possible. It is great to be able to support artists while fundraising to protect the Kimberley.

I welcome new Board member Sally Wilkinson. She brings experience and knowledge to our team. Thank you, Sally, for your input in Board matters. Welcome to Eliza, our latest staff member and Bevan and Amos for your continued work as our interns.

Recently I attended an Australian biodiversity discovery program called Bush Blitz, and interviewed participants whose main concern was how little of the Kimberley is known or mapped by western scientists. This reinforced for me the importance of our work to protect and maintain our country's biodiversity against destructive industries.

I look forward to seeing you at the EK AGM in a couple of months, where we will be updating you on our work and endorsing a Board for the forthcoming year.

Wali,
Natalie

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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.

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Thanks for helping us to protect the Kimberley environment



Director's Report

Martin Pritchard

Warlibirri National Park — 25 years in the making

In April, we welcomed the creation of the Warlibirri National Park — a historic move by Gooniyandi Traditional Owners and the McGowan Government.

The first stage of the Gooniyandi Warlibirri National Park protects the Margaret River and its spectacular gorge, which was proposed as a dam site more than 25 years ago. The gorge was one of three proposed dam locations to control the flow of the Margaret, Leopold and Martuwarra Fitzroy Rivers and provide water to grow more than 200,000 hectares of genetically modified cotton.

The National Park is highly significant to EK, which was set up by three people around a kitchen table in Broome in 1996 to support Traditional Owners in protecting the Fitzroy and its tributaries. Pat Lowe, one of the three founders of EK, said, "Twenty-five years ago, Fitzroy Valley Traditional Owners were worried about the threat of dams to the river. We couldn't stand by and watch one of Australia's great rivers be dammed, so we banded together and took a stand with Traditional Owners all along the river."

"We knew we were up against powerful forces, and the battle went on for eight years. In the end, the proponents pulled out. The decision today is a vindication of the stand Traditional Owners took all those decades ago, and we congratulate the Gooniyandi people, who worked so hard to get this National Park up."

We thank the Gooniyandi Aboriginal Corporation (GAC), Gooniyandi Elders and Gooniyandi Rangers for their determination and hard work to make this happen.

We also acknowledge Ms Josie Farrer, former Kimberley MLA, who made this proposal an election commitment, Ms Divina D'Anna, the current Kimberley MLA, for continuing to support the proposal, and Environment Minister Reece Whitby for its implementation.



Margaret River Gorge – under threat of a dam 25 years ago, now protected in the Warlibirri National Park. Photo: Gooniyandi Rangers

Our leader meets our other leader



EK Director Martin Pritchard with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese at the opening of Art Above the 26th exhibition, 8 August 2022. Photo: Pia Boyer, Queen Tide Creative

At the opening of the Art Above the 26th exhibition on 8 August, our honoured leader, Martin Pritchard, met Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, who was on holiday in Broome. Martin, who just happened to be wearing a Protect the Fitzroy River T-shirt, introduced himself to Mr Albanese and let him know that we have deep concerns about proposed fracking in the Kimberley, and that the future of the Martuwarra Fitzroy River is in jeopardy. He offered to meet the PM some time in Canberra. Watch this space.

Martin writes:

The Nation spoke loudly in May and the Coalition under Scott Morrison was crushed, suffering its lowest share in the House of Representatives since 1946, the first federal election contested by the Liberal Party. The resounding defeat was a strong message for action on climate change. The Greens increased their representation to sixteen members in parliament, including four in the House of Representatives (previously one). A new, loosely-aligned group of independent candidates labelled 'Teals' strongly advocating for increased action on climate change, dispatched six Liberal MPs from previously safe seats.

We welcome the new Albanese Government and seek urgent action on climate change.

With unprecedented floods in New South Wales, record-breaking temperatures across Europe (including +40°C in the UK for the first time in recorded history) and the mounting costs of climate change, we welcome the Albanese Government's commitment to a 43% emissions reduction target. However, Australia won't reach this target if we continue to allow new coal and gas projects to be opened up. Climate scientists have calculated that if the Kimberley's Canning Basin is opened to fracking, it has the potential to release more than double Australia's Paris Agreement carbon emissions commitment. The new Labor Government cannot be taken seriously on climate change if this is allowed to happen.

