

A concert to remember – Premier Roger Cook – Don't Frack the Kimberley!

It's not every celebration that starts off with the sight of Humpback Whales breaching, but that's how the Frack Free Kimberley Concert began at Marlagun Cable Beach. Three thousand people came on August 12 to celebrate the Kimberley's nature and culture and join together to stand against oil and gas fracking. What a show it was!

The talented and passionate Bart Pigram was our masterful MC. The music sounded magnificent and we thank the generous and talented musicians for their heart-warming and strong performances: John Butler, Emma Donovan, Kankawa Nagarra Knight, Puertside, Bojesse and Bradley Hall.



John Butler calling for a Frack Free Kimberley. Photo: Damian Kelly

Mangala Martu Traditional Owners Madeleine and Nuriah Jadai spoke strongly, calling for support to protect their Country from fracking. Lock the Gate's Claire McKinnon outlined the work they are doing in Perth, highlighting the support that is growing around the state for a Frack Free Kimberley. Martin Pritchard spoke powerfully about the threat of fracking and urgent need to take action and let the new Premier Roger Cook know that the community is united for a Frack Free Kimberley!

A heartfelt thank-you to all our volunteers, members, supporters and donors who made this event possible. Thank you also to the MC and the musicians, who donated their time and talent.

Take action through our website and send a message to Premier Cook [HERE](#)

Check out the photos from the night on our Flickr account [HERE](#)

If you missed out on joining us, or just want to relive the magic, you can find highlights on Warringarri Media's 'Country Matters' programme on Spotify: 'Frack Free Kimberley Concert in Broome'.



Standing together for a Frack Free Kimberley. Photo: Damian Kelly



Report from Chair

Kate Golson

Hello all.

In June, after nearly two years as our Chair, Natalie Davey made the difficult decision to stand down from the Board. The aftermath of the devastating floods has left Nat and her family, and many other families and organisations in communities along the Martuwarra Fitzroy River, re-building their lives (see the Chair's report in the last issue).

When Nat took on the position, she became the first EK Chair living outside Broome. This was a significant milestone for the organisation. On behalf of us all, I wish to acknowledge the valuable contribution that Nat made during that time and to reiterate how much we miss her considered approach and dependability.

As a result of this change, I have returned as Chair, with Craig Phillips as deputy. Many thanks to Craig for taking on extra responsibilities over the past months. Two other shifts to the Board's composition in recent times have been Wil Bennett's stepping down in late 2022 after a short but productive term, and in March this year, Brendan Renkin stepping up. Brendan, a long-term resident, and a lawyer, brings with him a wealth of governance, management, community development and local campaigning experience.

Among the Board's main priorities over the past few months has been a strategic planning process, which we look forward to seeing completed soon.

On the local front, we are awaiting with great trepidation the unprecedented increase in road trains into Broome in early 2024. This is when the Kimberley Mineral Sands (KMS) Thunderbird mine, located some half-way between Broome and Derby and the largest development in the West Kimberley's history, is due to start production.

The Government has given KMS approval to run 100 road-train movements a day, 24/7, 365 days a year for 37 years between the mine and the Broome Port, which works out to be one road train every 15 minutes.

While these operations will have enormous long-term effects on the quality of life, safety and livelihoods of Broome residents, no social impact assessment (SIA) or adequate community consultations have been carried out.¹

In the absence of transparent and clear public information about how this could have eventuated, local group No More Trucks (NMT) was formed last November to gather information and provide this to concerned residents. It remains the main source of coherent, up-to-date information for residents, many of whom seem unaware of the scale of the changes that Broome will soon be confronting. [Click here for more information.](#)

In July this year, a petition signed by nearly 500 people was sent to the WA Parliament, which the latter is obliged to respond to. [Click here to view.](#)

If you support stronger community engagement and the undertaking of an SIA, write a letter now to the MP who sponsored the Petition (Peter.Foster@mp.wa.gov.au) cc. the MP for the Kimberley (Divina.DAnna@mp.wa.gov.au).

Until the next issue,

Kate

¹ The four focus group meetings KMS held in April, which it is calling 'consultations', were required by government as part of the Traffic Impact Assessment and Management Plan and limited to the subject of the title. Only eight residents attended the whole-of-community event and reportedly the numbers at two of the others were low.

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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 nature of the Kimberley





CEO's Report

Andrew Batt

Firstly, a huge thank-you to our supporters, volunteers and partners. There has been a lot going on since the last newsletter, and our team continues to work hard on our core mission to protect the nature of the Kimberley.

Our ecologists are busy in the field enacting two-way science, and the campaigns and events teams are hard at it. Our Sustainable Communities team is preparing for the Wattleseed Collective harvest in September/October.

Behind all this good work are constant threats from the oil and gas industry, land clearing, and our climate emergency. And fracking. Premier Cook, if fracking is bad enough to ban in the rest of the state, it must be banned in the Kimberley too!

Buru is planning to industrialize the west Kimberley, certain agricultural (formerly mining) magnates plan to destroy vast tracks of land, and the vultures circle to make a quick buck from this almost pristine place.

On the upside, we had a memorable visit from the Rainbow Warrior (thank you to David, Jess, Hettie and her crew), our Annual Art Auction, which was a wonderful event and is our main fundraiser for the year, a staff gathering at Mimbi Caves, which we plan to make an annual event, and Yajilarra festival, promoting Bunuba culture.



Traditional Owners and EK staff visiting Parliament. Photo: Lisa Thomas

Along with our partners at the KLC and the Martuwarra Fitzroy Council, we delivered a petition 26,000+ strong to the Minister for the Environment to protect this globally significant river system. We are also progressing steadily with our strategic planning process and search for the new property that will be our home for the next decade. The team even snuck in an eclipse! Most recently, we got to experience an inspiring concert, with John Butler headlining, to spread our anti-fracking message.

With such a strong culture in place and values such as respect, integrity and cultural engagement, it is a privilege to have joined a team of such passionate advocates for the Kimberley. My role is empowering and enriching and I am inspired by everyone I meet. A special shout-out to a few. To Jeannie, who continues the fight after the devastating loss of the beloved Micklo — when we showed the 'Fighting Giants' film for the battle-hardened crew of the Rainbow Warrior and to the Greenpeace Asia Pacific team, there were lots of tears — not all of them mine.

