

KANTRI LAIF

News for North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Managers

Kimberley ... Northern Territory... Gulf of Carpentaria... Cape York... Torres Strait

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message from the Chief Executive Officer



Joe Morrison
CEO NAILSMA

Welcome again to all those readers and supporters of NAILSMA. This edition of *Kantri Laif* showcases the realisation of the inherent role of Indigenous people in the management of their lands and seas across northern Australia.

Importantly, Indigenous land and sea management also represents the emerging paradigm change Indigenous people have created towards shaping a north Australia that speaks of equality and inclusiveness, particularly in relation to broader issues of development. Most importantly, this movement of Indigenous people in the management of their lands highlights a desire to re-establish links with ancestral lands and seas using Indigenous Knowledge and effective collaborations to achieve results that are beneficial for people and country.

In August this year, on behalf of the Northern Taskforce, NAILSMA hosted the **Indigenous Water Futures Forum at Mary River** in the Northern Territory, where a rigorous discussion was had regarding development in the north, in particular the use of water. This meeting reminded us that the historical legacy of excluding Indigenous people from planning processes in the past has left a daunting task for current and future generations to find an equitable solution for sustainable development.

The magnitude of the issues we are collectively dealing with across the north – practical management, knowledge generation for new and emerging industries as well as ensuring that benefits are created at the local community level as well as the regional and national level are ever increasing. Basic human rights and respect for

them are essential if we are to meet our vision – please see our website for a copy of the statement made at this meeting by delegates.

The Indigenous leadership at this meeting represented the start of a necessary journey on this issue of development in northern Australia. I would like to thank **Joe Ross**, chair of the Northern Taskforce and **Richie AhMat**, taskforce member and NAILSMA Chair for ensuring that the work of the taskforce is taken seriously. I hope that this time, the Australian Government takes seriously, the opportunities presented by enabling Indigenous people to lead the development of the north, rather than be passive on-lookers as has been the case since colonisation commenced. I look forward to the report of the taskforce early next year.

As an aside from this historic gathering, the **Indigenous Water Policy Group** has worked with the Northern Land Council to get an allocation from the Katherine Water Plan for Dagoman people in Katherine for economic development purposes. This achievement has been made possible by this timely collaboration and I thank Ian Lancaster and Robert Dalton for their efforts in making this initial step. The next step will be to improve on these efforts and engage Dagoman in economic development activities.

We have been collaborating with the University of New South Wales and CSIRO to produce a report on the risks from **climate change** to Indigenous communities in tropical north Australia. This report, the first of its kind will be a profound wake up call regarding the issue of climate change in rural and remote Indigenous communities. If climate change is ignored then issues such as

health, housing and education will clearly worsen with rising temperatures, sea levels, and changes in rainfall and customary activities. NAILSMA looks forward to the Australian Government and others supporting all recommendations from this exercise in collaboration with the right agencies best equipped to deal with climate change. I believe that the NAILSMA philosophy of a Culture-Based Economic approach will become more profound due to the effects of climate change and emerging carbon markets.

In July, NAILSMA in collaboration with Warddeken Land Management and Traditional Owners from Kabulwarnamyo convened a gathering at Gulnuki in Western Arnhem Land. Approximately 120 people attended the field trip, the majority being Indigenous rangers from across the north, and a scientific community from local, national and international agencies. We gathered to discuss **fire management**, community aspirations and to research early dry season emissions. The trip also introduced Professor Ross Garnaut, the Australian Government's advisor on climate change to the opportunity for Indigenous people from savanna burning and downstream opportunities such as biosequestration. Another field trip was then held in September to examine emissions from late dry season fires. Preliminary results from both field trips are promising.

We continue to work with the Department of Climate Change to ensure that policy initiatives continue to support Indigenous economic development that delivers employment, training and governance outcomes in rural and remote northern Australia.

Over the last 12 months I have worked with **Mr Richie AhMat as the Chair of NAILSMA**. Richie has been inspirational to work with, and has brought a lot of integrity, energy, dedication and guidance to NAILSMA at a time when it was required from the departure of Peter Yu. Wayne Bergmann will replace Richie as the NAILSMA Chair for the next 12 months commencing in November.

Lastly, we were deeply saddened in October when a number of key senior people in northern Australia passed away: the last rock artist from Arnhem Land, **Wamud Namok**, whose intellect and love of his country commenced the fire abatement initiative in West Arnhem, and in the north Kimberley and Cape York, senior people had also passed away.

The role of our senior people are the inspiration and driving force for NAILSMA, and many people whom we collaborate with as well. We cannot express the level of our sadness at losing our old people –

I dedicate this *Kantri Laif* to those old people who worked and fought so hard for us today.



Joe Morrison CEO NAILSMA, Peter Yu, Richie AhMat, Richard Jenkins



Marceil Lawrence



Dean Yibarbuk

Images: David Hancock

MARY RIVER STATEMENT

In August 2009, about 80 Indigenous experts from northern Australia convened at Mary River Park in the Northern Territory to discuss and present to the Northern Land and Water Taskforce their water interests and issues.

Convened by the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance, the 'North Australian Indigenous Experts Water Futures Forum' provided an opportunity to raise ideas and concerns about economic development and opportunities; the potential impacts of developments in the north of Australia; and governance and institutional arrangements as they affect Indigenous community interests, aspirations and issues.

As outcome to that forum, the Mary River Statement was written. The Statement offers testament to the seriousness of Indigenous peoples contribution and participation in policy decision making. It also sends a message that Indigenous people can not remain on the margins of discussions about development in the north.

Mary River Statement 6th August 2009

“We the delegates of the Mary River Water Forum make this statement to bring to the attention of the Australian Government the fundamental principle that water, land and Indigenous people are intrinsically entwined.

Indigenous Peoples have rights, responsibilities and obligations in accordance with their customary laws, traditions, protocols and customs to protect, conserve and maintain the environment and ecosystems in their natural state so as to ensure the sustainability of the whole environment.

Consideration by the Australian Government to separate land and water in future policy development for northern Australia and establish a new regime for the allocation and use of water is of critical concern to us.

As traditional owners we have an inherent right to make decisions about cultural and natural resource management in northern Australia. In accordance with Article 19 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples we must have a central role in the development, implementation and evaluation of policy and legislative or administrative measures that may affect us concerning water.

Any policies and legislation that are developed in water allocation and management in North Australia needs to ensure that Indigenous rights are paramount.

In accordance with Article 26 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples we assert that:



Anne Poelina and Pat Dodson



Chris Griffiths



Joe Ross

**Mary River Statement
6th August 2009**

1. We, the Indigenous peoples, have the right to the lands, territories and resources which we have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.
2. We the Indigenous peoples, have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that we possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which we have otherwise acquired. States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources.

Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditional and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.

We further assert that in accordance with Article 32 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, that:

We the Indigenous peoples, have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of our lands or territories and other resources.

States shall consult through our representative institutions in order to obtain our free and

informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting our lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilisation or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.

States shall provide effective mechanisms for just and fair redress for any such activities, and appropriate measures shall be taken to mitigate adverse environmental, economic, social, cultural or spiritual impact.

Indigenous peoples have always been part of and are crucial to the maintenance of our ecosystems and therefore want to ensure minimal impact from settlement and unsustainable development across northern Australia.

We urge the government to ensure that sufficient resources are provided to enable the equitable participation of the Indigenous owners of northern Australia in the development of policies, setting of allocations and management of regulatory schemes that may evolve.

We the Indigenous peoples of Northern Australia will work with the Government to establish what water entitlement and allocation is required to satisfy our:

- (i) social and cultural;
- (ii) ecological; and
- (iii) economic needs.

The delegates of this forum support the North Australian Indigenous Land Sea Management Alliance, Indigenous Water Policy Group, representative bodies or individuals to proactively pursue positive outcomes in line with this Mary River Forum Statement.

Two nominations of people from each State/ Territory from the north Australian Indigenous Experts Water Futures forum are provided below to support NAILSMA and representative bodies in advocating this Statement.

They are:

Queensland:
Ron Archer and Marceil Lawrence

Western Australia:
Anne Poelina and Andrew Wungundin

Northern Territory:
John Christophersen and Mona Liddy »



Ron Archer



Trish Rigby-Christophersen and Bidy Lindsay



Mr Richie AhMat



Images: a range of Indigenous Enterprises in the top end

Using **Wildlife** Resources for **Business**

By Melissa Bentivoglio

There are an increasing number of Indigenous people across Northern Australia exploring and developing enterprises based on the knowledge and use of local plants and animals. From raw products of billygoat plums and crocodile eggs, to value adding for production of novelty foods, body products and crafts, a range of unique Indigenous products are emerging. In an environment where there have been limited prospects for economic development that is owned and controlled by Indigenous communities, these enterprises provide some fundamental opportunities.

The Enterprise Development Project at NAILSMA has been working with a number of Indigenous individuals and community groups in the Northern Territory over the past two years. While there is considerable diversity between groups, there are a consistent range of complex dimensions that are being addressed in the development of these Indigenous enterprises. In addition, each one of these dimensions has the potential for significant outcomes and / or challenges for the groups involved and more broadly across the Region.

The dimensions of Indigenous wildlife enterprises are identified as follows:

- Developing ideas for business – why do people want to be involved in business, and what ideas do they have about using local plant and animal resources?
- Ownership of land and resources – where do the wildlife resources come from, and what is the process for obtaining access to these resources for commercial purposes?
- Indigenous ecological and cultural knowledge – how does this knowledge underpin the development of wildlife enterprises, and how is this knowledge protected (Intellectual and Cultural Property Rights), and transferred to younger generations.
- Sustainable use of resources – what are the biophysical characteristics of wildlife resources, and how can commercial harvesting of these resources be managed to ensure ecological sustainability?

- Local governance – what are the local Indigenous structures (both traditional and western) for decision-making in a community, and are these structures involved in / supportive of the enterprise?
- Local capacity and skills – what is the capacity within the community / group to develop the enterprise and manage the numerous dimensions, and what skills / training will be sourced outside the community?
- Product development – what information / research / trials are required to develop the wildlife resources into a marketable product, whether it be the raw product or value-added?
- Business structure – what is an appropriate structure / model for an Indigenous enterprise, and how does this fit within the broader community governance?
- Business planning and financial management – what is the vision and goals of the Indigenous enterprise, and how are the finances managed in a community context?
- Capital and funding – what operational requirements (e.g. infrastructure, equipment, communications) can be met from within the community / group, and what funding or other support will be sourced outside the community?
- Employment and income – what are the economic outcomes of the enterprise, and to what extent are they part of a “hybrid economy”, incorporating CDEP, customary activities and a range of social profit?