It was pleasing to hear Prime Minister Albanese say that "... **the Kimberley is majestic, with astonishing beauty...**" on his recent holiday in Broome.

We look forward to engaging the Albanese Government on these and other matters relating to protecting the Kimberley's environment over the coming three years.

Living Green

– PAINLESSLY

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

MYTHS THAT PERSIST

When I was a child, I was told to rinse my hair after a wash in cold water 'to close the pores' on my scalp — even in frigid, English-boarding-school winter. Why the pores were better closed than open, or what benefit there was in having closed pores, was never explained, but to this day I dutifully give my hair (and usually my body too) a cold rinse to complete the wash.

Another thing I was told, and children probably still are told, was to eat the skins of fruit, such as apples and pears (parents drew the line at bananas and oranges) because that's where the 'goodness' lies. What this substance known as 'goodness' consisted of, I was never told, and I now strongly suspect there is no such thing. However, to this day I look askance at people who peel their apples and pears and throw out the skin. What will become of them if they don't eat the 'goodness'? Even the 'goodness' of potatoes lurks under their skins, so heaven help us when we peel and mash them.

Beliefs and habits die hard. When someone suffers a scratch or skin tear, most people immediately apply an 'antiseptic' before the dressing. I stopped doing that years ago, and, despite suffering frequent cuts and tears, have come to no harm. I once asked a nurse at the Emergency Department (ED) not to apply an antiseptic to an injury of mine she was dressing, but she insisted on doing so. Now, however, should you attend a clinic or hospital ED, you may notice that Betadine (an expensive, if convenient, version of plain old iodine) is nowhere to be seen. After a swab with distilled water (hospitals only use distilled water, but tap water is fine), the wound is covered and bandaged.

I commented about this to a doctor who had just rinsed most of the blood off a wound before strapping it up. She agreed that antiseptics are out of favour — indeed, they slow healing. Our own bodies are seething with beneficial bacteria, which rush to the site of a wound and protect it. True, occasionally wounds do get infected by nasty bacteria (mine never seem to), but I don't think a dab of Betadine or the equivalent would prevent that; it may even abet it.

We spend a lot of money on tooth hygiene. There is no way I'm going to be persuaded to stop cleaning my teeth, a habit inculcated in me since toddlerhood. However, some toothpastes contain abrasives that erode tooth enamel. And no toothpick or dental floss cleans between the teeth as well as a dry grass-stem of just the right thickness.

So what point am I trying to make? Maybe two: it behoves us to give careful thought to what habits we instil in our children, and to question the ones we acquired during our own childhoods, which may be, at best, pointless, at worst, positively harmful.

Ruminating with MAD COW



LOSS

This morning, I go for my usual walk into a patch of town bush earmarked for development. I have been walking through here for more than thirty years.

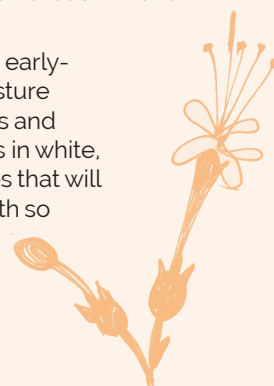
Broad sandy tracks run through the bush, created by cars. People who don't know or care about the bush drive along the tracks and dump rubbish. The variety of rubbish they have dumped over the years is impressive, from dead dogs, turtle remains and parts of bullocks, to bedding and white goods, and suitcases spewing out an array of personal belongings, children's toys, and clothes by the wardrobeful, many of them perfectly wearable.

A few years ago, to its credit, the Shire did a clean-up of the area, and closed off tracks with large boulders. Inevitably, people found new ways to get in, opening new tracks, and the dumping started again. It is getting worse.