To the Bunuba Wiyi choir at the Yajilarra Festival for braving a level of emotional turmoil that I cannot possibly imagine. These members of the stolen generation, recently reconnecting with their Bunuba culture, singing on stage about their experience was deeply moving for all in attendance.

Finally, to Christine Perks — a special thank-you for her generous bequest. It is the hardest part of my role to learn about a supporter's sad passing, but heartening to learn about the remarkable work that person has contributed in life.

I hope this newsletter inspires new supporters to be involved, and existing and long-term members to smile, knowing that their commitment to protecting the Kimberley helps drive the EK team every single day to be the best we can possibly be.

We cannot do it without you, and we feel your support at our back as we continue the fight!



EK staff at Mimbi Caves. Photo: Louise Beames



Protecting Bandarl~~ng~~garri at the Yajilarra Festival

Louise Beames and Eliza Arnold

The January 2023 disaster-scale flooding of the Fitzroy River saw Fitzroy Valley communities lose their homes, cars, and livelihoods. Lives were forcibly disrupted, and people were displaced, isolated, and unable to see families or connect with their homelands. The sandy riverbanks at Danggu were destroyed in the floods, the river carving a new path through this beautiful gorge.

Rather than surrender Yajilarra Festival to the difficulties posed by the flooding disaster, Bunuba were determined to press on and create something positive for their community. To come together in renewal and rejoice in their survival. To reconnect and place a spotlight on the importance of cultural wellbeing and cultural pride in the community's recovery.

The second night of the festival was a Bunuba/Environs Kimberley celebration and call for the protection of Bandarl~~ng~~garri (the Bunuba name for the Fitzroy River) and tributaries, including the Margaret River, through music. Artists included Kasey Chambers, Neil Murray, Mama Kin Spender, and local musicians, Kankawa Nagarra Knight, Trax and Fitzroy Xpress. It was certainly a night of celebration, with excited crowds singing loudly alongside Fitzroy Xpress as they closed the festival with local classic 'home sweet home'.

EK's Martin Pritchard, alongside flood-affected local resident Terri Leeson, MC'd the night, sharing stories and insights on the current threats to the river. Our campaign with Bunuba

and other groups to protect the river is now in its 27th year and has led to two key dam sites, Dimond and Margaret River Gorge, becoming National Parks. While dams are off the agenda, Murray–Darling-style pumps, off-river storage and large-scale land clearing are still major threats to this National Heritage-listed treasure. **You can support the campaign by signing the petition here:**

The late Bunuba Elder Mary Aiken was acknowledged and celebrated for all her contributions to the protection of the river; her knowledge, fierce determination and generosity will remain with us as we continue to fight.

Environs Kimberley's social enterprise Nature Projects Australia (NPA) worked in the background to support Bunuba and Theatre Kimberley to achieve their funding goals for the 2023 Yajilarra Festival, and EK Volunteers provided practical support on both evenings. We were grateful to be a part of such an important weekend, with renewed hope and action to keep the mighty river protected.

You can watch a full livestream of the Music Concert here: Live Event: Yajilarra Festival 2023 – Music Concert (ictv.com.au)

Volunteering at Yajilarra was an awesome experience. We had a great time meeting people and being part of a positive community event. It was the perfect opportunity to lend a hand and see some amazing performances in the process, including Theatre Kimberley, Kasey Chambers and Fitzroy Xpress!

– Bree Furlong, EK Volunteer

Tribute to Mary Aiken from Environs Kimberley

We are deeply saddened to hear of the loss of revered Bunuba leader and cultural warrior Mary Aiken. Mary has been staunch in the defence of Country and Bandarl~~ng~~garri/Fitzroy River all her life. We have been privileged to stand with her and the Danggu mob since Environs Kimberley was set up to protect the river with Bunuba and other freshwater people in 1996.

Mary was not afraid to speak out and call for the protection of the river, whether in the river bed at the Old Crossing concert or in the WA Parliament in Perth.

We were honoured also to work with Mary on protecting Bunuba lands through our on-ground work. Her knowledge of Country, culture and language will be sorely missed. Her legacy is a valuable testament to the dedication she had for Country and culture.

Thank you for everything you did Mary; we will miss you.



Mary Aikens standing strong for the protection of the river. Photo: Monique Barker



Mary Aikens speaking proudly at Old Crossing Concert. Photo: Damian Kelly

Let us Dream. Yajilarra Festival 2023

In Bunuba, Yajilarra means 'Let us dream'. In establishing the biennial Yajilarra Festival in 2021, Bunuba community realised a dream to host a celebration of language and culture and engage youth in the ancestral knowledge and ceremony of their Elders, bringing Bunuba cultural stories to life: in language, on stage, on Country.

This year, because of the floods, the Festival was held within the township. The first evening was a dedicated cultural event with Elders and knowledge custodians performing the powerful Junba, traditional ceremonial dances and stories, which are important renewal ceremonies for Country. For more than 40 years the neighbouring Ngarinyin people had kept the Junba and storyboards safe for Bunuba people. These were handed back to Bunuba people at Danggu in an emotional ceremony at Yajilarra 2021. In 2023, the community once again came together to reawaken the Junba that connect people across the river and ranges: to dance and sing a strong and healthy future into being.

Following this, the Winthali story of how fire came to Bunuba people was performed by Elders, cultural practitioners and school children from Broome and Fitzroy Crossing. The performance was facilitated by Theatre Kimberley, whose professional costuming, staging and direction produced a brilliant show. The Bunuba Wiyi choir members, who, affected by stolen generation practices, and recently reconnected with their Bunuba identity, performed moving songs for Bunuba in English and language in an emotional on-Country performance for their community.

[You can see a live stream of the cultural evening here](#)



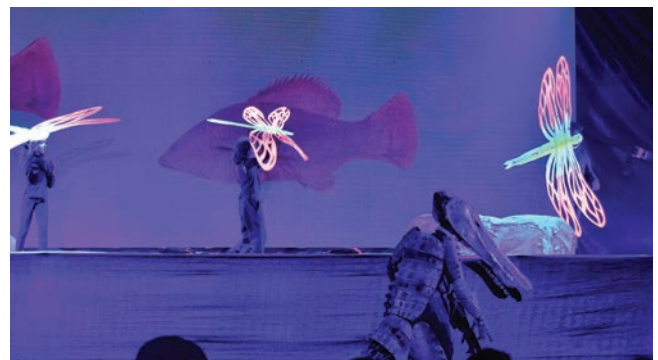
Junba performed by Bunuba community. Photo: Louise Beames.



