



Wins for the Kimberley in 2022

Martin Pritchard, Director



Buccaneer Archipelago – now in a Marine Park. Photo: Matt Deakin

It's been a historic year for the environment in the Kimberley. While major threats haven't gone away, there have been significant wins.

The Warlirri National Park on Gooniyandi Country has been created and the Margaret River Gorge, long targeted as a dam site, is now protected after 25 years of campaigning. We congratulate the Gooniyandi people and the McGowan Government on this outstanding achievement and celebrate another year of the Martuwarra flowing freely.

Our on-the-ground projects, protecting Kimberley nature, made major achievements. We secured three years of funding for the Great Sandy Desert Fire and Biodiversity project, which employs four ranger groups. We have started a new inter-tidal community science project. Our support for Aboriginal corporations to undertake sustainable development increased through our social enterprise arm. We were successful in supporting Aboriginal corporations with their governance and cultural programmes. These and many other achievements are listed in the EK Annual report.

600,000 hectares of one of the most spectacular coastal landscapes in the world, the Buccaneer Archipelago, is now safe in a Marine Park, thanks to the Bardi Jawi, Mayala and Dambimangari Traditional Owners, who co-designed it with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.

While threats like fish farming, mining, and petroleum exploration and production remain, sanctuary and special-purpose zones for cultural and biocultural uses make 53% of the parks off-limits to destructive industries.

There has been a huge win for Walmanyjun (Cable Beach) turtles. Traditional Owners have advocated for a review of beach access for over a decade and this year, after a concerted push by the community, with support from us, turtles now have a safe time to nest and hatch on the beach – free from vehicles – between December 1 and January 30.

We will continue to support the community to make sure the Kimberley remains Frack Free.

We were heartened to be recognised as a finalist at the UN Environment Awards in October, for all the work we've done the past 26 years to protect the Kimberley environment.

Thank you to everyone for your support this year. Have a great and sustainable festive season!



Report From The Chair

Natalie Davey

The Martuwarra Fitzroy River is flowing and Country is alive again. I've been watching the first big rains of the season, the river levels beginning to rise and life returning to the water. The Martuwarra nourishes life along the banks all the way to the Timor Sea. Knowing how far it is reaching, how much it is influencing, helps us realise the importance of our 26-year-long campaign to Protect the Martuwarra Fitzroy River. The river is the lifeblood of our Country, we are part of it, and to ensure healthy Country and healthy people, it must continue to flow.

Fitzroy Crossing was proud to host the homecoming of the multi-award-winning documentary series *Voices of the River*, which features many custodians from Fitzroy Valley sharing inspiring and powerful stories of their connection to the Martuwarra. After its screening around the world, we were happy to bring the series home. It was a powerful and calming experience to be together, to hear Traditional Owners speak on and off screen and feel how much all our lives connect. This homecoming showed the strength we have when we come together and use our voices. We will continue to advocate and stand against large-scale development and damming, which is always a threat to this important and precious waterway.

A multi-media exhibition 'The Martuwarra Fitzroy River — Lifeblood of the Kimberley' is being held on Noongar Country, at the WA Maritime Museum in Walyalup (Fremantle) until 29 January, 2023. Photographs celebrating and showcasing life in the Fitzroy Valley, as well as the series, 'Voices of the River', are on display. Damian Kelly, long-term supporter of EK and photographer, has a number of inspiring photos in the show. A highlight for my family was his image of Auntie Patsy, photographed beside Old Bridge, Fitzroy Crossing. It was a beautiful depiction of family, Country and our way of life. The community was really proud to be represented in an exhibition and for people to see how beautiful life is up here.



The rising waters of Martuwarra Fitzroy River after the first big rains on Bunuba Country, 24 November. Photo: Natalie Davey

We continued to work hard alongside ranger groups on various projects throughout the Kimberley and, as always, to keep our campaign voices strong. The threat of fracking continues to loom large in the Kimberley. We hope that people throughout Australia support us to stop fracking on our Country. While wins bring some hope, we must continue our work advocating for the health of Country and for renewable sources.

As we finish our 26th year, we thank our loyal supporter base, our passionate and dedicated staff and our faithful Board. We also welcome two new board members, Wil Bennett and Sally Wilkinson. We look forward to working together for a healthy and connected Kimberley.

Wali,
Natalie

Staff

Director: Martin Pritchard

Kimberley Nature Project: Louise Beames, Malcolm Lindsay, Matthew Macdonald, Danielle Bain, Hamsini Bijlani, Victoria de Bruyn, Ayesha Moss, Tessa Mossop, Kylie Weatherall, Sam Younis, Michelle Pyke, Fiona West and Phil Docherty

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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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us to protect the
Kimberley environment





Director's Report

Martin Pritchard

EK staff longevity

When I first arrived in Broome in November 2008, Louise, Christine and Gary were working hard at the offices at Lotteries House. Gary headed off to Central Australia not long after and Louise and Christine remained to do 15 years of invaluable work for EK! Kylie then came on board and shortly after, Malcolm was shanghaied; they've now been with EK for ten years each and achieved great feats.

As a team (with many star additions along the way), we've been through stormy seas, grown professionally and expanded the organisation to what it is today. With average job length within one organisation around three years these days, to have four staff with 50 years combined experience is outstanding. Thank you for your service and for all your support over the years.

I can't think of a better group of pirates to have been sailing with on the good ship EK.

