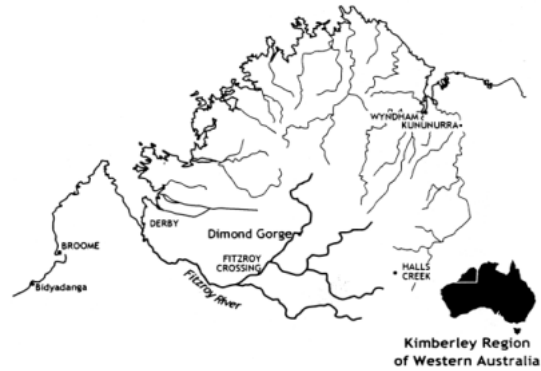




Save the Nature of the Kimberley

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INC

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Phone – 08 9192 1922 Fax – 08 9192 5538
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Bulletin No. 47 • September 2008

Science Week 2008 – Healthy Place, Healthy People

national science week



Erica Spry, Josh Byrne, Andre Leu and Graeme Campbell at the Climate Change Forum

EnviroNS Kimberley hosted events in Broome and across the Kimberley for National Science Week 2008.

What a week (I'm still recovering)! Science Week was a wonderful opportunity to bring together people who are working hard to achieve a sustainable future and healthy environment for us all, and to share and celebrate their knowledge with the general community.

On show were Eco and Cultural Tourism, bush foods, community gardening, Indigenous land management, Indigenous language in research and conservation, natural therapies, organic agriculture, Permaculture, healthy eating, conservation projects and weed busting. We also managed to fit in a challenging Quiz Night.

The week was action-packed and attracted a small dedicated following of people who made almost every event. St Mary's College now has a new veggie garden and worm farm, and Serendipity Farm has a terrific water feature and the bones of a spice spiral.

I'd like to thank all the marvellous speakers, participants and businesses for making Science Week 2008 so successful.

Tanvier Fowler



Doris, Andre, Steven, Mary, Pidge and Josh at Billard



Australian Government

Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research

This initiative is supported by the Australian Government as part of National Science Week

STOP PRESS - INPEX GOING TO DARWIN.

Inpex has decided to construct an LNG plant to process gas from its Browse Basin fields at a site in Darwin Harbour, rather than on the Kimberley coast. The company will need to seek all the necessary environmental approvals from the NT and Commonwealth Governments. Already, there has been opposition from local environment groups and members of the Larrakia Nation, Darwin's Traditional Owners, and concerns have been expressed by farmers and local government. Inpex plans to make its first LNG shipment from the Darwin plant in 2015.

EK, together with other environment and community groups, has been campaigning to keep Inpex from locating its LNG facility on the Maret Islands. EK understands that Inpex's decision was primarily due to the unsuitability, from a geological and engineering perspective, of its preferred Maret Islands location, a fact that Inpex has yet to publicly acknowledge.

Kimberley Land Council Executive Director Wayne Bergmann told ABC's Stateline program that Kimberley

Aboriginal people would be extremely disappointed by the decision as they had been working tirelessly for the last eight months to find a single hub site in the region. He also warned against ad hoc and uncontrolled industrial development: "We don't want to see Burrup Mark Two happening in the Kimberley. We want to contain it, control it so that the community and the region can get some benefit."

Besides Inpex, there are still five or six other companies drilling for gas in the Browse Basin. Woodside is continuing its own investigation of siting options for an LNG plant, weighing up a potential Kimberley hub precinct against a Burrup Peninsula location close to its existing facility.

EK wants to be part of an open and inclusive process that determines the future of the Browse Basin gas reserves. We are not convinced that there is an appropriate location for an LNG hub precinct in the Kimberley.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Change is the one constant in this world, and changes keep rolling on. The weather is warming up, the north Kimberley has already had some early thunderstorms, the state election has come and gone, the Browse gas campaign has moved to the next stage and EK itself is undergoing significant changes.

We finally know the outcome of the election, with the resurgent Nationals installing Mr Barnett and the Liberals in power. EK hopes that the new State Government will take a long term and considered view of the Kimberley in relation to the Browse Basin and other development proposals. EK especially hopes Mr Barnett's expressed desire to support Inpex's use of the Maret Islands for LNG production was a product of the election campaign, and once the responsibilities of government are assumed he will see the risk posed to our magnificent Kimberley heritage by an ad-hoc approach to development.