Theatre Kimberley performance included stunning puppets. Photo: Louise Beames



Bunuba Wiyi choir. Photo: Louise Beames



Children performing the story of Winthali. Photo: Louise Beames



Crocodile from Winthali story. Photo: Louise Beames.





Mark McGowan's legacy for the Kimberley's environment

Martin Pritchard

Mark McGowan will go down in history as the most popular Premier of Western Australia, having charted a safe course through a pandemic. He did have a few advantages over other jurisdictions, being in an easily isolated state with a relatively small population and an independent streak.

EK's association with Mr McGowan goes back to 2006, when he was Environment Minister for 10 months. He handed an EK student environment award to Bonnie Derne, and gave Pat Lowe an award from the Conservation Council of W.A. Since then, our relationship has been mixed.



Mark McGowan, Minister for Environment in 2006, handing over a student environment award to Bonnie Derne and a Conservation Council Award to Pat Lowe, which Jacqui Remond accepted on her behalf.

Also in 2006, Mr McGowan rejected the advice of the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) that the Chevron gas refinery proposed for 'biodiversity ark' Barrow Island should be abandoned. The EPA recommendation was because the project was assessed as being too much of a risk to the island's population of flatback turtles, as well as wallabies, bandicoots and birds, but the Minister favoured the oil and gas companies instead.

We built up a relationship with Mr McGowan when he was Opposition Leader. He seemed much more at home talking to big business and the mining industry but he had a soft spot for the ocean, probably from his navy days. We knew we couldn't count on him when mining or oil and gas projects were proposed; during the James Price Point campaign he said he '...would like to see it [Browse Basin gas] processed in the Kimberley...'

Just before the 2017 election, when he became Premier, we met him in Broome. He insisted on having a photo taken, and tweeted it. We presented our asks: to protect the Martuwarra Fitzroy River, declare more marine parks and ban fracking.

His government agreed to the Buccaneer Archipelago Marine Park and as a result of the hard work of Traditional Owners, the Department of Biodiversity and Attractions (DBCA) and our advocacy with the Pew Trust, it is now gazetted (but missing Adele Island and Mavis and Beagle Reefs).



Mr McGowan tweet just before the 2017 election.

Mr McGowan kept his election commitment to protect the Martuwarra Fitzroy River. Two national parks along Bunuba and Gooniyandi Country now cover two of the proposed dam sites. We are yet to see if the river will be protected from the big pumps proposed by Gina Rinehart in another stretch of the river.

The hold of the mining and oil and gas industry became obvious when, between August 2017 and June 2020, Mr McGowan held 53 meetings with the following: Chamber of Minerals and Energy, Woodside, Chevron and gas industry lobby group APPEA. We couldn't get one meeting with him — yet we had three with Colin Barnett when he was Premier.

Mr McGowan shared a table with Buru Energy head Eric Streitberg at a Labor Party fundraiser in Broome. It shouldn't have come as a surprise that as Premier he opened up the Kimberley to one of the world's most highly polluting and destructive industries, fracking.

The tight hold the oil and gas and mining industry has over Western Australian governments of all persuasions ('State Capture') shows no sign of weakening. This is dangerous when we have climate change disasters on our doorstep and an oil and gas industry hellbent on making as much profit as possible before it is shut down.

Our work begins with the new Premier, Roger Cook.



Our Frack Free Kimberley campaign ramps up as we face new threats including conventional gas

Shaun Clark



Protest outside Buru Energy AGM in Perth May 26. Photo: Pedro Podeva

Buru Energy has come out with frightening plans to industrialise the West Kimberley by extracting conventional gas and oil condensate from near Udialla and Manguel Creek next to the Martuwarra Fitzroy River. Buru Energy has released its 'phased development strategy' for the commercialisation of Rafael gas and condensate 60km south of Derby.

These plans include gas-fired power generation, a land-based LNG gas-to-liquids processing facility, trucking of the processed gas across the region, a petrochemical factory producing ammonia, a facility in King Sound to export ammonia, a pipeline to carry the oil for export via the Broome Port, and a floating LNG processing facility in the environmentally sensitive King Sound to liquefy gas for export.

This destructive plan would be the tip of the iceberg. Buru Energy holds thousands of square kilometres of petroleum leases across the region, as do other companies. Most of the oil and gas is locked within shale and tight formations and therefore would require fracking. If Buru Energy were to be successful with its strategy, we would see a rapid expansion of fossil fuel extraction and industrialisation of the Kimberley landscape.

We will continue to fight for a ban on fracking, alongside a growing Frack Free Kimberley community in the region and around Australia. We have been busy with our campaign partner Lock the Gate, and supporters down south over the past three months, with some well-attended actions in Perth.



Music in the Park, Frack Free Kimberley in Perth, April. Photo: Pedro Podeva



Support grows for our Frack Free Kimberley Campaign

Eliza Arnold



EK's Shaun Clark and Martin Pritchard alongside Lock the Gate Team. Photo: Damian Kelly

The Frack Free Kimberley groundswell continued through the days following the concert, as hundreds of people came together at Entrance Point on Sunday 17 August to send a strong and determined message. The love and inspiration from the Frack Free Kimberley Concert was evident, with our biggest turnout yet for a community photo. Musicians John Butler and Kankawa Nagarra Knight stood alongside Traditional owners, families and friends in a united call to Premier Cook: Don't Frack the Kimberley!

To round off an inspiring weekend of actions for a Frack Free Kimberley, alongside our campaign partners Lock the Gate, we screened our film 'Fighting Giants'. The film features Dr Anne Poelina, Mr Corpus (recently deceased), Nuriah Jadaï, Madelaine Jadaï, John Butler and EK Director Martin Pritchard, and provides insight into our 10-year long fight to protect the nature of the Kimberley from fracking. We were a full house of engaged and concerned community members, wanting to know more of the threats fracking poses to their community, Culture and water. 'Fighting Giants' is being screened around Australia. Contact us to find out more, or to host a screening in your town.