Last Director's report

When I started as EK's Director, it was daunting to be stepping into the very large shoes of Maria Mann, and if it hadn't been for helpful staff, Board members, mentors, partner organisations and supporters, it would have been a much harder job. As mentioned in the April newsletter, we've got to the point where we can sustain a CEO and a Director of Campaigns, Advocacy and Fundraising. This will be my last Director's report; I'll be reporting on our campaign work from now on. I cannot thank everyone enough. It's been an amazing experience that has changed my life. I couldn't have done this without the encouragement of my partner Jael and son Ellis, who were always there when situations were tough.

I look forward to continuing to work for EK and protecting the nature of the Kimberley with all of you.



L-R Louise Beames, Martin Pritchard, Christine Elsasser, Lily, Malcolm Lindsay and Bob Brown, 2013. Photo: Damian Kelly

Environs Kimberley Finalist in UNWA awards

EK was honoured to be a finalist in the United Nations Association of WA's 2022 Environment Award at the UN Day Gala in Perth in October.

It was heartening to have our 26 years of work protecting the Kimberley recognised. The staff, Board, members, donors and supporters have collectively made a significant difference to the environment in this region. This work could not have been done without the partnerships we have — most importantly with the Aboriginal Nations across this very special place.

We were proud to be among many groups working on human rights, gender equality and the environment, towards sustainable development goals. Huge congratulations to the WA Forest Alliance and everyone who contributed to its well-deserved win for protecting Southwest forests over the past few decades.

Despite the Kimberley being globally recognised, our region is under threat from industrialisation on a large

scale, with agribusiness interests wanting to take massive volumes of water out of the Martuwarra Fitzroy River to irrigate feed for cattle destined for live export. Oil and gas companies are eager to build a gas pipeline to open up the Kimberley to gas fields that would need fracking. Weeds, wildfire and feral animals are also major threats.

We can protect the Kimberley if we work together. Become a member, regular donor and supporter of EK and invite others to do so as well.



Finn Pedersen (EK founding member), Martin Pritchard, Kira Sorensen (UN Association WA). Photo: Donna Chapman

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

CHRISTMAS HERE AGAIN

This is the time of year when people you considered perfectly normal, mature adults take to wearing red and white cone-shaped hats or faux antlers in green or red. The fever seems mainly to possess workers in places like banks and supermarkets, so perhaps making a seasonal fool of oneself is a requirement of the job.

It's also the time of year when curmudgeonly Living Green gives advice about how not to get caught up in the Christmas nightmare.

Everyone agrees that Christmas is stressful — possibly the most stressful time of year. By the time the day comes around, everyone is so broke, strung out and tense, and children so overwrought, that the brittle effort to maintain universal good will cracks, family members fall out with one another, there is shouting, plates are thrown, someone gets drunk or walks out and the day is ruined. Philosopher Alain de Botton remarked in his book, 'The Pleasures and Sorrows of Work' that families 'are...well-recognised and sanctioned loci for hysteria reminiscent of scenes from the Medea...' (a summing up that I found heartening, if only because it implies that Alain de Botton's home is no calmer or more orderly than anyone else's), and never more so than at Christmas.

In previous years Living Green has given advice on presents (few, second-hand, recycled or EK merch), wrapping (use the colourful pages of ads that come with the weekly paper, or draw holly and reindeer on brown paper bags), food (decline invitations, keep it simple, take the family camping or out for a picnic), and complete avoidance (go bush on Christmas Day, volunteer at a hospital or, if all else fails, take to your bed with a migraine and a good book — a subterfuge not recommended for parents of the young).

The above advice is all very ad hoc, but to do away with Christmas for good, consider changing (or taking up) a non-Christian religion. Buddhism is probably the best choice; I don't think Buddhists are given to anniversaries, and there is not much encouragement to overeat and generally overindulge. But if you think of migrating to another country, think carefully. I once visited Sri Lanka, a country whose population is 70 % Buddhist and a mere 6% Christian, in December, imagining I would avoid most of the pre-Christmas hoo-haa. I was mistaken. It seems that Sri Lanka, very sensibly, makes the most of the religious holidays of all faiths. Every department store in Colombo was bright with Christmas lights and adorned with life-sized reindeer and other Yuletide iconography, with Christmas carols blaring into the street from loudspeakers. Best of all, television newscasters read the news with their usual solemnity while 'snow' floated down the screen in front of them.

Ruminating with MAD COW



SECRETS OF HAPPINESS

Do you sometimes get the feeling that you are just holding on to reality by your fingernails? That the world around you is in such turmoil and confusion that you have to remind yourself who you are and what you believe in? The sense that you must hang on to something that might be called old-fashioned moral values, in the teeth of a zeitgeist that no longer has any? And then, something happens, usually a small thing, that reminds you that not all is lost.

Recently, I emerged from the supermarket, passed a group of men who would be described in some quarters as 'itinerants', and pushed my trolley along the raised verandah outside shops before realising there was no ramp down to the pavement at the other end.

'Oh, there's no way down here, is there?' I remarked to one of the men, as I turned back my trolley.

'No, you have to go all the way back to the car park,' he said.

I started to follow his advice, when one of the other men called, 'Wait, wait!' I turned around, and he said, 'Wait, we'll help you.' Whereupon two of the men picked up my trolley and its contents, and carried it down the steps to the pavement.