Despite the dumping, largely restricted to the tops of the tracks, the bush is beautiful. At this time of year, many trees are in flower. The commonest wattle in the area, *Acacia eriopoda*, has been flowering in relays for months. At the height of their season, the trees seem to drip with gold. Starting a month or so later, some of the abundant *Hakea macrocarpa* began flowering, their pale-yellow bottle-brushes hanging from the branches, laden with nectar for the pollinators: insects and honey-eaters. The early flowers have almost finished now, and in their place emerge the clusters of small, green, boat-shaped fruit, which will grow bigger and later turn brown and woody, and split to release their winged seeds. Just yesterday, on leaving the main track to walk into the bush, I was thrilled to see a *Grevillea pyramidalis* in full flower, its creamy fingers reaching out for pollinators. And now the Silver Wattle, *A. colei*, has begun to bloom. In contrast with all the yellow, the distinctive red flowers of the Jigal Tree, *Bauhinia cunninghamii*, have opened, full of nectar for the birds and insects.

In the same patch of bush I see wallabies every time I go there, occasionally Frilled Lizards, Red-winged Parrots and Red-tailed Black Cockatoos. The less spectacular, shyer birds often give themselves away through their calls: the soft peep-peep-peep of the Striated Pardalote, and the whip of the Rufous Whistler amongst them.

A few days ago, I awoke to an early-morning fog. Droplets of moisture beaded the lanky grass stems and etched dozens of spiderwebs in white, evidence of lives unseen: lives that will soon be annihilated, along with so much else.



Protecting the Kimberley from fracking

Shaun Clark

Theia Energy withdraws Environmental Assessment from the EPA

Theia Energy has withdrawn its referral to the WA Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) for its fracking test-well program near the Edgar Ranges. While we welcome the news, Theia is still the holder of the petroleum lease and has not made any public statement about its intention to extract oil through fracking. The company has previously released conceptual plans, which showed roads, pipelines, and ports, all of which would have a significant impact on the region's biodiversity.

Theia Energy lodges a drilling-only plan at the same site – is it trying to avoid EPA scrutiny?

The website of the Department of Mines, Industry, Regulation, and Safety (DMIRS) shows that Theia Energy has submitted an updated Environment Plan for a drilling program in the same location as previously disclosed in other documents with the EPA and DMIRS. The drilling target depth and subsequent horizontal well are within the lower Goldwyer shale formation, which would require fracking to extract the oil. This clearly constitutes a fracking proposal, and our opinion is that referral to the EPA is required under the recommendations of the scientific inquiry into fracking. If the company or DMIRS does not refer this proposal to the EPA, it is still possible for a third party to do so, to ensure it is fully assessed by the authority. Companies should not be able to break projects into pieces to circumvent environmental scrutiny.



Attendees of the Fighting Giants sold-out premiere screening in Boorloo (Perth), 27 July 2022. Photo: Lock the Gate



Mangala Martu Traditional Custodians take a stand outside Theia Energy's office in Boorloo, 31 July 2022. Photo: Shaun Clark

Buru Energy seeking export exemption for Kimberley gas

Buru Energy, which has discovered conventional gas south of Derby, recently announced its plan to sell the gas commercially, for export. The WA Domestic Gas Policy requires onshore gas to be retained for future WA domestic gas usage, not exported to international markets; however, Buru is seeking an exemption to this rule. In order for the gas to be exported, a pipeline would have to be built from the Kimberley to Karratha, which would be the Trojan horse for full-scale conventional and unconventional (fracking) extraction of gas across the region. Buru Energy has also stated that it would be looking for Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF) funding (from the taxpayer) to build the pipeline. Expert analysis shows pipeline construction would cost between \$1.2 and \$1.5 billion.

Petrochemical factory in the Roebuck Bay catchment?

According to a recent presentation (available on their website), Buru Energy is proposing to build a petrochemical factory in the Roebuck Bay catchment to produce methanol, urea and ammonia. This is the second petrochemical factory proposed in recent times for the West Kimberley. The other is linked to Theia Energy.

Fighting Giants – movie premiere

A new movie, 'Fighting Giants', premiered in Boorloo (Perth) and Walyalup (Fremantle) cinemas to sold-out shows. The movie highlights the beauty of the Kimberley, while showing the horrific damage by fracking that's occurred in the US, and the fight we face in keeping the Kimberley Frack Free. Traditional Custodians spoke at the screenings with deeply emotional speeches about their connection to Country and what it would mean to them if full-scale fracking were to get a foothold. Attendees saw firsthand the effect these proposals have on our Traditional Custodians and are now gathering in support of Frack Free Kimberley. Events are being planned over the coming weeks and months. There will be further screenings across the state. The movie is dedicated to Micklo Corpus for the deep commitment he showed in protecting the country for future generations.