The community sending a strong message. Photo: Damian Kelly



The Rainbow Warrior comes to the Kimberley

Martin Pritchard

In May this year, EK and Greenpeace welcomed more than 100 people, including Traditional Owners and community leaders, on board the Rainbow Warrior, to admire the famous vessel and discuss the threats new gas projects and fracking pose to Country, culture, climate, jobs and livelihoods. We were inspired to meet the RW team, who work tirelessly to protect the sea and sea life around the world.

The Rainbow Warrior sailed up to Walmadany James Price Point — almost exactly 10 years after our community campaign defeated Woodside Energy's Browse LNG gas-factory proposal, which garnered national and international support. Woodside now wants to revive its plan to open up the Browse gas field, proposing to send the gas to the North West Shelf LNG factory on the Burrup Peninsula. Buru Energy wants to pipe gas to a monstrous floating gas factory in King Sound, threatening our magnificent Kimberley coast and communities that depend on it.

The Kimberley community is determined to keep fossil fuels in the ground to prevent the destruction of Country and to avoid contributing to dangerous climate change. Greenpeace Australia Pacific Head of Clean Transitions, Jess Panegyres, said new gas and oil has no place in Western Australia's future:

"It is sobering to hear stories from Traditional Owners across the Kimberley of the terrible impacts of climate change on Country, including floods and soaring temperatures. The world's scientists and the International Energy Agency are clear that there is no room for new gas projects if we want

to limit the worst impacts of climate change. The good news is that WA can be a renewable energy superpower — creating clean jobs of the future for our regions and communities. We're united with Environs Kimberley to call for a renewable future."

Government climate models predict that, if the global warming trajectory continues unabated, Kimberley towns will suffer temperature extremes in the next 30 years and become unliveable by 2090.

A special thanks to Greenpeace Head of Transitions Jess Panegyres, CEO David Ritter and Rainbow Warrior Captain Hettie Geenen.

We look forward to maintaining our partnership with Greenpeace to ensure a safe future for all of us.



Calling to Buru Energy: No floating LNG on the Kimberley Coast. Photo: Sarah Methven



A clear message from Walmadany James Price Point. Photo: Alex Westover



National Park to protect Martuwarra Fitzroy River

Martin Pritchard

In a huge win for the Kimberley's Martuwarra Fitzroy River, Traditional Owners (TOs) have created a new national park, which will protect the Bunuba section of the river, including Jijidu Dimond Gorge, which has been a proposed dam site for decades.

Back in 1996, Environs Kimberley was formed when cotton farmers from New South Wales wanted to dam the Martuwarra Fitzroy River to irrigate broadscale cotton crops in the west Kimberley. We joined Traditional Owner groups from along the river in their determined struggle to prevent this from happening. When the cotton plans failed, there were further proposals to dam the river and pipe the water to Perth, which, after years of low rainfall, was running out of water. Our long campaign in solidarity with TOs paid off eventually, and the river was saved — for the time being. It still had no legal protection, and so people began advocating for a national park or parks. And now, Bunuba Country has one.

Covering 220,000 hectares, the new national park will extend from the existing Danggou Geikie Gorge National Park, along the river, north to Dimond Gorge — protecting the gorge from dams and development forever.

Bunuba people were delighted that their hopes and plans have finally been realised. Elder Selena Middleton said:

"Today was a very special day for Bunuba people. We've got a national park now to protect the river, to protect our country, to protect the environment — everything. I'm proud!"



Dimond Gorge on the mighty Martuwarra Fitzroy River will now be protected under the Bunuba National Park. Photo: Adam Monk



Bunuba Traditional Owners celebrate the creation of the Bunuba National Park. Photo: DBCA

Bunuba Dawangarri Aboriginal Corporation chairman Kevin Oscar said the national park was a huge achievement for Bunuba people and his Country:


"It has been in the pipeline for the last generation of people, our people and our Country... we are quite happy with what we have achieved so far. This particular conservation area will protect from things like damming of the Fitzroy and also protect flora and fauna welfare, that seriously need to be managed and controlled."

Bunuba Dawangarri Aboriginal Corporation Director Joe Ross said:

"This is an historic outcome for our community and will have great cultural, social and economic benefits for Aboriginal people. We welcome the opportunity to be a part of the creation of Bunuba National Park, which builds on our existing joint management partnerships that help protect our Country."


This is a memorable day for the Martuwarra Fitzroy River on Bunuba Country. After decades of attempts by developers to build a dam at Jijidu Dimond Gorge, we finally have a national park instead. We congratulate the Bunuba people and the Cook government, especially Minister Reece Whitby and DBCA, for protecting this part of the river in a national park.

Serious threats still remain to parts of the river that are not part of the Bunuba National Park. We hope to see the entire length of the Martuwarra Fitzroy River protected in the near future.



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Living Green

– PAINLESSLY

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

THE DEATH CLEAN

Most of us have probably heard about the Death Clean — it's a thing. The concept isn't new — as we get older, we start thinking about making our wills and reducing the accrued dross of a lifetime to spare others having to do it post mortem. But now that it has a name, the death clean has gained a certain cachet, and people of different ages are doing it.

For many years I have longed to divest myself of clutter, but one critical look at my overburdened cupboards, shelves, and every available surface, saps my will to live. 'Set aside an hour a day,' helpful friends have suggested. 'A whole hour?' I think to myself but don't say. And nothing changes.

But folks, if this is you, I have found the answer. Forget the hour a day that you can't afford — or face. Make the goal just five minutes. Anyone can afford to spend five minutes a day sorting and throwing out. Of course, the five minutes is a minimum, and on most occasions will expand to 10 or 15 minutes or even longer. And it's surprising how much you can accomplish in that time. I started on my paperwork — one of the banes of my life. There is considerable satisfaction in emptying old files of obsolete contents, and I also make the occasional incursion into one of the many random piles of letters, ancient Christmas and birthday cards, unopened charity appeals, newspaper cuttings and the rest, being turned to lace by silverfish.