- Legislation and regulation – what are the legal requirements of establishing an enterprise based on the use of wildlife resources, and what are the realities of implementing these regulations? Marketing – what is the nature and extent of demand for these products, and to what extent are the Indigenous enterprises willing and able to meet this demand?
- Support networks – what is the nature and extent of support available to an emerging Indigenous enterprise, and how is this support network “coordinated” or “navigated” to address the numerous dimensions or challenges involved?

There are potentially an overwhelming number of dimensions in establishing an Indigenous wildlife enterprise.

However, a growing number of Indigenous people are developing their ideas in this regard, and they highlight the desire to have control over the nature and rate of development. In addition, they have identified the need for practical, consistent support to address the various stages and dimensions of business development.

The NAILSMA Project has been funded by the Federal Government for the past two years, to work with a number of Top End communities. In addition to this, The Christensen Fund has also provided support to this project as well.

Planning for the next phase of the Project is now underway, to broaden the scope across Northern Australia, and to address some of the dimensions at a more strategic research and development level.

TWO YEARS OF THE BARDI JAWI RANGER LAIF

Living in a remote area and previously working for minimal wages on CDEP is not an easy task.

Most CDEP work was not rewarding, no training and low wages, so when we heard about the Bardi/ Jawi rangers starting up we jumped at the opportunity.

Since starting with the rangers two years ago in October 2006 we have seen a lot of changes in the ranger group as a team and in our own lives. We'd just like to share a few of the many highlights we've had in the past two years.

When we first started all we had was eight rangers, one Coordinator, a Troopcarrier and a GPS. Talking to our elders we recorded cultural knowledge on where most turtle nesting and hunting activities were, as our first activity.

In December 2006 the rangers were invited to Ningaloo Reef in Exmouth to learn different techniques on finding, monitoring and identifying different turtle tracks and nests.

We also learnt about Marine and National Park Management in a high visitation site. The trip was very successful with information and techniques exchanged on both sides.

During 2007 the rangers were able to pick up more work (out side the turtle and dugong project) from Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS), Environ's Kimberley and training from TAFE towards our certificate II in land management and conservation. This training has involved restricted coxwains, fire and emergency, animal handling and venomous snake handling.

As part of NAILSMA's overarching research on the socio economic's of Indigenous management of marine resources we collected turtle and dugong catch data in more detail. After a while most hunters started to relax more and didn't feel threatened or intimidated to give us this information. They knew the rangers were there to help Bardi people make management plans to sustain a healthy turtle and dugong population.


This information will see our ranger group named in a report to be published by NAILSMA on the work we've carried out in conjunction with Australian National University's Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research.

Highlights for 2007 included satellite tagging green turtles on the Lacepedes Islands which was a success and in 2008 we successfully satellite tagged two dugongs in Pender bay.

After 2 years of working out of our Coordinator (Daniel Oade's) living quarters we finally got our own office at One Arm Point.

Many thanks to Daniel Oades (Marine Turtle & Dugong Coordinator), Traditional Owners, the steering committee, Kimberley Land Council and NAILSMA for their support over the years.

By Mark Shadforth and Nathan Sampi



'G'day this is Mark Shadforth and Nathan Sampi from the Bardi Jawi Rangers, We've lived in Bardi country for most of our lives.'

TROPICAL RIVER RESEARCH ACROSS NORTHERN AUSTRALIA



By Kate Golson and Ruth O'Connor

Image above: William Shaw & April Mirindo
Image left: Water sampling in the Fitzroy

With growing pressures to develop water resources, catchments and coastal environments across Northern Australia, as well as to manage existing threats, including weeds and feral animals, it is vital that public debate, policy and management decisions about Australia's tropical rivers and estuaries are informed by sound science.

Tropical Rivers and Coastal Knowledge (TRaCK) is a 3-year research program being undertaken across the North to provide the science and knowledge that governments, communities & industries need for the sustainable use and management of tropical river systems.

TRaCK's lead partners are Charles Darwin University, CSIRO, Griffith University, Land & Water Australia, NAILSMA and the University of Western Australia. They have spent two years developing the research program and consulting with stakeholders. As a result, fieldwork is focussed in 4 catchments: the Mitchell and Flinders (Qld), Daly (NT) and Fitzroy (WA).

Over 20 research projects are looking at different aspects of tropical river systems, and people's relationships with them, including:

- Who is eating what in the rivers, waterholes and floodplains.
- The importance and uses of river systems.
- The amounts of water that rivers need to stay healthy.
- How rivers have changed in people's lifetimes.
- The opportunities that exist for sustainable enterprise development in remote Indigenous communities.
- The amounts of water, sediment, nutrients and carbon in tropical rivers & estuaries, where they come from and how they move through the systems.
- The relationship between groundwater and river systems.

Engagement with Indigenous people is a critical feature of the TRaCK research. Working closely

with NAILSMA, TRaCK has developed an Indigenous Engagement Strategy which aims to:

- Ensure the research is relevant and beneficial to Indigenous communities and organisations;
- Ensure that the research is conducted according to the highest ethical standards;
- Provide opportunities for Indigenous employment, and to transfer skills, share knowledge and increase cultural awareness amongst all parties;
- Communicate research results effectively and share knowledge with Indigenous people, and;
- Ensure meaningful Indigenous participation in TRaCK governance.

TRaCK is drawing on Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous perspectives on the region's ecology, and how changes to the ecology can impact Indigenous livelihoods in the region.

Research agreements and approvals processes have been developed or are in development with Indigenous organisations in 3 of the catchments.

Many of the projects will contract local people to work as research and community liaison assistants, and as cultural advisers. TRaCK is working very closely with local organisations and schools to develop materials that are useful for and relevant to the local community.

There will soon be regional coordinators for each of the catchments based in Northern Australia. Please contact them if you would like more information about what is happening in your region.

For their contact details, and for further information on TRaCK, go to www.track.gov.au

TRaCK receives major funding for its research through the Australian Government's:

Commonwealth Environment Research Facilities initiative; the Australian Government's

Raising National Water Standards Programme; Land and Water Australia and the Queensland Government's Smart State Innovation Fund.

Contact Details: 0409-088512

OUR WORK AS Thamarrurr Rangers

By Mark Ninnal

The Thamarrurr Rangers at Wadeye have been completing Certificates II and III in Conservation and Land Management. We protect our cultural sites and maintain the area which is our hunting ground. We manage mimosa pigra by spraying them and also we manage marine debris along our beaches. We have new rangers and we work as a team. During the day at 12 o'clock we have our lunch then back to do more again.

Some of us have completed a course including the new rangers who have to train well and learn from us to teach them how to mix chemicals .

We do map reading and identify plants and animals, and we also work for AQIS. We carry out planning on a weekly basis. We also have a sugar bag project where we put them into the tree to grow. We do bore monitoring, test the water quality and we spray the rubber bush along the beach side. Once when we get tired we have a break, we sit at the shade to cool us down and return to work in the afternoon.



NT Government & BLUEMUDBAY

The Northern Territory Government has kick started negotiations in relation to the Blue Mud Bay High Court decision by engaging two well known persons in the Indigenous issues and fisheries management field.

John Christophersen and Chris Calogeras have been engaged as consultants to meet with Indigenous groups including the Northern, Tiwi and Anindilyakwa Land Councils, Amateur Fishermen's Association of the Northern Territory, NT Seafood Council, Game Fishing Industry, Guided Fishing Tour Industry and other bodies and agencies.

Their role over the next six months will be to meet with and inform people of what the decision means and gather information as to what their aspirations are for the future good management of the Northern Territory marine environment and access to and utilisation of its resources.

John Christophersen is a member of the Murrumbidgee group of Cobourg Peninsula and has been an advocate for Indigenous Peoples for most of his adult life. John has an intimate knowledge and understanding of the issues surrounding the Blue Mud Bay decision. In particular he is well grounded in processes associated with articulating Indigenous aspirations as a member and Chairman of the Cobourg Peninsula Sanctuary and Marine Park Board where negotiations achieved the first zoning plan for a Marine Park in Australia with Indigenous input in the management of the land and seas of Garig Gunak Barlu National Park.

Cobourg Marine Park Zoning Map link
www.nt.gov.au/parks

For further information or input:

John Christopherson
0488 544 961

Chris Calogeras
0401 692 601

Email: calogeras@inet.net.au

Chris Calogeras is the founder of C-AID Consultants and has over 30 years experience in the seafood and fishing industry. This includes over 20 years experience in fisheries and resource management and administration within the NT Government and six years senior operational experience in the seafood industry. He has worked as a fishing industry, natural resource, environmental management and people development consultant since 2001.

Supported by the NLC Marine Officer, John and Chris coordinated a multi-sector delegation, including indigenous, commercial and recreational and Government representatives to New Zealand in 2008 which was featured in Kantri Laif last year.

Both Chris and John are keen to work on this project and many in the industry sector and coastal Indigenous community have welcomed their return and input.

They both believe that this decision is a great opportunity for Industry and Indigenous Peoples to work together to achieve a win/win outcome that will unite people of the Northern Territory for the good management of the marine and coastal environment, to be enjoyed by Territorians and visitors alike well into the future.



Chris Calogeras



John Christophersen

NARNU-YUWA KI-WUNDANYUKAWU (LAW FOR THE SEA TURTLE)



Images: Jaemie Page



By Stephen Johnston

ANNUAL LI-ANTHAWIRRIYARRA SEA TURTLE CAMP

Every year li-Anthawirriyarra Sea Ranger Unit hosts a turtle camp on Wurdaliya country at Maabayny [north beach] on West Island. This beach is a special nesting place for Wirndiwirndi [flatback turtles] and this time of year is when they mostly lay their eggs. Over these two weeks Yanyuwa families, the Rangers, Parks and Wildlife, Dr. Scott Whiting, his wife Andrea, Dr. John Bradley and lots of other visitors, all worked together to learn more about jadiwangarni (nesting turtles) to make sure they stay happy and healthy.

