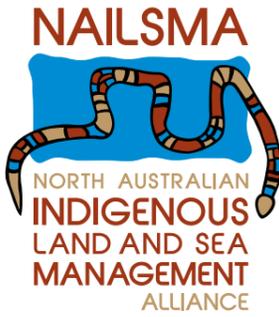


# KANTRI LAIF

## North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management News



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## About NAILSMA Ltd

We are an Indigenous not-for-profit company with a decade of experience delivering large-scale initiatives across north Australia. We are committed to finding practical solutions that support Indigenous people in the management of their lands and seas for future generations. Our culture-based-economy approach aims to assist Indigenous people through livelihoods and employment on their country. We have a strong track record of delivering award-winning programs in challenging and complex settings.

## About Kantri Laif

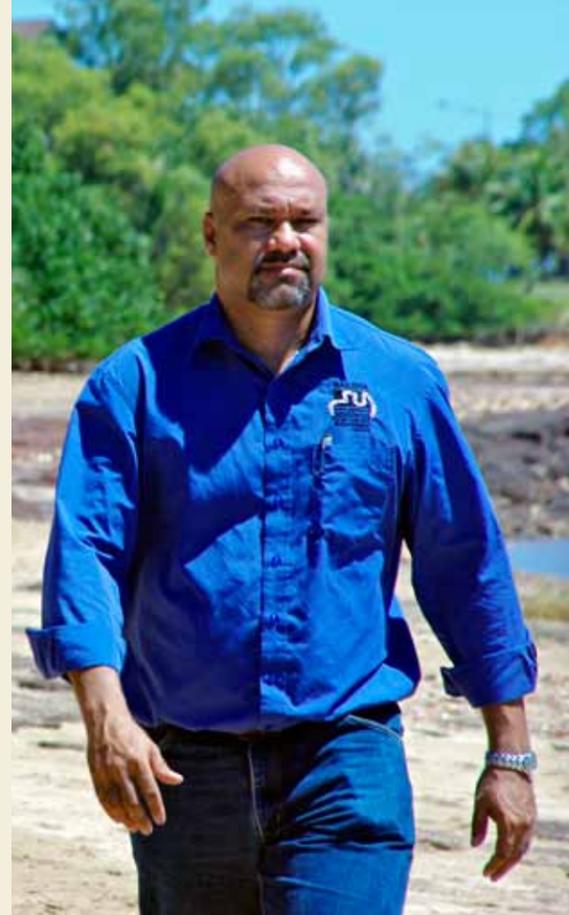
Kantri Laif showcases and shares Indigenous land and sea management stories about Indigenous individuals, communities, aspirations, challenges and achievements, and about activities and research being undertaken by Indigenous people and groups in north Australia.

The name 'Kantri Laif' (coun-try li-fe) is spelt in Kriol. The name is not intended to reflect any other publications with similar names. Current and past issues are available electronically on our website. Email us if you would like printed copies.

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## Warning

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this publication may contain images and words of people who have died.*



*message  
from the*

**Chief  
Executive  
Officer**

**Welcome - to the seventh edition of NAILSMA Limited's Kantri Laif, and the first issue since becoming an incorporated not-for-profit company in 2012.**

In this edition you'll find many stories from Indigenous people who live and work in north Australia, and whose important work is focused on issues affecting Indigenous people, their lands and seas across a third of Australia's land mass. The stories also highlight the contemporary pressures and the amazing innovation taking place across the region that are not well known or understood.

Many of the articles come from Traditional Owners and land and sea managers who incorporate Indigenous and contemporary methods of caring for their country while maintaining the social and cultural fabric that has been handed down to them by their ancestors.

Over the last few months, north Australia has been viewed in the public media as a place of great opportunity for development, a place where immense wealth can be generated for the nation. Unfortunately it is rarely referred to as home for the many Indigenous people who have lived here for perhaps 60,000 years, or the place that has shaped much of the nation's identity.

I agree that there is potential for development of north Australia, but perhaps the greatest potential lies in the new and emerging industries, driven by Indigenous innovation, that sustain the resident population and are based on the best Indigenous knowledge and science to ensure the north is recognised for its immense social, cultural, environmental and economic values – not just a place to be exploited.

There are great opportunities to share in our natural resources, to ensure that future generations of people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, have the full benefit of these resources.

However, we are reminded of the need to keep an eye on the future by the constant number of funerals we must attend, by the large portion of our young population in gaols, and by the pressure placed on our communities to make informed decisions about the use or exploitation of their lands and seas.

I believe that the north is at a critical juncture in its history and in the history of the people who live here. Carefully considered decisions need to be made so north Australia remains a special place - a place we can all be proud to call our home.

This edition of Kantri Laif celebrates the voices of the north, celebrates enormous human achievement, and documents some of the events that are often going on below the radar of public attention. It gives a snapshot of what north Australian Indigenous people are saying about their work, land, seas and their dreams to find a balance.

*Thanks to all those who support Kantri Laif by their readership, contributions and involvement.*

**Joe Morrison,  
CEO, North Australian Indigenous Land and  
Sea Management Alliance Ltd (NAILSMA)**



# Indigenous participation in the



# Developing Northern Economy

**The second North Australian Indigenous Experts Forum on Sustainable Economic Development discussed how to respond to challenges potentially arising from proposals to develop north Australia as part of the growing and critical debate on global food security and in response to the Australian Government's Asian Century White Paper.**

The Forum was held at Jabiru in Kakadu National Park, NT, between 30 April and 2 May, 2013.

Forum Chair Professor Patrick Dodson, described the Forum as, 'historically significant because of the determination of participants to explore innovative ways for Indigenous interests to engage with governments and industry in northern Australia's economic future'.

Professor Dodson said, 'there was a critical need to develop a commercial framework that could assist Traditional Owner interests for engagement with investors, development proponents and governments'.

The Forum participants endorsed engagement at various levels within the national commercial sector and to investigate pathways for dealing with international interests, as well as how best to navigate across all jurisdictions of northern Australia.

The Forum also advocated for a leadership group to guide the future relationship and participation in the various industries building upon connections and protocols that are emerging out of existing engagements.

Professor Dodson said, 'The growing interest in northern Australia's economic future is an opportunity for the nation to embark on a different development paradigm that is both inclusive and sustainable'.

He further added, 'The Forum was adamant that they were not passive agents in determining the future of northern Australia and has called upon governments, industries and other interests to respect and acknowledge the uniqueness of northern Australia and its peoples'.

'For there to be success, a broad institutional framework incorporating traditional land owning groups, land councils and organisations must emerge to ensure that the proposed dialogue and relationship building can deliver practical outcomes.'

Four concurrent field trips gave participants the opportunity to reflect on key industry interests relevant to Indigenous participation in northern development: pastoral investments; land and sea management; tourism, arts and culture; and resource extraction.

**Additional statements from the Forum**

- The need to develop a commercial framework that could assist Traditional Owner interests for engagement with investors, development proponents and governments.
- Recognising the already constructive participation by Indigenous peoples in and across various industry sectors.
- The Forum participants encouraged engagement at various levels within the national commercial sector and to investigate pathways for dealing with international interests, as well as how best to navigate across all jurisdictions of northern Australia.
- The Forum acknowledged the need for constructive collaboration among all interests responsible for representing Traditional Owner and native title holder interests across northern Australia
- The Forum is keen to see measures established to ensure that real benefits accrue and change the social circumstances for their communities and family wellbeing.
- The Forum is conscious that Indigenous interests across northern Australia are extensive, and decision making in relation to development proposals affecting their assets are very much the domain of those particular peoples.

- The Forum made it clear that cultural considerations and connectivity between land and water are integral to considerations about 'free, prior and informed' consent (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples).
- The Forum advocated that there should be a leadership group to guide the future relationship and participation in the various industries building upon connections and protocols that are emerging out of existing engagements.
- The Forum was clear that proposals for northern development must involve the participation and inclusion of the Traditional Owners who permanently live in north Australia.
- The Forum was adamant that they are not passive agents in determining the future of northern Australia but called upon governments, industries and others to respect and acknowledge the uniqueness of northern Australia and its peoples.

*Clockwise from top left: Participants visited the Gunbalanya pastoral industry and meat works, then reflected on pastoral industry opportunities. (L-R) Djawa (Timmy) Burarrwanga, Patrick White, Aven Noah, Professor Patrick Dodson (Forum Chair) and Peter Yu (Deputy Chair).*

*Participants visited Ubirr art site, then reflected on land management opportunities. Second Indigenous Experts Forum participants, 30 April - 2 May, 2013.*



# WELCOME & RESPECT



All the people employed by Yawuru - the native title holders of the Broome region - are now under one roof. Besides a welcoming foyer and an open space work area, the Nyamba Buru Office has a board room and three meeting rooms. The Yawuru language centre is connected to our main office.

This is a place that Yawuru can call home; a place to work, to have our meetings and to plan for the future. This office is for the whole Yawuru community.

The office philosophy is *Welcome and Respect*. Those words are for both the workers and the visitors who come to the office. Please come and visit. You are most welcome.

The new office is a symbol of the achievements that Yawuru have made happen since our native title agreement was registered less than three years ago.

Those achievements are considerable. Yawuru has produced an award winning cultural management plan which is now being used as the basis of establishing the jointly managed Yawuru conservation estate with the Western Australian Government and the Shire of Broome. We are building houses to create sustainable income and providing subsidised rental to Yawuru families in need.



Staff outside their new office building.

We are developing a world class geospatial mapping capacity with the Australian National University, Canberra, so that Yawuru will have a comprehensive digital data base on our lands and seas, community and our cultural heritage. From this data base which we call the Yawuru Knowledge System, Yawuru will be in a position to negotiate with third community renewal vision.

We have established a language centre which is revitalizing Yawuru language.

Yawuru is committed to community development with a range of programs and services to build the capacity of young people, honour and care for our senior people, and develop our cultural strength.

**Howard Pedersen**  
Nyamba Buru Yawuru Ltd

*The Yawuru PBC\* is committed to informing our community about what is happening in the Yawuru community newsletters, indigenous and mainstream media and community forums. We will soon have a Yawuru website and we will draw on the creative talents of our young people to entertain, inform and educate our community and others through Facebook and YouTube.*

\*Prescribed Body Corporate

*While there is a lot of discussion about expansion of agriculture across north Australia, one inspirational Aboriginal enterprise is showing leadership in providing produce on a commercial scale.*



Staff and workers of Kalano Farm.



# Kalano Farm

The Kalano Farm is located on the banks of the Katherine River in the township of Katherine, Northern Territory. The venture is a non-incorporated subsidiary of Kalano Community Association Incorporated.

Utilising forty hectares of freehold land available for farming, the venture is primarily involved in the cultivation of trellis-grown gourmet tomatoes, capsicums and sweet corn.

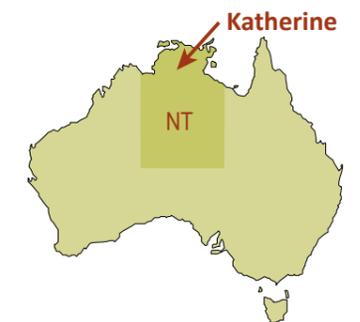
Kalano Farm is in its third year of production and currently provides Woolworths with the majority of gourmet tomatoes in the Northern Territory. The Farm provides local employment for CDEP\* participants and regularly involves members from the Association's Venndale Alcohol Rehabilitation Centre who assist with picking, packing and distribution activities.

Kalano Farm produces between nine and eleven tonnes of tomatoes per week over a twenty week season that spans from early June to late October each year.

Kalano Farm employ's a Farm Manager, four full time local Aboriginal people in the field and one, full time Aboriginal account manager.

**Rick Fletcher, Director,**  
Kalano Community Corporation

\*CDEP - Community Development Employment Project.





**YIRRALKA RANGERS... take to the air**



Feral animals are an ongoing concern in the Laynhapuy Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) and population control and impact monitoring is a major focus of Yirralka Rangers' work. Over the last few years, the rangers have been implementing their comprehensive management plans for both buffalo and pigs.

The Yirralka Rangers were established in 2003 and represent the Yolngu Traditional Owners of north-east Arnhem Land who manage the Laynhapuy IPA. This area covers 6,900 km<sup>2</sup> from Gove Peninsular to Blue Mud Bay.

Experimental plots have been erected in wetland areas across the homelands to keep buffalo out. These plots have revealed a measurable improvement in wetland health, reducing saltwater intrusion and increasing natural resource values.

In October 2012, Yirralka Rangers conducted a four day aerial survey with the help of Parks NT and NAILSMA. The survey was the start of a larger ongoing management project to map areas that contain high densities for buffalo and pigs in preparation for control measures to be implemented across the IPA.

Yirralka Rangers and NAILSMA have worked together to develop an I-Tracker buffalo aerial survey application. The application was successfully used by rangers to record sightings of buffalo and pigs. Consultations with Parks NT and CSIRO scientists provided the methodology for counting buffalo from the air to determine buffalo population densities. Approximately 8,000 buffalo were counted during the survey and high density areas were targeted for further management and monitoring.