Lotterywest grant presentation – Great and Little Sandy Deserts Biodiversity Project

Hamsini Bijlani

The ecologically and culturally rich biodiversity of the Great and Little Sandy Deserts has been severely altered by widespread, uncontrolled wildfires over the past century, with fewer people living out in the desert and practising traditional fire management.

Environs Kimberley will support five desert Aboriginal ranger groups in restoring traditional fire patterns, monitoring the biodiversity response and informing the wider community about the biocultural importance of traditional fire management. EK has received more than \$1 million in Lotterywest grant funding for the Great and Little Sandy Deserts Fire and Biodiversity Project, which is funded jointly by Lotterywest, the WA State Natural Resource Management Program and the Australian Federal Government's Environment Restoration Fund.

Over three years, the project will enable Ngurrara, Ngurrpa, Nyangumarta, Karajarri Rangers and others to reduce and monitor the impact of wildfire on desert biodiversity, including key threatened species, through fire management that is informed by traditional knowledge, scientific research and weather information. EK will coordinate the project and provide technical and ecological expertise. Other project partners are the 10 Deserts Project, the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, and the Western Australian Museum.

We acknowledge and thank the project funders, the McGowan Government, and Minister Whitby for their support in launching this significant project.



Ngurrara Ranger Emily Lenmardi checking traps on the Ngurrara Indigenous Protected Area during a monitoring survey as part of a three-year pilot fire and biodiversity project, which ended last year. Photo: Hannah Cliff, 10 Deserts Project



Ngurrara Ranger Justin Andrews working to recreate traditional burning patterns at a long-term biodiversity monitoring site on Ngurrara Country. Photo: Hamsini Bijlani



EK ecologists Hamsini Bijlani and Malcolm Lindsay accept the funding certificate from Hon Reece Whitby MLA, Minister for Environment, Climate Action. Photo: Damian Kelly



Huge win for the Kimberley coast

Martin Pritchard



Bedford Islands, Buccaneer Archipelago. Photo: Matt Moreton-Deakin

Australia's first marine parks, co-designed with Traditional Owners, have been declared in the Buccaneer Archipelago, from the northern end of the Dampier Peninsula to Macleay Island.

The new Bardi Jawi Gaarra, Mayala and Maiyalam marine parks are a first for Australia, with cultural zones and joint vesting. They are a recognition of the importance of drawing on Aboriginal culture and knowledge in conservation.

The marine parks, which were announced by Traditional Owners and Environment Minister Reece Whitby at the beginning of August in Broome, will cover more than 600,000 hectares of sea country along the Kimberley coast, the most pristine tropical coastline left on earth.

The new marine parks will be added to the existing marine conservation network in the Great Kimberley Marine Park, covering more than 3.1 million hectares of protected coastline.

We've been working on the creation of the Great Kimberley Marine Park for over a decade through the Kimberley-Like Nowhere Else alliance, which includes our partner organisation, Pew Charitable Trusts, with Traditional Owners, the WA Government, local communities and stakeholders.

We congratulate the Bardi Jawi, Mayala and Dambimangari Traditional Owners and the WA Government on these new marine parks.

The WA Government's co-designing the marine park with Traditional Owners is an example to governments across the nation of how best to conserve our natural world. This process has shown that the knowledge and experience of Traditional Owners is vital for world-class conservation.

The McGowan Government now has an opportunity to put in place the Great Kimberley Marine Park, which would extend from the Pilbara to the Northern Territory border. It has already committed to protecting Adele Island, Beagle and Mavis Reefs, which lie west of the Buccaneer Archipelago. If they protect the entire Dampier Peninsula, including the Lacepede Islands, and the coastline between Roebuck Bay and Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park, they will have completed the 2009 recommendation of the Marine Parks Reserve Authority which was for the whole of the Kimberley coast to be included in a marine park.