Small kindnesses have a reassuring effect on the receiver — this little incident lifted my spirits for the day — but also, I believe, on the giver. The British philosopher Bertrand Russell wrote a book called 'The Conquest of Happiness', which gives excellent advice on how not to be unhappy. One of the secrets of happiness, he says, is to do things for other people. He also recommends cultivating 'impersonal interests', which take us away from thinking about ourselves. Self-absorption leads to mental ill-health; this is recognised in the handbook for GROW, the mental health self-help association, in which members are urged to take up constructive outside activities, such as volunteering for NGOs.

I believe that modern technology has a detrimental effect on our spirits. Trying to navigate around certain websites, often those belonging to government departments, can be a slow torture for anyone born before 1990. Not only is the task frustrating beyond bearing, but there is that sense of life passing you by while you struggle with bland screens that decline passwords you know to be correct, or lead you around in circles so that the same 'page' keeps popping up and asking you for information you have already entered a dozen times.

But I digress. The point is that those looking for an 'impersonal interest' could do worse than study nature, or any aspect of it that appeals to them: flowers, trees, insects, reptiles, mammals or whatever. There is nothing that takes your mind off your own woes like the natural world. And volunteering for EK can do wonders for your mental health.



Orphaned Wells

Shaun Clark

Regularly I read about the vast number of orphaned wells in the US, where the companies that drilled the wells are long gone and the wells themselves have not been plugged with a cement core. Unplugged wells can cause significant environmental and human health risks. From gases being released into the atmosphere, to water table contamination, abandoned wells that have been drilled and left to decay end up being a problem for the government and the local people.

This issue was recognised by the WA Scientific Inquiry into Fracking, and became the basis for Action #19 of the Implementation Plan – Financial Assurances. A pooled fund was recommended, to which the companies exploring for unconventional oil and gas would pay a levy; if a company was no longer able to meet its obligations to plug and rehabilitate an exhausted well and well-pad, the cost would be met by the pooled fund. The companies lobbied heavily against this recommendation, and Action #19 became a watered-down version that covered up a problem previously recognised as significant.


Here we are, with a number of wells drilled across the Kimberley, and we already have our own orphaned well/s and sites where no rehabilitation has occurred. New Standard Energy has been delisted on the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX) and cannot meet its obligations to plug Nicolay-1 well in the Great Sandy Desert and rehabilitate other wells pads, turkey nest dams, and even an airstrip. ConocoPhillips and PetroChina, both massive companies, were linked to these drill sites, but New Standard Energy was left to foot the clean-up bill when the wells came up dry.


If there were a pooled fund as recommended by the Scientific Inquiry, the costs (estimated to be many millions) would not be the responsibility of the taxpayer, but the unconventional oil and gas explorers would bear the expense and fix up the mess that their reckless industry had created. There are other wells in the East Kimberley, unplugged and not rehabilitated, where the company is no longer the permit holder. What will be the future of those wells? Who will bear the expense to make these wells as safe as they can be, at the very least? What will be left for future generations to deal with?

How can we trust the government, the regulator of this industry, when we already face these problems with the small number of wells drilled in the Canning Basin — problems that in the US are at an unfixable scale? What will become of our orphaned wells? If the fracking industry gets a foothold, the risk will be magnified to an unmanageable level. If the government regulator can't manage just a few wells, how on earth could it manage many? Is Nicolay-1 in the Great Sandy Desert leaking methane, and when was the orphaned well last visited and tested by the government regulator? We will be demanding answers to these questions from the government – which didn't establish a pooled fund as recommended by the Scientific Inquiry, and listens more closely to powerful petroleum lobby groups than to its own panel of experts.



Nicolay – 1 wellhead in the Great Sandy Desert.
Source: Facebook






Greg's new book!

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Building Networks and Knowledge

Tessa Mossop and Ayesha Moss

EK @ the Social Enterprise World Forum (SEWF)

Project Officers Ayesha Moss and Tess Mossop joined over 2,700 people representing 93 countries to boost their knowledge, skills and networks at the Social Enterprise World Forum (SEWF) 22, held in Brisbane in September.

The two-day event focussed on the theme 'co-creating the future' and featured 70 presentations and workshops from a diverse array of social entrepreneurs, funders, and policy makers.

Stepping out among so many inspiring individuals opened our minds to the many innovative ways people are working together to bring about positive change. The new skills, knowledge and networks accessed at the SEWF allow us to confidently grow our own social enterprise capability and support those around us to do the same.

Indigenous social enterprise was a key theme of the event, with presentations from Aboriginal and First Nations people from across the globe. These included Kimberley representatives Cissy Gore-Birch (Indigenous Carbon Industry Network) speaking about rural land ownership, management and stewardship for community benefit, and Pat Torres (Mayi Harvests) speaking about food systems and using environmental knowledge to shape the world around us. Natasha Short (Mentor – Kimberley Jiyigas), Jaala Ozies (Derby-based Hair Artist) and Yisah Bin Omar (Djugan Designs) held stalls in the marketplace.

Inclusion and diversity, youth representation and sustainability, and zero waste were other well-delivered themes. As well as inspiring us with its thought-provoking content and design, the conference allowed for valuable networking. Overall, the experience increased the capacity of EK to develop our Social Enterprise initiatives.