**Yirralka Rangers  
Laynhapuy Homelands, NT**



*Clockwise from top left: Rangers who took part in the aerial survey at Yilpara air field, NT.*

*Feral buffalo and pig activity can damage coastal and wetland areas, Laynhapuy IPA, NT.*

*(L-R) Erica McCreedy (NAILSMA), Yirralka Rangers, Bandarr Wirrpanda and Napunda Marawili, and Danny Barrow (Parks NT) check the IPA area to be surveyed before heading off in the fixed wing aircraft, Gove Airport, NT.*

*The aerial survey was carried out over three consecutive days. Sections 1, 2, and 3 of the IPA were accessed from Yilpara community, and Sections 5 and 6 from Gove Airport.*

*The crew get a satellite fix on their I-Tracker equipment before take-off.*



# Talking to CANBERRA



**In March 2013, Jenny Creek from Kalan Rangers joined NAILSMA staff on a trip to Canberra.**

They travelled there to meet with staff from the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPAC), the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FAHCSIA), and from the office of Environment Minister, the Hon Tony Burke MP.

The aim of the presentations and meetings, held over three days, was to highlight the achievements of the I-Tracker program and showcase Indigenous ranger efforts in using I-Tracker to work on a wide range of environmental issues. This included fire management, control of weeds and feral animals, bio-security surveillance, distribution and abundance of native plants and animals, visitor impacts, marine and terrestrial protected area management and habitat quality.

NAILSMA Project leader, Rod Kennett, said it was a good opportunity to understand the priorities and responsibilities of the many sections of the department, and explore how they align with Indigenous priorities.

'It is clear that the data collected by Indigenous rangers using I-Tracker is of major relevance to a range of departmental responsibilities beyond Indigenous Protected Areas and Working on Country.

'SEWPAC staff were very impressed by the detail of data collected by rangers and were particularly interested in working with NAILSMA, the Northern Australia Hub National Environmental Research Program and Indigenous rangers in a targeted way to improve the uptake of Indigenous collected data into SEWPAC's environmental assessments and decision making,' Dr Kennett said.



'My name is Jennifer Creek, I am *Kaantju* (father's side) and *Ayapathu* (mother's side), I live in Coen which is Kaantju - south of Coen is Ayapathu. I work as a Cultural Heritage Officer for Kalan Rangers who are a group of Kaantju people.

'I would like to thank NAILSMA staff, Rod Kennett and Erica McCreedy, for inviting me to participate in this enjoyable and exciting trip to meet staff from government departments and talk about the work Indigenous rangers do.

'It appeared to me that staff from SEWPAC and FAHCSIA don't get out of the office much, so I took my work to them and showed a presentation at their office and at the university which was an experience and an educational trip for me.

'I was extremely happy when Erica took me to the National Museum of Australia, where I got to see my *puula Naiga's* (grandfather's) collection of spears on display for Lockhart River. I also visited the Tent Embassy and got smoked. Canberra is a beautiful city I will never forget.'

**Jenny Creek, Cultural Heritage Officer, Kalan Rangers, Coen, Cape York Peninsula, Qld**



Jenny Creek visits a display of her *puula Naiga's* (grandfather's) collection of spears from Lockhart River, Cape York, at the National Museum of Australia, Canberra, ACT.

# Our Bunuba country



Justice Gilmore, Isaac Hale, Danny Marr.

# finally recognised



**It was a great day in December 2012, when hundreds of our Bunuba people and supporters celebrated the success of the Bunuba (part A) native title claim over 6,500+ km<sup>2</sup> of the Fitzroy valley. Justice Gilmore made the announcement during a special on-country Federal Court hearing at Danggu (Geikie Gorge) near Fitzroy Crossing.**

We celebrated for hours with traditional dances, songs, and foods. We also paid tribute to the eight elders who worked so hard for native title rights over what has always been Bunuba land. Sadly six of these elders weren't there to celebrate with us, they passed away during the 13 years since the claim was lodged in 1999.

Our Bunuba Part A claim includes the Bunuba owned Leopold Downs and Fairfield stations and part of the Kimberley Downs, Jubilee Downs, Quanbun Downs and Blina pastoral leases, as well as three conservation parks

Fitzroy Crossing



which will be jointly managed with the Western Australian Government.

We had long talks with pastoralists, working through some of the issues that concern all of us. There will be no interference to cattle station development or the usual running of a property.

These native title rights will create real opportunities and a future based on the strength that comes with owning country. When you are a land owner, you have rights and when you have rights, you are seen in a different light.

We are waiting for the outcome of the second part of our native title claim, and hope that it will also be successful.

**June Oscar, Chairperson, Bunuba Dawangarri PBC (Prescribed Body Corporate)**



Elders help kids get familiar with the big picture.

# MAPPING bio-cultural values

- How will we bring on the next generation of land managers?
- What really drives people to look after their country?
- How do we show others what's really important to us about land management?

These are some of the questions being explored in a social and biodiversity mapping exercise at Ngukurr in southern Arnhem Land.



Wallaby and termite mounds.

Yugul Mangi land owners and managers, like many other groups across the north, are looking at ways to improve and sustain more activity on country. They see potential in payment for environmental services and perhaps in earning money from the sale of carbon credits from good fire management. They also see the need to do it their way, not only to run their own enterprise and to get the direct benefits from their hard work, but to care for and grow the things that drive land management.

Clarry Rogers, Ranger Coordinator, Yugul Mangi Rangers explains, 'it's important to show that caring for country values and stories are beneath the surface, and not easily recognised or understood by outsiders'.

In April 2013, with support from The Nature Conservancy, work began with the Yugul Mangi Rangers, Traditional Owners and elders on a project to look at useful ways to express the connection and value of underlying social and cultural drivers to land management enterprise. Without ignoring the importance of science and conservation, Indigenous land managers recognise the need to respect and enhance family and kin based connection to country and the language and knowledge of the land imbued in senior custodians.

This project is in part about finding ways to promote these and other critical assets as part of the investment in contemporary land management. It's also about starting to tease out local ways to measure positive and negative impacts on these values as conservation and carbon market opportunities are taken on.

The artistic expression of saltwater to stone country set the tone for lots of stories, engagement with kids and fun. The kids in Ngukurr had a great time painting and talking about their country along the Roper River.

Under the guidance of elders they produced a beautiful map showing the many features in the customary landscape, prominent plants and animals, song lines and fire.

It will be mapped against topographic and other more conventional fire and biodiversity management layers to express the important linkages, serving in part as a communication tool and step towards the development of a local monitoring and evaluation framework for land management enterprise.



A special thanks to Ngukurr Arts and Yugul Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation for their kind and valuable support.



The next generation of land managers render their Roper River country.



**I am further developing my leadership skill set, thanks to a scholarship with the 2012 Australian Rural Leadership Program, and the support of NAILSMA and the Northern Land Council.**

I am building my leadership skills and knowledge of farming and agricultural practices so I can work with the Wubalawun community to develop and manage its own pastoral company. I am committed to building the capacity of future leaders in our community by passing the benefits I gain through the program on to younger generations. Our old people are dying and there is no one standing by to take their place. I want to step up and show our young people that 'if I can do it, you can do it'. I want to secure a positive pathway for younger generations so our young people can become leaders in their own right.

The program of the rural leadership course includes study tours to different regions of Australia, where rural leaders are pushed to extend their leadership capability through practical experiences.

So far I have found the program both challenging and rewarding. On recent trips through the Kimberley, and to Sydney and Canberra we have been really pushed to our limits. I feel like I have already learned so much, it is just amazing.

**Alan Maroney, Wubalawun Traditional Owner, NT**

*Alan Maroney, Wubalawun Traditional Owner and Co-chair of the Mataranka Traditional Owner Water Allocation Reference Group, worked with other Reference Group members to have a say on the NT Government's Mataranka Water Allocation Plan and establishing future engagement protocols with the government.*

# WATER POLICY

# LAUNCH

**The NAILSMA Indigenous Water Policy Group (IWPG) has been working to better support people's interests in government water planning processes in line with the National Water Initiative.**

Indigenous people, like other interest groups, want to manage water for economic use and better engage Indigenous communities in land and water resource management. By doing so it would contribute to Indigenous economic development and help address disadvantage in north Australia.

After six years of community engagement, targeted research and significant policy consideration, we launched our agreed position on the Strategic Indigenous Reserve which will assist in consultative processes among governments, non-Indigenous stakeholders and Indigenous land managers toward implementing a Strategic Indigenous Reserve in government water planning and policy frameworks.

The Strategic Indigenous Reserve is a means for enhancing our water rights and interests and achieving practical outcomes that will contribute to the overall well-being of Indigenous communities.

The Strategic Indigenous Reserve is a perpetual, exclusive and inalienable right to a share of water available for consumption in surface and groundwater systems. This just means communities would get an amount of water in a statutory water plan to be used by communities for their interests. The rights to that water would be held and managed by Traditional Owners but shared by community.



*Joe Ross, Chair IWPG and Nicklas Woody, Ranger, Wenlock Catchment Meeting, Mapoon, Qld.*

Indigenous economic development and addressing disadvantage is an agreed national priority. The idea of water rights through the Strategic Indigenous Reserve is consistent with the Australian Government Closing the Gap agenda and recognises and leverages native title assets, rights outlined in the universal United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and north Australian Indigenous community interests to secure real and practical benefits, including through participation in the market economy.

Securing water for our communities before it becomes fully allocated would ensure we are well-placed to engage in and take advantage of development activities in the north. It would encourage communities to take up industry activities on their land that uses water or trade water to help contribute to both Indigenous and broader social and economic outcomes.

The Strategic Indigenous Reserve provides a strong framework for governments to improve existing arrangements for Indigenous reserves in Queensland, and to adopt this concept in all water plans for the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

**Joe Ross,  
Chair, Indigenous Water Policy Group**



*Participants of the 13th Meeting of the Indigenous Water Policy Group, Broome, WA.*

New Publication: *Indigenous people's right to the commercial use and management of water – The Strategic Indigenous Reserve* published as NAILSMA 017/2013. It is available on the NAILSMA website.

# BITTER Water Decisions

**We were perplexed at the ease with which the NT Government, in April 2013, granted a huge amount of water to one property outside the draft Mataranka Water Allocation plan, but a day before and without community consultation, overturned the previous decision to set aside a Strategic Indigenous Reserve of water for the Indigenous community of the area.**

Indigenous people at the local level have always said they don't want to be consulted after the fact; that they too have aspirations for economic development; that being part of northern development will enable them to create businesses that grow their wealth but also protect their cultural interests.

Keeping everyone informed upfront of the planning process, particularly Traditional Owners, must be standard practice, not the exception. This decision is totally inconsistent with internationally accepted standards to seek prior and informed consent from Indigenous people who have the most to lose in these circumstances.

This situation highlights why water plans must be put in place and why the Commonwealth Government must play an overarching role in ensuring that state and territory governments adhere to their own planning processes and the COAG\* blueprint - the National Water Initiative.

We need to move beyond the *rush towards development at any cost* approach to one that positions north Australia as one of the great social, cultural and economic wonders of the world where Indigenous people are no longer marginalised but are truly part of the fabric of the north and its development into the 21st century.

We will continue to engage with all sectors of the community and governments to ensure that our future generations enjoy the fruits of developing the north, an expectation common to most Australians.

**Joe Morrison, CEO, NAILSMA Ltd**

*\*COAG - Council of Australian Governments.*



Some of the participants of the Mataranka Indigenous Water Planning Forum, NT 2011, one of four major meetings held over six months, to develop their submission to the Draft Mataranka Tindall Limestone Aquifer Water Allocation Plan. The submission was lodged in May 2012 with assistance from Northern Land Council and NAILSMA.

## Meeting my family through WATER



### I didn't get to grow up here on our Wubalawun country, around Mataranka.

My mum and my uncle, were taken away in the 1960s. They were taken to Croker Island Mission and ended up getting adopted by a non-Indigenous family. I have since returned and learned a lot of things about our family that I didn't know growing up. I also learned a lot about how important land is and the importance of water and how water connects all of us.

The first water planning meeting I went to, I didn't know anything about water – I didn't know anything about the background. But when I found out that the Traditional Owners in the Mataranka area hadn't actually been involved with the planning process that had been going on for three years, I was shocked that this could happen. Also that they did not have proper representation until only a few months before the draft plan was due to go to government – that was also amazing – how can such lack of consultation and inclusion still happen?

After all our discussions, and with help from NAILSMA and the Northern Land Council, we agreed that a Strategic Indigenous Reserve (SIR)\* should be part of the plan. I think the SIR is very important because it is about opening up commercial opportunities for our families for the next hundreds and hundreds of years.

If we get it right now, then we are in a position where we can not only develop business on our country if that's what we decide to do, but we would also be included properly into how the water gets distributed within the water planning area. That's important because the water in Mataranka is connected to the water in Katherine. If we take water from one area, then another area might be affected. So all four Traditional Owner groups in Mataranka water plan district need to focus our attention on that. The Strategic Indigenous Reserve to me is about planning into the future.

