



Selena Stumpagee and Henarlia Rex, Barro Jawi Ooray Rangers.



Kevin George conducting cultural training.



**Northern Australia  
Environmental  
Resources  
Hub**

National Environmental Science Programme

# Knowledge brokering at the Kimberley Ranger Forum

Summary of a report  
to the Kimberley Land Council

## Understanding the benefits Indigenous people gain through learning from each other

The 2017 Kimberley Ranger Forum brought together Indigenous rangers from across northern Australia for a gathering in the Kimberley. Hosted by the Kimberley Land Council (KLC), in partnership with the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, the Forum had a particular focus on biosecurity. Indigenous rangers play a critical role in maintaining Australia's biosecurity, not just for people in the north but all across our vast country. Many activities at the Forum reflected its theme "Indigenous Rangers – delivering biosecurity, protecting Australia". In addition, when Indigenous land managers come together, they share knowledge and learn from each other. Indigenous peoples gain many benefits through learning from each other.

The KLC is a partner in a Hub project investigating how knowledge brokering can empower Indigenous people in northern Australia to look after country. KLC invited Hub researchers to report on knowledge brokering at the Forum through conducting interviews and participating in workshops and discussions. This factsheet is a summary of that report.

*It's empowering for us, seeing all these Ranger groups, we're boots on the ground.*

Harry Ludwig, Hopevale Congress Ranger

## Key messages

- Being on country, welcomed by Traditional Owners, following cultural protocols and reciprocity, creates the right environment for learning.
- Rangers are empowered through social cohesion, collegiality and a sense of pride experienced at the Forum.
- Cultural connections through dance, language, and family are vital to peoples' sense of comfort and ability to grow and learn.
- Peer-to-peer exchanges and one-on-one interactions allow for more targeted learning and follow up.
- Exchanging common experiences, successes and grievances allows Rangers to identify what works and why in policy, program design and on-ground activities. It also supports Women Rangers and land managers to be stronger and more confident in their own roles and decision-making.
- Practical, hands-on activities particularly the realistic first-aid scenarios, building the tables, the smack-down on the beach and fixing machinery are great ways to conduct formal training.
- Greater formal and informal interaction between the Rangers and non-Indigenous participants would foster trust, relationships and mutual learning.



## Key messages

Being on country, welcomed by Traditional Owners, following cultural protocols and reciprocity, creates the right environment for learning.

*You just feel welcome here with that official welcome from Kevin ... hearing the laughter around the campfire at night ... hearing the joy and the happiness of people coming together. It just settles people's souls. It's calming people to stop and slow down ... a space away from the everyday busyness that we live. It's just so important to have these Forums on country. It takes away all the other distractions and all the other social influences.*

Cissy Gore-Birch, National Aboriginal Engagement Manager with Bush Heritage Australia, Kimberley Land Council Director and Traditional Owner



Kevin George welcomes people to his country at Pender Bay.

Cultural connections through dance, language and family are vital to peoples' sense of comfort and ability to grow and learn.

*I guess it's all about hearing that story about looking after country – culture stays strong, language stays strong ... when you're on someone's country, it's good to learn the language.*

Jason Richardson, Yawuru Ranger



Duane Ahchoo performed a cultural dance on the first night.

Peer-to-peer exchanges and one-on-one interactions allow for more targeted learning and follow up.

*Learning from each other, more one-to-one. You're actually getting it from people on the ground who are applying that training to the on-ground, and you get feedback from them whether it's working or whether it's not working. Because you are talking to the person one-on-one.*

Chris Muriata, Girringun Rangers

*Good that we have forums like this, we have to be strong, transferring it over to other Rangers, bringing stories. Coming together we have one voice.*

Bardi Jawi Oorany Rangers



Harry Ludwick, Hopevale Congress Rangers and Chris Muriata, Girringun Rangers.



Women rangers shared many publications bringing together their Indigenous and scientific knowledge of plants.