The Northern Development Taskforce process has produced four potential LNG hub sites, nominated by traditional owners via the Kimberley Land Council consultative process. These sites are Anjo Peninsula (in the far north Kimberley), North Head and James Price Point on the Dampier Peninsula, and Gourdon Bay, south of Broome and Roebuck Bay. All these sites have their own special environmental values, as well as social and economic values that need to be considered before any further work

is done. The new government has not yet indicated whether it will support the NDT process for the Browse gas fields, and as the Commonwealth Government has a significant role the situation ahead is quite unclear, but undoubtedly still very challenging.

Science Week was once again successfully hosted by EK and special thanks are due to Tanvier and the team for a brilliant effort in bringing it all together. Christine (admin), Gary (fresh water campaign) and Louise (weeds campaign) continue to produce excellent work. Congratulations to Louise for getting her Community WEED project nominated for the WA Environment Awards.

After years of excellent service our longest serving staff member (and founding member) Maria Mann has decided to move on and we are now advertising for an Executive Director. Maria's final date will depend upon a number of factors including the recruitment of a replacement, and we expect the transition to take up most of the balance of this year. More of that in the next newsletter, but in the meantime we hope that EK is able to find a person of similar energy and talent. We are also seeking a new Coordinator for the Seagrass Monitoring project — thanks to Jessica for her input.

The upcoming Annual General Meeting is the opportunity for the Board to renew itself and for you, the membership, to ensure your views are heard and acted upon, so I encourage as many as possible to attend and to consider nominating to become Board members. Please contact me if you need any advice or encouragement!

Peter



Save the Nature of the Kimberley

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KIMBERLEY
INC

Annual General Meeting

You are invited to our AGM,
to be held at The Mangrove Hotel,
High Tides Function Room, Broome on
Saturday 18th October 2008 at 3.00 pm.

Light refreshments provided.

Seeking new committee members.

ALL WELCOME!

Contact the office for more information.

AND THE WINNERS ARE....

A crowd gathered at our market stall on Saturday 6th September to see who would win the fabulous prizes that had been generously donated by Broome businesses...Tension was running high, knuckles white from keeping fingers crossed, but finally it was decided!

Congratulations to our winners of the Annual Environs Kimberley Raffle

1st prize: Kevin Smith, Broome, won the Denise Walker painting; Ticket no. 967.

2nd prize: Carol Grace, Margaret River, won the 3day/2night accommodation package at Goombaragin EcoVentures, Ticket no. 735.

3rd prize: Craig Phillips, Broome, won Freshwater Pearl Jewellery, Ticket no. 63.

4th prize: Peter Beinssen, Qld, won a Bicycle helmet, pump and lock, Ticket no. 874.

Thank You to supporting businesses and to all participants for your continued support of Environs Kimberley.

Freshwater Campaign – WA Election Update

During the recent State election campaign, EK was keen to hear any commitments made to the long-term legal protection of the Fitzroy River.

The campaign began with a quick 180-degree turn-around on the Kimberley canal by new WA Liberals leader, now WA Premier, Colin Barnett. After initially not ruling it out, Mr Barnett soon realised the game would be up if he pursued the idea to take Fitzroy River water to Perth, and on day two of his leadership the canal was history. By the end of the campaign, Mr Barnett, on ABC National Radio, pronounced the canal ‘stone motherless dead’.

Not a single journalist thought to ask the obvious question of Mr Barnett: if the canal is now dead, what about the Liberals’ policy of damming the Fitzroy River for large-scale irrigated agriculture, as announced last year by former leader Paul Omodei? The party’s agriculture and environment policies, released during the election campaign, were silent on this issue. Perhaps we can take this to mean a dam is no longer on the Liberals’ policy agenda. EK will be seeking confirmation of this. At the very least, the Liberal-led coalition government could not now claim an election mandate for a dam to be built on the river.

The National Party, now holding the balance of power in the new coalition government, took a strong stance on the Fitzroy River. To quote a media release by the Nationals’ Kimberley candidate, John McCourt: ‘Any plan to dam or divert water from the Fitzroy is simply not negotiable and if the Nationals secure the balance of power at the coming election, any attempt to do so by any party will be vigorously opposed.’ Less impressively, the Nationals, like the Liberals, strongly support the introduction of genetically modified (GM) crops into WA, probably including GM cotton in an expanded Ord project.

The Fitzroy River did not feature in the ALP’s campaign. EK considers this a missed opportunity for the former Premier Alan Carpenter and his team to commit to the long-term protection of the river. Instead, we got a commitment to ‘identify areas of high conservation value (in the West Kimberley) for protection, including marine ecosystems and rivers’. This would have been carried out as part of the Northern Development Task force planning process for an LNG hub on the Kimberley coast. It was not made clear whether the Fitzroy River would be included in this plan.