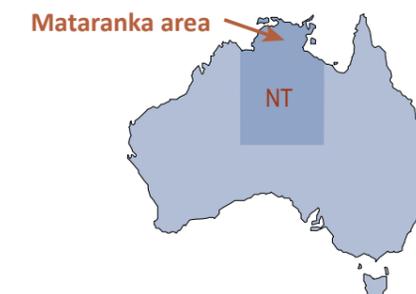
The big thing I've taken out of the Mataranka water planning process that we Traditional Owners have been a part of, has been meeting all the other language groups as well as the four groups getting together and talking about water. I have met lots of people, and these are all my extended family that I didn't know before – it's been an amazing journey.

**Trish Maroney, Wubalawun Traditional Owner**

*\* The Strategic Indigenous Reserve (SIR) is defined as a perpetual, exclusive and inalienable right to a share of water available for consumption in surface and groundwater systems. These water rights would be specifically set aside for activities that contribute to Indigenous prosperity and be held and managed by Traditional Owners across northern Australia.*

*Trish Maroney is a member of the Mataranka Traditional Owner Water Allocation Reference Group who lodged their submission to the Mataranka Tindall Limestone Aquifer Draft Water Allocation Plan in November 2012 after a consultation period of nine months that included four traditional owner meetings, one water forum, and support from NAILSMA and the Northern Land Council to develop their submission.*

*Trish Co-chairs the Future Generations Panel who provide advice to the North Australian Indigenous Experts Forum on Sustainable Economic Development. She is a speech pathologist in the Katherine region.*





Ricky Archer, Djungan Traditional Owner.

# Looking ahead to **FUTURE GENERATIONS**

## Future Generations Panel Mission Statement

We, the North Australian Indigenous Future Generations Panel, are representatives of the Indigenous youth demographic. Our mission is to ensure that Indigenous youth perspectives, knowledge and experience on the social, cultural, environmental, economic and political aspirations of north Australian Indigenous communities are included in all levels of sustainable regional development discussions and decision making for the well-being of Indigenous communities. We are laying the foundations of cultural succession to prepare us for the challenges that Indigenous communities will face in the future based upon the decisions that are made today.

**The biggest thing we identified that we wanted to do at the First Indigenous Experts Forum (June 2012), was to set up a youth advisory group to work alongside the Indigenous Experts Panel.**

We wanted to be aligned with the people making decisions in policy development and strategy creation. We were eager to be at the table and to be recognised by the Experts Panel and by the whole community.

Since then we have formed the Interim North Australian Indigenous Future Generations Panel that works in tandem with the Indigenous Experts Panel on all matters where the youth perspective/input can be considered and valued.

We are exploring options to ensure the sustainability of the Future Generations Panel into the future. This includes establishing and reviewing our roles and responsibilities and identifying opportunities to expand and diversify.

One of our main roles is to ensure that the youth/future generations sector is fairly represented at the Second Indigenous Experts Forum (May 2013) and our concerns and issues are tabled and shared with the Indigenous Experts Panel and other Forum participants.

We are pushing for Future Generations Panel involvement in the Second Indigenous Experts Forum to contribute to the development of strategic succession planning that will target and benefit the growing and emerging indigenous youth demographic right across north Australia.

**Ricky Archer, Co-chair, Interim North Australian Indigenous Future Generations Panel**

# Focusing our **NORTHERN VISION**

**The first North Australian Indigenous Experts Forum on Sustainable Economic Development held at Mary River Park, NT in June 2012, offered a unique opportunity for Indigenous people to engage in northern development, and to influence policy and investment through the Northern Australia Ministerial Forum.**

'This Forum provides some focus on a vision that has Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and our aspirations at the heart of what a northern Australia might look like over the next 25 years.' Peter Yu, Deputy Chair and forum convenor.

More information: [www.nailsma.org.au/programs/north-australian-indigenous-experts-forum-sustainable-economic-development](http://www.nailsma.org.au/programs/north-australian-indigenous-experts-forum-sustainable-economic-development)



Napcia Bin Tahal, Torres Strait Islands.

'This Forum for me is definitely a big stepping stone for a broader governance structure for the north of Australia, for Indigenous peoples especially. I think it was a good opportunity for us to all to be here together, to work collaboratively together.'

'The biggest thing that has come out of this discussion is the word UNITY. I think that we really need to keep that strong. The word UNITY is in the word *community*. We all come from communities, and we need to maintain that unity. To go forward on this - to get that action plan out there and to get the government on side with what we want to do here - what we'll need is that northern Australia unity.'

**Napcia Bin Tahal, Torres Strait Islands, Qld**



Joseph Rainbow and Cissy Gore-Birch.

'This is a chance to come together as a group, and to support and lift each other up. The Forum was very important to me, to reflect our views. It also enlightens us to hear about other positive initiatives going on with Traditional Owners from other areas. Additionally, we all have our own goals to show others - to support and bring others up - because some communities have little. And Traditional Owners from my area feel that, in any management plan - land, sea and freshwater means more to us than any dollars.'

**Joseph Rainbow, Kurtjar Traditional Owner, Morr Morr Pastoral Company, Qld**

'As a representative of the Indigenous Experts Panel, I feel so privileged to be part of this whole journey to be able to address the issues for northern Australia. I think it is really important that we continue this journey together, united as one, with one voice, to be able to move forward, and to bring our emerging generations with us.'

**Cissy Gore-Birch, Kununurra, WA**



# 2012 I-Tracker Forum

**The 2012 NAILSMA I-Tracker Forum was held at Mary River Park, Northern Territory during October. It was attended by Traditional Owners, Indigenous ranger groups, government representatives and international guests.**

The three day forum was divided into a number of activities including presentations by international guest speakers and information sharing and feedback on improvements to I-Tracker. There were a number of hands on workshops and skill sharing sessions including one on how to track lions in Africa. There was plenty of entertainment between formal sessions, with some attendees choosing to sit around a campfire under the stars in the evening while others stayed in the cool to watch ranger group DVDs and videos. There were even music jam-sessions and fun games such as identity bingo and a haiku competition.

Here's what some of the participants had to say.

### David Leask

...is from the community of Metlakatla, British Columbia on the west coast of Canada. His job is the land and resource coordinator for his community and the supervisor for the guardian program in Metlakatla.

'We have just started using Coastal Tracker which is almost the same as I-Tracker.'



We have identified areas that are important to the community in terms of traditional use and areas that are ecologically important. We are working out what data we want to collect from the areas. Some areas we have identified are tourism values and the number of tourists in our areas. We've also identified some key species like crab and salmon that we want to find ways of recording data for.

The forum has really opened my eyes to the potential that we could move to. I think the sheer number of rangers here that are collecting data out on country is an eye opener for me. The other thing I have really enjoyed is that it seems like a real brotherhood here with the rangers. They have a real strong relationship and it's an inspiring thing to see.'



### Napunda Marawili

...is a Yirralka Ranger with Laynaphuy Homelands and lives at Baniyala in North East Arnhem Land, NT

'We use I-Tracker in our community especially for ghost nets, buffalo and feral pigs surveys and marine debris which are all recorded in CyberTracker. This is my first time here and I have met a lot of other rangers and we have been getting to know each other, sharing stories and where we are from. It's good to learn about each other and meet together, it's *maynmak*. I especially enjoyed meeting the people from Canada who are telling their important story, passing on their knowledge of where and how they work, so we can learn from each other.'

### Alison Liddy

...is the Team Leader Administration for the Lama Lama Rangers in north Queensland

'We have been using I-Tracker on cultural recordings and have done data collections on our swamps and lagoons. Hopefully we get more information on our land and the sea. I enjoyed seeing some new faces, meeting other people especially some of the ladies from the other ranger groups. There were lots of new faces and some old ones. It's been great to see stuff like report writing and database collection and what other tools are available to use on the ground. It's good everyone is working together. I think there have been more opportunities this time to go to the working sessions – I found this more interesting.'



Some of the participants at the NAILSMA 2012 I-Tracker Forum.

# Warddeken & Kimberley rangers

## Exchanging fire stories



Warddeken Rangers, Terrah Guymala and Nigel Gellar, sharing information about their fire management program.



Regan Gellar using a leaf blower to control an early dry season burn around a patch of the endemic and fire sensitive Anbinik (*Allosyncarpia*) trees, Arnhem Land, NT. Photo: Jake Weigl



Rodney Naborlhborlh fighting a late dry season fire in the stone country, Arnhem Land, NT. Photo: Jake Weigl



In December 2012 three members of the Warddeken Land Management Ranger Group traveled to Derby, WA to share their stories and experiences in being involved in the West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (WALFA) project.

Senior Ranger Coordinator Nigel Gellar, Ranger Coordinator and Director Terrah Guymala and Operations Manager Jake Weigl attended the conference, which brought together Kimberley Landowners and fire project coordinators involved in the region's developing fire management and carbon abatement programs.

Warddeken Rangers from western Arnhem Land have been implementing a fire management program in a formal carbon abatement arrangement with ConocoPhillips for seven years. The WALFA project was developed in close collaboration with a number of eminent *Bininj* professors of the plateau so is based upon the principles and practices of customary burning.

The three Warddeken staff who traveled to mentor Kimberley rangers are experienced in all facets of the fire program – from conducting landowner consultations and planning, to implementing on-ground and aerial burning, to fighting wildfires – and so were able to share practical knowledge about the operations of a major fire project. The team shared first-hand evidence of the way in which improved fire management has positively impacted the environment and ecosystems of the west Arnhem plateau – from a landscape to species level.

Importantly the team also shared some of the less tangible benefits of the fire program with Kimberley Rangers, including the maintenance and intergenerational transfer of customary knowledge, the sense of pride the program brings to younger generations, and the fulfilment brought by seeing sick country become healthy again through using fire the right way.

Warddeken has forged strong relationships with rangers from the Kimberley, and had recently hosted sixteen Willingun Rangers in the Warddeken IPA. It was a pleasure to travel to the Kimberley to meet up with old friends, and share our story about fire.

**Georgia Vallance,**  
Administration, Research and Training Manager,  
Warddeken Land Management Limited,  
Arnhem Land, NT

# International SPOTLIGHT on Indigenous fire management



Peter Yu, Chair, NAILSMA Ltd.

**Aboriginal skills and knowledge in managing fire in north Australia's savannas will be shared with developing countries across the globe.**

NAILSMA Ltd Chair Peter Yu travelled to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Doha, Qatar, in December 2012 to assist in delivering a special briefing with the then Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, Mark Dreyfus in announcing the new Australian Government sponsored Savanna Fire Management Initiative.

Under this initiative, NAILSMA is collaborating with the Australian Government and the United Nations University (UNU) to share Indigenous fire management knowledge and experiences.

Peter Yu said, 'The north Australian approach to managing fire could well apply in savanna country internationally.'



World distribution of savanna grasslands and the location of the UN Climate Change Conference in 2012.

'Savanna peoples in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and South America have experienced catastrophic interruptions to their traditional ways of managing fire, just like we have here in north Australia.'

'This has threatened people's links to country and culture and has resulted in regular outbreaks of uncontrolled and destructive wild fires.'

'Our north Australian Indigenous land managers' pioneering experience of reviving and applying traditional techniques for managing fire has come at a time when effective fire management can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and generate income.'

'While this is important for communities with limited economic opportunities, Indigenous fire management also strengthens ties with country and culture and enables people to stay on their ancestral lands.'

Two major fire management projects underway in the Northern Territory - the West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement project (WALFA) and the Fish River Fire Project - are widely recognised as trail blazers and examples for other projects preparing to join the carbon economy.

Senior Research fellow of the UNU's Traditional Knowledge Initiative, Sam Johnston, who also attended the briefing at the Climate Change Conference in Doha, said that the Savanna Fire Management Initiative will help interested groups in developing countries to benefit from the work done by Indigenous land managers in north Australia.

## Savanna burning in north Australia

Indigenous land managers have been leading the development of savanna burning initiatives, which combine Indigenous knowledge systems with science, to care for country and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Re-igniting traditional style patchwork fire management regimes to reduce destructive late dry season wildfires presents many opportunities for countrymen to reinvigorate and strengthen connections to country, culture and family. Importantly it also offers potential for income from selling the abated GHG emissions to investors or the Carbon Market.

The opportunities to grasp greater control over livelihood development and wellbeing outcomes by generating an income through providing environmental services, are gathering more and more interest from Indigenous land managers who constantly struggle with the uncertainty of government and non-government organisation funding cycles.

NAILSMA and its partners are working with Indigenous land managers to expand these opportunities, including through the development of a range of new methodologies, enabling them and others to engage with the Australian Government's Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) and Carbon Market.

Though there is no easy short cut to accessing these markets, land managers on the west Arnhem Land plateau (through the WALFA Project) and those from Fish River Station have shown that it can be done. These two groups are now actively

involved in helping others understand what's required to develop a land management enterprise.