A Great Kimberley Marine Park would rival the Great Barrier Reef as a global conservation icon and attraction.

EK meeting with WA Government Ministers

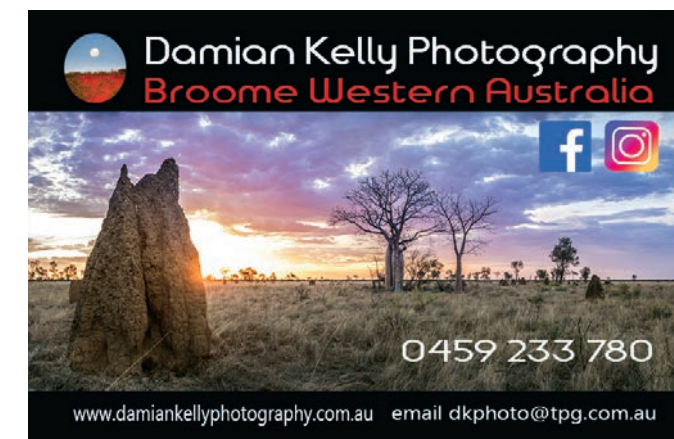
We had a great opportunity to engage with the WA Government in early August when Minister for the Environment and Climate Action, Reece Whitby, Minister for Water, Forestry and Youth, Dave Kelly, and Upper House Member for Mining and Pastoral, Peter Foster, visited our office in Broome.

We congratulated them on the recent Buccaneer Archipelago Marine Park announcement that will see three Traditional Owner groups, Bardi Jawi, Mayala and Dambimagardee, jointly manage three new parks in the archipelago. This is an outstanding achievement in protecting one of the most spectacular coastal areas in Australia. We also thanked them for instituting the Warlibirri National Park along the Margaret River on Gooniyandi Country.

Fracking, the Fitzroy River, and our work in the Great Sandy Desert on fire and biodiversity, were other topics covered. We thank local member Divina D'Anna MLA for recommending the Ministers meet with us.



Caption: L – R Hon Peter Foster MLC, Hon Reece Whitby MLA, EK's Director Martin Pritchard, Hon Dave Kelly MLA at the EK office. Photo: Damian Kelly





Finding the grasswren and helping the nyarlgoos on Gooniyandi Country

Sam Younis

The Gooniyandi Rangers, Marlee Hutton from the Kimberley Land Council (KLC) and EK staff had

a busy week out in Bawoorrooga with Traditional Owner and cultural advisor Claude Carter (Claudie) in July. We worked together to continue the nyarlgoos (bilby) food surveys and collect images from camera traps that were put out last trip. We also developed a Fox Baiting Plan to manage these invasive predators, and started looking for an elusive grasswren.

Grasswrens are a mysterious bird species, notoriously hard to see. They like to jump along the ground under spinifex and live with their mates in small territories. They have a very high-pitched call. Grasswrens only occur in areas that are fire protected, which is often girloorloo (limestone country) on Gooniyandi Country. Gooniyandi girloorloo is some of the most hard-to-access and spectacular country in the Kimberley, holding many special places, and secret spaces known only to Gooniyandi mob – the perfect place to find a grasswren!

We spent the mornings on the hunt for grasswrens in the girloorloo, but back in Bawoorrooga, where we set up camp, nyarlgoos were the main game. Foxes are a serious threat to nyarlgoos and have been identified in the National Recovery Plan as one of the leading causes of nyarlgoos decline. This is a serious problem to the nyarlgoos in the Kimberley, and more and more ranger groups are reporting having seen foxes near important nyarlgoos sites. Claudie has repeatedly seen foxes hanging around the nyarlgoos burrows near Bawoorrooga and is leading a push to get rid of them because of the threat they pose to nyarlgoos. One of the most effective ways of dealing with foxes is baiting, which has not been done by many ranger groups in the Kimberley to date. Our new joint Fox Baiting Plan aims to reduce the harm caused by foxes and potentially pave the way for other groups to conduct similar feral animal control on their Country.

This trip builds on previous nyarlgoos work in Bawoorrooga and is the beginning of our feral animal management activities in the area. Even though we didn't find a grasswren this time, we have high hopes for future attempts!