The ALP also promised to extend the current state-wide moratorium on GM crops for another four years. At the same time it committed \$30 million for infrastructure projects to help facilitate the expansion of the Ord irrigation project into the Mantinea Flats area.

The Greens, meanwhile, failed to make a specific commitment to the long-term legal protection of the

Fitzroy River, instead promising to ‘keep waterways healthy and restore degraded aquatic areas’. However, they did reject any new dams or large-scale landclearing in the Kimberley. The Greens also rejected GM crops, but in the *Kimberley Echo* in the final week of the campaign indicated support for the expansion of the Ord Project.

All in all, the election results were inconclusive for the Fitzroy River and other Kimberley waterways. The Fitzroy did not feature nearly as much as it had in the 2005 campaign, when the canal proposal dominated. Environs Kimberley, with all our supporters and campaign partners, particularly the Australian Conservation Foundation, can claim a measure of success in that the canal proposal and perhaps the dam have been taken off the immediate political agenda. We can now hope to have a more sensible debate about how best to protect the natural and cultural values of the river.

Other freshwater news

EK is pleased to report that it recently signed a twelve-month funding agreement with the Rangelands NRM Coordinating Group to deliver a project considering whether a fishway should be built on the site of the Camballin Barrage on the Fitzroy River. A Steering Committee has been set up, comprising EK, Department of Water, Liveringa Station, KLC, Murdoch University and the Northern Australia Aboriginal Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAISMA). More information about this project will follow in our next newsletter.

*Gary Scott,
Freshwater Campaigner*



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Community WEED Update

Weed Education and Eradication Delivery Project

Welcome to the second year of Community WEED!

The Community Weed has secured a second round of funding through the Rangelands NRM Coordinating group. The last 12 months saw over 150 person-days recorded in on-ground weed *Busting!* As well, some great resources were produced for on-ground groups, including 20 Kimberley Weed Cards and Safety and Records Manuals. The project extension means that the CWEED, after working predominantly in the West Kimberley, will include additional groups in the mid, north and east Kimberley. The weeds will be trembling in their roots!

At Minyirr Park, CWEED has been assisting the rangers to remove Neems, Coffee Bush and Bellyache Bush and to learn new skills to create computer maps of weed works. In August, we ran a Weed Buster Day as part of Science Week and, with help from CVA, had 16 people 'freeing the trees' and piling up Siratro and Neem seedlings. More recently, we burnt these dried piles to remove a fire hazard and reduce the chances of Siratro re-sprouting.

On the Peninsula, the Bardi Jawi Rangers have taken on additional vine-thicket sites for weed survey and control, and removed a new infestation of Camel Melon (*Citrullus lanatus*) before it could seed and spread. The continued work on sites in Lombadina and One Arm Point is beginning to show progress, with less weeding required per visit. As we visit more sites we can diligently remove incursions and re-inspect before they become big problems. Thanks also to the rangers Nathan Sampi, Kevin George and Daniel Oades for delivering a talk about their projects, including vine thicket weed work and the turtle-dugong project at the recent Goombaragin Science Week event.



Collecting Ngilimirti (Rock Fig, *Ficus platypoda*)



Mosaic burning comes naturally in well maintained country – near Kaningarra.



CWEED visits Warlu Jilajaa Jumu IPA with Rangers



This quarter, the CWEED was fortunate enough to accompany Walmajarri Traditional Owners and new rangers for the Warlu Jilajaa Jumu Indigenous Protected Area, to Kaningarra in the Great Sandy Desert. As well as looking after country activities, this trip included training and capacity building in weed identification and control with CWEED, and animal trapping techniques with Phil Palmer from KLC. Two groups of eight rangers learnt about weeds affecting this desert ecosystem and put theory into practice by locating and mapping infestations. We also practised techniques of safe weed control and synthesised ideas for control and restoration of larger weed infestations. We saw how insidious weeds like buffel grass are, as they creep into areas surrounding camps, soaks (jumu) and permanent waterholes (jila), changing the vegetation structure. Areas can be changed from green clumping spinifex with sufficient inter-tussock spaces to provide micro-habitats for plants and animals to a dry, highly flammable and dominant grass sward. It was a trip of many firsts: my first 122 sandhills, first cooked witchetty grub and first 'flu in 10 years. Many thanks to Ronnie Jimbidie and Edwin Mulligan, who kept my spirits high with steamed bush medicine and a little bit of Country and a little bit of Rock 'n' Roll! Thanks also to organisers Ismahl Croft and Joseph Nugget, the fantastic ranger crew, TO's and all the other lovely people on the trip – I look forward to working with you again this year.