As well as facilitating new (CFI) Methodologies NAILSMA is developing educational and communications material to help inform land managers about the opportunities in carbon and environmental service markets and how to access them. We've come a long way since the pioneering steps of the west Arnhem Land plateau leaders and have a long way to go to realise greater benefits for all.

The huge success of Indigenous fire management projects is shown by the increasing number of rangers involved in fire management and the hundreds of thousands of tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions being abated each year. Congratulations must go to land managers and the non-Indigenous people who have worked alongside them to make this opportunity become a reality.

# Tackling CLIMATE CHANGE with traditional knowledge

More information is available at: [www.nailsma.org.au](http://www.nailsma.org.au)

- Carbon Glossary – What are people talking about?
- Carbon Business – Frequently Asked Questions
- Carbon Project booklet

## Steps towards a carbon market



2007

- UN Climate Change Conference, Bali, Indonesia
- Australia ratifies Kyoto Protocol  
Australia commits to introduce targets to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

2009

- United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference, Copenhagen  
'Non-binding' international agreement to tackle climate change reached.

2011

- Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) legislation is passed by Gillard Government  
CFI creates a carbon market for emissions abatement and sequestration projects. Polluting companies can buy carbon credits to offset their emissions.

2013

- New CFI Methodologies  
NAILSMA and partners work on Sequestration Methodology for higher rainfall areas and Abatement Methodology for lower rainfall areas (including pastoral).
- New NAILSMA communications tools

- West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (WALFA) project initiated

WALFA pioneers the use of traditional fire management practices together with western science to better control the extent and severity of late dry season savanna wildfires and thereby reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

1996

- West Arnhem Land Fire Management Agreement (WAFMA) reached

Agreement brokered with Traditional Owners to offset some greenhouse gas emissions generated at the ConocoPhillips liquefied natural gas plant in Darwin Harbour. \$1 million a year to be paid for 17 years to provide this fire management service.

2006

- NAILSMA and its partners initiate several savannah fire management projects on a 'landscape-scale' (based on WALFA precedent)

- NAILSMA and UN University (UNU), International Expert Group Forum on Indigenous People and Climate Change, Darwin

- UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, New York

- Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) proposed

Cap-and-trade system of emissions trading proposed.

2008

- CPRS defeated

- NAILSMA and NCCARF (National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility) Climate Change Adaptation Workshop, Darwin

Delegates highlight role of traditional knowledge in responding to climate change.

2010

- UNU Climate Change Mitigation with Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Meeting, Cairns

- Federal Government introduces price on carbon

- Government negotiates to link Australian and European carbon markets from July 2015

- Savanna Burning Methodology approved under CFI

- Fish River Savanna Fire Management Project approved as the first Eligible Offsets project under CFI

- UN Climate Change Conference, Doha, Qatar

- NAILSMA establishes Northern Indigenous Environmental Services (NIES) Ltd

Established to assist Indigenous land managers with enterprises aimed at creating employment.

2012



The sick Green Turtle died soon after it was brought aboard.



Djelk Rangers Alfie and Moses enter information about the turtle find into PDAs using CyberTracker software and I-Tracker application.



Djelk Rangers, Alfie Galaminda and Joe Watson, with resident biologist Dr Alys Stevens performing an autopsy on the turtle.

# Djelk Rangers investigate SICK TURTLE

In October, 2011, a team of Djelk Sea Rangers headed out in their boat Djelk II to patrol the blue-green waters around Maningrida, NT. An hour into the patrol, one of the rangers spotted a sea turtle splashing about on the surface of the water in the far distance.

As they got closer the rangers could see a turtle repeatedly trying to dive down unable to get more than half its body below the surface. Exhausted, the turtle was hauled into the boat for examination. It turned out to be a fairly large Green Turtle *Chelonia mydas*, one of six species of marine turtle found in the waters of Australia. Less than an hour later the turtle died on the boat.

The rangers were doing I-Tracker training on the boat patrol at the time so they were able to record and photograph all the details of their find. Using I-Tracker Saltwater Country Patrol application they could record information onto their PDA (personal digital assistant). Back at the office this information was downloaded onto the rangers' computer.



From this they were able to use CyberTracker to show a map of the patrol route with the location of the turtle sighting and all other relevant details. This information is now accessible to the rangers anytime.

Given the unusual nature of the turtle's death, the rangers decided to keep the animal and investigate further. Initially they suspected that the turtle may have eaten indigestible marine rubbish such as hard plastic. This can cause a turtle's intestines to become clogged and bloated, making it float - a bit like the Green Turtle the rangers found. Turtles are susceptible to eating plastics because some plastics look similar to items in their usual diet like squids and sponges.

After returning to the ranger base, the rangers contacted Dr Kathy Townsend of the University of Queensland's Moreton Bay Research Station. Dr Townsend provided remote assistance to the rangers, and to resident NT Government biologist Alys Stevens, enabling them to perform a comprehensive autopsy on the turtle.

During the autopsy, the rangers employed their traditional knowledge and detailed understanding of turtle anatomy to thoroughly examine the animal and note any unusual features. In the end, no evidence of marine rubbish was found; instead an infection called spirorchiid fluke was discovered, and determined to be the most likely cause of death.

Spirorchiid fluke is a naturally occurring parasite in marine turtles. Usually a turtle becomes infected, gets a bit sick and then recovers. But in this instance the fluke infection caused a blockage of the digestion tract. The resulting build up of faeces and gas caused bloating and prevented the creature from being able to dive, feed or process food.

Marine scientists are worried by the increasing number of young turtles being severely distressed by this natural and normally combatable disease. Questions are being asked about how the immune systems of these young turtles are being compromised to the extent that they cannot recover from this infection. The management of threats to marine turtles is a complex business. All available information about any turtle death becomes very important as the search for clues continues.

On this occasion, the traditional knowledge of the Djelk Rangers combined with their use of cutting edge technology added another valuable piece to the jigsaw of marine turtle knowledge.

If you come across a sick, injured or dead sea turtle in the Northern Territory contact the Marine WildWatch hotline on 1800 453 941 for assistance and advice.

**Djelk Rangers and Alys Stevens (Dr), Biologist, Dept Land Resource Management based in Maningrida**

The Green Turtle that was seen floating and unable to dive.

# Crocodile Islands Rangers protecting Murrungga Island

The Traditional Owners of Murrungga Island are committed to caring for their country. They recognise the biodiversity conservation value of this remote offshore island which is currently free from feral animals and has the potential to be free from declared weeds, making it an ideal wildlife sanctuary.

**Some 25 km off the mainland, and approximately 500 km east of Darwin, lies a hidden treasure – Murrungga Island.**

Home to many species of birds and reptiles and the nesting ground for vulnerable and endangered sea turtles, this remote island is also home to Senior Traditional Owner and the 2012 Senior Australian of the Year, Laurie Baymarrwangga.

It was Laurie's initiative and generous donation that enabled the establishment of the Crocodile Islands Rangers (CIR) Program in 2011. The CIR patrol both mainland and sea country which includes over twenty islands in the Crocodile Islands group. This story focuses on some of the valuable work the Rangers are undertaking at Murrungga.

**Crocodile Islands Rangers, Arnhem Land, NT**

*The Crocodile Islands Rangers are very grateful for all the support they receive to undertake these essential and rewarding cultural and natural resource management activities both on Murrungga Island and in the rest of their patrol area. Some of the many supporters of the Murrungga natural resource management programs include: Working on Country; Caring For Our Country; Territory National Resource Management; DAFF; GhostNets Australia; Tangaroo Blue; University of Sydney; NT Dept Land Resource Management; and NAILSMA.*



Rangers logging a ghost net with I-Tracker. To help look after marine turtles in the area, the CIR have been undertaking ghost nets and marine debris patrols over the last few years. The community has also been involved in learning about marine debris, as well as participating in beach clean ups on Murrungga main beach.

Below: Ranger and Junior Rangers undertaking a Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) Marine Debris surveillance patrol. The CIR work very closely with the Murrungga community and have established a Junior Ranger program with Murrungga School. The Rangers are joined on many of their natural resource management activities by this enthusiastic and energetic team.



In 2011 the rangers conducted a wildlife survey on Murrungga. It was a valuable training exercise as well as adding to the number of recorded species on Murrungga. The survey confirmed that there is no evidence of feral animals on Murrungga.



The rangers are targeting declared weeds on Murrungga Island, and working with the community to tackle these weeds in a joint effort.



# A century of persistence

Over her 96 years Laurie Baymarrwangga has witnessed the arrival of the first missionaries and the World War II bombing of Milingimbi. She has established an island homeland, a school, a ranger program and a turtle sanctuary. She has saved her language, created language nests and is still not giving up. The 2012 Senior Australian of the Year now wants to give children a trilingual Yan-nhangu dictionary for free.

Laurie Baymarrwangga's dictionary project supports language education on the Crocodile Islands. In 1993 only 300 of her words were documented. Now she has recorded some four thousand. Learning local language, aside from promoting health and psychological resilience, helps transfer local knowledge to a new generation. This dictionary brings together two Yolngu languages, Yan-nhangu and Dhuwal, with English, to fill the vacuum left by the removal of bilingual education. Laurie plans to give this full colour dictionary to all Yolngu children, their schools and homelands as a gift before Christmas 2013.

Laurie's concern for her language and culture is the driving force behind the Crocodile Islands Initiative, which supports language, livelihoods and homelands. It aims to upskill and employ people on country, to follow traditional law, and protect the linguistic, cultural and biological diversity of the Islands. In 2011 Laurie was awarded the Life Time Achievement Award for services to country (NT Innovation Awards) for her support for the Crocodile Islands Initiative and for practical engagement with livelihoods on country, including a ranger program.

The Crocodile Islands Ranger Program, formally launched in 2010, won the Minister's award for Outstanding Team Achievement in the 2012 NT Ranger Awards. The rangers now protect more than 10,000 km<sup>2</sup> of sea country with 250 km<sup>2</sup> of registered sacred sites and have created a 1,000 km<sup>2</sup> turtle sanctuary. These programs are set to manage, conserve and enhance the natural marine resources and the traditional ecological knowledge that lives in local languages. This conservation effort has national significance.

Big Boss Laurie Baymarrwangga says, 'homelands are at the heart of our country'. Knowing country depends upon the complex cultural relationships linked to living on homelands. This protects a vital part of Australia's biodiversity and its cultural and environmental heritage. Homelands are where people transfer the world's oldest living traditions, deep cultural knowledge and globally rare Indigenous languages. All of these are under threat.

But Laurie Baymarrwangga will not give up the fight to save a diverse inheritance for all our futures.

**Bentley James (Dr), Anthropologist,  
Crocodile Islands, NT**



Above: Laurie Baymarrwangga. Middle: Green Turtle hatchling. Bottom: Yan-nhangu language fish poster.

# A face that reflects an exceptional life

A gentle sea breeze touches the tamarind trees of Milingimbi where Laurie Baymarrwangga is sitting in the dappled shade on the beach of her mother's country.

The ninety six year old Senior Australian of the Year 2012 is weaving while being painted by Melbourne artist Gillian Warden. Gillian spent weeks studying this amazing Malarra Elder beneath the trees in the changing island light.

'The art of portraiture is to portray a special quality of the person,' Gillian said. 'I named the portrait Virtue because Laurie has so many qualities; she is so kind and wise showing us the way.'

Baymarrwangga says it looks just like her and it is true, this picture portrays something of her life's long and exceptional experience. Wisdom, tolerance, insight and foresight are some of many qualities she represents: the virtues of leadership.

The portrait was entered in the 2013 Archibald Prize and has been selected for the June 2013 Hidden Faces exhibition in Melbourne.



Gillian Warden's Virtue, a portrait of Laurie Baymarrwangga. Below: 'Big Boss' holding her 2012 Senior Australian of the Year award surrounded by members of her community.



# National INDIGENOUS SEA COUNTRY Workshop

In May 2012, ninety Indigenous people from around Australia convened at Mary River Park in the Northern Territory, to discuss their vision and aspirations for managing sea country.

Convened by NAILSMA, on behalf of the Indigenous Advisory Committee, the Workshop provided an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from around Australia to discuss their aspirations and cultural obligations as sea country managers, to explore options for increased Indigenous engagement in sea country management, and to develop and articulate the views of delegates on appropriate frameworks and mechanisms to ensure an ongoing national voice for Indigenous people.

'Indigenous people have been owners and custodians of the marine and terrestrial environments of Australia for millennia. Since colonisation, Indigenous Australians have articulated, fought and argued for their inherent rights and responsibilities regarding the continual management of their traditional lands and seas.' Joe Morrison CEO NAILSMA

Workshop participants developed and endorsed a number of key outcomes including:

- a National Indigenous Sea Country Statement, on the need for management arrangements that address Indigenous social and cultural, ecological, and economic needs;
- recommendations for substantial Indigenous involvement in Marine Protected Areas (including incorporation of these areas into new and existing Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs));
- a Framework that identifies strategic options to increase Indigenous involvement in sea country management and protection; and
- A Working Group to continue to advance the recommendations of the workshop into the future.