For three days during this fortnight, we were privileged to have li-Wirdiwalangu [senior Yanyuwa people] camping with us. We also had eight kids from Borroloola school come and stay. During the day, the old people taught these kids and the other Yanyuwa children some narnu-Yuwa ki-Wundanyukawu [law for the Sea Turtle]. This valuable extra involvement of senior Yanyuwa

people and school age children was made possible by grant funding from the NAILSMA Indigenous Ecological Knowledge program.

They explained to the kids how all Yanyuwa families and clans had special relationships and responsibilities to Wirndiwirndi, malurrba [green turtle] and all the other Wundunyuka [sea turtles] on Yanyuwa country. Many songs were sung to share knowledge of these things – na-ngalki [what makes someone who they are] – and help the kids to understand how all the animals, plants and things on and moving across Yanyuwa country made up a part of their identity.

At night, we all walked down the beach together. Jadiwangarni were everywhere and we made a record of how many came up, how many laid eggs and how many had been there before. At the same time, li-Wirdiwalangu taught us many more things about Wundunyuka Yanyuwa way. One senior lady in particular, summed up these special relationships just before we returned to the camp on the second night.

She walked quietly alongside one Wirndiwirndi who had laid her eggs and was returning to the sea, speaking softly to her all the while:

Bawuji nya-ngatha nya-nganji
[you have finished my kinsman]

Wingkayarra yalayka ja-wukuku
[go now quickly my senior mother's mother]

Janda-yanynymanji yinku
[the sea laps the shore for you]

Kurda! Ka-warrka kurdandu bara
[Oh you dear one! You have crawled so hard]

Kurda! Lhakarrantharra nyinku wujbi, yinda ka-wani marnajinju
[Oh you dear one! You returned here to lay your eggs]

Jarna-alarrarrinji marnajingulaji
wurrungkawurrungka jarna-mudamanji yinku kurda
[I am standing here on the beach and farewelling you my dear one]

marnaji ngarna wambu barra yinda wingkayarra kajikaji
[I will remain here and you will quickly go]

Bawujiiiiii!
[Farewell]

(Roddy Harvey 7 Oct 2008.
Translation Dr. John Bradley).

Special thanks from li-Anthawirriyarra to NAILSMA, WWF, li Kurlurluwa Language Centre and Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Association for making this event

possible. This project was supported by funding from the Commonwealth Government through the Natural Resource Management Board of the Northern Territory.

THE INDIGENOUS WATER POLICY GROUP :BEYOND 2006

Background

The Indigenous Water Policy Group (IWPG) is a NAILSMA created and facilitated initiative. Initially funded (2006-07) by Land and Water Australia, the IWPG is currently funded (2008-11) by the National Water Commission (NWC) under its Raising National Water Standards Program.

The group was initiated in response to the government's plan for water reform as outlined in its National Water Initiative (NWI). The NWI has significant implications for future Indigenous land and sea management in northern Australia, Indigenous communities have low awareness about their rights to access and manage their water under this plan.

Role

The IWPG is the only construct in the north of Australia examining Indigenous water policy, and coordinating across state and territory jurisdictions. It provides water policy advice to its members; advice and representation on social, economic, environmental and cultural issues and interests concerning water resources; and supports the appropriate engagement of Indigenous interests in all north Australia regional water planning.

The IWPG works with Indigenous communities, organisations and institutions; north Australian water resource managers, research organisations and programs (such as TRaCK) and policy advisors; north Australian economic development policy officers; other government and non government organisations; the NAILSMA Indigenous Community Water Facilitator Network; and, potential investors.

Objectives

The IWPG focuses on improving Indigenous people's awareness of water reform at local, regional and federal levels so that informed decisions are made about water planning, access and management. The IWPG also directs research relating to Indigenous rights, responsibilities and interests in water resources in northern Australia so that knowledge of customary and traditional water use are identified; knowledge, customary practices and intellectual property in water are recognised, valued and protected; Indigenous people are engaged in consumptive and non-consumptive water planning and policy development; the economic future of Indigenous people is secured in the development of water reforms; and so that existing policies on the regulation of tourism, weeds and feral animals, and other impacts on water resources are examined.

Structure

The IWPG is made up of key Indigenous representatives from major regional organisations across the north that represents a large number of Indigenous communities and Traditional Owners. Core partners include: Kimberley Land Council, Northern Land Council, Balkanu – Cape York Development Corporation, Yawoorroong Miriuwung Gajerrong Yirrgeb Noong Dawang Aboriginal Corporation, Cape York Land Council, and Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.

The IWPG is supported by an Advisory group and a Policy Engagement Group (PEG). Advisors provide strategic research advice and PEG may act to support the IWPG to engage Indigenous water policy positions in the north of Australia with development initiatives at the state, territory and federal levels.

Outcomes to date

Since its inception in 2006, the IWPG has achieved many significant outcomes, such as the establishment of Advisory and Policy Engagement Groups; coordinated regular meetings and delivered three research case studies on Indigenous water values and interests in Katherine; on freshwater in the Maningrida region's hybrid economy; and, on mining and Indigenous values of water in the Gulf of Carpentaria. The IWPG has also delivered two literature reviews on Indigenous interests and the National Water Initiative (NWI); and, Indigenous legal rights to freshwater, Australia in the international context, as well as delivered a number of other publications (see www.nailsma.org.au).

The IWPG has participated in various events advocating for Indigenous people's water rights and interests. Highlights include the Australian Government's 2020 Summit; the ABC North Australian Forum on environment and water, the NWC National Water Planners Forum, CSIRO Science and Indigenous Futures Roundtables, an International Indigenous Water Experts Forum, and the Australian Indigenous Water Focus Group meeting.

The IWPG has several memberships including to

Northern Land and Water Taskforce; Tropical Rivers and Coastal Knowledge Consortium; Northern Land and Water Futures Assessment – Cultural and Social Program; NWC Steering Committee for two projects (National Risk Assessment Guidelines – Water Services in Remote Indigenous Communities, and Guidelines and Best Practice Documentation – Water Supply in Remote Indigenous Communities); Strategy Management Committee for the north west Queensland Regional Water Supply Strategy; and, the NWC Stakeholder Reference Group.

Future Direction

The key priorities of the IWPG is to examine Indigenous water allocation, community consultative processes and best practice community engagement, legal rights and water resource management in terms of interests, issues, access and economic opportunities. The IWPG is currently directing legal research on water rights and research on the potential for Indigenous water markets in northern Australia. The IWPG is currently seeking opportunities to engage in research on Indigenous Knowledge.

The IWPG will be participating in a number of upcoming forums. Internationally, the IWPG will participate in the 5th World Water Forum through the development of a Declaration. Nationally, the IWPG is assisting the Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations in coordinating an Australian Indigenous Freshwater Forum, and assisting the NWC in coordinating the Indigenous Water Planning Forum.

Visit the NAILSMA web site for more information about the IWPG (www.nailsma.org.au) and subscribe to NAILSMA's regular e-News for water project updates.



International Indigenous Water Experts Forum

By NAILSMA IWPG and UNU TKI

Indigenous Water Knowledge & Indigenous Water Interests

An International Indigenous Expert Exchange on Issues and Opportunities arising from Emerging Trends in Mainstream Water Management

On August 7-8, 2008 a group of Indigenous representatives from Canada, USA, Guatemala, the Andes and many parts of Australia met in Gulkula, Australia at the site of the Garma Festival in north east Arnhem Land to exchange perspectives on Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and interests in water.

This expert exchange was convened by the United Nations University Traditional Knowledge Initiative (UNU TKI) in collaboration with the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA) and the welcome and support of the Yothu Yindi Foundation and the Gumatj people of north east Arnhem Land.

The concept for this meeting arose from the discussions of the NAILSMA Indigenous Water Policy Group (IWPG), and the UNU TKI. The IWPG identified that access to international experience and perspectives on Indigenous water knowledge and interests would broaden the frame of reference for the group in such a way that would enhance its capacity to identify and advocate Indigenous interests in water, as well as, benefiting participants from across Australia and around the world.

Objectives of the exchange included:

- Reflecting on the relationship between Indigenous water knowledge and interests, and providing an avenue for the sharing of international experiences on issues and opportunities arising from emerging trends in mainstream water management systems, with particular attention to issues arising from emerging water trading and property rights regimes, and the recognition by western science of the value of Indigenous knowledge and science for natural resource management.
- Developing a statement and a set of recommendations on Indigenous water knowledge and interests for the 5th World Water Forum and other international forums; and,
- Supporting ongoing informal international networks of Indigenous experts engaged in Indigenous knowledge and interests in water.

On the first day of the exchange, representatives presented case studies on Indigenous Water Knowledge and interests in their communities. Several of the case studies will be compiled as a single publication that will be available for the 2009 World Water Forum and the Eighth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. During the North Australian panel session, the IWPG had the opportunity to premiere its draft policy statement.

On the second day of the exchange, discussions revolved around the process for drafting a declaration on Indigenous water knowledge and interests and the guiding principles that this declaration would follow. Representatives formed working groups to discuss important issues to be included in the declaration. These robust and fruitful discussions benefited from the wisdom of the international and Australian participants as well as from Sir Tipene O'Regan of the University of Canterbury, Marcia Langton of the University of Melbourne, and Tom Calma of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

A small working party is being convened to continue the drafting process on behalf of the group.

This meeting was not only a great opportunity to exchange international perspectives but also served as a platform for northern and southern Australians to come together and discuss a common way forward on what is one of the great challenges of this time – water. At the meeting, Australian participants agreed to continue this regional collaboration.

An Indigenous Water Focus Group meeting was held in Adelaide at the parliament house in November to discuss a national approach to Indigenous water policy on interests and issues and toward Indigenous integrated water planning and management strategies for Australia.

Charles Darwin University hosts both UNU TKI and NAILSMA, proving instrumental in fostering collaboration between these organisations and thus linking international policy with national concerns here in Australia.

The support of the Government of the Northern Territory and The Christensen Fund were crucial in the establishment of the UNU TKI and this forum, as too was the support from the Australian National Water Commission for the IWPG.