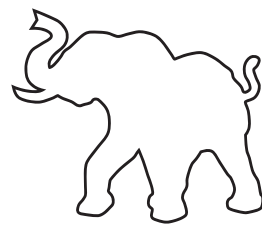


Marlee Hutton, Claude Carter and Gooniyandi Rangers looking for grasswrens on a cold early morning near Mimbi Caves. Photo: Samuel Younis

This Project was funded by the Western Australian Government's NRM Program and by Rangelands NRM, through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, with support from the Kimberley Land Council.



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Birds, bugs and fish in Mparntwe

Kylie Weatherall & Sam Younis

Crisp, frosty mornings and warm, sunny days on Arrente Country shaped our visit to Mparntwe (pronounced *M-barn-tua*) — Alice Springs — in July this year, to undertake a seven-day intensive Desert Field Ecology course run by Charles Darwin University.

The week was busy with collecting baseline data on river red gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) and contributing to a long-term bird study around Mparntwe. We also visited Tjoritja (pronounced *Joor-it-ja*) — the West MacDonal National Park — to conduct surveys of fish, macroinvertebrates and water quality in order to assess the health of the water system. The desert country was vibrant and alive with birdsong and flowering plants, having received above average rainfall over the past year. We were lucky to observe the area in this state, as a definitive feature of arid Australia is moisture availability, dictated by 'boom and bust' cycles of rainfall; there are often long periods without rain. Animals and plants use a range of life strategies to persist through large weather variations. Some respond rapidly to make use of the sudden increase in productivity and resources, growing to maturity and reproducing as quickly as possible. For example, the fairy shrimp's entire life cycle can be as short as five weeks, but she lays drought-resistant eggs lasting many years in the dry sediment of ephemeral clay- and salt pans, waiting for the next flush of rain. Other species, such as the desert rainbowfish, endure long dry periods by withdrawing to small waterhole refuges, which do not dry out as the rest of the landscape bakes and becomes inhospitable.



Kylie Weatherall and Samuel Younis on the banks of the Todd River in Mparntwe on a cold winter's morning. All rugged up and ready for a long day exploring Tjoritja. Photo: Samuel Younis

While it is amazing to see this country after big rains it was hard to ignore the impact buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) is having on this landscape. It is well suited to the desert ecosystems, forming dense monocultures, which stifle the growth of native vegetation (wildflowers, spinifex and native grasses), reducing food sources and changing habitats for native animals. Its large biomass creates hotter and bigger fires than spinifex and native grasses, placing people, and cultural and environmental values, under threat. Many, if not all, of the areas we visited had little spinifex and were invaded by buffel grass, highlighting the need to prevent arid areas of Western Australia (including parts of the Kimberley) from being overrun by buffel.

Kylie Weatherall and Sam Younis were lucky enough to receive a Protected Area Collaboration (PAC) scholarship to fund their visit to Mparntwe to participate in this comprehensive field intensive. Their increased knowledge of arid Australia and scientific research skills will enrich their current projects and the new Great and Little Sandy Deserts Biodiversity Project (see page 6).



Sam and Dambimangari Indigenous Protected Area coordinator Phoebe Martin using cast nets to fish for freshwater desert fish in Simpsons Gap, Tjoritja. Photo: Imogen Owen





EK Art Auction: Live and Online in 2022

Anomie

Were you at this year's Live Art Auction? Our 19th auction was held on the evening of Saturday 6 August. Many local and visiting art lovers and supporters of Environs Kimberley attended our signature event. Online bidders Zoomed in from Perth and beyond for the live auction and there was fierce competition for a portrait of EK's founder and well-loved Kimberley author Pat Lowe, donated by generous local artist Amelia Jajko.

When auctioneer Chris Maher put the hammer down on the final bid of \$3,200 there was a huge cheer from the audience. It turned out that the winning bid was from a consortium of EK supporters who banded together to give the portrait to the organisation.

"That was a magic moment," said EK's Martin Pritchard. "Everyone was feeling the love for Pat Lowe and EK."

To show more works of Kimberley art, EK also hosted an Online Art Auction on a professional auction platform. We had 41 pieces auctioned live and 28 online.