The best thing about the five-minute rule for me is that it's becoming an obsession. Instead of seeing the clutter as insurmountable, I now see it as a challenge. I look at it with an eye to possibilities: could this go out, or that? Besides papers, there are all those other bits and pieces that make their way into most homes: useless ornaments, a surfeit of pens and pencils, containers of assorted nondescript articles that 'could come in handy one day', but never do.

For me, the difficulty is with things people have given me. Even if the thing itself has little to commend it, the fact that someone was kind enough to present me with it makes me reluctant to part with it. And, more practically, if I donate it to a charity shop, what if the donor goes in and spots it? I remember the shock I felt at a friend's garage sale when I spotted a rather fetching brass fish ashtray that I had given her for her birthday, going for one lousy dollar. After making clear my displeasure, I bought it and have it still (something else to be got rid of). One way of dealing with the gift dilemma is to explain to donors about the death clean, and to ask their blessing to part with their cherished gifts. You could offer them first refusal at no cost.

Ruminating with MAD COW



SHOOTING OURSELVES IN THE FOOT

As we know, human beings are often too clever for our own good. I hear Australian politicians touting 'our values' and 'our lifestyle', as if we were the natural exemplars of all that is clever and fine, while other poor benighted nations are, well, poor and benighted. Yes, we are smart all right — our smartness apparent in such creations as the Hills Hoist, the Victa lawn mower and Lamingtons.

These were such harmless, useful inventions, it's a pity we didn't stick to the likes of them instead of branching out into IT, AI and the like, along with the rest of the self-styled 'advanced' world.

I wonder if people realise that our collective brilliance means that soon we won't be able to use the Internet at all — that is, if we have any skerrick of interest in truth and reality (it seems that many of us don't). Who can we trust? Before the Internet the news was the news — we all read some version of the same thing — dangerous if it was all lies and propaganda, but at least we could discuss it and debunk it when necessary. Now, we are fed material according to our interests, as I have pointed out before, so adherents of different ideologies receive not just different but contradictory information, tailored to their world view.

We won't be able to use the Internet or even our phones with any confidence because we won't know right from wrong, truth from falsehood. Just recently I was scammed, and became more wary of responding to messages. I got a message from someone purporting to be the Wilderness Society — but I couldn't tell if it really was the Wilderness Society or just some hacker who knows I have supported TWS in the past, so I didn't reply. Often the give-away is in the spurious email address or the bad English — but wait till AI gets more sophisticated, learns to spell and can vacuum up your card number along with the so-called 'security code' on the back of the card. I don't imagine it will have much problem saying it's human and telling which squares have traffic lights.

Another thing that I find curious is the scramble to invent new weapons of war, such things as remote-controlled, personal-attack drones, when we know that our enemies will soon get their hands on similar technology and use it against us. That's why we don't 'take out' Mr Putin and his ilk; there is an unspoken understanding that a head of state is untouchable — always excepting internal coups and random assassinations — otherwise, all heads of state would be fair game, and none of them will countenance that.

When I get to this point in my harangue, I ask myself what possible relevance it has for the natural environment in general, or for EK in particular. Well, having no Internet or smart phone worth using is relevant to us all. And, just quietly, I can't wait.



Wattleseed Collective: from pilot product to next harvest

Louise Beames and Tessa Mossop

Our Sustainable Communities team joined the Yiriman Women Bush Knowledge Enterprises and took off to Perth and the Swan Valley on Whadjuk Noongar Boodja to learn more about the wattleseed and bush foods industry and share their wares.

We first spent time with Wardandi Bibbulmun Elder Dale Tilbrook, a bushfood businesswoman of over 30 years, and attended the 'Accelerating Wattle Seed Industry Workshop'. This was an inspiring event supported by Agrifutures and Australian Native Foods and Botanicals, where producers shared their knowledge about wild harvest, cultivation, harvesting and cleaning, nutritional values of wattleseed and developing the wattleseed market.

Attending the workshop allowed us the opportunity to promote Wattleseed Collective's pilot product – roasted and ground wattleseed – and display our new Sustainable Harvesting and Cleaning Guides prepared for this year's harvest. We met with chefs, retailers and wholesalers interested in collaborating and providing support for the developing enterprise, and came away knowing there is overwhelming support for an Aboriginal-led wild-harvested product that balances commercial interest with the opportunity to be on Country, care for Country, share knowledge and engage multiple generations in traditional storytelling.

On our return to Broome, we held a workshop with Wattleseed Collective members to review past harvests, plan for the 2023 harvest, and to develop the Wattleseed Collective business and financial models. Representatives from Yawuru, Karajarri and Nyangumarta attended to review the concept and define a vision and set of values for the Wattleseed Collective.

We also had some hands-on activities roasting, grinding and packaging wattleseed, tried some wattleseed sourdough, and made wattleseed soap with Robyn Wells from Yiriman (thank you Robyn!).

We are now working on refining our ground wattleseed product (roast and ground wattleseed is often used infused in drinks or as a caffeine-free coffee; to flavour breads, cakes or deserts; or in savoury spice mixes such as dukkha) and developing a wattleseed pre-mixed damper where buyers can just add water (or beer) for delicious and nutritious damper every time.

It has been great to learn from, and connect with, other people in the wattleseed industry, and to all get together and be inspired about the exciting future of the Kimberley Wattleseed Collective.

To find out more please visit us here.

The establishment and growing success of the Wattleseed Collective, and other Environs Kimberley social enterprise development projects, would not have been possible without persistent and dedicated work by long-term EK staff member Ayesha Moss. Ayesha and her family are taking 12 months off, from Broome life and EK work, to undertake a volunteer role in Indonesia. We miss you Ayesha but know that your skills and experience will be hugely appreciated there as they were here. We can't wait to see you back as part of the EK Sustainable Communities Team soon!



L-R EKs Tessa Mossop with Jacko and Mandy Shoveller of Yiriman Women Bush Enterprises and EK's Louise Beames at the Accelerating Wattleseed Industry Workshop.