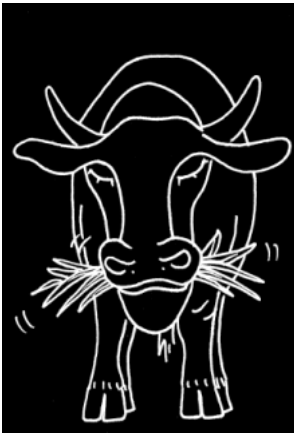
The Community WEED's campaigning for Water Corporation to drop their promotion of potentially weedy plants in their East and West Kimberley & Pilbara Waterwise Ways has resulted in all the more serious exotics being removed, including *Lantana spp.* and Jujube (*Ziziphus*). With help from people at SKIPS, TAFE, Kimberley Environmental Horticulture and Shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley, Flame Tree and DEC, a more suitable selection of locally native plants was suggested. The final list from Water Corporation now comprises over 50% natives species such as Gubinge, Jigal, Lemon Grass, Mimusops, *Livistona kimberleyana*, Elephant-ear Wattle, *Eucalyptus miniata* and *Hakea macrocarpa*. The Kimberley has led the way for changes to the promotion across the regions, with the Pilbara next in line. Many thanks to Kelly Agar, Invasive Plants Program Coordinator at DEC, for assisting this process. We hope to see the new pamphlets and online resource soon.

Continue to keep me busy! – If you or your group want to undertake a weed project and are looking for some advice or support, please give me a call at 08 91929122 or drop me a line:

ekweeds@enviromskimberley.org.au

Cheers, Louise





RUMINATING WITH MAD COW

IN MY LIFETIME

In my lifetime, the human population of the world has tripled.

When I came to live in Broome, the town's population numbered 3000. Now, at over 15,000, it is growing three times faster than the world's average.

In my lifetime, one quarter to one third of the world's non-human animal species have become extinct.

In my lifetime, the White Rhinoceros, the African Elephant, the Lion, the Cheetah, the Mountain Gorilla, the Snow Leopard, the Tiger, the Indian Elephant, the Giant Panda, the Hairy-nosed Wombat, the Northern Bettong and countless other animals around the world have declined to dangerously low levels. Not to mention Barbara Brown's Titi (I kid you not), the Spineless Forest Lizard, Hotson's Mouse-like Hamster, the Modoc Sucker, the Neglected Frog and hundreds of other frog species, similarly neglected, the Penitent Mussel, for its sins, several species of Bushy-tailed Cloud Rat, the Gloomy Tube-nosed Bat, who has every right to feel like that, and on it goes. Take a look at Wikipedia's list of endangered species: you will be shocked.

When I lived in Africa, wildlife was still plentiful and not confined to National Parks; I once watched a giraffe crossing the road in front of me at sunset. Hyenas came to the back door to steal the dog's food. Out walking, we often encountered troupes of baboons.

When I lived in Africa, AIDS was unheard of

When I first came to Broome, there was bushland from the cemetery to Cable Beach. All but the narrow coastal strip has been replaced by lawns and palm trees. Birds and lizards can't live on lawns and palm trees, and many species are disappearing from our gardens.

When I first came to Broome, one family kept a horse on Guy Street. A botanical reserve separated Guy from Orr Street. The open spaces are rapidly being built over. Soon, the views of the ocean that give the town its character will be blotted out.

Soon, the night skies above the Kimberley coast will be polluted by light, and the air by noise and gas emissions. Whales and dolphins will be driven mad, or away, by underwater sound waves.

When I was young, you could put money in the bank, as little money as you liked, and leave it there, quietly gaining interest. The account was not called a 'product' and there were no fees or charges. In those days, the banks were grateful to borrow your money and use it wisely. It's hard to believe today, but banks accumulated wealth without robbing their customers.

Thirty-five years ago, you could post a letter in Wyndham and expect it to reach Perth the following day. Letters to the Eastern States took two days, to the UK, four, five if the fourth was a Sunday.

When I was a young heifer, cows ate grass and there were no epidemics of Mad Cow Disease.

Why are old people grumpy? It's because we remember a better world.