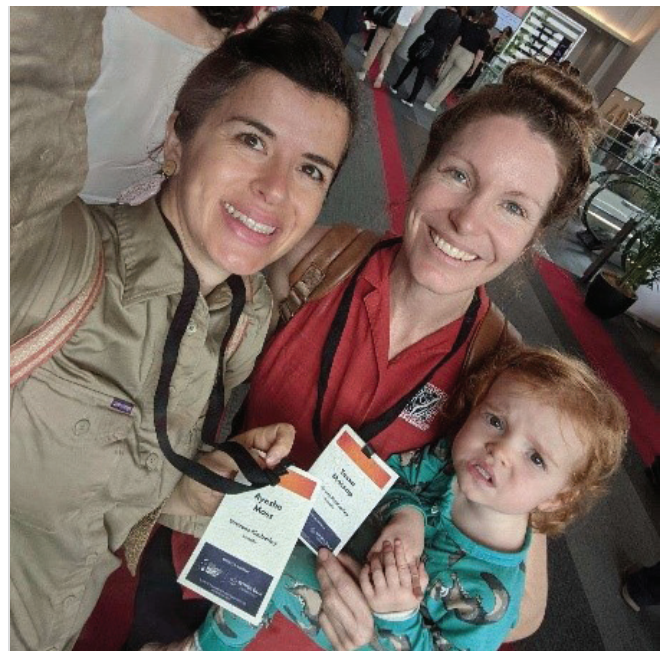
What is a social Enterprise?

There are differing opinions on what a social enterprise is; however, working definitions agree that it is an **enterprise that uses its revenue or business model to achieve an economic, social, cultural or environmental goal that benefits the public or a particular community.**

Running a social enterprise means using business models and skills to solve societal problems.

The EK Sustainable Communities team works through the EK Social Enterprise Project supported by Lotterywest. Some of initiatives and works in progress include:

- **Support for Social Enterprise** – EK is using our skills, knowledge, relationships and the development of resources to support other Kimberley community social enterprise initiatives.
- **Nature Projects Australia** (EK's not-for-profit consulting arm) provides expert consultancy at an affordable price for community organisations. Revenue is reinvested to help finance EK's work to protect the nature of the Kimberley.
- **Wattleseed Collective**—EK is working to develop a social enterprise model for community-led wattleseed harvest and product development. The aim is for sustainably collected seed to reliably reach the market and provide financial returns to Aboriginal rangers and community members.
- **The Kimberley Community Seedbank** is an EK social enterprise with the aim of conserving seeds, plants and cultural knowledge, and building the capacity of Aboriginal and other groups to enter the bush resources industry.



Ayesha Moss, Tessa Mossop and Acacia at the Social Enterprise World Forum, September. Photo: Ayesha Moss Brisbane, September 2022.

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Natural Dyeing Workshop

Eliza Arnold

The Society for Kimberley Indigenous Plants and Animals (SKIPPA), once again hosted Eucalypt Australia 2022 Fellow Samorn Sanixay. Samorn facilitated multiple workshops for Broome locals and artists. Samorn shared traditional natural dyeing methods used by weavers and textile artisans of Laos, expressing her love of Australian plants.

Participants learnt about local Australian Eucalypts, native plants, berries and flowers and their dyeing properties, and explored a variety of natural hand-dyeing and colour applications. Participants created their own colours on natural fabrics and one person designed and dyed a scarf handwoven by Samorn.



Natural Dye Workshop Participants, September, 2022. Photo: Phil Docherty



This event was proudly supported by SKIPPA, Environs Kimberley, Lotteries House, the Jimmy Pike Trust and Eucalypt Australia. We hope to host Samorn again next year.

Martuwarra Fitzroy River exhibition goes to Walyalup

As part of the *Kimberley — Like Nowhere Else Alliance*, we celebrated the launch of our new multi-media exhibition, 'The Martuwarra Fitzroy River — Lifeblood of the Kimberley' at the WA Maritime Museum in October.

The exhibition takes you on a journey along the Martuwarra to meet the people and wildlife that live beside it. You see stunning photography by Damian Kelly and Adam Monk, showcasing the beauty of the river and its life cycle, from raging floodwaters in the heart of the wet season, to remnant pools and billabongs in the drier months. Also featured is a life-size, seven-metre replica sawfish art installation, representing the river's importance to the critically endangered freshwater sawfish and other wildlife.

Our award-winning 'Voices of the River' documentary series plays throughout the exhibition, as Traditional Owners share their powerful connection to the river and their country.

Thank you to the launch speakers — Kimberley Land Council CEO Tyrone Garstone and Professor Anne Poelina, Chair of the Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council. Thank you also to Whadjuk Elder Marie Taylor, for her warm Welcome to Country.

It was great to have special guests travel from Gooniyandi Country to be at the launch, bringing their own stories from the Martuwarra. Guests included Kimberley Gooniyandi Elder and accomplished author, illustrator, carver and painter Mervyn Street, Walmajarri/Gooniyandi Traditional Owner and emerging artist and leader Hozaus Claire, and Gooniyandi man Russell Chestnut.

Thank you to Member for Jandakot and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Yaz Mubarakai MLA, Federal Labor Member for Fremantle Josh Wilson, Member for Belmont Cassie Rowe MLA, Member for the South Metropolitan Region Dr Brad Pettitt MLC, WA Museum Boola Bardip CEO Alec Coles, Director of Engagement for WA Museum Jason Fair, and to Noongar Elder Professor Len Collard for helping us celebrate the Martuwarra.

The exhibition is on display until January 29, 2023 at the Maritime Museum.