EK's Ayesha Moss presenting to Karajarri, Nyangumarta and Yawuru members of the Wattleseed Collective at the Wattleseed Collective Workshop 2023. Photo: Tessa Mossop



Wattleseed Collective Sustainable Harvesting and Cleaning guides, and roasted and ground Wattleseed products. Photo: Tessa Mossop

EK is working to create a Conservation Economy in the Kimberley

Your support is vital. We invite you to contribute and be a part of this remarkable journey

[Learn more here](#)

[Contribute here](#)



The Social Enterprise Project is funded by Lotterywest. This month the Wattleseed Collective has also received some support from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development



Fencing ecologically and culturally important wetlands on Gooniyandi Country

Sam Younis

The transition of wet to dry season in northern Australia heralds a dramatic transformation of the landscape. As the monsoonal rains recede, vast wetlands and river systems gradually shrink, exposing an intricate mosaic of freshwater places. Lush vegetation starts to wither, as the once vibrant greenery turns a parched brown. The skies, once adorned with thunderous clouds, now showcase an arid blue expanse. Wildlife adapts to the changing conditions, with migratory birds departing and local species concentrating around remaining water sources. The dry season unveils a striking contrast between the lush abundance of the wet season and the rugged, resilient beauty of a sun-scorched landscape awaiting the return of the rains.

This dramatic change highlights the importance of freshwater places that last all year round, providing a refuge to many species. Despite this, little research has been done on these highly productive environments. Even conspicuous species have been overlooked; scientists have only recently found 20 new species of freshwater fish and recognised the Kimberley as an international hotspot for waterlily diversity.

These places are important not only for animals and plants, which must take refuge in the only remaining green places in the Kimberley, but also for people. Culturally, wetlands are significant habitats for Aboriginal people, providing camping spots and food, and are the location of law grounds, sacred sites and homes of creator beings. This importance is reflected in the Gooniyandi Healthy Country Plan (HCP), in which freshwater places are the third target. The HCP groups permanent water places, spring country, billabongs and rockholes, and all the plants and animals that live in fresh water. For Gooniyandi people, the rivers and waterholes are lifelines: special cultural sites with many stories and traditions.

This year in June the Gooniyandi, Kija and Paruku rangers worked together to fence Wiyiga, one of the many stunning gorges in the Mueller Ranges, which lie south of the Margaret River. They did this because cattle pose a significant threat to freshwater places on Gooniyandi country. As introduced species, cattle can cause extensive damage to delicate wetland ecosystems by trampling vegetation and eroding riverbanks, leading to increased sedimentation and water pollution. Their unrestricted grazing can deplete vegetation around water sources, destabilizing banks and degrading water quality. Additionally, cattle access can disrupt cultural

practices and sacred sites, interfering with the Gooniyandi people's spiritual and traditional connections to these areas. Effective management and control measures are essential to mitigate the adverse effects of cattle on freshwater places, ensuring the preservation of these critical habitats for both ecological and cultural reasons.

Fencing is the best way to mitigate the threat of cattle to freshwater places on Gooniyandi country because it establishes physical barriers. By keeping cattle out, fencing helps preserve delicate wetland ecosystems, maintains water quality, safeguards cultural sites, and ensures the sustainability of these vital freshwater habitats for both the environment and the community.



Roberta Daylight, Phiffney Skeen & Jedda Thomas learning to weld the braces of the fence. Photo: Samuel Younis



Beautiful Wiyiga, one of the many stunning palm-filled gorges in the Mueller Ranges. Photo: Samuel Younis

This project is supported by funding from the Western Australian Government's State NRM Program and Lotterywest through the Kimberley Wetlands Project.



All rangers working together. Photo: Samuel Younis.



Weeding Warriors' War on Woody Weeds: Minyirr Park 2023

Kylie Weatherall and Louise Beames

This dry season a group of 'Weeding Warriors' undertook a hunt and destroy mission in Minyirr Park, pursuing invasive woody weed species. Armed with a variety of weeding tools for different treatment methods, the Warriors undertook a series of sweeps through the park, targeting coffee bush *Leucaena leucocephala* and neem tree *Azadirachta indica*. To avoid and then minimise chemical use, the team used the levering tool 'Tree Poppers' to pop small and large saplings out of the ground, and herbicide capsules to 'drill and pill' large seeding trees.

This team was recruited with the assistance and backing of Nyamba Buru Yawuru (NBY) Environmental Services, and the Warrmijala Murrugulayi – Rise up to Work – program. Supported by our newest EK Project Officer Sid Rankin, the NBY casual Country Manager weed support team (aka Weed Warriors) has been skilled up in weed treatment techniques and strategy, while occasionally working alongside and learning from the established NBY Country Manager team.

Both weed species are highly invasive and grow into and dominate large trees, replace native plant species, increase fire frequency and intensity, and change habitats. This in turn affects how and where different mammals, birds, reptiles and insects can live. They are found throughout the Yawuru Buru Conservation Park, and within Minyirr Park, this southernmost and most heavily affected patch of Monsoon Vine Thicket (MVT) in Broome.

The MVTs of the Dampier Peninsula are listed nationally as Endangered, and in WA as a Threatened Ecological Community. They are a dry coastal rainforest with restricted range, found in patches from Broome to Ardyaloon (One Arm Point). The Kimberley Nature Project at Environs Kimberley (EK) has been working with Bardi Jawi, Nyul Nyul Rangers and NBY Country Managers for many years to help protect and conserve this culturally significant plant community.

This year we will complete a three-year WA State Natural Resource Management grant, which has supported the Weed Warrior team as well as a wide variety of work to protect MVTs, including: scientific survey and research; recording Traditional Ecological Knowledge, planning protective burning, mapping and training; and the creation of a Monsoon Vine Thicket management and technical advisory group led by Traditional Owners.



Weeding Warriors Team with the 'Tree Popper's' weeding tool. (L-R) Jeremiah Lee, Lyall Pedro, Sidney Smith (EK), Jeremiah Cox, Isaiah Williams, Pungi Eriha. Photo: Kylie Weatherall

The resources available to tackle weeds are most often inadequate, resulting in weed infestations compounding year after year, as we have seen in Minyirr Park. This dedicated effort by the Yawuru Weed Warriors has significantly reduced the number of woody weeds, while also building capability in the local community. We acknowledge this determined effort to protect the MVTs of Minyirr Park, and we will support the Minyirr Park management team to source funding to continue this great work. An enduring commitment saves time, money and team morale, and as all experienced weeders know, the key to assailing sneaky invasive species is to follow-up, follow-up, follow-up.