Staff Profiles



Robin MacGillivray

NAILSMA Communications Officer

Robin MacGillivray was born a farm girl in south-east South Australia, and spent most of her early years in South Australia and New South Wales. After rethinking the meaning of life along the well trodden travellers' trail between Australia, and London in the 70s, and after teaching business subjects for several years back in Adelaide, she wound her way towards environmental studies and a ranger position with South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service.

In 1984 she took up the Interpretation Officer position Kakadu National Park, which blended her teaching and environmental backgrounds, while broadening her understanding of north Australia and Indigenous cultures. In 1995, her family moved to Darwin, where she continued in her role as Interpretation Officer, but this time with the NT Government. In recent years Robin has worked for the NT Museum and Art Gallery, with the NRETAS Greenhouse Policy Unit and in Cambodia with a team developing a pro-poor eco-tourism trail along the Mekong River.

Robin works with other Communication Officers across NAILSMA projects, but concentrates her efforts on Indigenous Water Resource Management Projects.

MAKING OILS FROM BUSH MEDICINE PLANTS

By Brenda Huddleston

On Tuesday 7th October 2008, some of the Wagiman women went to Lewen Springs on our Country. We welcomed the visitors from Larrakia, Peppimenarti and Darwin, and our workshop facilitator David from NSW. Everyone set up camp, and our two cooks Mavis and Louise made us a good dinner.

On Wednesday morning my Aunty Teresa and I took everyone to the Spring and wet their head to welcome people to Country, and let the ancestors know that visitors are here on Wagiman Country and to keep them safe. Our facilitator David then talked to us about making essential oils from different plants, and we talked about some of the bush medicine plants on Wagiman Country, Larrakia Country and at Peppimenarti.

We went to the Guwardagun (Daly River Crossing at Claravale) Crossing and collected paperbark leaves to put in the oil distiller. While we were there we went to the Saw Mill block and had lunch with the Wagiman men who are working on the Cattle Business. Then we went to the stockyards and watched the men branding the Wagiman cattle. We headed back to Lewen Springs and put the paperbark leaves in the distiller to make an oil.

On Thursday we bottled the oil from the paperbark leaves and also made another oil from turkey bush. We also learnt how to make candles using some of the oils to make them smell nice. At the end of the meeting, me and Aunty Teresa thanked everyone for coming and wished them a safe trip home.

The North-Kimberley Saltwater Country Project



North Kimberley Traditional Owners have been doing a Saltwater Country Project for the last 3 years. The project has been about getting back to country, looking after the country and managing visitors; especially the charter boats have been a big concern.

In October this year Balangarra TO's went on a back-to-country sea-trip to the King George Area to do some work at the site of the WWII bombing of the State Ship Koolama. The group constructed a 1.648m long walk-trail to a lookout. This trail follows the trek of the survivors of the SS Koolama and their Aboriginal rescuers, who guided them out of their misery.

The Koolama story is important to Balangarra people because ancestors were involved in the rescue, guiding the survivors to safety and running messages to Kalumburu Mission. This has not been properly recognised in history books. The interpretative signs emphasize the shared history, which Balangarra people are proud of. The trail makes a safe place where visitors are welcome to walk around.

Beside this work the rangers also surveyed beaches, monitored ants as part of an AQIS contract and eradicated the Calotropis rubber bush that's spreading around the coast. There was even time for a trip to the King George Falls and estuary and catching barramundi.

In October 2008, the Saltwater Country Steering Committee held a meeting with Interagency partners at Broome. The main outcome from this meeting will be the making of a Saltwater Country plan and undertaking consultations about possible Indigenous Protected Areas in the region. The groups are also developing a Visitors Pass to manage tourist access to Aboriginal lands and sites around the coast.

The project was steered by elders from the Mayala, Dambimangari, Unguu and Balangarra native title claim groups and coordinated by the Kimberley Land Council and Department of Indigenous Affairs with funding from Rangelands WA, Coastwest, Threatened Species Network, DEWHA and LotteriesWest.



FROM **STONECOUNTRY**

TO **SALTWATER**' WALK

By Dave Wise

Burning Nguliyanga flood plain

Image above: Freshwater spring on Wuyagibar Beach

Senior and junior members of the Numamudirrdi clan and Yugul Mangi Rangers recently completed a five day walk from the site of the old mission near Ngukurr all the way to Wuyagibar outstation on the coast on the Gulf of Carpentaria. This walk was along a path traditionally used for generations and was under the direction of senior Elders and was used to teach younger people important knowledge of their country.

Starting at the old mission site near Ngukurr on October 6th, people walked to Mangajarra, then on to Awumbunji and through to Wuyagiba finishing the walk. Roger Numamudirrdi and his sons Clarry and Walter Rogers have really wanted to do this walk for a several years and with the help of Don Duggan and Joe Morrison started to plan. Funding from NAILSMA's 'Talking Culture on Country' grants program and from the Indigenous Heritage Program made it possible this year.

As a young man Roger Numamudirrdi used to make this walk often with his family.

The main reason for the walk was to pass on traditional knowledge to younger generations that will help them care for the country properly, now and into the future.

The passing of important knowledge by Roger Numamudirrdi, Clarry and Walter Rogers to the younger people including rangers was carried out along the walk. Young people were informed about ancestral creation stories, about the significance of places they went, how to care for country, how to burn country the proper way and how look after rock art sites and significant areas like tool making sites, waterholes and spring-water places.

Along the way the rangers took plenty of video footage and photographs to make a DVD and

photo books that will document the knowledge and help share it with the wider community in the Ngukurr area.

Clarry Rogers said about the project

"Other Aboriginal people will want to do similar projects on their country; it's the start of something bigger."

'Talking Culture on Country' grants for Indigenous ecological knowledge are available until late 2009. If you would like more information or would like to apply for a grant, get in touch with David Wise at NAILSMA ph 08 89467674 fax 08 89467677, email david.wise@cdu.edu.au or go to the NAILSMA IEK website at: <http://www.nailsma.org.au/projects/iek.html>

This project is supported by the Commonwealth Government's Caring for Our Country Program through the Natural Resource Management Board of the Northern Territory.



Kelvin Rogers burning Nguliyanga flood plain



Fish Trap near Wuyagibar

BIO CONTROL GROWING up

At their outstation on Woolianna road on the banks of the Daly River, Rita Purack and her sister are raising two biological agents, the weevil *Cyrtobagous salvinia*, for *Salvinia* control and a moth, *Macaria pallidata*, for controlling *Mimosa*.

Though rearing insects for biological control was a completely new concept and experience for Rita and her sister, they have taken to the project with enthusiasm, even cutting the logs and building the shelter that houses the project.

The weevil rearing ponds are set up and maintained during the dry season and the weevils are released into infected waterway as required.

Mimosa pigra has infected large tracts of MalakMalak wetland country in the Lower Daly region. For the most effective control of *Mimosa* the MalakMalak are using an integrated approach to manage this invasive species. The

MalakMalak Land Management Men's Ranger Group implements an on-ground chemical control programme and two MalakMalak women have been 'growing up' a leaf-eating moth since May 2008.

This moth has had excellent results on the Mary River system and Rita Purack and her sister are hoping for a similar outcome on their country.

With Natural Heritage Trust funding, Natural Resources, Environment and The Arts biological weeds management branch staff trained Rita, her sister and Wangamaty (Lower Daly) Landcare Group coordinator how to mass rear the moth.

It takes about three weeks for the moth to complete a life cycle and the bio control stage is when the caterpillars eat the leaves thereby inhibiting the plants ability to flower and produce seed.

How to raise the moth:

Start, 4 small *Mimosa* plants in a container (to water) with a skirt around each plant to prevent the moth from pupating in soil- release 25 females and 25 males in each cage (we have 2).

Look for small larvae appearing then growing into caterpillars and eating the leaves.

Keep plants watered and once the leaves are becoming stripped put more plants/food into cage.

Caterpillar's pupae then hatch.

Once the moths begin to hatch, we daily catch moths in petri dishes, sex moths, re stock cages with 25 females and 25 males, then release remaining moths and pupae at designated dense *Mimosa* site in the bush.

Beware:

Always look out for ants invading cages.

A big sheeting of fine cloth is secured around cage and person when catching as moths do try to escape, it can sometimes take quite a while to catch all the moths and it has become quite an art catching the moths.

To date four generations of this moth have been raised and approximately 150 moths and many pupae released.

We will continue raising moths until the big rains arrive and start again in the early dry season.



Rita setting up pupae so they can safely hatch into moths at the *Mimosa* release site.

Moths ready for release

Pupae

Caterpillars



2. Sue Murdoch selling products from her Beach Hibiscus Floristry Business

3. Melanie and Jarred's Kakadu Secret Product Range

5. Bagot Community Artists selling there beautiful art work at Mindil with the help from Yvonne Oodegard

7. Wadeye Girls selling there products at Mindil Markets

6. Melissa Banderson selling her Wagiman – Tjuwaliyn Body Products at Mindil Markets

8. Brenda Huddleston Selling Langawarin Products at Mindil

at Mindil Markets

Aboriginal Bush Traders

Aboriginal Bush Traders was an initiative that started in early 2008.

This came about as many Indigenous small business operators wanted better access to the market. Darwin Regional CDEP with assistance from NAILSMA took over an existing market stall at Mindil Markets and called this collective of Indigenous businesses Aboriginal Bush Traders.

Larrakia Nation launched the first market stall at the start of Mindil season in April, and sold a range of the arts and crafts from their shop. The stall was advertised on the Darwin Regional CDEP website, where people could view a calendar for the Mindil season and book a Thursday evening to use the stall. Staff from Darwin Regional CDEP and NAILSMA provided assistance to set up the stall and provided all equipment that was required such as lighting, chairs, table and the rest was up to the group or individuals.

There are many exciting products that Indigenous people are developing and the market stall

provided a opportunity to showcase their products. This allowed people to sell things directly to the public as well as establishing good marketing networks.

The stall was used through-out the season by various community groups and local Indigenous businesses including:

- Beach Hibiscus Florists
- Larrakia Nation, Bagot Artists
- Langawarin Bush Medicine Soap
- Wagiman- Tjuwaliyn Hair Products
- Kakadu Secrets
- Wadeye Women (Thamarrurr and Palngun Wurnangat Association)

These and many other Indigenous enterprises have benefitted from using the market stall and selling products direct to the public. Due to the success of this initiative the Mindil Market Aboriginal Bush Traders Stall will continue in 2009.