L – R Hozaus Claire, Mervyn Street, Dr Anne Poelina, Tim Nicol, Martin Pritchard, Russell Chestnut at the launch of exhibition, October 2022. Photo: Miles Tweedie



EK partnership with Seed Mob to protect the Kimberley

Martin Pritchard



EK Director and Seed Mob at Sun Pictures in Broome, 24 November. Photo: Damian Kelly

We are proud to announce a new partnership with Seeb Mob, Australia's first Indigenous youth climate network. EK and Seed Mob will be working together to protect the Kimberley from fossil fuels, to advance climate justice and ensure a sustainable future.

Our first collaborative action was to host a screening of the films 'Fighting Giants' and 'Water is Life' at Sun Pictures in Broome on the 24 November. 'Water is Life' is a documentary about the Aboriginal communities fighting against fracking plans in the NT and is available on the Seed website. 'Fighting Giants' is about the epic ten year struggle for a Frack Free Kimberley. The film is on limited release before going live on the web.

The evening included inspirational speeches and saw our community come together to stand for a Frack Free Kimberley.

We look forward to hosting many more events with Seed Mob in the future.



A packed crowd at Sun Pictures calling for a Frack Free Kimberley. Photo: Damian Kelly



Mangala Martu woman Nuriah Jadai spoke passionately to the crowd about the importance of protecting Country from fracking. Photo: Damian Kelly



Community Engagement, Events and Fundraising

Eliza Arnold

It's been another big year for the Environs Kimberley online shop.

Our very own Chairperson, Natalie Davey, created a **Protect the Fitzroy River's Sawfish** t-shirt design, to call for the protection of the Freshwater Sawfish – a critically endangered animal with a 60 million-year-old lineage. Extinct in much of its former habitat through dams, overfishing and other human actions, the Sawfish's last stronghold is the Martuwarra Fitzroy River. We are grateful to Natalie for sharing her artistic gift to help protect these remarkable creatures and the mighty Martuwarra.

Our **Frack Free Kimberley t-shirts** were restocked and, thanks to a few successful online campaigns and Kimberley events, are being worn by supporters all around Australia. These shirts are essential in getting the 'Frack Free Kimberley' message out and keeping frackers out of the Kimberley, once and for all.

Our first design in our **Kimberley Life Collection, The Bowerbird**, was created by Jeanné Browne, a Melbourne art-maker whose artwork has been significantly shaped by extended time spent north of Broome, with the Goolarabooloo Aboriginal community. Her unique rendition of this intriguing bird is one of our favourites, and seemingly yours. This has been restocked in response to popular demand.

Stay tuned for news on our second design in our 'Kimberley Life Collection' early next year. We have some creative ideas brewing and are hoping to get you involved!

All proceeds raised through the EK Shop go towards our work to protect the Kimberley.



Artist Natalie Davey in her Protect the Fitzroy River's Sawfish T-Shirt. This piece includes four language group names for the Sawfish who live along the Martuwarra. Photo: Damian Kelly

Award-winning documentary series comes home

In October the Martuwarra Fitzroy River Film Festival came home to the Fitzroy Valley community. The Festival included a screening of our short documentary series 'Voices of the River', produced by EK and The Kimberley — Like Nowhere Else Alliance, which has received international acclaim, screening at film festivals across the world and winning multiple awards.

Thank you to everyone who came along and shared a strong message of support to protect the Martuwarra from large-scale development.

Special thanks to the stars of the films for telling us about their spiritual connections to the Martuwarra and Country. We were so lucky to have Bunuba elder Mary Aiken, star of *Voices of the River*, give the Welcome to Country. We also heard from Gooniyandi elder and painter, author and illustrator Mervyn Street, Walmajarri elder Joe Brown, Walmajarri man Anthony McLarty and Bunuba woman Natalie Davey — all of whom featured in the films.

The Martuwarra needs our help. Please send a message to your local MP today and ask them to protect the river, and/or go to our website to send a message to the McGowan Government: www.environskimberley.org.au/martuwarra



Martuwarra Fitzroy River Film Festival enjoyed by Traditional Owners and community members in Fitzroy Crossing, October 2022. Photo: Lisa Thomas



Building Leadership and Capability in Natural Resource Management

Louise Beames



Facilitation and Conflict Resolution Masterclass Broome. L – R Back Row: Victoria De Bruyn, Matt Macdonald, Grey McKay, Tessa Mossop, Martin Pritchard, Shaun Clark, Kylie Weatherall. Front row: Danielle Bain, Christine Elsasser, Steve Willing (facilitator), Nadia Donnan, Aggie Pigram, October. Photo: Jennifer McDonnell

For a small, not-for-profit organisation, it is difficult to find the funds to train interstate. And, for trainers to travel to the Kimberley, all the ducks have to be lined up to make it work. Yet accessing training is so integral to our growth and evolution as facilitators and leaders.

For a number of years, we sought funding and worked with Social and Environmental Planning Partnerships to bring their three-day Masterclass, 'Planning with Communities: Facilitation and Conflict Resolution Skills', to Broome. With thanks to our funders, eight EK staff members, one EK Board member and six other people, from Green Collar, Land Alliance, Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre and Bunuba Dawangarri Aboriginal Corporation, attended the course in October.

Facilitating small groups in planning and implementing projects or campaigns is a large part of what we do at EK. This training supported EK and others, particularly emerging women leaders in NRM, to develop and refine skills, knowledge and practice to engage groups in a respectful and inclusive way, while navigating conflict and empowering groups to make decisions.