Weeding Warriors team in Minyirr Park. Pungi Eriha (front), (L-R) Messiah Cox, Jeremiah Lee, Lyall Pedro and Isaiah Williams. Photo: Kylie Weatherall



On the hunt for woody weeds in the Monsoon Vine Thicket with the Tree Poppers. (L-R) Lyall Pedro, Pungi Eriha. Photo: Kylie Weatherall

SKIPA excursion to Lake Champion

Di Bennett

(SKIPA member and EK Volunteer)

On June 11 a large group of SKIPA and EK members met at Broome North servo for a much-anticipated trip to Lake Champion on Roebuck Plains.

I had been to the lake several times on Broome Bird Observatory lake tours, all at the end of the dry season, because that's when the birds are concentrated on the shrinking fresh water. The lake and surrounding wetlands were unrecognisable from what I had seen before. At the end of the dry, the lake has contracted and is surrounded by a dry, dusty landscape with munched-on bushes. What we saw that Sunday was a large wetland and green, growing vegetation. Isn't it amazing what adding water can do?

There were two main areas of interest – plants and birds.

Plants. The area was very green, full of happy plants. The highlight was the abundant carnivorous plants: three species of *Drosera* (sundews) and a *Byblis*. Other notable plants were the aquatic annual *Nymphoides beaglensis*, with its delicate white and pink flowers, and the Northern Swamp Box *Lophostemon grandiflorus* subsp. *grandiflorus*.

Birds. George Swann had an impressive list of 70 birds by the morning's end. This included large numbers of Egrets (three species) and Spoonbills at the old bore yard, now a wetland. There were lots of waterbirds, with big numbers of Black Duck and Grey Teal; some juveniles I hadn't seen before in their muted young colors were Magpie Geese and Black-winged Stilts. Winter migrants from southern Australia were Fairy Martins and Grey Fantail (alisteri). Also my first cockatiels in the Kimberley.

There were many varied discussions over morning tea in the sun by the lake. Perfect morning. A big thank you to Phil Docherty and Kylie Weatherall for organizing this event, and to Roebuck Plains Station and NBY for allowing us on Country.



SKIPA members enjoying a morning tea at Lake Champion. Photo: Kylie Weatherall



Exploring the wonders of the lake. Photo: Anomie



Dragonfly. Photo: Colin Nicholls



Nymphoides beaglensis. Photo: Kylie Weatherall



EK's Twentieth Art Auction

Pat Lowe

A tremendous amount of work goes into organising the annual EK art auction, with one Bunny (named Eliza this year) taking on most of the responsibility, supported by other staff and a truly wonderful team of volunteers.

There are the hangers (they need an eye for juxtaposition and alignment), the friendly folk at the door who take your entrance fee and stamp your wrist, the musicians, the gifted cake-makers, the spotters (woe betide them if they miss a last bid), the recorders, who also field Zoom bids, the white-gloved brigade of carriers, and others. It's almost hackneyed to say of any endeavour: 'This could not have happened without the help of...' but it's never truer than for our art auction. We at EK are immensely grateful to all of you.

None of this would be worth a pinch of manure without the artists and art centres who contribute the work — original paintings, photographs, artefacts from around the Kimberley. We are happy that many of them earn whatever proportion of the selling price they choose to retain, while EK benefits from the rest — in some cases, 100%. And let us not forget the generous bidders and supporters, without whom not, as they say in Latin (sine qua non).



Bex Youdale and Jaime Jackett wowing crowd. Photo: Don Bacon



Walls of the Convention Centre were filled with beautiful artwork. Photo: Don Bacon

This year we held our auction in June instead of the usual August, when there were other important events in our calendar. We try to avoid clashing with major happenings in this busy town and beyond, but we were wrong-footed by the Moulin Rouge show at the Civic Centre the same night — we were sorry to miss that, but one can't do everything, and some people chose Moulin Rouge (tsk! tsk!).

Despite the above, Mick Connolly's Convention Centre (thank you for making it available again, Mick) was filled with keen art-lovers. While punters inspected the works on display, MC Shane Hughes and local musicians Jamie Jackett, Bex Youdale and Amber Hurley created the mood. By the time Martin came on stage to give his speech, the decibel level in the auditorium had risen alarmingly, but it was clear from the applause that most people had been listening.

Enter Chris Maher, our indefatigable auctioneer over many years, for whom we are ever grateful, and bidding in the live auction began. As always, there were some nail-biting moments as patrons vied with one another for a choice piece of art.

The on-line part of the auction was a Covid innovation, so successful that we have continued running it. Bidding starts before the live event, and the last on-line bid on an item becomes the opening live bid. Furthermore, the few pieces passed in remain available on line for several days after the live event until the auction closes, giving artists and interested customers a second chance.

Although we had few big-ticket items this year, takings were fair and the art auction remains EK's main fundraiser of the year. Thanks again to everyone who took part.



Successful bidder Maddie with her piece 'Gunbalin oyster catcher' by Maxine Charlie. Photo: Don Bacon

EK fundraising raffle

Drawn at the EK Live Art Auction on 24 June the winner was Margaret Matthews with ticket number 125.

Prize:
Nancy Tjungupi
Carnegie
Mina Mina, 2022
acrylic on canvas
76 x 38 cm
Mina Mina is a
waterhole close
to the Patjarr
Community. It is
surrounded by a
claypan which is a
water catchment
area rich in bird
life and of cultural
significance to
Patjarr people.

Permit No:
LS219875823



Letters to the editor



Dear Editor,

The news that Tasmanian salmon company Tassal, owned by Canada-based Cooke Inc, has bought the Cone Bay barramundi project near Broome, comes with the threat of a massive expansion of industrial aquaculture.

Cooke has been repeatedly fined for breaching environmental laws in North America, and Tassal has been the focus of community uproar in Tasmania.

To see why one only has to read internationally-acclaimed author Richard Flanagan's book TOXIC. Flanagan describes the destructive impact on marine ecosystems by Atlantic salmon producers in southern Tasmanian waters off Bruny Island and in Storm Bay, the D'Entrecasteaux Channel and Huon River (where I live).