Melissa George, Indigenous Advisory Committee Chair (SEWPaC\*), closed the three day workshop, reflecting on all the hard work done so far on sea country management and the need to keep moving the agenda forward. She urged delegates to build on the new relationships and ideas generated by the workshop, and raised the idea of a national land and sea conference in 2013, possibly themed on a review of the 1993 Mabo-inspired 'Turning the Tide' Conference and what has been achieved twenty years on.

\* SEWPaC: Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities



Workshop delegates line up to prioritise national framework components.



One of many breakout sessions held during the workshop.



Another breakout session.



(L-R) Donna Jackson, Selina Timothy, Darren Burns, Tamara Murdock and Anna Dwyer.

## Crocodile Islands Rangers



**Gurriba Island (North-West Crocodile Island) is a small (285 ha), sandy island approximately 50 km from the mainland, and is part of the Crocodile Islands group in north-east Arnhem Land. The sandy beaches of Gurriba are considered nationally significant nesting sites for vulnerable Flatback and Green Turtles and endangered Olive Ridley Turtles. The island has also been traditionally visited by Yolngu to hunt turtles and collect turtle eggs.**

It was one of Laurie Baymarrwanga's goals (the Senior Traditional Owner of the Malarra estate), to establish a turtle sanctuary around Gurriba Island. Following Laurie's wishes, the Crocodile Islands Rangers' Executive Committee discussed the turtle sanctuary at length with the Traditional Owners for Gurriba Island and the surrounding seas. The Traditional Owners recognise their important role in helping to protect turtles and ensure turtles can keep breeding into the future, and they took the initiative to declare this area a Turtle Sanctuary.

**They said: 'In the past, Gurrmirringu was there and looked after the turtles, the surrounding waters and the island. Now, the Maringa Traditional Owners look after Gurriba and its turtles, surrounding waters and reefs.'**

Initially the sanctuary will be trialled for two years (June 2012 to June 2014), after which it will be reviewed, with the ultimate objective of making this area a permanent sanctuary. The agreed moratorium states that no person is to hunt for turtles or turtle eggs within the specified area.

The Crocodile Islands Rangers will continue to remove ghost nets and marine debris from Gurriba and the other Crocodile Islands and to patrol the surrounding seas. If people are caught breaking the rules of this moratorium the rangers will bring this to the attention of the Executive Committee, who can then take appropriate action. The rangers have also been helping to educate the community about the importance of this sanctuary, and have organised signs for Milingimbi and Gurriba Islands, to both inform people and celebrate this initiative.

**Crocodile Islands Rangers, Arnhem Land, NT**



Ranger Samuel Wumulul observing a flatback turtle on Gurriba Island. Photo: Steve Totterdell.

# DHIMURRU ABORIGINAL CORPORATION TWENTY YEARS ON

In September 2012, Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation celebrated its 20th year as a proud Indigenous organisation committed to the management of the rich cultural and natural resources found in remote North East Arnhem Land.

Dhimurru started out in 1992 with three rangers, an Executive Officer, one second hand vehicle and shared office space with Parks and Wildlife Commission NT (Parks NT). Yolngu elders, Traditional Owners, custodians, and their supporters, were the driving force behind Dhimurru and it was their vision and determination that put the fledgling ranger group on the map.

Today Dhimurru employs twelve Yolngu Rangers and seven *Napaki* (non-Yolngu) staff. The organisation undertakes an astounding number of projects, large and small. Major achievements include the establishment of a new office complex, the continuation of the longest running marine debris survey program in Australia (started in 1996), a marine turtle recovery program, the declaration of the Dhimurru Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) together with a comprehensive plan of management in 2000 and the launch of Dhimurru's Sea Country Plan in 2006.

One of Dhimurru's major initiatives is managing visitor access by the introduction of an access permit system negotiated through the Northern Land Council on behalf of Traditional Owners. Access Permits allow Yolngu to maintain control of their country and provide a mechanism through which Dhimurru can protect sensitive and fragile areas from the large number of visitors.

A large part of Dhimurru's success arises from its *both ways* approach and its many effective partnerships. Dhimurru's *both ways* philosophy is about engaging with leading experts to get the best scientific and cultural advice, and empowering Yolngu to make informed decisions as they direct Dhimurru in its programs.

Dhimurru has shown that with strong leadership, a solid governance model, commitment to *both ways* management and a very large measure of respect, Indigenous led organisations can produce very effective, long term and successful outcomes for both the environment and the community.

As the capacity of Dhimurru continues to increase, the core value of *everyone together looking after country* continues to influence every aspect of the organisation.

**Vanessa Drysdale, Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation, Nhulunbuy, NT**

[www.dhimurru.com.au](http://www.dhimurru.com.au)



Mandaka Marika, Managing Director, Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation.



Dhimurru rangers replacing signs for Nhulunbuy, a significant site popular with tourists.



Dhimurru rangers clear marine life caught in a ghost net.

# Nyul Nyul & Dhimurru



In February 2013 the Kimberley Land Council Nyul Nyul Rangers, from Beagle Bay a couple of hours north of Broome visited the Dhimurru Rangers in Nhulunbuy, on a ranger exchange visit.

Ranger exchanges are a great opportunity for rangers to share knowledge, stories and issues from their respective country on natural resource management. This type of experience gives both ranger groups the opportunity to share methods and ideas of improving management concerns they both face so that they can adopt and develop ways to succeed in projects on their own country. It also gives Rangers the opportunity to gain confidence in their ability to speak about their country outside the circle they are used to and for a remote group like the Nyul Nyul Rangers, the chance to realise they are not alone in their battle to protect the biodiversity of their country from tourists, weeds, fires and ferals.

Dhimurru has been at the forefront of Indigenous Land management by an Indigenous organisation for the past 20 years and is recognised as a leader, not only in Australia but the rest of the world for its two-way approach to learning; *ngapaki* (western) and *yolngu*, working together on natural resource management of country.

Senior Nyul Nyul Ranger Yoshi Akune says, 'We enjoy these exchanges because Dhimurru has a similar landscape to us as we work on the coast as well. We have lost a lot of our culture and stories due to many elders passing away so it is up to us to continue our culture and share stories we have learnt from our elders, with the young people of our community.'



Dhimurru Rangers conducting 'Welcome Ceremony' for the Nyul Nyul Rangers at Nhulunbuy.



Dhimurru Rangers giving Nyul Nyul Rangers tour of Wurrurrwuy (Macassan Stone Pictures) at Garanhun (Macassan Beach).

'Dhimurru Rangers are very close to their culture and it has been good for us to be among this.' Yoshi Akune said.

The Dhimurru Rangers get great pleasure in helping other ranger groups who are still trying to establish themselves as Indigenous land management groups and enjoy learning a thing or two from them as well.

**Paul Augustin, Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation, NT**

# RANGER EXCHANGE

# Pormpuraaw Rangers pig-proof Bull Lake

**One of the most devastating environmental impacts facing north Australia is the damage caused by thousands of feral pigs roaming the landscape.**

Counting and controlling feral animals is a key activity for Indigenous ranger groups operating across the north. One group has tackled this problem head on at a very important local wetland.

Bull Lake is located about 50 km east of Pormpuraaw, on the south-western side of Cape York, Queensland. The lake is an extremely important place culturally, relating to the start of the Rainbow Serpent story for this area. It is also classified as a wetland of national significance. It is a permanent swamp, but shallow throughout. This makes it very attractive habitat for feral pigs, which cause severe damage to the vegetation through their wallowing and rubbing. It also impacts local people because pigs prey on freshwater turtles, a food source.

To control the pigs and protect the lake, the Pormpuraaw Rangers, who are employed through the Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council by the Queensland Government, decided to take action. The rangers operate over an area of about 4,662 km<sup>2</sup> along the west coast of Cape York Peninsula (encompassing the Pormpuraaw Deed of Grant of Land in Trust, or DOGIT).

Starting in August 2012, the rangers embarked on a project to install pig-proof fencing around the entire periphery of Bull Lake. The nine Pormpuraaw Rangers had assistance from an additional four Ewamian Rangers, who are normally stationed at Mt. Surprise. Together, the rangers toiled in very hot conditions to install a whopping 6.4 km of fencing. To make things more interesting, an air compressor and post driver were damaged during the operation, and over 300 pickets had to be driven in by hand.

To make the fence totally pig-proof, the rangers used Waratah materials, and the wiring was tied seven times on each picket. The end result includes three double gates and a series of 'wallaby hatches', which are pig-proof but allow wallabies to move in and out of the area without injury. All up, the fence took about eight weeks to complete and used roughly \$80,000 worth of materials.

The main danger to the fence and its maintenance is fire, so the Pormpuraaw Rangers plan to spend about three weeks a year maintaining the fence, which includes repairing any damage and keeping the fence area clear from long grass and other fire hazards.

**Pormpuraaw Rangers, Cape York, Qld**  
[www.pormpuraaw.qld.gov.au/ranger.htm](http://www.pormpuraaw.qld.gov.au/ranger.htm)



*Bull Lake, about 50 km of Pormpuraaw (Qld) has been completely protected by pig-proof fencing by the Pormpuraaw Rangers.*

*Below left: The new fence, which is 6.4 km long, will keep feral pigs out of the lake while allowing wallabies to get in and out.*

*Below right: The Pormpuraaw Rangers and four visiting Ewamian Rangers worked for eight weeks to complete the fence around Bull Lake.*



# DHIMURRU RANGERS Rehabilitating Wanuwuy



Ranger Daniel Hicks planting Lunginy plant *Scaevola sericea*.

Dhimurru Rangers recently planted out more than 100 seedlings and grass stock at Wanuwuy (Cape Arnhem) covering an area of approximately four hectares. The seedlings planted included casuarinas, pandanas, brachychiton and native grasses. Most seedlings were grown in the Dhimurru nursery, but a significant number were donated by Yirrkala Business Enterprises (YBE) from their excess stock.

The growing of seedlings has been going on since mid-2012 with the Dhimurru Miyalk Rangers collecting seeds from the coastal dunes, preparing the seeds and potting them up in the nursery. The timing of the planting has taken place in the hope that some wet season rain will allow the young plants to take root quickly and enable them to get through their first dry season.

During two full days of work, plantings were concentrated around the popular camping areas near the area known locally as *The Penthouse*. The project aims to rehabilitate the coastal dune systems at Wanuwuy, which may have experienced some degradation in the past. This damage may be due to vehicle access to areas that are fragile, or areas of land that have been burnt outside of the traditional burning season.

Along with the planting of seedlings, protective barriers and interpretive signage will be installed around the more dense areas of planting. This will prevent the small plants being inadvertently crushed by foot and vehicle traffic.

With this combined effort between the Dhimurru Rangers and the Nhulunbuy community, within a few years there will be a bunch of lovely new shade trees at Wanuwuy for all to enjoy. The dunes will be stabilised and some healthy coastal thickets will develop in which the small native animals can find shelter and food.

**Vanessa Drysdale, Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation, NT**



Ranger Wanggawuy Mununggirritj holding Lunginy plants *Scaevola sericea*.



Some of the Dhimurru staff, Wanuwuy (Cape Arnhem), NT.



# Indigenous approaches to LEARNING ABOUT SEA COUNTRY

While doing my PhD with the University of the Sunshine Coast under the CSIRO Coastal Collaboration Cluster Research Program, I conducted research with the Apudthama people of the Northern Peninsula Area (NPA), Cape York Peninsular, Queensland.

Researchers have increasingly investigated different areas of learning in natural resource management however little is published about the Indigenous approaches to learning in natural resource management and more specifically in coastal and marine resource management.

Mr Meun Lifu, the key informant of my research is also one of the traditional elders of the Gudang Yadhaykenu tribe in the NPA who are directly connected to sea country. He is a respected elder in the traditional owner community of Injinoo and has authority over traditional knowledge of both the land and the sea. He was born in 1943 and spent more than 24 years as a Land and Sea Ranger for the NPA region. He described the indigenous approaches to learning for sea country as yarning/story-telling, demonstration, observation, memorisation, imitation and repetition, learning from lessons and mistakes at sea, learning from embarrassing situations, shaming, learning from questioning, and learning in stages.

The consideration of these learning styles is important for cross-cultural and Indigenous natural resource management practitioners in partnership with Indigenous communities in the NPA. For example, yarning sessions with elders and knowledge holders of sea country is an effective strategy for obtaining first-hand information, not only about sea country but also about relationships to sea country and aspirations for sea country.

**Lavenie Tawake, Cairns, Qld**

*Lavenie Tawake is based at the CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences Office in Cairns. She is an Indigenous Fijian and married with three children.*



Lavenie Tawake and Meun Lifu.