The course has been a real boost, with participants feeling they have been gifted an 'invaluable toolbox of skills' and looking forward to enhancing their contribution to Kimberley conservation and communities' projects.

Feedback from the EK team...

"Since the training I have been more mindful of interacting with people, the listening and talking, the non-verbal cues. A big learning was how to step out of the decision-making process and conduct the 'conversation' of the meeting."

"I feel much clearer in my role chairing meetings and more comfortable being directive and assertive."

"The trainers demonstrated how facilitation is the art of conducting: moderating and focussing a group of diverse people in a respectful way to empower all involved."

"I learnt that skilled facilitation successfully allows all participants a voice, and the opportunity to listen to each other."

"It's great to see that everyone is now more comfortable using a broader set of skills."

"I am going to be able to apply these skills to my personal and professional life!"

This professional development was supported by Lotterywest through our Social Enterprise Project, and by the Australian Government's National Landcare Program through our 'Building leadership and capability within the Kimberley NRM community' project.





The Magic of a Wattle Harvest

Louise Beames, Sam Younis & Kylie Weatherall

During Yawuru's warm transitional Wilburu season (September), and in the hot 'build-up' season Larja (October–November), you will find wattle trees laden with seed-pods and dripping with seed.

This year, our Social Enterprise Project worked with Aboriginal ranger groups to lay foundations for an annual sustainable commercial-scale wattleseed harvest. Together with EK, Bardi Jawi, Karajarri and Nyangumarta Rangers, Yawuru Country Managers and Yiriman Women ventured into the heat to harvest wattle seed. They collected seedpods by laying tarps on the ground and shaking the trees. They then sorted and cleaned the seeds under a shady tree, with a billy of tea. Winnowing with the breeze facilitated lots of chatting, laughs and the sharing of stories. Together we harvested and cleaned 40kgs of (mostly) soap wattle (*Acacia colei*) — an amazing effort.



Acacia Colei in seed on Djugan and Yuruwu Country. Photo: Kylie Weatherall



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SKIPA volunteers then experimented to find the most efficient method for the next cleaning stage. This time, sieves and vacuum seed-cleaning equipment came in handy, and again, the most important part of the day was the conversations facilitated by cups of tea and cake.

Wattleseed collection is an important step toward a bigger picture, in which Aboriginal people, while managing natural resources and engaging in cultural activities on Country, have increased opportunities to make an income seasonally. Within the Social Enterprise Project, we are providing technical and logistical support for collectors in an industry that places value on Country being healthy for sustainable harvest. We hoped to collect enough seed to approach potential buyers with a pilot product.

With consultant Andrew Batt (Epoch), we are developing a social enterprise model — where profits go back to the collectors and pay for the equipment, facilities and systems to maintain a viable community-based enterprise. Andrew will help us develop the right type of agreements, find the right market, develop a brand for what we are temporarily calling the 'Wattleseed Collective', and identify financially sustainable avenues for this wattleseed to get to the market in future years.



L-R Bardi Jawi Oorang Rangers Tamara Moore, Chenielle George, Tiyan Edgar and Vivien Hunter, October 2022. Photo: Kylie Weatherall



The Social Enterprise Project is funded through Lotterywest. The wattleseed harvest and the Kimberley Community Seedbank have also been supported through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program and the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal.

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Vale Micklo

We've lost a warrior for the Kimberley's environment. Micklo Corpus has passed away. We are devastated at this loss.

Micklo stood up for the Kimberley's special Country for decades.

He was a custodian of Broome's environmental jewel, Minyirr Park, once threatened by hotel developments and a golf course, but now protected in an A class reserve. A proud Yawuru man, Micklo took a strong stand against fracking on his Country. He bravely faced the might of oil and gas corporations and held them to account at Yulleroo, 70km out of Broome, where he set up a camp and stayed there for three years. He stood strong against the bullying of the oil and gas company and withstood the heat and humidity of the wet season. He garnered huge support every year on the road to the Broome races with his 'Ban Fracking' banners and supporters and led the Shinju Matsuri parade with his no fracking message. He's known across Australia for standing up for Country. He took the message to Canberra, Perth, Melbourne and Margaret River. We miss him terribly, but he leaves a powerful legacy. We will carry on with his mission for a FRACK FREE KIMBERLEY.

Thank you, Micklo, for everything you did to protect the Kimberley from fracking!



Micklo Corpus – protector of Country. Photo: Damian Kelly

Milestones



Malcolm – How did 10 years fly by so quickly?

When this tall, dusty, wild-haired bloke first asked to borrow our camera traps, I wondered aloud if I would ever see them again.

It was 2012, and Malcolm was fresh from Victoria, taking a break from writing his PhD in marine ecology. He was certain that he could transfer those skills to finding bilbies with Goolarabooloo mob.

Bilbies were thought to have been wiped off the map in many areas. It would take a marine ecologist and some great community collaborations to find them and deepen our understanding of how the populations were moving around in response to fire patterns.

At some point in my first pregnancy, it dawned on me that I might need to take maternity leave. That's when Martin and I first approached Malcolm to stand in for me. He took some convincing, but I told him it was the best job in Australia, and he would only have to do it for six months!

Well, it's been 10 years now that we have shared this role, managing and growing the Kimberley Nature Project, and I am confident that Malcolm is enjoying every bit of it. He has great enthusiasm and motivation and, despite the demanding workload, is warm and jovial, with an engaging banter that quickly prevents any meeting from becoming boring.