An opportunity arose for Aboriginal Bush Traders to have access to a space at Brown's Mart in Darwin city. This is a permanent space in the city that is open to the public from 10-4pm weekly. A place where Indigenous people can sell their products, that is easily accessible to the public.

Products are purchased by Aboriginal Bush Traders at cost price and then sold at a higher price to cover costs such as power and airconditioning for the shop. The aim is to provide the best possible price back to the person who develops the products. There is still the opportunity to sell directly to the public and get a higher price through the Mindil Market stall where all the profits are the persons own as the overhead costs are much lower than that of a shop.

Darwin Regional CDEP also recently carried out a scoping study to look at the potential of establishing a "Co-op" type organisation to assist people to develop their own products and provide support to access the market. Following on from

this IBA provided support to develop a Business Plan for Aboriginal Bush Traders.

Darwin Regional CDEP will continue to work together to assist existing and emerging Indigenous Enterprises to develop their products and links to the market and broader networking support. It is inspiring to see Indigenous people showcasing their own initiatives through the use of their local knowledge and resources.



I-Tracker Trial Project Review



Rangers (One Arm Point) using I-Tracker on country.



Images: Mark Shadforth (Bardi Jawi) Terrence Whap (Mabuiag)

Since mid 2008, some 17 ranger groups across north Australia have worked with the NAILSMA Dugong and Marine Turtle project to trial an exciting new monitoring program dubbed “I-Tracker” or “Indigenous Tracker”.

As part of the trial, each participating ranger group was supplied with an I-Tracker package that included a field-tough, state of the art handheld computer; support including a manual and some training; and a ranger patrol data collection sequence designed for use on sea country.

The data collection sequence featured in the trial was written by the Djelk Rangers and NAILSMA using the internationally acclaimed CyberTracker software. The makers of the software, CyberTracker International, have endorsed I-Tracker as part of the CyberTracker Worldwide Network.

The I-Tracker package has allowed rangers to collect GPS referenced data on a wide range of events they encounter while on sea patrol, including sightings of turtles and dugongs; sick or injured animals; vessel sightings (including foreign fishing vessels); fishing activity, such as set nets; and fish kills. The patrol data sequence also includes ghost net and marine debris monitoring procedures developed by project partner, the Carpentaria Ghost Nets Programme: (www.ghostnets.com.au).

When rangers return from their patrol, they can upload information they have collected onto their office PC or laptop and view their sightings—as well as a track of their patrol—on a map. They can also monitor patrol hours and kilometres covered over a period of time.

I-Tracker also has the potential for patrol data from multiple regions to be collated into one database to provide a broad picture of sightings and activity across the whole north Australian coastline.

Now that rangers have had a chance to trial



I-Tracker, NAILSMA is working with the Carpentaria Ghost Net Programme to review I-Tracker to see how it has worked and how it can be improved.

Micha Jackson and Danny Burton head the I-Tracker review team under the guidance of Dr Rod Kennett, NAILSMA Dugong and Marine Turtle Project Coordinator.

The review team have been very busy over the past month and have visited participating ranger groups across the north and met with a range of other organisations and government departments interested in I-Tracker.

During these visits, rangers have provided important feedback on I-Tracker including how they have been using the technology and problems they have encountered. Rangers have provided new ideas on how to improve I-Tracker and expand it in the future. These include modifications to the sea patrol sequence to make it more user friendly for their local needs, and new sequences that can be shared across northern Australia and collect more information, including land-based patrols. Rangers

also want to use I-Tracker to produce reports for Traditional Owners and Indigenous land and sea organisations as well as funding bodies.

Future work for the review team includes the investigation of what’s needed to support the ongoing use of I-Tracker focusing on training; equipment; and fulfilling data management requirements.

Looking forward

With the right combination of Indigenous and scientific knowledge, training, technical support, and coordination, the I-Tracker program has the potential to be an entirely new way of looking after country and of supporting employment in remote and regional Australia.

For example, it could be used to demonstrate changes in turtle and dugong populations; identify where marine debris is concentrated; or monitor boat activity across the northern coast.

Cont...

pg 31 Cont...

It also has the ability to calculate information on how many hours Indigenous rangers have spent patrolling the north of Australia and how many kilometres they have travelled collectively—demonstrating the strength and potency of the Indigenous ranger movement.

The I-Tracker program could also be expanded into areas beyond sea country. The Australian Government's Indigenous Protected Areas element of the Caring for our Country Program are very interested in I-Tracker and are funding the trial, with the view to investigating the potential for adopting it as a standard monitoring and evaluation tool across the entire IPA network; and integrating with the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) requirements of the Caring for Our Country initiative.

Through the I-Tracker trial report, NAILSMA will seek funds for ongoing support for an expanded I-Tracker program.

The Dugong and Marine Turtle Project is managed by NAILSMA, Kimberley Land Council, Northern Land Council, Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation and the Torres Strait Regional Authority, through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country.

For more information see www.nailsma.org.au/projects/i-tracker.html



WAGIMAN GUWARDAGUN RANGERS

MOVE INTO NEW
RANGER BASE.

By Kate Maltby, Wagiman Land Management and Economic Development Coordinator
Photo: Wagiman Guwardagun Rangers.

The Wagiman Guwardagun Rangers have moved into a new Ranger Base to care for over 4,000km² of country in the Upper Daly region.

Until recently the Rangers have been working out of the Pine Creek Aboriginal Advancement Association office at Kybrook Farm. Successful grant applications from the Northern Land Council to the Aboriginal Benefits Account and the Working on Country program have enabled the establishment of a Ranger Base at Lewin Springs and the employment of 4 male and 2 female Rangers.

The Ranger Base enables the Wagiman Guwardagun Rangers to have a greater presence on country to look after the land and maintain their cultural practices through their work, which includes implementing traditional burning practices, managing weeds and feral animals, protecting waterways, looking after sacred sites and getting young people more involved in their country and culture. The Rangers are building a future on country for younger generations.



Image above: Dr Michael Looker, Country Director, Australia Program of the Nature Conservancy

“WORLD'S
LARGEST
TEAMS UP WITH
WORLD'S OLDEST
TO RESTORE BALANCE”

By Zoe Davies and Joe Morrison, CEO NAILSMA

The world's largest conservation organisation, The Nature Conservancy is privileged to be partnering with NAILSMA to help bring about positive conservation and social outcomes for local indigenous communities in Northern Australia. The Conservancy is a global conservation organisation operating in over 30 countries including here in Australia, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia.

With a history of 63 years of significant conservation achievements, The Nature Conservancy is a world leader in finding innovative solutions that conserve our natural environment but also ensure a sustainable way of life. The Nature Conservancy prides itself on its science-based approach to conservation and adopts pragmatic solutions to conservation challenges in partnerships with indigenous communities using their intrinsic knowledge base, business and industry as well as Federal and State Governments.

Northern Australia is a key priority for the Conservancy's Australia program as it is rich not just in biodiversity—in being home to the world's largest remaining tropical savanna—but equally importantly as it is a region home to the world's oldest living culture.

The Nature Conservancy recognises the indigenous communities of northern Australia as the original inhabitants of the region and as the cultural custodians of their country. The Nature Conservancy further recognises that this kinship to country is all encompassing and empowered the Traditional Owners to shape the region's vast landscapes for over 60,000 years.

The Conservancy shares NAILSMA's interest in the reinstatement of traditional fire regimes to protect cultural and natural values, including rock art sites, sacred sites and biodiversity rich sites.

While fire is a significant ecological process that naturally occurs across Northern Australia, the loss of traditional fire management and the conversion of vast tracts of land to grazing combined with the exclusion of fires by some pastoralists, has led to a changed fire regime that is detrimental to the values mentioned above. Intense late-season fires are now wide-spread and cause degradation of the land as well as the loss and reduction of hundreds of species of native flora and fauna, many of which are endemic and found nowhere else on earth. Traditional fire management created a fine-scale mosaic of patches that were burnt during different seasons and years and effectively helped ensure a sustainable balance between human use and the conservation of the region.

The loss of this balance has resulted in many negative consequences; it has furthered the cultural displacement of indigenous traditions and also resulted in an increase in annual greenhouse gas emissions.

In partnership with NAILSMA, The Conservancy is working to re-introduce traditional fire regimes at a landscape-scale to not just help restore the region's ecological balance but also to help provide long-term employment and economic opportunities for local communities. Using the highly successful West Arnhem Fire Management Agreement project as a model, the Conservancy is working to expand this program across northern Australia.

NAILSMA

says *thanks* to Peter Yu

Author: Joe Morrison, CEO NAILSMA

Peter Yu was the inaugural Chair of the NAILSMA Board, commencing in 2003. Peter's role as the Chair of the Board came at a critical time to support the development of the alliance in a time of great uncertainty. It was during this time when the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) was abolished.

Many uncertainties existed in Indigenous affairs around the nation and particularly across northern Australia there was the emergence of a new paradigm of post land rights and native title to get on with. As the only Indigenous construct in the north, NAILSMA has emerged under the leadership of Peter as a vehicle in which doing business can be achieved strategically. This leadership has allowed the alliance to lead in many important and focal areas such as:

Management of both land and sea country;

- Climate Change;
- Water Policy;
- Traditional Knowledge;
- Emerging economies;
- Advocacy; and
- Pragmatism.

It is also testament to Peter, the relationships that have been built and fostered under his chairmanship, including with The Christensen Fund, Australian Government and many other Indigenous organisations and NGO's. The trips through the Kimberley and the Gulf country are a highlight.

Without a doubt, there have been many challenges faced by the alliance, and without the professionalism and integrity shown by the former Chair these would have not been possible to deal

with or simply would have been significantly more difficult to resolve. And with the high profile that Peter brought to NAILSMA, as someone that could be trusted to ensure that the best outcomes for people in the bush are met, I knew then that we had the right chair in the position. As stated in his speech to the National Land & Sea Conference held in Cardwell:

Never in our shared history have we seen such enormous opportunities so sharply contrasted with such fearful apocalyptic threats. We, as a nation, will soon be forced to make decisions on how full or how empty the glass is going to be for our children and their children. How to manage lands, natural resources and our fragile eco systems in the face of inevitable climate change, demographic change and increasing integration into the global economy.