Mr Meun Lifu on his way fishing early in the morning. Behind is the mouth of Cowal Creek. Photo: Lavenie Tawake



The delegation: (L-R) Cameron Yates and Steve Sutton (Bushfires NT), Nigel Geller (Warddeken Land Management), Victor Rostron (Djelk Rangers), Michael Carter, Peter Bocklehurst (Dept. Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport), and Jake Weigl (Warddeken Land Management), Otto Campion (Gurruwiling Rangers), Dominique Lynch (Bushfires NT\*). Absent: Jeremy Russel-Smith (Consultant: NAILSMA. Bushfires NT). \* Some Bushfires NT staff are now with the Darwin Centre for Bushfire Reseach.

**A delegation of north Australian Indigenous fire managers and fire scientists travelled to Sun City, South Africa in May 2011 to attend a conference, *Wildfire. Addressing Global Change through Integrated Fire Management.***

The delegation gave presentations that shared their expertise on Savanna Fire Management and how Indigenous land managers are successfully integrating traditional fire management practices with scientific research to prevent large destructive wildfires and thereby reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The conference field trip took delegates on safari into Kruger National Park, where they saw some of South Africa's savanna country, which is similar but also very different that the north Australian savannas.



World distribution of savanna grasslands.

'Field trips certainly felt different because there was someone standing there with a gun all the time to protect us from unwanted animal attention.' Cameron Yates, Bushfires NT.

# Talking fire in SOUTH AFRICA



# A voice in the Fishing & Seafood Industry

A stronger Indigenous voice in the fishing and seafood industry is being heard thanks to the Indigenous Reference Group (IRG), established in 2011 with support from the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC), to lead discussions and provide advice in working towards a Fisheries Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) plan for Indigenous Australians.

The IRG is working to encourage recognition, documentation and protection of Indigenous fishers as the first fishing sector in Australia. This includes seeking to focus RD&E into customary fishing rights and knowledge, its use in contemporary management frameworks and pathway to management equity, as well as increasing Indigenous economic participation and prosperity across the industry.

With input from two national forums the IRG has developed the key documents below that are being used to help guide RD&E in the industry.

- Eleven Key RD&E Principles for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders developed at the Cairns Forum in 2011.
- Eleven Key RD&E Principles, Context and RD&E Outputs Endorsed at the Cairns Forum 2012.
- Five Indigenous RD&E Priorities for Fishing and Aquaculture - endorsed at the Cairns Forum 2012.

Australia's First Nation peoples have thousands of years of traditional knowledge and experience in sustainable management and use of fisheries resources. The common assertion amongst Indigenous people is to manage their own futures and for this management to be respected by policy makers.

Strengthening the Indigenous voice within the fishing and seafood industry is a small step towards the shared desired outcome.

**Chris Calogeras, Secretariat, Indigenous Reference Group, Fisheries Research and Development Corp., Dept. Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Canberra, ACT**

Copies of these and other documents are available at:  
[frdc.com.au/environment/indigenous\\_fishing/Pages/Indigenous-Reference-Group.aspx](http://frdc.com.au/environment/indigenous_fishing/Pages/Indigenous-Reference-Group.aspx)  
 More information: Indigenous Reference Group Secretariat  
 email: [calogeras@inet.net.au](mailto:calogeras@inet.net.au) mobile: 0401 692 601



*Bo Carne, Clarry Rogers and Terry Yumbulul discussing priorities, Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) Forum 2012, Cairns, Qld.*



*Stephan Schnierer, Chris Calogeras and Dennis Ah-Kee discussing priorities at the RD&E Forum.*



## Our Badu Island water

### I want to tell you about our water.

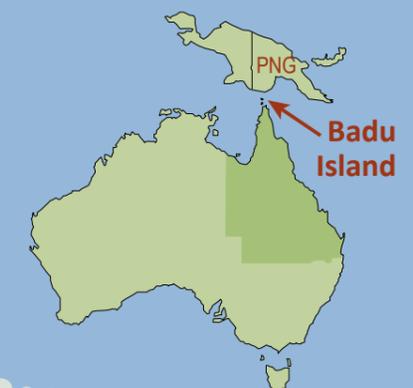
Long before, in the history of my country on Badu, my grandfather moved people, three tribes of people, from around the back to our area, our territory, because water was there. People were dying out the back; those three tribes were dying so my grandfather moved them. Because he was the Chief he knew about the land. He knew where the best water was, the best place for gardens, so he moved them around to the front of the island. Today the establishment of the Council is on our land.

Underneath Badu, there is a water table, a big water basin that goes right through from Papua New Guinea to South Australia. In the middle of the reefs, sometimes we'd find there's freshwater. My uncle William Busch and I used to hunt crayfish together - sometimes we'd find freshwater seeping up.

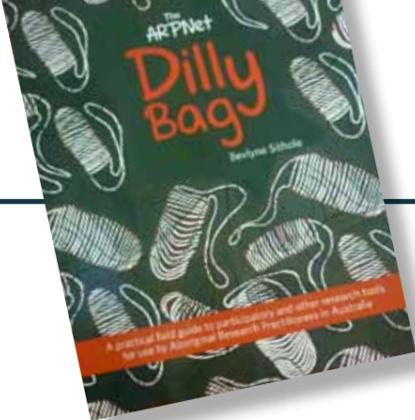
Today on the coral cay islands outside of Badu, there's no water, no drinking water. They have desalination plants set up to turn saltwater into freshwater. We don't want that on Badu.

That water table is really important, and so are our creeks. When mining and construction companies came (before we knew about self-determination and all that) they disturbed the ground, put in roads, dug up here, dug up there. Next minute, there's no creek. Today we still live off the artesian basin under Badu. Its freshwater plays a big role in our lives. We can't live without it. We want to protect it - save it so it's always there for our people. Water on small islands is extremely important.

**Robert Sagigi, Traditional Owner, Badu Island, Torres Strait**



# A toolkit for Indigenous Research



**The Aboriginal Research Practitioners' Network (ARPNet) Dilly Bag is a practical field guide to participatory and other research tools for use by Aboriginal research practitioners in Australia.**

The Dilly Bag is a manual containing a set of very simple and practical participatory tools for Aboriginal research practitioners in Australia.

It weaves in local Aboriginal experiences and understanding of concepts, ideas and processes and in that way it becomes a manual developed with Aboriginal research practitioners and is owned by them. The beautiful cover design is based on artwork by Linda Gurawana from Babbarra Women's Centre in Maningrida, Arnhem Land, Northern Territory. It reflects the significance of the dilly bag and the value placed on the tools which Otto Campion says 'he wants to add to his dilly bag'.

Though these tools have been adapted for use by Aboriginal people, other people can use them too. They are suited for wide use and are easy to learn.

The tool cards and cue cards presented in the manual make it portable and give Aboriginal research practitioners a reference point and a companion when doing field work. The tools in the ARPNet Dilly Bag equip Aboriginal people with skills that can open up more opportunities for participation in research and evaluation projects especially as there is a growing interest in qualitative research and local involvement.

Interest among Aboriginal people to participate in research and evaluation projects continues to grow and with this growth is a demand for better and more effective tools that respond to and are suited to Aboriginal needs. Getting the tools right is therefore critical to sustain this growing interest and level of involvement. Participatory tools can be the basis for developing simple and useful tools for engagement in research, evaluation, planning and development situations both in remote areas and among urban Aboriginal communities. One of the teams, team Gunbalanya, worked on a project in 2011 where ARPNet was one of four consulting companies employed to work on the Community Safety and Wellbeing survey undertaken by the Australian Government.

The success of ARPNet teams in tendering for projects and their increased involvement in collaborative research projects demonstrate how engagement by Aboriginal people can be strengthened when suitable tools are available. A recent 2013 contract to support a review of a Government program (Department of Health and Ageing) elicited an interesting response from stakeholders who felt the tools used by ARPNet research practitioners were 'simple and effective'. The Indigenous Research Reform Agenda argues for a repositioning of research on Indigenous issues to involve Indigenous people. Tools in the ARPNet Dilly Bag provide Aboriginal people with a way to effect this repositioning and to be direct agents in effecting that change.

Giving communities good tools and strengthening local capacity for stronger engagement is key towards enabling sustainable futures for Aboriginal people in Australia.

Over the last few years ARPNet has been host to interested Aboriginal people who want to explore and engage in research and evaluation. To respond to this demand, ARPNet has conducted annual workshops where interested Aboriginal people are trained to use participatory tools.

Once trained, ARPNet members like Otto Campion, become trainers. Dean Yibarbuk said 'I use these tools all the time now, even in the family to talk about issues, I like that ranking one'. So the tools are being used beyond the projects.

Giving Aboriginal people this training means we open up as yet underutilised opportunities for short term employment in remote areas. Cherry Daniels, a founder and Co-chair of ARPNet said 'this is a good way to get jobs for my girls, my youth and my people, and we get to help our people and do this research the Bininj way'.

The high number of research and evaluation projects in communities and urban town camps makes this a real opportunity for Aboriginal employment that should be explored and developed as a real option to address unemployment.

The increasing involvement and competitiveness of ARPNet against other research and consulting groups underscores the value of stronger Aboriginal involvement in projects and the growing importance of participatory tools in research and community development. We anticipate that The Dilly Bag manual will add to this positive trend.

**Bev Sithole (Dr), ARPNet research direction and training, Darwin, NT**



Team Gunbalanya (Back L-R) Godfrey Blitner, Serina Nimanyilk, Grace Daniels, Celia Lewis (Front L-R), Hmalan Hunter-Xénié, Dean Yibarbuk, Rex Edmond (Barbara Galamirnda absent).



ARPNet Co-chair Otto Campion (far right) trains others by demonstrating the use of transects as a tool to gather information about knowledge and perceptions of natural resource management. (L-R) Julie Roy, Grace Daniels, Christine Brown.

*Acknowledgements:*

*ARPNet is hosted by the Research Institute for Environment and Livelihoods (RIEL), Charles Darwin University, Darwin NT.*

*Australian Government through the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) funded manual preparation.*

*NT Government Dept Employment and Training, Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation and other agencies funded workshops.*



(L-R) Ricky, Ron and Jim Archer, Djungan Traditional Owners.

# Rangers present @ beach-nesting birds workshop



Red-capped Plover on nest

## New technology on old transport

When I first asked my son Rick to come with us to record traditional knowledge on our Mt Mulligan bush trip, he grabbed his GPS and his laptop, strapped it to his back and stepped aboard his horse. Swag behind. My eldest brother Jim was leading the way and leading the passing of knowledge to Rick.

I said to Rick, 'Mate, the most important thing about this field trip is you recording the knowledge from your uncle.' So we'd stop every couple of hours and pull out the laptop. I just sat back and I watched this recording going on for hours.

How the world has changed. Old ringers like us would never have thought that our children would one day reach into their bags, pull out a laptop, and start punching data into it when we went bush.

Ron Archer, Djungan Elder, Upper Mitchell River, Cape York, Qld



(L-R) Jim and Ricky Archer, Djungan Traditional Owners.



Mapoon Ranger representatives Thomas Pitt and Jane Blackwood share information at the BirdLife Australia Beach-Nesting Birds workshop, Cairns, Qld.

**Representatives from the Nanum Wunghim (Napranum) Land and Sea Rangers and the Mapoon Land and Sea Rangers travelled to Cairns in April 2013 to present at a workshop run by BirdLife Australia. The workshop was open to the public by registration and focussed on the issues and threats facing resident beach-nesting shorebirds, that is shorebirds that live in Australia year round and lay their eggs on beaches.**

In southern Australia, conservation of resident beach-nesting birds is extremely challenging primarily because their habitat is very popular for recreational use, for example swimming, beach driving, and dog walking. However, particularly in the past few years, some species of birds at certain sites are well monitored due to the large number of volunteers who contribute data regularly to BirdLife Australia databases.



In north Australia, the status of beach-nesting birds and the threats to them are less well known. While it is expected that populations in Cape York are faring better than those in more populated areas, few studies have been done. In general, there is a lack of data about nesting occurrences and success for many beach-nesting birds, especially those that are secretive and have a large territory, such as the Beach Stone-curlew, which, in Queensland, is listed as a vulnerable species.

At the workshop, Napranum Rangers representatives, Dale Furley and Bronwyn Hall, made a presentation which gave a general overview of the ranger program and then discussed areas of interest around Napranum for shorebirds, and the results of a recent shorebird count. Mapoon Land and Sea Ranger representatives, Jane Blackwood and Thomas Pitt, presented on the important shorebird areas around Mapoon, the monitoring that has been done on beach-nesting shorebirds in the last three years, and some of the issues facing beach-nesting birds such as Red-capped Plovers, Black-fronted Dotterals, Beach Stone-curlews, Pied Oystercatchers and Little Terns.

One of the issues raised at the workshop was that while resident shorebirds face a number of well-understood threats on highly populated beaches in southern Australia, where large numbers of volunteers monitor nesting and threats,

little accessible information is available for the many remote beaches in Cape York that likely contain some of Australia's most robust populations of resident shorebirds. It was reinforced to attendees at the workshop that ranger groups in Cape York are extremely well-placed to vastly expand the amount of information available on resident shorebirds, and have the expertise and on-ground presence to do so. The importance of collaborative partnerships was reinforced.