Malcolm is always looking to turn things on their heads, to innovate and collaborate. His Excel wizardry is as admirable as is his commitment to always improving how we engage, and how we can bring new and better science to projects. There is no limit to the positive impact that KNP can make in the realms of conservation, community and cultural heritage.

Malcolm has had 10 years at EK, and has played a huge part in creating a professional team that works so well in a supportive, happy and fun environment.

Congratulations Malcolm, from all of us at EK!



15 years of the inexhaustible Louise Beames

This year we are celebrating another milestone: 15 years with Environs Kimberley for Louise Beames.

Many of us who have worked with Louise have no idea how she does so much. She is inexhaustible in her passion for EK protecting the Kimberley, no matter how recently she gave birth. During those 15 years, she has raised three beautiful kids, built a sustainable house in Victoria, amassed a farm's worth of animals, continued working with our team, and expanded our project partnerships to Aboriginal groups in Victoria and Queensland.

This drive and determination encourages those around her to do more. Louise is the first to trust new staff members or partners to lead a significant project activity. She can give a government department a kick up the bum in such a way that they feel grateful. When she picks up the slack left by a collaborator's incompetence, she explains with calmness and empathy so that the collaborator feels inspired to do better.

When Louise started at Environs Kimberley it was a small regional NGO whose main activity was environmental advocacy. Louise, on holiday in Broome, was persuaded to apply for the new position of weeds coordinator. After making her mark in the west Kimberley, she attracted further grants, expanded the project beyond weeds, and now the on-ground conservation arm of EK, the Kimberley Nature Project (KNP), employs 13 staff.

The growth of the KNP was only possible because of the approach Louise took to working with Aboriginal ranger partners. She and her team prioritises respect for traditional knowledge and culture and for knowledge holders, and respectful project partnerships. This approach has recently been espoused by university researchers, land managers and government departments; thanks to Louise, we have been doing 'two-way science' from the beginning.

Louise's KNP legacy is significant not only for EK and the region, but also nationally. No other Australian environmental not-for-profit we know of pairs collaborative on-ground conservation with environmental advocacy.

Louise pairs compassion and understanding with intelligence, pragmatism and a fierce passion for nature. She has already created a significant legacy for Environs Kimberley and the region's natural environment, and we look forward to whatever's next.



15 years through thick and thin – our stalwart Christine

Christine is one of the most positive souls anyone could hope to work with. When she is at her desk, her smile greets everyone who comes through the door, and radiates through the office.

It is rare to have a finance and administration manager who is so diligent, reliable and conscientious with figures and paperwork, and so deeply invested in the wellbeing of the organisation and its staff, Board and members.

Christine replaced Rachel Tenni as Administration Assistant, joining Maria Mann (Director) Gary Scott (River Campaigner) and Louise Beames (Weeds Project Officer) in the small but productive EK team operating out of two offices at Lotteries House.

In the times since, our organisation has seen much change and growth. Within a year of Christine joining the team, EK was awarded some of its largest-ever project grants, and the Kimberley Nature Project was born, requiring a tremendous uptick in finance and administration for Christine to manage, which she did without complaint.

Christine took the EK Art Auction from strength to strength, working with our many volunteers and supporters to grow our annual fundraiser into a reliable revenue source for EK, and an exciting regional calendar event.

It is Christine's efficiency and organisation skills that have helped EK to grow from a four-person to an 18-person team. With each stage of growth, Christine has stepped up the professionalism of the organisation, skilfully managing HR, finance and administration for a swelling office and an ever-expanding list of grants to administer, keep track of and acquit.

There have been periods of intensity, challenges, stress, hard work and conflict, but there have also been so many positive connections and wonderful achievements to celebrate. Through it all, and when chaos was all around her, Christine has been consistent and dependable. Her empathy, kindness and intuition have been woven through the office, helping to create the beautiful EK Family culture that we all love. We at EK feel so privileged to be working with you, Christine, and thank you for an amazing 15 years at EK.



Looking for the adorable and endangered black-flanked rock wallaby

Hamsini Bijlani

Black-flanked rock wallabies are small marsupials who live in caves on rocky outcrops in western and central Australia. These little wallabies, called 'wiliji' in Nyikina, are hard to spot as they weave through crevices and over boulders with amazing speed and balance. They are listed as endangered under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act, and are threatened by wildfires, feral predators and habitat destruction, amongst other things.

In the northern part of WA, only a few populations were known to exist on three rocky ranges on Nyikina Mangala Country. However, new populations have recently been found on Nyangumarta and Karajarri Country, further to the west and south.

The wiliji found on Karajarri Country are an extension of a previously known population in the Edgar Ranges on Nyikina Mangala Country. These were seen and caught on sensor camera for the first time in September 2021 by the Karajarri Women Rangers and Environs Kimberley ecologists after years of looking for them in that section of the Edgar Ranges.

Black-flanked rock wallabies were first found (post-colonisation) on Nyangumarta Country in 2019. This discovery is particularly exciting since the closest known populations are hundreds of kilometres away to the north on Nyikina Mangala and Karajarri Country, indicating that they could be a genetically distinct subspecies. Very little is known about the distribution, size and genetics of this new population, which further compounds the importance of monitoring and protecting them.

The Nyangumarta Rangers and Environs Kimberley are now conducting surveys to understand the distribution of this species across the Nyangumarta Indigenous Protected Area, and the threats they face, so that the rangers can work to manage them. We have been on two surveys with the Nyangumarta mob so far this year, when we installed several sensor cameras, crawled through many intricate caves, learned about Nyangumarta language and culture and saw some epic country. Fingers crossed the cameras yield some adorable wiliji photos!