SWEK WINS 2008 SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS — RURAL

Congratulations to the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley (SWEK), WINNER of the Environs Australia 2008 Sustainability Awards – Rural, for their Lake Kununurra Project. This major project was funded through the Rangelands NRM Coordinating Group. The main elements include: development of a vegetation management plan; *Salvinia* control and eradication; weed management and rehabilitation; Waterways education package; a storm water quality monitoring program. The project's success has depended on the development of partnerships with on-ground community group, Ord Land and Water, and alliances with State Government agencies. Better still, the Rangelands NRM seed funding has enabled the Shire to see the value of having a full-time Environment Officer within its structure. EK congratulates the SWEK team especially Katya Tripp!



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2008 Kimberley Economic Forum

Gary Scott and Maria Mann recently attended the second annual Kimberley Economic Forum, hosted by the Kununurra Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Kununurra.

The forum's aims were to:

- Raise awareness of the opportunities, challenges and issues relating to economic development in the Kimberley
- Provide a forum for Kimberley businesses and communities to engage with each other and with stakeholders from outside the region.
- Provide an opportunity for corporations to engage with the regional business community, to share their vision, management approach and information about the economic benefits their developments may bring to the region.

Before the forum, delegates had a choice of activities: a Lake Kununurra River Cruise or an Ord Valley Agricultural Tour. Maria opted for the former, on a barge that left from Lily Creek Lagoon and motored slowly onto Lake Kununurra. We heard a great deal about 'water going to waste' and government red tape preventing development plans. We saw a lot of weeds in the water and on the riverbanks, and heard how someone had come from the NT less than ten years ago and released 'red claw' crustaceans, which were now competing with the local cherabin. The barge-master didn't know of any actions being taken to eradicate or manage the red claws, or prevent their spread into other waterways.

Gary chose the agricultural bus tour, which included a visit to the rum distillery, 'The Hoochery'. Gary heard about the large volume of water flowing out to sea, 'wasted', and the vast potential for Ord Stage 2. The group looked at fields planted with newly-introduced crops including chia (*Salvia hispanica*) and rice, while sandalwood now occupies more than 25% of the Ord River Irrigation Area (ORIA).

The Forum got under way next morning with a welcome to country by Teddy Carlton from the Mirriuwung-Gajerrong Corporation. This was the last we heard from the Traditional Owners.

The program covered four topics: Resources; Agriculture and Primary Production; Tourism; and Sustaining Business, Housing and Labour.

Terry Bailey, from the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, explained National Heritage Listing and the regional strategic assessment that started in July 2008. This prompted discussion about the impacts of listing: that it would 'slow down development, lock up the country and close down the pastoral industry'; also that 'existing land uses would likely be allowed to continue' and 'NHL brings economic benefits, e.g. 15 World Heritage properties in Australia generate \$7.25 billion/year and create 83,000 jobs'.

Tim O'Neill from Argyle Diamonds put 'the business case for sustainable development'. Asked about Argyle's carbon abatement program, Tim admitted they didn't have one. He did not know what the mine site's annual emissions are.

On the topic of Agriculture and Primary Production, we heard from Department of Agriculture and Food representatives, local growers, pastoralists and businessmen. We heard that global climate change presents opportunities for northern Australia; that the market will 'sort out the animal welfare issue' of mulesing; that all available land in the ORIA is being cropped and more should be released.

We learned of the rapid switch in the ORIA from horticulture to sandalwood (see graph) and that the notion of a 'food bowl' development is fanciful.

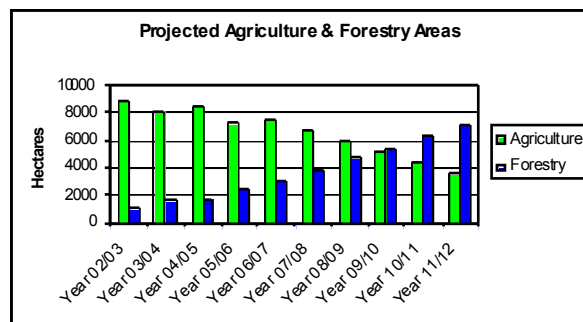


Figure: Changes in land allocation in the Ord River Irrigation Area

Cattle graze just 10% of available pasture in the Kimberley and this could increase to 30%, doubling beef production. The beef industry is restricted by access to markets – there was discussion about the need for an abattoir in the Kimberley – and low returns on costs.

Tourism had many speakers. We heard about the importance of indigenous art to the regional economy and the formation of a Kimberley Aboriginal Arts collective.