In June 2008, Peter agreed to the invite from Minister Jenny Macklin to Chair the review into the Northern Territory Intervention. In typical thinking, it was the pragmatic thing to do.

From all the members of the alliance and the NAILSMA Board, we wish Peter Yu the best for his future endeavours and will no doubt be running into Peter in the very near future.

All the best!

In late 2008, the NAILSMA Board elected a new Chair Mr Richard Ah Mat as the Chair of NAILSMA Board. For further information visit the NAILSMA web (www.nailsma.org.au) and subscribe to NAILSMA's regular e-News for water project updates.

WALKING OUR COUNTRY FATHER & SONS

The Groote Eylandt & Milyakburra Youth Development Unit started leadership walks in the first six months of the year. These walks were usually made up of 6-7 young people, our Programs Manager Joewah and a couple of elders, who are all dropped at a remote part of the Eylandt for a 5 day walk to a designated pick up site.

The group leave with spears, woomeras, machetes and sleeping bags hunting their food and collecting water from creeks along the way.

These walks were proving such a success with young people wanting to participate we approached NAILSMA who are assisting with funds for two Father and Son Walks planned for June and July.

The first of these walks has just been completed by a group of 21 Fathers and Sons who were dropped at Cape Beatrice a very remote part of Groote Eylandt.

The drive took 7 hours by 4wd to reach the spot the group wanted to start at and we all camped the night awaiting sunrise when the walkers began.

These walks are a great opportunity for young men to see country that is fairly inaccessible most of the time and learn from the elders about their country, cave paintings, ancestors, stories from their childhood and about their culture.

The young men participating learn respect, for their country and for the knowledge the elders hold and are passing on to them, who in turn will pass on to their children.

They learn the traditional skills to hunt, prepare and cook food and about bush tucker and bush medicines whilst working as a team.

The group of fathers and son camp each night, cook food from the days hunting, make a fire and sit around talking about their days adventures and telling stories about the land they have walked.





KALACC FESTIVAL

In September last year, the Kimberley Aboriginal Law & Culture Centre coordinated the KALACC Festival called Gaadmungungardi, which was held at Arnbardah Community (Old Mt Barnett Station). It was located 7kms north of Kupungarri Community – about 310kms east of Derby on the Gibb River Road.

North Australian Indigenous Land & Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA's Indigenous Water Resource Management team) in partnership with Kimberley Land Council, Land & Sea Management Unit – Fitzroy Catchment, Tropical River and Coastal Knowledge (TRaCK), the Department of Water (DoW) and the United Nations University (UNU) had a joint display about all things 'water'.

We all showed some areas of our work; posters, newsletters, photos, fact sheets, reports and gave information and hand out materials. Staff from different agencies were able to talk to all

interested community participants who attended the KALACC Festival.

A series of small workshops and activities were organised to engage young kids about important issues concerning creeks and rivers in the Kimberley.

Many thanks to the Arnbardah & Kupungarri communities, as well as KALACC and Kimberley Land Council for their hospitality and shared celebrations.



Photo L. McArthur



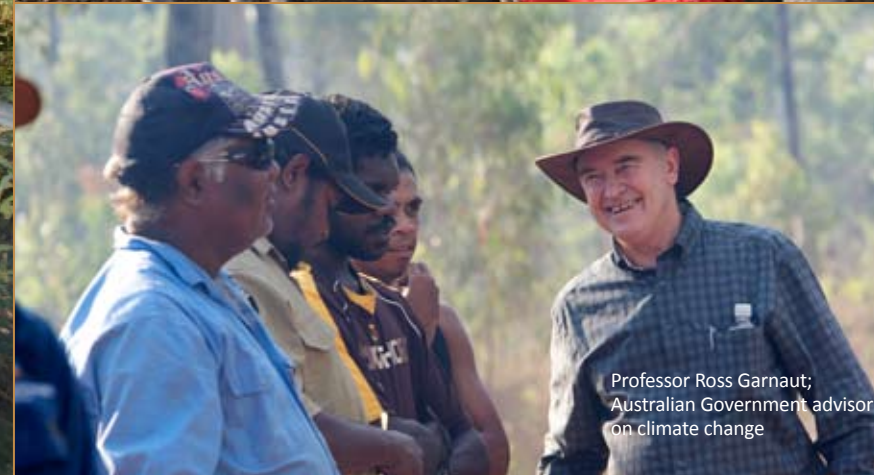
Aaron Rickson from Mimal Ranger group



Dancers performing welcome to country



Dean Yibarbuk, Senior Ranger of Warddeken Land Management



Professor Ross Garnaut; Australian Government advisor on climate change



Basecamp at Kulgnuki

NAILSMA CARBON PROJECT

Images: David Hancock

By Glenn James
NAILSMA Carbon Project

NAILSMA is working through its partners (the Kimberley, Northern and Carpentaria Land Councils and Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation) to develop up to four landscape-scale savanna fire management projects that can support Indigenous livelihoods on country with real jobs through emissions abatement opportunities.

The four prospective savanna fire management projects are located in the north Kimberley region of Western Australia, central Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory, the Gulf of Carpentaria and western Cape York in Queensland.

Essentially, the project seeks to incorporate highly significant Indigenous knowledge of land and fire management with quality science to increase

controlled early dry season burning creating fire breaks and patchy mosaics of burnt and unburnt country, minimising destructive late dry season wildfires, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions and maximising biodiversity protection.

The collaboration of scientific and traditional technologies in fire management is geared towards broader social and cultural goals about Indigenous groups caring for their country, their families and their long term livelihood sustainability away from what many have called the welfare trap. Fire abatement, trading in GHG emissions offsets and or selling land management services may provide core incomes for Indigenous groups across the tropical savannas to support their livelihood goals.

Much of the modelling for these proposed projects has come from 8 years of collaboration with the Traditional Aboriginal owners of the west Arnhem Land plateau and their business, Warddeken Land Management Inc. Development of the collaborative

research, realising the potential for commercial outcomes from culturally driven land management activity and forging productive pathways through often trying institutional arrangements have all been valuable lessons to inform future and expanding fire abatement projects across the savannas.

Great interest is coming from these prospective regions, and traditional owners and Indigenous ranger groups are enthusiastically and generously sharing their knowledge and experience. One such occasion was the field trip to the west Arnhem plateau in July of this year.

Carbon Project Fieldtrip in West Arnhem Land

In July around 80 Indigenous rangers from across northern Australia came together with scientists, policy makers and politicians at Kulgnuki, on the Upper Liverpool River in west Arnhem Land.

The field trip was hosted by Wamud Namok and family on part of their traditional estate. All visitors were honoured and protected in this country by a formal blessing in the creek and welcome from Wamud Namok and his family.

They gathered to discuss and carry out early dry season burn experiments showing how strategic fire management in tropical savanna landscapes, utilising local Indigenous knowledge and biophysical science can lead to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and improvement in biodiversity values, whilst at the same time providing an important livelihood option for remote Indigenous communities.

Activities included:

- developing familiarity with and understanding of carbon project field methods
- assisting with pre- and post-measurement activities, including burning, on the assessment plots



Junior Djandjomerr



NAILSMA CARBON PROJECT

- assisting with the undertaking of protective burning around plots which have been identified for being burnt in the September late dry season treatment
- establishing new assessment plots
- learning about equipment such as gas measuring devices
- networking with colleagues and countrymen engaged with similar activities in different regions
- group discussions, informal workshops and information sessions
- topical talks by the likes of Warddeken rangers,
- Ross Garnaut, Sam Johnston from UNU, Joe Morrison from NAILSMA, Paul Burgess from Menzies School of Health Research, University of Maryland, CSIRO and others
- preliminary opportunities to start to map out other regional projects with the benefit of collaborators with experience in the west Arnhem project
- video sessions showing land management related stories from other regions

The trip provided rangers with a good sense of the application of local Indigenous knowledge and science, the field based methodologies used in collaborative fire management, the potential

for commercial outcomes and a sense of the work ahead of them back in their own respective country. Participants found the hands-on activities and various discussions useful and stimulating.

Face to face interaction with the local Warddeken land managers was particularly rewarding for most visitors as it was they who provided the human story of how their project developed and what it means to them.

Fire abatement and the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS)

Scientists on the West Arnhem field trip specifically investigated variation in emissions from early dry season burning, and will compare that to late dry season burning. This has been an issue requiring clarification by the Department of Climate Change. Analysis of this data shows no significant increase in emissions of accountable greenhouse gases in early dry season burning. This finding has opened the door for the inclusion of savanna burning as an offset to the covered sector in the proposed CPRS and therefore an exciting opportunity for Indigenous people in remote northern Australia to participate in the emerging carbon economy.

More significant perhaps than a sense of how land management might relate to green house gas abatement and climate change was a strong

sense by Indigenous people of ownership and empowerment in this type of enterprise and how it resonates with local aspirations, an important reminder to collaborators of the underlying philosophy in the development of the other prospective Indigenous enterprises.

Acknowledgements:

NAILSMA would like to thank the late Wamud Namok and his family for hosting the fieldtrip.

The NAILSMA carbon project is supported by the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country Program as well as various other government sources including CSIRO, Bushfires NT and the Tropical Savannas Co-operative Research Centre, and a number of private sector sources.

For further information contact: Glenn James, Social/Community Programs Officer
glenn.james@cdu.edu.au

SPECIAL NOTE:

On behalf of all those who were able to participate in the July trip, we would like to extend our sympathies and thanks to the family of Wamud Namok, a great leader for whose warmth and generosity we are privileged and grateful.



Lenny and George, Gavin Hogan and other Rangers from Carpentaria Land Council and Wild River Rangers.

Aboriginal values to improve water management in the north



Bush cucumbers
Photo: Skyscans



Naiiyu
Photo: Emma Woodward



Wagiman kids with turtles caught on their traditional country, near Pine Creek, NT. Photo by: Sue Jackson

Barbie McKaige & Marcus Finn

The value of rivers, fish, lilies, water birds and other wild food resources to Aboriginal people is the focus of new research that will help transform water management in northern Australia.