After the workshop, the rangers headed back to Weipa along with a staff member from NAILSMA and a staff member from BirdLife Australia. As part of an ongoing collaborative project, four ranger groups in the Gulf of Carpentaria, including Napranum and Mapoon, have worked with NAILSMA and BirdLife Australia to establish regular count areas and do training in shorebirds identification and counting skills. The project has also developed an I-Tracker application to collect shorebirds data and to help with identification during counts. The ranger groups did workshops and shorebird counts from 8 to 11 April 2013.

**Nanum Wunghim Land and Sea Rangers, Mapoon Land and Sea Rangers, Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council; Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council, Cape York Peninsula, Qld**

[www.napranum.qld.gov.au/council-departments/rangers](http://www.napranum.qld.gov.au/council-departments/rangers); [www.mapoon.com](http://www.mapoon.com)



Beach Stone-curlew



Pied Oystercatcher



Black-fronted Dotteral

In 2012, Tuna Blue Consulting was contracted by NAILSMA to undertake an assessment of the I-Tracker program by interviewing people who know or use the NAILSMA I-Tracker services. The whole process was called 'Most Significant Change' (MSC). MSC uses stories told by people on country to look at the changes a project has made for them and their communities.

NAILSMA wanted to get feedback about I-Tracker and to measure what impact I-Tracker was having on individuals and communities.

People were invited to tell their story. It was explained to the people who agreed to take part (Traditional Owners, Indigenous rangers, scientists and others) that they would remain anonymous and that any interviews done would be confidential. This way readers of the final report would not know who was being quoted.



## Most Significant Change process for I-Tracker

*Will Bessen, Tuna Blue Consulting, explains the process of Most Significant Change project at the I-Tracker Forum, 2012*

Here are some quotes from stories collected during the process:

'Our elders tell us stories and keep that information, well now the I-Tracker more or less is sort of doing it in a technology way - what the old people are doing. And we're combining it together.'

'It's a multi-layered approach that requires a coordinated effort from different people with different skills ... and what I see here with I-Tracker is that combination, and the right mix of people to make it work.'

'It helps us get to our destinations quicker because it more or less shows you where you've been and which country you've been to ... more or less like a live map.'

'So now it's become main-stream, every time we go out on patrol the rangers are grabbing their Nomads [PDAs]. So it's taken five years, but it's really become part of what the rangers do every day.'

**Will Bessen**  
Tuna Blue Consulting



*Will Bessen interviewing a delegate of the I-Tracker Forum 2012.*

# I-Tracker Wins two Banksia Awards



*Banksia Awards presentation (L-R) Chris Sampi, Dion Cooper, Joe Morrison, Rod Kennett, Alison Liddy, Micha Jackson, Jenny Creek.*

**The North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance Ltd won two awards in the prestigious Banksia environmental awards at a gala event on the 26 October 2012 for the following categories:**

- Land and Biodiversity - Preserving our Ecosystems Award
- Indigenous Award - Caring for Country

The awards were attended by Dion Cooper from the Djelk Rangers, Jenny Creek from the Kalan Rangers, Alison Liddy from the Lama Lama Rangers and Chris Sampi from the Bardi Jawi Rangers. Also in attendance were Dr Sam Johnston from the United Nations University Traditional Knowledge Institute, Michael Looker from The Nature Conservancy, Rod Kennett, Micha Jackson and Joe Morrison from NAILSMA and Ilse Kiessling.

The NAILSMA I-Tracker program, which supports Indigenous land and sea managers across north Australia, has been recognised for innovative solutions to the challenge of monitoring and conserving biodiversity on Indigenous lands and seas in north Australia.

'Our I-Tracker program is fundamentally advancing land management in Australia, by giving Indigenous communities the power to record, analyse and map their own data,' said Joe Morrison, CEO of NAILSMA Ltd.

In awarding the winner of the Indigenous Award - Caring for Country, the Banksia Environmental Foundation noted that, 'the judges were particularly pleased to see the great

connection between technology and its application to care for our country on a multitude of levels'.

The Foundation also highlighted the broad impact of the I-Tracker initiative in its remarks for the Land and Biodiversity-Preserving our Ecosystems Award, saying that 'it has transformed the collection of environmental information and the management of environmental and biosecurity issues across the Top End of Australia'.

Mr. Morrison said, 'Indigenous land and sea managers are often the only locally-based managers in remote and regional Australia, and I-Tracker equips rangers with the same state-of-the-art tools and technologies as other land managers around the globe'.

'As part of the National CyberTracker Network, I-Tracker has become the leading model for best-practice environmental monitoring and reporting by Indigenous rangers, and is now in use by rangers responsible for over 25 million hectares of high-biodiversity land and sea country.'

'I-Tracker is a key part of NAILSMA's strategy to develop livelihood opportunities in north Australia that are based on the cultural and traditional responsibilities of Indigenous people to care for their country,' he said.

Mr. Morrison congratulated the finalists for the 2012 Banksia Awards saying, 'all finalists are making important contributions to the conservation of Australia's unique cultural and natural heritage'.



# Shorebird count - Gulf of Carpentaria

**Migratory shorebirds are one of nature's great wonders and are sensitive indicators of the quality of wetland habitats. Other shorebirds are resident in Australia and have important breeding areas on beaches in north Australia. However, despite national and international protection, shorebirds are declining.**

NAISMA, BirdLife Australia and four Indigenous ranger groups in the Gulf of Carpentaria – the Mapoon Land and Sea Rangers, the Nanum Wungthim Land and Sea Rangers (based in Napranum), the Pormpuraaw Rangers and the Li-Anthawirriyarr Sea Rangers (based in Borroloola) – are involved in an exciting collaborative project to monitor shorebirds in the region using I-Tracker tools.

The Gulf of Carpentaria region is the third largest shorebird aggregation site in Australia, however accessible data on numbers of shorebirds in the region is incredibly sparse. Ranger programs are uniquely placed, through their skills, traditional knowledge, and access to country, to make a major contribution to the collective research knowledge about shorebirds, their status and migration routes in Australia.

BirdLife Australia's Shorebirds 2020 project, of which NAISMA is a project partner, is a nationwide community engagement program that aims to facilitate the monitoring and conservation of shorebird populations in Australia.

The primary objective of the project is to build the capacity for Indigenous Land and Sea managers to engage in active shorebird monitoring and environmental management for shorebird conservation.

On-ground workshops were held with ranger groups in Mapoon, Napranum, Pormpuraaw, and Borroloola in 2012 and 2013. Outcomes from these trips include:

- an I-Tracker Shorebird Count application for rangers to record shorebird and wetland bird counts;
- an I-Tracker Identification application so that an ID key is available on the PDAs (personal digital assistants) for rangers to use during shorebird counts;
- training workshops on shorebirds identification and counting skills were held with all participating ranger groups;
- Shorebird Areas and Shorebird Count Areas were established and registered with BirdLife Australia for all four areas; and
- community outreach activities such as school visits and open information barbeques were held to spread the word about the project and about shorebirds in the community.

The project was funded by the Australia Government's Caring for Our Country Program.



Migratory shorebirds at Skardon Beach near Mapoon, Cape York. Top: Nanum Wungthim Land and Sea Rangers and NAISMA staff recording shorebirds.



**Apudthama Rangers have come up with a new approach for better access and insight into some out of the way areas of their country by doing patrols on horseback.**

The rangers, representing the Traditional Owners of Gudang, Yadaigana, Angkamurthi and Atambaya, look after a vast area in the far north Cape York known as the Northern Peninsula Area (NPA). As in other places where rangers are working, much of their country is remote and hard to access: the land is sparsely populated, there are few roads, and difficult country makes off road access nearly impossible.

The rangers usually spend about five days doing these horseback patrols - two days patrolling, one day's rest, another day patrolling, and then a day to head back to town. This allows them to keep an eye on areas that are normally not accessed regularly, to look for any suspicious activities, and to complete a variety of patrol activities.

The patrols started in 2011 involving just a few rangers, and were expanded in 2012 to include many more on the team.

The horseback patrols have helped the rangers see what animals are living in some of the remotest parts of the NPA. Last year the rangers set traps for catching small mammals as well as camera traps to survey biodiversity on this remote country.



The rangers are gaining expanded access to their country through the new horse patrols.

They were able to monitor native animals like possums, bandicoots, emu and kangaroos. They were also able to monitor feral animals such as cats and pigs, which threaten native species and their habitats. Activities during horse patrols are often recorded using I-Tracker applications, which keep detailed records of the ground covered by the rangers and allows them to map their patrols when they get back home.

The rangers expect to be back out on country with their horses in 2013 once the land starts to dry up after the wet season.

**Apudthama Rangers, Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council**



Rangers Christo, Tom and Redman record sightings during their horse patrols using I-Tracker on their GPS devices.



# THE POWER OF DATA IN ABORIGINAL HANDS



The power of data in Aboriginal hands can play a strategic role in community development and reconstruction, and help shape a functional relationship between Indigenous people and governments.

As an example, I want to share some insights about my community and the current work of Yawuru native title holders in the Broome region to show how data can support an Aboriginal development agenda.

Less than three decades ago, Yawuru people were the majority of Broome's population. We are now the minority living among a growing settler and Aboriginal itinerant population.

To safeguard Yawuru cultural and social values, build a sustainable capital base and produce a substantial social dividend, Yawuru have developed a strategic plan that focuses on innovative social and home ownership models, employment, education and training, enterprise and cultural renaissance through language revitalisation, land and sea management and cultural tourism. Yet without sound baseline data of Yawuru and Broome Aboriginal demography we would be flying blind with our development agenda. In 2011 Yawuru undertook the most comprehensive Aboriginal population survey in an urban environment in Australia. We called this project *Knowing Our Community* because we need data collected by our own community so that we can plan for our community's future. Over three months every Aboriginal household in Broome was visited by local people employed to conduct a very simple questionnaire. The aim of the survey was to find out as accurately as possible how many Aboriginal people live in Broome, because nobody knew that basic information. Australian Bureau of Statistics data on Broome is not helpful. Not only is there a significant undercount of the Aboriginal population, but the census does not enquire into the cultural complexity of the population. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey is no use to us at all.

The *Knowing Our Community* project sought answers to only a few questions. Besides the total Aboriginal population in Broome, we also wanted to know how people choose to identify their Aboriginal cultural or language group background. We wanted to know how many Aboriginal people are permanent residents or transient residents of Broome. We wanted to know about people's housing: how many people are renting public housing, own their own houses, live in community housing, are staying with family or friends or don't have adequate housing at all. We wanted to know if people's houses are overcrowded and the hopes and ambitions people may have for their own housing, or their family's housing, in the future.

The Government says that a new housing estate known as Broome North will be able to cater for Broome's population growth and that one house in nine allocated for public housing will satisfy social needs. Yet the Government's planning decisions that will affect people's lives and help shape the future of Broome is not based on sound demographic information. Yawuru now has an accurate picture of the broad Aboriginal demography of Broome. The permanent Indigenous population of Broome was calculated as 3,469 represented by more than 50 language groups. Yawuru is the largest cultural group comprising almost 30% of the Indigenous population. The survey also showed the demographic realities of Broome as a regional service centre and that when short term residents are added to the permanent population the total Indigenous rises to 8,763. The survey shows how Indigenous people in Broome are concentrated in impoverished neighbourhoods and the challenges this presents for Broome's future social planning.

Broome -  
50 Indigenous  
language  
groups

Yawuru -  
almost 30%  
of indigenous  
population of  
Broome

Yawuru know that Broome's Indigenous data base is accurate because world experience shows that the most effective way to collect population data on Aboriginal communities is to employ people from the community to gather that information. Twenty Aboriginal people from a wide cross section of the Broome community were employed to collect the data. They were assisted in collecting, managing and analysing the data by researchers from the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the Australian National University who have recognised expertise on Indigenous demography. This data will enable Yawuru to more effectively plan and invest its limited resources particularly in housing. Importantly the data now provides a basis for an informed dialogue between Aboriginal interests, government, the Shire and industry about infrastructure and social investment in the Broome region.

Establishing an Aboriginal population baseline for Broome also enables a deeper assessment of social and economic issues that will be pursued through sample surveys. A third dimension of Yawuru's evidence based approach will be a longitudinal study which is intended to assess social and economic changes to Yawuru society over a time span of two decades.

The power of data in Aboriginal hands has important consequences for Broome and surrounding communities.

- It gives Yawuru an informed basis for decision making.
- It can assist dialogue between different native title groups in the Broome and West Kimberley who will be affected by industrial development with the aim of building a concerted Aboriginal approach to managing the impacts.
- It can provide a baseline to measure impacts of economic and social change on Aboriginal society.
- It can provide a basis for informed dialogue with Aboriginal interests, government and industry.
- It can provide a basis of accountability for public policy and investment for Aboriginal development in this region.