We heard that good business decisions are those with better outcomes in both tourism and conservation, and that the environment and tourism sectors should develop a better relationship. We heard that the resources sector is a threat

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to tourism in the Kimberley, but can be offset via 'industry tourism' such as that offered by an LNG industry in the Kimberley.

Finally, we heard that 'Australia, the Movie' offers 'huge cross-promotional potential' when it premieres on 13th November 2008.

In the last topic of the day, labour shortages, infrastructure and housing were discussed. We heard of a scheme to bring Timorese workers to the Kimberley to

reduce labour shortages in peak season; the barriers and opportunities for indigenous people in the resources boom; the rising costs of building

SWEK CEO Peter Stubbs had the last word: there is a conservation/development dilemma – we are all conservationists and consumers. There is a business case for heritage and sustainability. Infrastructure is a driver of development and government has a key role to play.



KIMBERLEY WATERS, HIDDEN TOOLS

Kimberley rivers and other freshwater sources (such as billabongs, waterholes and soaks), in addition to the wondrous saltwater ocean and coastline, mean a great deal to permanent residents and people who visit the region. Rivers, waters and oceans are also integral to sustaining the life of the landscape, and to industries such as tourism, fishing and pastoralism.

Whilst many waterways, such as the Fitzroy River, are central to indigenous customary law and feature in native title claims, as well as in storytelling, films, books and artworks, locations enlivened by water also provide important venues for everyday social, economic and cultural activities for a broad range of people. For example, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal rangers organize popular Fitzroy River cruises, where passengers relax as well as learn about the ecology. Elsewhere, people use water resources as aesthetic foci for artworks, the Indian Ocean supports fishing and swimming, and coastlines present niches for picnics and evening strolls.

Most long-term and newer residents value the cyclical Kimberley climate, with annual 'wet season' rains to replenish the landscape and waterways and allow some respite from the heat. This seasonal process also helps to succour the rich variety of species (fish, birds, reptiles, plants) that constitute the very best that nature has to offer.

Despite lived qualities such as these, and the socio-cultural and economic value of saltwater and freshwater sources in their own right and as agents of transformation (e.g. to grow plants for food and for manufacture into other goods for sale), Kimberley waters are regularly under threat. EK Bulletins have reported on these threats during the past 12 years, such as the prospect of Fitzroy River diversion to alleviate diminished water supplies in the south of Western Australia, the implica-

tions of damming Dimond Gorge and irrigating land in the West Kimberley for cotton production and, more recently, the proposed gas developments on Maret Island. Whilst



Fitzroy River

successful campaigns were mounted against river diversion and cotton production, the possibility that these projects will be rekindled by government and industry remains. As EK members would also be aware, the establishment of a large gas processing plant continues to be a distinct and disturbing possibility.

EK and other non-government organizations have worked relentlessly to protect and nurture the Kimberley environment, an activity and process different from, but often complemented in, interdisciplinary as well as natural and social science research projects. Whilst the practice, benefits and outcomes of research are not always obvious or acted upon, there nonetheless exists a large volume of material capable of extending understandings of local rivers, waters and oceans, and furthering knowledge about people's relationship to these valuable resources. In other words, research data can be a substantial, though often hidden, tool to advance campaigns aimed at protecting, nurturing and sustaining the unique Kimberley environment. For members interested in accessing some of this work to see what it has to offer (and assess whether some of it might provide a useful addition to your environmental tool kit!) please see EK's website for a selection of references.

Sandy Toussaint

Ellendale Diamond Mine

On 12 August I flew out to Ellendale Diamond Mine at the invitation of the mine operator, Kimberley Diamond Company (KDC), to discuss the latest plans for expansion.

KDC already has two open-cut pits on the mining lease, known as E9 and E4. Now, KDC is proposing an expansion of the pit at E4, a new pit in adjacent Area 5, mining the nearby Satellite Pipe ore body, and a new airstrip.

To mine Satellite Pipe, KDC would seek approval to mine inside the Devonian Reef Conservation Area, as the ore body straddles the park boundary. Twelve hectares of the conservation area would be given over to mining very close to the Oscar Range. KDC's preferred starting date for this part of the project is 2013, but the other components would start in the next 12 months, if approved.

The environmental footprint of the mining operation will grow significantly should the expansion proceed. A further 130 hectares would be affected by mining, vegetation clearing and other activities, on top of approximately 1000 hectares under existing operations. The depth of the E4 pit would double to 220 metres and an additional 40 million tonnes of waste rock would be produced. The expansion of the E4 pit alone would require a further 1 gigalitre per annum of pit dewatering and place more pressure on underground aquifers.