Money raised from this event, one of our major fundraisers, goes first to artists and art centres, and the rest supports our work with Traditional Owners and the community to hold the government to account over the protection of this significant region. You can read about community action on our front cover.

A huge thank you to all the artists, collectors and art centres who contributed works; Mick and all the staff at Troppo and the Broome Convention Centre; our wonderful Board members and volunteers who hung artwork and managed the cake stall; Mona Lisa for the delicious food; Amber Hurley and Jaime Jackett's Broome Jazz Collective for their sweet sounds; our irrepressible auctioneer, Chris Maher; Anna Mardling for event photos and all those friends of the Kimberley who dug deep into their pockets to support our work. We hope you enjoy your pieces!

EK would love to see photos of your new art in your homes or places of work. To show us, please email community@environskimberley.org.au with your images and a sentence or two about how the art makes you feel.



EK's founder, Pat Lowe sits on stage while her portrait by local artist Amelia Jajko is auctioned. Photo: Anna Mardling



Were you at this year's Live Art Auction? Attendees enjoying a laugh while viewing the stunning art. Photo: Anna Mardling

Environs Kimberley Art Raffle

We are very pleased to announce the winner of our recent art raffle, drawn at the EK Art Auction on 6 August 2022. Congratulations to Rebecca Jennings who held the winning ticket, number 81. Rebecca has won the beautiful piece by Balgo artist, Gina Sunfly.

Thank you to everyone who bought a ticket! All proceeds go to the artist, art centre, and our work to protect the Kimberley.

Prize: 'Wilkinson', 914 x 610mm, Acrylic on linen by Warlayirti Artist, Gina Sunfly



Goodbye Maddie Edwards, Adrian Boyle and Liz Jack

EK said farewell to three staff members recently as they move on to new endeavours. Maddie, Adrian and Liz remain members of the EK community and hold a place in our hearts. We thank them for their tireless efforts, their humour and friendship, and the innovations they all made within their roles. EK wishes them the very best in their future.

New Board Member



Sally Wilkinson

Sally comes from Naarm (Melbourne), and in 2012 moved to Broome, where she has worked on native title matters as the future acts and heritage manager at Nyamba Buru Yawuru, and as a writer and consultant for several local organisations.

She has also worked as a policy manager and advisor on the Victorian treaty process and climate change policy. Sally holds a BA (Hons) in German and a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) from the University of Melbourne, and a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice from the Australian National University.

New Staff



Eliza Arnold

Eliza grew up in Naarm on Boonwurrung Country, where she completed a bachelor's degree in Health Science and a Masters in International Community Development. Eliza has worked in the Community Development Sector for the past 10 years, in Cambodia, South Africa and Naarm; her

roles included Teaching, Events and Fundraising, Volunteer Management and Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Mentoring Coordinating. Each role has allowed for reflection on her deep love and passion for environmental protection, people-powered organisations and the importance of positive action and education. Eliza is really excited to be joining the EK family!

Current Interns



Bevan Grant, Kimberley Nature Project

Bevan grew up in Walyalup (Fremantle) and recently completed his undergraduate degree in Geographical Sciences nearby, at the University of Western Australia (UWA). After a visit to the region in 2021, Bevan was keen to return to

the Kimberley to further his interest in climate governance, fire, and atmospheric science. He believes that nurturing the health of intact, restored, and degraded ecosystems is paramount, and that modern conservation practices should be conducted in a way that is supportive of Indigenous values and interests. Bevan is currently working with the KNP team to collate historical fire data in the Kimberley with Geographic Information Systems (GIS).



Amos Smith, Kimberley Nature Project

Amos is a Balanggarra man, who grew up on Minang Country (Albany and surrounds), and spent much of his early childhood on Wongatha Country in Kalgoorlie. He attended Guildford Grammar on a Madalah scholarship, graduating in 2019.

He is now studying Conservation Biology at UWA. Amos is concerned about the impacts of mining and human activity on the earth's biodiversity. He wants to help keep the environment intact for future generations. Amos is interning with EK during university breaks. Recently, Amos planned and carried out a valuable project on arboreal mammals in the Monsoon Vine Thickets.

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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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