Tassal is one of three companies operating in Macquarie Harbour, into which the Franklin and Gordon river waters flow on the island's west coast, where the Maugean Skate species now faces extinction.

Industrial aquaculture's bruising impact in Tasmania includes dumping fish faeces, killing seals and cormorants, using tonnes of antibiotics, visual and noise impacts on both local residents and tourism, and intrusion on whale migration areas.

Cooke/Tassal should be up-front with the people of the Kimberley about its coming expansion and the costs and added impacts of the 24/7 servicing of that huge marine take-over on other interests in the region.

Yours faithfully,

Bob Brown.

Former Greens senator for Tasmania.

Messages from you: Our Supporters

"The music was brilliant, and the guest speakers taught me a lot, particularly Nuriah's story – I put her example about hunting for clams being compromised in my submission to my local MP.

Dr Caroline Orr's speech was also very powerful. Thank you everyone."

CONCERT IN THE PARK

April 2023

"The two-way science work you're doing is a game-changer."

KIMBERLEY NATURE PROJECT

"Thank you EK and the whole team. We're so lucky you're doing this work, looking after Country. We're here with you."

FRACK FREE KIMBERLEY

CONCERT August 2023

"Wow, speechless at the turnout."

"What a great opportunity. I was lucky to get on board the last time EK made this opportunity available some years ago.

Unfortunately, I'm in Perth now – but I still love to get all the news and updates on what's happening in our precious Kimberley region, and all the great work you guys continue to do. Thank you."

TOUR OF GREENPEACE'S

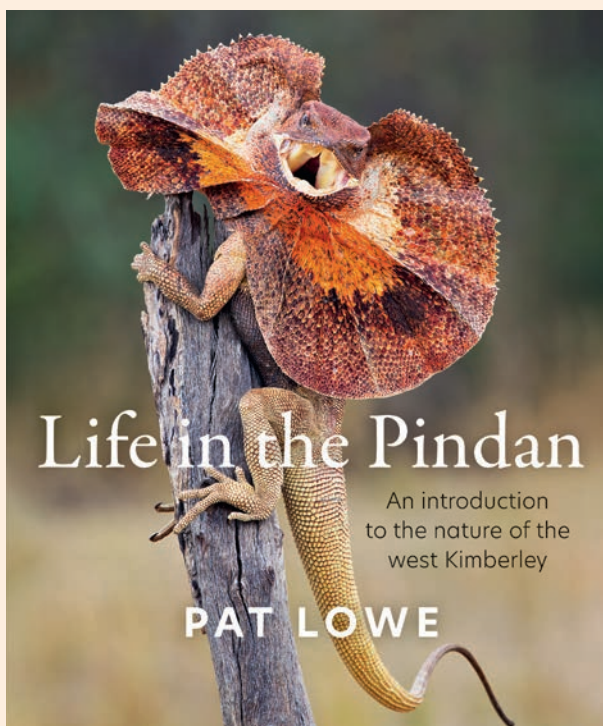
RAINBOW WARRIOR June 2023

Life in the Pindan – EK's new book!

EK is excited to announce the release of Pat Lowe's new book, *Life in the Pindan*. The Kimberley holds part of Northern Australia's vast landscape of savannah, the most extensive, most intact in the world. With 70% of the world's tropical savannah under crops or concrete, time is running out to save what's left.

The Pindan, a savannah landscape of shrubland and woodland, is a treasure-house of wildlife, little known or explored by visitors to the Kimberley, or even most non-indigenous residents. Often overlooked by people used to towering trees and rainforests, the Pindan is surprisingly varied and rewards close attention. And, like so many other landscapes, it is under threat.

This book offers non-specialists a glimpse into this undervalued ecosystem and others neighbouring it, showing the reader how interdependent natural systems are. We will be holding a book launch to celebrate this release in the coming months. Stay tuned!



Vale Christine Perks

It was with sorrow we received news of the passing of long-time EK supporter, Christine Perks. Christine attended the EK Art Auction in 2016 and continued to follow and support our campaigns from Victoria.

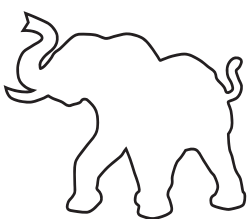
Christine was a very giving and selfless woman, who spent her professional career working in remote Aboriginal communities.

She was thoughtful enough to leave us a generous bequest in her will, so that we can continue caring for the Kimberley. Christine was survived by friends and her beloved cavoodle, Billy. We deeply sympathise with them for their loss.



Photo courtesy of Raelene Wilson and Catherine Dean.

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Five Questions for new EK Board and Staff



Sid Rankin-Smith volunteering at the 2023 Annual Art Auction as one of the White Glove Brigade. Photo: Anomie

Sid Rankin-Smith

What were you doing before you joined EK?

Before starting at EK, I worked in a variety of roles, in sectors such as trades, disability, hospitality and natural resource management, largely focused on weeding efforts.

What is your role at EK?

My current role at EK is tackling the weeds within Minyirr Park to help protect the monsoonal vine thickets alongside Yawuru Country Managers.

What excites you about this role?

I'm excited to be working in this role as it allows me to learn about this Country and the Yawuru community, as well as learn strategies I can take back to benefit the Dhunghatti nation, where I'm originally from.

What is most important to you?

Things that are most important to me are looking after the land, learning and working with Traditional Owners, and a good feed – keeps a grin on everyone's face.

What is your favourite place in the Kimberley?

Being new here, I'm yet to see a lot of the Kimberley but everywhere I've been, so far, is awesome and I can't wait to get out and explore it some more.

Brendan Renkin

What were you doing before you joined EK?

Wondering what I might do next, with my garden under control and the cooler weather arriving.

What is your role at EK?

I have joined the EK Board.

What excites you about this role?

EK has a strong reputation for advocacy, high achieving workers and a very broad scope of activities that continues to expand. I am excited about how these diverse activities and growth can be managed and sustained without losing the local and personal touch or driving people round the bend.

What is most important to you?

The future of the planet – will the next generations get to see and appreciate the wonders of the natural and cultural environment that we have sometimes taken for granted?

What is your favourite place in the Kimberley?

Under water – preferably salty.

Damian Kelly Photography
Broome Western Australia

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