KDC intends to seek approval from the WA Minister for the Environment to commence the E4 pit expansion without submitting a revised proposal to the Environment Protection Authority, on the assumption that the proposed cutbacks to the E4 pit will have impacts not significantly different from those assessed in KDC's previous Environmental Impact Statement. EK submitted a formal objection to the E4 pit proposal in 2005, when it was first going through the environmental approvals process. We will need to consider our course of action very seriously this time as well.



During the mine visit, I certainly let the company management know that EK would not support mining of the Satellite Pipe ore body in a designated conservation park. Nor would EK support the idea put forward by KDC that mining in the park could be offset by biodiversity conservation initiatives elsewhere, paid for by the company. I explained that it is extremely important to protect the integrity of existing conservation reserves in the Kimberley – there are precious few of them as it is.

KDC agreed that they will not, at this stage, seek to get the boundary of the conservation park changed to accommodate their mining plans. Boundary changes to conservation parks must be authorised by the Minister for the Environment. EK would strongly oppose any attempt to have the boundary altered should the company decide at a later stage to pursue this course.

EK has concerns about the company's strategy of applying for new environmental approvals every few years to support a new stage of mine development. KDC and its partner, Blina Diamonds, intend to step up the mining of alluvial gravels on the Ellendale mine lease. EK wonders where this will all end, as further exploration activity on the lease is set to continue.

*Gary Scott,
Freshwater Campaigner*



Conservation Council of WA re-launches **The Greener Times**

The Conservation Council of WA has recently re-launched its magazine, **The Greener Times**. WA's only environmental news magazine, the new GT places the spotlight on key environmental issues and features the latest from the Council and its members, plus much more.

For a limited time the Council is offering members of affiliate groups a copy of the new GT. If you would like a complimentary copy please contact the Council on (08) 9420 7266 or send an email to cons.wa@conservationwa.asn.au. For more details about the new and improved GT visit the Council's website www.conservationwa.asn.au.

State Election Wrap-up, or what you can expect from the new State Liberal/National Coalition Government

Liberals on the Kimberley:

- Progressive development of the Ord irrigation area, beginning with Mantinea Flats.
- Allow the immediate planting of genetically-modified (GM) cotton in the Ord.
- Allow uranium mining in WA.
- Identify a site in the Kimberley for the processing of LNG, aiming to minimise the impact on cultural and natural values while allowing the State to 'unlock the enormous potential' of its offshore gas resources. *Note:* As part of its 'first 100-days plan', the Liberals committed to immediately meet with Inpex and argue the case for them to locate their Browse gas project in WA rather than Darwin.
- Up to \$9m to develop an integrated Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy to protect the natural and cultural values as the region 'fulfils its economic potential'.
- Take responsibility for the Kimberley region and not hand over control to the Commonwealth Government.
- Support the fight to 'Stop the Toad' from getting into the Kimberley, by providing \$1.2m over 4 years for a program of field work by Kimberley Toad Busters.

Liberals on Environment Funding:

- Establish a new \$6m Environmental Community Grants Program to support local environmental projects at community level.

Liberals on Environment Legislation:

- Establish a high-level ministerial taskforce to review all environmental legislation and approvals processes.

Liberals on Climate Change:

- Ensure timely decision-making and open and transparent approvals processes for new LNG projects.
- Give in-principle support to a national Emissions Trading Scheme but not sign those schemes that may put our 'trade-exposed, energy-intensive industries e.g. LNG' at a competitive disadvantage.
- Develop a *Climate Change Adaptation Strategy* covering each major sector of WA industry as well as urban planning agencies and state water and energy utilities.
- Encourage and support the development and uptake of renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, geothermal, wave and tidal power.
- Introduce incentives for homeowners to install renewable energy systems; examine options for extending the scheme to small business and commercial premises.
- Commit an additional \$6.5m to expanding the Solar Schools program in WA.

Nationals' Commitments:

- *Royalties for Regions* – 25% of mining and petroleum royalty payments to be invested in economic and social projects in rural and regional WA. *Note:* The details of this arrangement are still being negotiated.
- A single hub to process Browse Basin gas.
- \$200 million over 4 years for Ord River Irrigation Area expansion. Allow GM cotton to be grown.
- No dam on the Fitzroy River or diversion of water to Perth.