Aboriginal people in the north have a large stake in water resource planning and management based on their distinct cultures, ways of life and substantial land holdings. Yet their interests and values in water are poorly understood by decision makers, CSIRO's Dr Sue Jackson says.

"Our research will increase understanding of the importance of river systems to Aboriginal people and thereby help water planners and managers take Aboriginal people's water needs into consideration. Aboriginal people will be able to sit at the table with other water users such as farmers and irrigators and have their water requirements factored into planning."

The TRaCK (Tropical Rivers and Coastal Knowledge) funded research is recording Aboriginal social and cultural knowledge relating to water and will survey people to quantify the economic benefit

households derive from their use of aquatic plants and animals.

For example, we'll be asking people how many fish they've caught or bush cucumbers they've collected over the past few weeks and then work out how much it would have cost them if they had bought that same amount of food from the community store, says Dr Jackson.

"We'll also be looking at what effect different water levels, or flow regimes, have on the patterns of resource use by Aboriginal people. This is the first time this relationship has been studied in Australia."

The research is focussing on two catchments; the Daly River in the Northern Territory and the Fitzroy River in the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

The research team will be working closely with Aboriginal people in the Daly and Fitzroy over the next three years to find out where important water places are located and to observe changes in water quality and ecosystem health.

Malak Malak Traditional Owner, Mrs Biddy Lindsay, is concerned about the impacts of people on the Daly River and billabongs.

She says that some of the billabongs on her traditional country have changed substantially over the last five to ten years.

"Pigs, horses and cattle have stirred up the edges of some billabongs. We go to catch fish and turtle there but we don't catch much anymore" says Mrs Lindsay.

Mrs Lindsay is also concerned with the effects of groundwater extraction on the Daly River.

"All that water taken out used to mix in with the river water and make it good; not cloudy, not mud", she says. "Now that water in the river is not good; cloudy. It's not healthy that river anymore."

As well as participating in surveys, Aboriginal people will be employed in the survey and monitoring components of the research and as advisors on river health.

The research is part of the TRaCK (Tropical Rivers and Coastal Knowledge) program. TRaCK receives major funding for its research through the Australian Government's Commonwealth Environment Research Facilities initiative; the Australian Government's Raising National Water Standards Programme; Land and Water Australia and the Queensland Government's Smart State Innovation Fund.

Contact: Dr Sue Jackson CSIRO
phone: 08 8944 8415 Email: Sue.Jackson@csiro.au



Malak Malak Traditional Owners Mrs Biddy Lindsay & her brother Albert Myoung. Photo: Sue Jackson



Kalkadoon

Training for the Future



Kalkadoon Community Pty Ltd in partnership with Southern Gulf Catchments has been investing in the development of a team of professional and capable Kalkadoon Cultural Heritage Rangers to assist Kalkadoon in meeting core responsibilities and obligations associated with the management of the region's natural & cultural heritage.

With funding obtained through Southern Gulf Catchments under the new Australian Government 'Caring for our Country' program a team of eight Kalkadoon trainees, supported by four Kalkadoon Elders, have been undertaking professional development and training.

Training to date has included Introduction to GPS and GIS and the recent completion of 4 days intensive training resulting in partial completion of a Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management (specialising in Indigenous Land Management).

Trainees were hosted by Birla Mt Gordon Mine for the four days staying at the old Gunpowder School. The third phase of training commencing in a fortnight will see Trainees undertake three days introduction to Archaeology training.

"Kalkadoon Community Pty Ltd Board of Directors is committed to ensuring the organisation has a sustainable future" said Kalkadoon Director and spokesperson Mrs Noeleen Dempsey, "It's critical that we fortify our participation in and share the benefits of Government, non-Government and Industry initiatives through the delivery of trained and skilled Kalkadoon professionals."

It has been really important to give these Trainees formal skills but also to have the Elders accompany them and share their knowledge. If we don't start developing our capacity and investing in our future we will miss out on opportunities.

"The support of Birla Mt Gordon and Southern Gulf Catchments has been fantastic and as we go from strength to strength we will be looking for new partnerships with Government and Industry that support us to care for the natural and cultural resources of the region for the benefit of the wider community" said Mrs Dempsey.

Further information:

Tanya Willis, Cultural Heritage Officer,
Southern Gulf Catchments,
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Rodney Looper, General Manager,
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Michael Storrs 'it's good to be back'

Michael was born in England and spent his early years in southern Africa. After his family migrated to Australia Michael grew up and went to university in Canberra. Michael has spent the past 18 years in the Top End.

Michael has qualifications in science, natural resource management, business management and financial planning. He has worked in various roles as a scientist and manager principally involved in community-based natural resource management.

A 9 year stint with the Northern Land Council saw Michael working as the Caring for Country Unit Wetlands Officer, the Caring for Country Executive Officer and finally as the Manager of the Land and Sea Management Branch where he oversaw the work of the Caring for Country Unit, the Enterprise Development Unit and the Parks and Reserves Unit.

Michael's work with the Caring for Country Unit (1997-2006) was during a particularly exciting time when the number of community-based 'ranger' programs in the Top End increased from just 2 to over thirty with over 300 Aboriginal people employed. Many useful partnerships and collaborations were also formed during this time with external management and research agencies.

Most recently Michael took a deviation in his career to train and work as a financial planner but has recently returned to the fold to work with NAILSMA.

Michael is the coordinator of the TRaCK Sustainable Enterprises Theme. Within the Theme there are research projects looking at water markets and water rights for Indigenous people in northern Australia as well as several case studies broadly looking at the role of healthy rivers in the customary economy, recognition & reward for maintenance & delivery of ecosystem services, options & obstacles for development of related businesses and options for engagement with the mainstream economy based on resource use.

Mr Michael Storrs, NAILSMA Project Coordinator
Email: michael.storrs@cdu.edu.au

Staff Profiles

MICHA JACKSON

Micha Jackson joined NAILSMA in March 2009 as the Project Development Officer for I-Tracker.

"I-Tracker", short for Indigenous Tracker, is a project that is helping Indigenous Land and Sea Managers to collect and manage information about country across remote north Australia. Utilising the renowned CyberTracker software, I-Tracker provides Indigenous Rangers with field-tough handheld touch screen computers that are a user-friendly, culturally appropriate way to collect important information about natural and cultural resources.

Micha's role involves working with Indigenous people across northern Australia to further develop the I-Tracker program to support data collection that helps Indigenous Land and Sea Managers monitor and manage country. She will also be communicating with government and non government agencies and researchers with an interest in environmental monitoring in north Australia.

If you would like to learn more about I-Tracker, please contact Micha on (08) 8946 6539 or by email at micha.jackson@cdu.edu.au.

MIYAPUNU (TURTLE) SATELLITE TRACKING BEGINS IN YOLNGU TIME



By Joshua Kitchens, Communication and Project Support Officer
NAILSMA Dugong and Marine Turtle Management Project

In 2005, Dhimurru and Parks and Wildlife Rangers along with volunteers from the Nhulunbuy, Yirrkala and Ski Beach Communities removed 78 miyapunu (turtles) from Ghost Nets as part of their turtle recovery program.

These turtles included Guwarrtji (hawksbill), Marrpan (green), Garriwa (flatback) and Muduthu (olive ridley) turtles. Around 50 of those turtles were released alive back into the water, whilst the rest had already died in the nets. This was an extremely busy year for rangers involved in the project which coincided with a large amount of nets also being washed ashore.

The nets arrival onto the once pristine beaches of the Dhimurru IPA have always coincided with the beginning of the Dhimurru (South East) winds which usually start around mid April and persist until the end of July/August.

Dhimurru has released over 180 live turtles from nets out of a total of over 300 since the project began back in 1996. In many cases, the turtles were given flipper tags in the hope that Dhimurru could one day determine whether or not the turtles had survived and how far they had travelled since release. However at the end of 2005, no turtles with tags had been recovered.

This prompted the idea to attach satellite trackers to turtles released back into the water after being removed from entanglement in ghost nets. With great assistance from the NAILSMA Turtle and

Dugong Project Coordinator Rod Kennett, a project proposal was developed and submitted to the Natural Heritage Trust, and was successfully funded.

In line with Dhimurru's willingness to work with partners, this proposal was no exception. Aside from gaining enough money for five trackers and the associated satellite costs, the proposal also allowed for a partnership with local vet in Nhulunbuy – Sue Samuelsson. Sue was asked to develop tables which would help the Rangers to assess the miyapunu's health at the time of release. Sue also determined that it would be valuable to collect blood samples of the turtles prior to release, for checking by a pathologist. The rangers were then taught how to collect the blood samples and preserve slides for later analysis by the pathologist.

For expertise in satellite tracking, Dhimurru employed the assistance of researcher Dr Corey Bradshaw who was then based at Charles Darwin University, and Professor Graeme Hayes from Swansea University in Wales, UK.

Dhimurru and Parks and Wildlife Staff were aware that the Marthakal Rangers from Galiwinku had assisted these researchers in a satellite tracking program for nesting Muduthu (olive ridley) turtles in 2005. It was thought that if the Dhimurru project also focussed on Muduthu (olive ridley) turtles, then comparisons could be made between the healthy nesting muduthu and those that were released from ghost nets.

The researchers also assisted in determining the type of trackers to be used and arranged for the production of five Satellite-Relayed Data Loggers (SRDL). The trackers chosen will provide data about the depth and length of each dive the turtle makes and also report on its location via satellite.

The first of the trackers was collected by Dhimurru Director Djawa Yunupingu and Parks and Wildlife Senior Ranger Phil Wise, whilst attending the International Ranger Federation Congress in Scotland in

June 2006. Although late in the season, it was hoped that the rangers would still be able to deploy the trackers that year.

Dr Bradshaw travelled to Nhulunbuy, and along with Dhimurru Senior Sea Ranger Balapalu Yunupingu, Vet Sue Samuelsson and Parks and Wildlife Ranger Phil Wise, a turtle recovery flight was conducted in July 2006 in the hope of deploying the first tracker. Only one Guwarrtji (hawksbill turtle) was released alive, and one Muduthu (olive ridley) was found dead in a net. In the end a successful deployment was not to be in 2006 as no live Muduthu were found in nets that year.