This work was done through Environs Kimberley's new desert threatened species project funded by the Federal Government's Environment Restoration Fund.

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Nyangumarta Rangers Huzi and Kasahn setting up a sensor camera during one of the rock wallaby surveys conducted this year. Photo: Hamsini Bijlani



Sensor camera images of black-flanked rock wallabies found on Karajarri Country by the Karajarri Women Rangers and EK ecologists. Photo: Hamsini Bijlani



The Nyangumarta Ranger cars in front of one of the rocky outcrops we surveyed. Photo: Hamsini Bijlani

Natalie Davey, Chairperson

Natalie comes from Fitzroy Crossing. She is a content creator working with local organisations. For Baya Gawiyi, the Children and Parenting Centre (CPC) and Early Childhood Learning Unit (ECLU), she is creating an educators' resource system based around the local Aboriginal seasons. Natalie is a broadcaster at Wangki Radio, the local station and, with her father, presents a morning language program called 'Danggujarra'. With Mangkaja Arts, Natalie is developing a jewellery collection inspired by Country. As part of the 2019 NAIDOC Week Speaker Series 'Voice. Treaty. Truth.' Natalie travelled with the Australian Consulate General and the founder and General Manager of Miromaa Aboriginal Language and Technology Centre (MALTC) to share knowledge about the conservation of language with many First Nations people of the United States. Natalie is dedicated to sharing the world around her and bringing people together through cultural understanding.

Craig Phillips, Vice Chairperson

Craig moved his young family from Perth to the Kimberley in 1994 and started his own computer sales and service business, now also offering IT consultancy. His previous roles include Victorian sales manager of Columbus Mufflers, and West Australian sales manager of Lukey Mufflers. He is currently the Treasurer for the Community Resource Centre and has served on the boards of the Broome Chamber of Commerce and the Small Business Centre West Kimberley. Craig has been an EK member since 1996 and joined the EK committee in 1999, serving as Chair in 2005–06.

Laurel Sutcliffe, Treasurer

From Victoria, Laurel gained a Bachelor of Arts (BA) and a Diploma in Education from the University of Melbourne and taught at schools in Victoria and Papua New Guinea before moving to the Kimberley in 1986 to work in Aboriginal education. She lived at Yakanarra community near Fitzroy Crossing for 20 years as the school administrator and principal, while raising a young family. In 2006, she moved to Broome and teaches at Broome Senior High School.

Alexis Harper, Secretary

Lexi is passionate about health in a holistic sense and values local environments, food systems and communities and the roles they each play in individual wellbeing. Her academic background includes a BA in Naturopathy and a Master's in Public Health. She has been a resident of northern Australia for over 10 years, having lived in Darwin for several years before moving to Fitzroy Crossing in 2016. Now based in Broome, Lexi is interested in creating local, sustainable food systems as well as ensuring the wild spaces of the Kimberley are preserved for future generations.

Wil Bennett

Wil grew up by the Murray River in country NSW. After a lap of the world and a fair few laps of the Sun, he moved to live by the Fitzroy River at Noonkanbah in 2007. Wil has since worked with Aboriginal rangers right across the Kimberley, supporting their work in natural and cultural resource management for the good of people and Country alike. Wil's academic background includes a Bachelor of Science and BA from the University of Sydney, and a Graduate Certificate in Environmental Management from Charles Darwin University (CDU).

Kate Golson

Born in Canberra, Kate first arrived in the Kimberley in 1992. She has worked with many community organisations as well as universities and government on projects ranging from community development and sustainable development through to native title, heritage protection and cultural and natural resource management. Kate has extensive experience in social research, community engagement, communications, and monitoring and evaluation. She holds a BA and Master of Arts in Anthropology from Sydney University.

Carmel Leahy

Born in central western NSW, Carmel is a teacher, linguist and literacy specialist who has worked at various schools and institutions, including Yakanarra Community School in the 1990s, Broome Senior High School, Mabu Yawuru Ngan-ga language centre and Nyikina Mangala Community School. She is currently in a support role with Yiyili Aboriginal Community School. Carmel is an active member of the Society for Kimberley Indigenous Plants and Animals (SKIPPA). She has a Bachelor of Education in Multicultural Education from Edith Cowan University, a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics from CDU and Cert III in Conservation and Land Management.

Kat Taylor

Kat arrived in the Kimberley in 2010. She is a researcher at the Water Justice Hub, based at the Australian National University (ANU), and is an adjunct with the Nulungu Research Institute at Notre Dame University. Kat completed a PhD in water policy at ANU in 2020 and holds a Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Environmental Science (Hons) and a BSc in Conservation Biology from Murdoch University.

Sally Wilkinson

Sally comes from 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 in climate change policy and as a policy manager on the Victorian treaty process. 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 ANU.

Current Intern

Shilpa Adhikari, Kimberley Nature Project

Shilpa grew up in Nepal, where she completed a Bachelor's degree in Forest Science. In Nepal, Shilpa worked in disaster recovery and human-wildlife conflict, and studied the long-snouted crocodile at Chitwan National Park. In 2019, Shilpa moved to Australia to complete a Master's degree in Disaster Resilience and Sustainable Development at the University of Newcastle. She is currently assisting with project activities including wattleseed collection and fire-scar mapping.

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