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RiverSymposium, Brisbane

On 1-2 September I attended RiverSymposium in Brisbane, which forms part of the city's annual River Festival. This is a large event with hundreds of participants from all parts of Australia and the world. The theme this year was 'A Future of Extremes', given that water and food supplies as well as river health will be affected in a major way by climate change.

World supplies of water, and river systems, are coming under increasing pressure. As the world population has tripled over the last few decades, water use has increased six fold, with more than two-thirds being used for agriculture. The Director General of the World Water Council, Ger Bergkamp, pointed out that to produce 100 grams of meat, 1800 litres of water are required.

In 2005 Environs Kimberley was a finalist in the prestigious RiverPrize for its work to protect the Fitzroy River. This year, the national finalists included the Tweed River and Lake Macquarie in NSW and Perth's own Swan and Canning Rivers. The \$150,000 first prize went to Lake Macquarie. More than 200 landcare groups have been set up around the lake to care for its health and that of surrounding waterways.

The opening speech at the conference was made by Federal Minister of Climate Change and Water, Penny Wong, who emphasised the current crisis facing the Murray-Darling system. A later speaker noted that, due to the projected impacts of climate change, the river system is likely to have 20% less water by 2030.

During a session on the future of irrigation in Australia, I asked whether farmers in the Murray-Darling

Basin were coming to terms with the new realities or were perhaps hoping to move north. The Chair of Irrigation Australia, Stephen Mills, replied that a move north was unlikely as there were few good opportunities for increased irrigation in North Australia. It was more important, he said, to bring irrigated agriculture into the 21st century by making it more efficient and sustainable where it is. He conceded that this may mean that some irrigation areas in the Murray-Darling Basin will have to close down.

I also attended a session on protecting northern Australian rivers, which included a talk by Dr Stuart Blanch from WWF-Australia on the NT's living rivers program. Dr Blanch asked the 50-strong audience to rank where they stood on a spectrum, with the proposal that northern rivers should receive legal protection at one end, and that rivers should be open to unhindered development at the other. The very strong sentiment was for some form of legal protection, new legislation being seen as the most promising instrument to achieve it.

I came away from the conference thinking that there is a lot of support in the academic, research, public and NGO sectors throughout Australia for increased protection for northern Australian rivers, including those in the Kimberley. There is also an increasing awareness, I believe, that the northern 'food bowl' idea is simply unrealistic.

Gary Scott, Freshwater Campaigner



THE RETURN OF THOSE AMAZING FLYING MACHINES – THE SATELLITE-TAGGED BARTAILED GODWITS!

The researchers are very excited: the first Bar-tailed Godwit to return still transmitting was C3. She arrived back in Roebuck Bay at approximately 8.00pm on 30 August and was first seen by Chris Hassell at 3.00pm on Saturday 6 September.

Next to fly in was H3. She landed at 2.30pm on 2 September and, although she's not been seen since she arrived back, her transmitter is still working. Following close behind H3 was C7, who arrived at approximately 6.00pm on the same day. Whilst being observed by Clare and Grant Morton on 7 September she was transmitting a signal to the satellite! The time and place match up exactly!



C7's roosting location in front of Grant and Clare Morton!

H9 probably arrived in the morning of Saturday 6 September, and a mere 8 hours later Chris Has-sell saw her. She was quite skinny but well, and preening vigorously. She then proceeded to have a sleep — understandably!



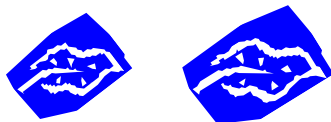
H9 taking a well-earned nap.

Later that day, C6 arrived back at approximately 5.30pm, and was seen the next day by Andrea Spencer.

As we know, boys can be a bit slow at times, and H8, the only male Bar-tailed Godwit with a transmitter, is still at Yalu Jiang in the Yellow Sea — some 6,500 kms behind the females! He is still transmitting and has yet to start his final southward journey to Roebuck Bay. Two other birds appear to have taken a break in their journeys; one is on the coast in the far south-west of Sulawesi and the other on Flores after an earlier break in the Philippines.

This has been a remarkable research project and highlights yet again the importance of the pristine mudflats of Roebuck Bay, as these birds now spend the next 7 months preparing for their next epic journey.

If you would like to find out more about these amazing birds and their migration, visit the Global Flyway Network (GFN) website www.globalflywaynetwork.com.au or the link through the Broome Bird Observatory website: www.broomebirdobservatory.com



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We would like to THANK YOU all for your on-going support. We rely heavily on membership and donations to carry out our campaign work. Keep it going!

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