Along came the 2007 Dhimurru winds, and the rangers increased their efforts to locate suitable Muduthu, by adding many more quad bike and vehicle patrols along beaches additional to the turtle recovery helicopter flights. Dr Bradshaw flew again to Nhulunbuy and conducted a training

session with Dhimurru, Yirrkala and Parks and Wildlife Rangers regarding how to attach the trackers.

An old shell was used to demonstrate the whole technique. This training session was filmed so that staff could remind themselves of the technique whenever needed.

Despite searching over many weeks, there were very few nets washed up during 2007 and thankfully few turtle entanglements. The rangers started to wonder whether they were being too efficient with their clean ups as part of the Carpentaria Ghost Net Program, and that the satellite tracking program may never get off the ground!!!!

Although always developing over time, the Dhimurru Rangers were starting to joke that the tracking program was running in Yolngu time – and that it would happen when it happens!!

Finally in a recent turtle recovery quad bike patrol at the end of April 2008 at Lurrpukurru (south of Cape Arnhem), two muduthu were successfully deployed with satellite trackers after being released from ghost nets. Present on the day were Sea Rangers PJ White and Djawulu Mununggurr, IPA Rangers Banula Marika and Dhuru Yunupingu, Dhimurru's new Sea Country Facilitator Vanessa Walsh, and Senior Parks and Wildlife Ranger Phil Wise. Both turtles were showing signs that they had been entangled for a long period, and had old and new scars on most of their flippers. One rear flipper on one muduthu was badly cut, and the



other turtle was missing approximately one fifth of its shell, an injury that possibly occurred long before being caught in the net.

One thing for sure is that they would now be dead if not for the work of the rangers.

Dhimurru Sea Ranger PJ White named the muduthu with the broken shell Troy, as it had the strength of a Trojan and seemed like a real fighter when given a test swim prior to putting a tracker on. The second turtle was named A\gi (pronounced un-gee) by PJ, which is a yolngu word for weak and tired, which is how the second turtle seemed when first released back into the surf.

Because A\gi was unable to swim out through the breakers, a decision was made to take her to a more sheltered area on Cape Arnhem, at a place

known as Gay\ada. When it was released here it seemed to have some renewed strength and was last seen struggling out through larger breakers around 200 metres offshore.

Our fellow researcher Professor Graeme Hays sent us an email from Wales the following day to confirm that both satellite trackers were now sending data, and that we could now monitor their progress over the internet.

It is still early days, but all partners in the project continue to hope that A\gi and Troy will be able to teach us about how turtles recover and where they travel to after their horrendous ghost net entanglement. Stay tuned for the next issue of Kantri Laif for an update on their progress.

Some of the delegates attending the 8th IWPG Meeting in Cairns



8th Indigenous Water Policy Group Meeting

By Lorrae McArthur

The Indigenous Water Policy Group started 2009 with its eighth meeting. Held in Cairns on the 3rd and 4th of February, the IWPG considered and planned its activities and priorities for this year, as well as, came together with state, territory and federal water agencies to further develop relationships for effective engagement of Indigenous water policy positions.

The IWPG spent the first day in a closed meeting reviewing 2008 and considered how best to achieve its objectives in 2009. Discussions on the first day focussed on policy positions, research objectives and a plan for promoting Indigenous positions among a wide range of stakeholders, such as engaging in different forums.

Relationships with the United Nations University – Traditional Knowledge Institute (UNU-TKI) and other Australian Indigenous regional representative bodies, particularly the Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN) are being further developed. In March this year, the NAILSMA IWPG will be again co-hosting an event with the UNU-TKI, but this time co-hosting a panel session on Water and Culture at the World Water Forum. In August 2008, the UNU-TKI and NAILSMA IWPG co-hosted an International Indigenous Experts Water Forum at the Garma festival in north east Arnhem Land. The panel session that will be held at the World Water Forum aims to further build relationships developed at Garma. The panel, which is made up of representatives from International Indigenous nations will exchange their knowledge, experiences and perspectives on

water. In addition to this, a Declaration on Indigenous Water Rights, which was developed out of the Garma festival, will be launched at the World Water Forum.

The NAILSMA IWPG is supporting with the National Water Commission an event that is being hosted by MLDRIN and held in Adelaide on the 18th February. The Australian Indigenous Freshwater Forum aims to bring Indigenous Australians from across Australia to discuss a common way forward for Indigenous water rights, interests and issues. It was identified at an earlier national Indigenous meeting held in November that further dialogue was required to advance a shared Indigenous position on water. The next meeting to be held in February aims to continue that dialogue and discuss key issues affecting Australia's Indigenous people's access to water resources.

The second day of the 8th IWPG meeting was spent working with the Policy Engagement Group (PEG), Research Advisors and other water agencies in reviewing, updating and identifying opportunities for better Indigenous integrated water resource management, research and policy development and for improving consultation processes. PEG is made up of state, territory and federal water agencies that develop state and regional water plans. To highlight its relationship with PEG, the IWPG co-chaired the second day of meetings with PEG. Given the location of the meeting, PEG member Tom Crothers from the Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Water co-chaired the meeting with Joe Ross, Chairman of the IWPG. Working with PEG has been positive for the consideration and engagement of IWPG ideas and positions in water planning processes and for updating the IWPG on any recent developments in water planning.

Besides being involved in the events mentioned above, the IWPG will in the first half of this year hold a closed workshop to consider a number of Indigenous water positions and a plan for engaging its position in policy. To achieve this, members of the IWPG will work closely together, including the Kimberley Land Council, Yawoorroong Miriuwung Gajerrong Yirrgeb Noong Dawang Aboriginal Corporation, Northern Land Council, Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Balkanu – Aboriginal Land Corporation and the Cape York Land Council. To implement its policies, the IWPG will later in the year workshop its ideas with the National Water Commission (funder of the IWPG) and PEG.

For more information about the IWPG, visit the NAILSMA web site: www.nailsma.org.au



Message Disk 3 A Hit!

Indigenous Sea Rangers involved in the NAILSMA Dugong and Marine Turtle Project released the third edition of the Message Disk series late last year to rave reviews.

Message Disk 3 highlights the rangers' award winning work in managing and conserving dugong and marine turtle.

NAILSMA CEO Mr Joe Morrison launched the DVD to the public in February.

"Indigenous Rangers provide key services that are essential for the management and protection of Australia's globally significant ecosystems in the north."

"Message Disk DVD highlights the work of Indigenous Rangers and offers a fly-on-the-wall opportunity for people to witness first-hand the importance to Australia of the Indigenous Ranger movement taking place across the north today," he said.

The DVD contains short stories that have been filmed, photographed, scripted and directed by Indigenous ranger groups from the Kimberley, Top End, Gulf of Carpentaria, Cape York and Torres Strait.

1200 DVDs have been distributed with 55% delivered to Indigenous organisations, 15% to

government, 15% to educational institutions, and 15% to NGOs and the general public.

People were invited to send their feedback on Message Disk. Here is what some of them had to say.

"Message Disk is a valuable information resource, especially hearing the stories from traditional owners and land and sea managers."

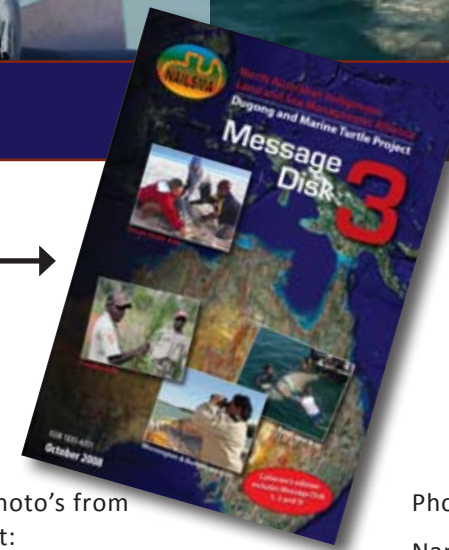
"I think this is an awesome initiative, and it allows all kinds of people to see what is going on in a short period of time."

Messages of support for the rangers were also received.

"Guys, you rock! Seriously, I am impressed with the work you do and the dedication you show to getting it done and done right. It's not always easy to pick up on 'outsider' technology and ideals, and integrate them into long-lived traditions, but you have managed to do just that, using the best of each side of the deal, to make positive change happen. Congratulations!"

Message Disk can be viewed on-line by visiting www.nailsma.org.au

The NAILSMA Dugong and Marine Turtle Project is funded by the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country program.



Top page photo's from left to right:

Wild River Ranger Billy Jackson from the Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation surveying the coast off Burketown, QLD.

Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation's Djelk Sea Ranger Justin Cooper using I-Tracker to record sea patrol data off the Maningrida coast, NT.

Kimberley Land Council's Bardi Jawi Rangers Dwayne George, Kevin George, Trevor Sampi, Alec Isaac and Terry McCarthy working with Marine Biologist Dave Holley (ECU) to tag a dugong for satellite tracking, Kimberly, WA. Senior Napranum Land and Sea Protection Officer Peter Harper and Napranum Land and Sea Protection Officer and Photographer Angela Christie tell the story of a major marine turtle rescue event that occurred during the extreme North-West monsoon of 2007/08.

Have you watched it yet?

Photo's on right top to bottom

Napranum Land and Sea Protection Officer and Photographer Angela Christie with a turtle rescued from ghost nets on Pennefather Beach during the extreme North-West monsoon of 2007/08.

li-Anthawirriyarra Sea Rangers Stephen Johnson, Damien Pracy, Graham Friday and Thomas Simon joined by members of the community at the launch of their new boat. Borroloola, NT.

The Welesley Islands Rangers from Mornington and GANGALIDDA/GARRAWA WILD RIVER RANGERS from Burketown show the range of work they do on Message Disk.

Message Disk can be viewed on-line by visiting www.nailsma.org.au




DON'T TRY THIS
This Croc has NO TEETH!

Thanks to Peter Mowat, Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Community and the Edward River Crocodile Farm for getting these pics to us!





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Kantri Laif is produced by NAILSMA. It may contain images of deceased persons.

NAILSMA may not represent the views of all those featured in this issue and aims only to showcase the land management activities being undertaken by Indigenous people and groups in North Australia.

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