Within the evidence based approach to Yawuru development, planning is underway to construct a Yawuru wellbeing index, to measure the things that are important to Yawuru people.

This index will include people's income levels, housing and health profile but it will also include family and kinship relationships, connection to culture, the extent that people feel respected by the dominant society, and other social and cultural matters that are important to Yawuru people.

Whilst the power over data collection and analysis remains in the hands of government the narrative about Indigenous people's place in the Australian nation will continue to be one of deficit, disadvantage and dysfunction. The policy prescriptions flowing from that narrative will continue to fail Indigenous people and the nation.

Only when Indigenous people are resourced to collect and analyse data and tell a far more compelling story will we see the emergence of genuine Indigenous self-determination in Australia.

**Peter Yu, Chair, NAILMSA Ltd  
Former Chief Executive Officer,  
Nyamba Buru Yawuru Ltd, Broome, WA**

*Updated extract from a plenary paper held Social Science Perspectives on the 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, held at The Australian National University (ANU) on 11–12 April 2011 and subsequently published in CAEPR\* Topical Issue No. 4/2012 7 <http://caepr.anu.edu.au>*

*\*Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, ANU*

*Top left: Yawuru Knowing Your Community Survey Team and support personnel from the Kimberley Institute and the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Broome, WA.*

# Opportunities for OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

**My name is Ted Carlton, my black fella name is Yumbun. I was born and raised on Carlton Hill Station in Western Australia - this is my traditional country, which is on Yawoorroong Miriuwung Gajerrong Country.**

I think there are programs that NAILSMA are involved with that could benefit Traditional Owners in our area, especially the Carbon project which is looking to decrease carbon emissions by reinstating traditional burning practices.



If we can combine the knowledge of our cultural traditional ways handed down from our old people, with the carbon program activities, we should be able to help find employment opportunities for our young people especially on pastoral leases.

There could be opportunities with land owners and managers who are looking after country for the stock, but also to benefit Aboriginal people, making sure sacred sites and hunting grounds are protected. These possible employment opportunities could help our youth as well.

It is up to our senior Indigenous leaders to show the way.

I think information from NAILSMA in relation to cultural burning and carbon credits can help us build bridges with the wider Australian community and find opportunities that we may not otherwise be able to take up.

**Yumbun (Teddy Carlton), Director, MG Corporation\*, Kununurra, WA**

*\*MG Corporation - Yawoorroong Miriuwung Gajerrong Yirrgab Noong Dawang Aboriginal Corporation - [www.mgcorp.com.au](http://www.mgcorp.com.au)*

*Yumbun was born and raised on Carlton Hill Station, his traditional country. He has experience in community development, in building self-esteem and motivating MG people towards self-help, education, training in social dependency areas, planning, organising and leading. He is a qualified alcohol counsellor and has a Bachelor of Applied Science from Curtin University, Perth. He also is a Director on the NAILSMA Limited Board.*

# NEW COMPANY FOR CARBON BUSINESS

**A new not-for-profit, Indigenous owned and managed company has recently been established to facilitate the participation of Indigenous people in the emerging environmental service market such as carbon farming from better fire management.**

The mission of the Northern Indigenous Environmental Services Ltd (NIES) is to create employment on-country and associated benefits for Indigenous Australians. This company was established to develop a pathway to market, reduce overheads and to bring Indigenous land managers closer to formal enterprise opportunities. An immediate opportunity is presented in savanna burning projects across north Australia, including the trading of carbon credits.

NIES will support projects to deal with complex project start-up and accreditation processes and overcome other barriers to entry, including access to start-up capital. NIES will be structured to reduce the net cost of compliance, help streamline operations, improve risk management and, in some situations provide financial support until projects have their first products recognised and available for sale. The core operating principle for NIES is to maximise returns to Indigenous Australians in a responsible and sustainable way.

NIES began in October 2012 with the appointment of General Manager, Andrew Plate, and works with the financial and operational support of the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance Ltd (NAILSMA) and the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC).

NAILSMA has been extensively involved in developing the savanna burning methodology for north Australia over the last few years; including working with a number of Indigenous groups and playing a key role in assisting the Indigenous Land Corporation secure approval under the Australian Government Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) for the Fish River Station Project. NAILSMA has also been at the forefront of policy development and implementation of fire projects across the north in partnership with the Indigenous community.

NIES was established in response to recognising the complexities of the sector and the varying capacity of Indigenous groups across north Australia to successfully develop savanna burning projects.

For more information contact: [Andrew.Plate@nailsma.org.au](mailto:Andrew.Plate@nailsma.org.au)



*Controlled early burning in strategic locations and mosaic burning, reduce the number and size of severe late season wildfires. Indigenous fire management combines traditional land management approaches with cutting edge science to reduce greenhouse gases. Under the recently introduced Carbon Farming Initiative, Indigenous groups have the potential opportunity to benefit from engaging in savanna burning projects.*



# CreAative collaboration

The Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists Aboriginal Corporation (ANKAAA) and NAILSMA are collaborating on a series of projects that will further some of the similarities in our organisations' visions and goals.

ANKAAA Chair Djambawa Marawili (AM) invited NAILSMA staff to give an information session about NAILSMA and the I-Tracker Program at the last Annual Conference in November 2012, and to participate in a forum: *The Land and Sea Can't Talk – We Have To Talk For Them: Working Together to Care For Country*.

The forum also addressed the use of bark paintings of sea country as evidence in the landmark Blue Mud Bay Sea Rights Case (Djambawa Marawili AM); and the Ngurrara Canvas painted by over 60 Traditional Owners in the Great Sandy Desert to prove connection to country in the historic Ngurrara Native Title claim.

Additionally, both organisations collaborated on the production of a DVD capturing outcomes of the Second North Australian Indigenous Experts Forum (May 2013), where I also attended sessions relevant to the Indigenous art and culture industries and their potential in north Australian development.

NAILSMA staff will also be part of an upcoming ANKAAA forum at Yirrkala: *Harvesting Traditional Knowledge*, focused on the Indigenous knowledge involved in harvesting bush materials for use in the contemporary art industry, and sharing skills with conservation scientists who care for art objects in national collecting institutions.

**Christina Davidson, CEO, ANKAAA**



ANKAAA staff attended the Second North Australian Indigenous Experts Forum, David Mackenzie, Annette Kogolo (Deputy Chair), Christina Davidson (CEO).



ANKAAA Annual Conference (November 2012).

## Rod Kennett wins FULBRIGHT SCHOLARSHIP

**Dr Rod Kennett, Saltwater Country Program Manager, NAILSMA has won a prestigious Fulbright Scholarship for study in Alaska in 2013. Rod will be based in Anchorage where he will be hosted by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Chugach Alaska Corporation.**

The Australian-American Fulbright Commission was established in 1949 and is co-chaired by the Australian Prime Minister and the USA Ambassador to Australia. The Commission annually supports around 25 of Australia's best and brightest to study in the USA. The NT scholarship is sponsored by the Northern Territory Government and Blackboard Australia Pty Ltd.

Rod will be working with Indigenous and non-Indigenous experts to study how Indigenous Alaskans manage their lands and seas, and the challenges they face in creating livelihoods that reflect traditional knowledge and customs.

'There are many similarities between Alaska and north Australia including large intact ecosystems with people living in remote communities, limited transport infrastructure, large resource development projects, large areas of Indigenous managed lands and a strong and vibrant Indigenous culture. But the Alaskan landscapes are very different. Geologically they are much younger with huge mountains still forming and fertile soils with lots of water and enormous areas of forest. It has highly productive seas and permanently flowing river systems that support an abundance of important native foods like salmon - and of course it's a lot, lot colder' said Dr Kennett. 'It will be interesting to learn how native Alaskans use their natural resources and importantly what Australia can learn from land and sea managers in Alaska.'

During his time at NAILSMA, Rod has helped create several International knowledge and skills exchanges including with villages near Madang in Papua New Guinea, the Comcaa People of Mexico and the Coastal First Nations in British Columbia, Canada (Coastal Guardian Watchmen Network). Planning is also well underway for visits in 2013 by coastal communities in Timor Leste, Rote (Indonesia) and the Solomon Islands. In 2011 and 2012 Coastal Guardians attended NAILSMA's I-Tracker forums and have since developed their own CoastTracker CyberTracker Application based on what they learned from the NAILSMA I-Tracker Initiative.

'Coast Tracker is just like the I-Tracker Sea Country Patrol Application but you record bears, seals, wolves and spawning salmon' said Dr Kennett. 'Interestingly both applications can record humpback whales which highlights the connectedness of the work that rangers and Coastal Guardians do in monitoring migratory wildlife.'

As part of his Fulbright Scholarship Rod will work with Alaskan First Nations groups to explore opportunities for future community exchanges with Australian Indigenous land and sea managers. 'I'm sure what Canadian and Australian Indigenous managers have learnt from working together will be of interest to the Coastal Guardian Watchmen Network in coastal Alaska. The TNC's program area covers both Alaska and British Columbia so we will have the chance to explore these ideas.'

NAILSMA CEO Joe Morrison explains the global importance of making these connections, 'Australian Indigenous land and sea managers have a lot to offer and to learn from these exchanges and they have been an important part of NAILSMA's strategy to engage regionally and internationally in promoting the rights and responsibilities of Indigenous people to manage their lands and seas for a decade.'

[coastalguardianwatchmen.ca](http://coastalguardianwatchmen.ca)



Professor Patrick Dodson, Co-chair, Expert Panel on Constitutional Recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Photo: Wayne Quilliam.

Shirley Persley, Ngarrindjeri elder, AM, at the passing of the Act of Recognition 2013. Shirley was also a campaigner for the successful 1967 Referendum - shown here on Vote Yes poster aged 26. Photo: Wayne Quilliam.

## Getting **RECOGNISED** in the Constitution

**The Act of Recognition passed in Parliament in February 2013 gives way for a Referendum to be held within two years to change Australia's Constitution to recognise the unique and special place held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.**

Recognition of the first peoples in the Constitution of a country starts to send a message that you are valued, you are important, that we want to respect you, and we want to deal with the things that have caused us division and discord in the past.

If we want to emulate the success of 1967 Referendum\* there is much work to be done. This has been a long road for many and already too much time has passed.

The wording of the referendum proposal must have multi-partisan support at the Federal level; and the states and territories must be engaged in the discussion. Moreover, there must be support of the final proposition by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

If the parliament decides on a referendum proposal other than the proposals recommended by the Expert Panel on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, it should consult further with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This was stated quite clearly by the Expert Panel in its report.

A successful referendum, whilst it starts with political commitment, requires a properly informed public. Further resources will certainly be required to raise public awareness of the question and build public support for a successful referendum outcome.

It is therefore hoped the Recognise campaign is resourced beyond June 2014.

The passing of the Act of Recognition is one hill we have climbed, but it does not mean we have conquered the mountain.

We now need to work together; to put aside our differences and help each other reach the top of the mountain. If we are successful in reaching the summit - the way forward may perhaps become more clear.

We know that there is unfinished business. We know that there is division and discord that arises from this nation's colonial past. We know the legacy of *terra nullius* still lingers. The on-going silence in the Constitution about the presence of Aboriginal people in this continent perpetuates this.

This is in part why constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is a matter that goes to the very heart and character of this nation.

We are at the moment in our history where we can stand up and redress a great wrong or walk away cowering from a seminal truth.

I truly hope that we as Australian citizens are mature enough and courageous enough to recognise the unique place and status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our nation, and in our founding legal document.

If we are successful at a referendum, we will have at least provided a future framework for the next generation to constructively move forward.

**Patrick Dodson (Professor)**

(Extracted from speech given at the passing of the Act of Recognition)

### Thanks to contributors

- Alan Maroney
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- Yirralka Rangers
- Yumbun (Teddy Carlton)

### Call for stories

NAILSMA usually calls for stories a couple months before the magazine is due to be published. Please contact us if you have a story for the next issue.



Mildred Wilson, Mapoon Land and Sea Ranger, Mapoon, Cape York Peninsula, Qld.

### Disclaimer

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#### Front cover:

Laurie Baymarrwangga, 96 year old senior Traditional Owner of the Malarra estate, Crocodile Islands, NT, and Senior Australian of the Year 2012.

Junior Rangers with her: (Back L-R) Evonne Wangarrnga Gaykamangu, Elenore Ngulumay Garrawurra. (Front L-R) Sarah Marrayurriyawuy Garrawurra, Elenore Yipalina Gaykamangu.

#### Back cover:

Gibb River Road, Kimberleys, WA.

\* The 1967 Referendum was a watershed moment in our history as a nation. Many saw this change as recognition of Aboriginal people as full Australian citizens

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# Looking after Our Country... Our Way

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North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance Ltd.

PO Box 486  
Charles Darwin University  
Darwin Northern Territory  
0815 Australia

Web: [www.nailsma.org.au](http://www.nailsma.org.au)  
Email: [contact@nailsma.org.au](mailto:contact@nailsma.org.au)  
Phone: +61 8 89467673  
Fax: +61 8 89466364