Exchanging common experiences, success and grievances allows Rangers to identify **what works and why in policy, program design and on-ground activities**. It also supports Women Rangers and land managers to be stronger and more confident in their own roles and decision-making.

*Most groups are on the delivery end of things, from that we've learned and now we want to be able to design programs. You need to merge both Indigenous knowledge and Western science. We'd love it [coming into science centres] because we see things from that science perspective, and then we can bring in our Indigenous knowledge of that – our perspective and weave it together in a way.*

Harry Ludwick, Hopevale Congress Ranger

*Being an only female ranger, the interaction with other female rangers give me that passion that inspires me to keep going because it's really, really hard sometimes for our voices to be heard as females within our group.*

Annie, Karajarri Ranger



Laurissa Mundraby, Mandingalbay Yidinji Ranger.

**Practical, hands-on activities**, particularly the realistic first-aid scenarios, building the tables, the smack-down on the beach and fixing machinery are great ways to conduct **formal training**.

*The First Aid was really useful. It was fun and good – we felt the pressure, we had limited time to act before the patient lost consciousness and we were on our own trying to figure out what was wrong with them.*

Daniel Carrington, Gooniyandi Ranger

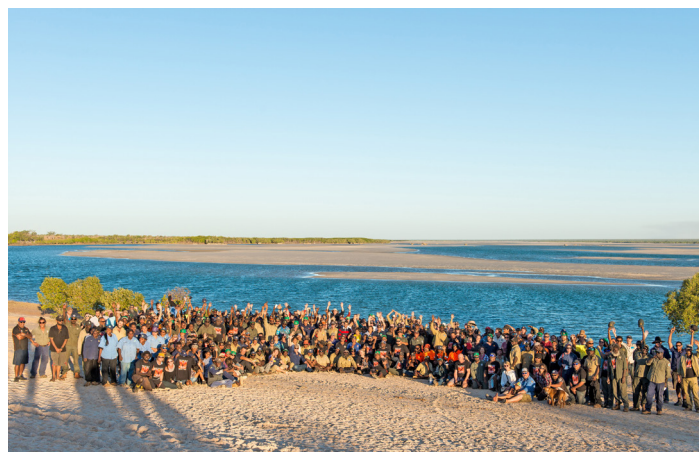


Chris Muriata, Girringun Ranger, learning new knots.



Build 'em workshop.

Greater formal and informal interaction between the Rangers and non-Indigenous participants would foster trust, relationships and mutual learning



Kimberley Ranger Forum attendees on the beach at Pender Bay.





Practical activities on the beach were popular.

## Participants identified many topics where informal exchanges had increased their knowledge

- Control of common weeds that are found right across the north
- How to raise funds for Ranger projects and programs
- How to prioritise spending of funds
- Using zoning and compliance activities to control threats
- Managing soil erosion, particularly on roads and tracks
- Managing vegetation, in particular culturally and ecologically important species
- Responses to sugar bag declines are happening in lots of places
- Responses to declines of fruit pigeons and flying foxes
- Putting a moratorium on netting in some coastal areas to control over-fishing

- Hatching, feeding and selling crocodiles
- Running ecotourism businesses
- Managing visitors through a permit and pay system
- Developing and selling bush products
- Gun licences
- Managing crocodiles and buffaloes
- How to establish an ongoing Indigenous land and sea management alliance.

## Who is involved?

Dr Ro Hill and Emma Woodward from CSIRO conducted the interviews and wrote a report to the Kimberley Land Council on which this factsheet is based. The report was reviewed by Ranger Groups and interviewees who attended the Forum.

**Contact:** [ro.hill@csiro.au](mailto:ro.hill@csiro.au),  
[emma.woodward@csiro.au](mailto:emma.woodward@csiro.au) or [will.durack@klc.org.au](mailto:will.durack@klc.org.au)

For further information and project updates, visit the project webpage at [www.nespnorthern.edu.au/projects/nesp/knowledge-brokering-indigenous-land-management](http://www.nespnorthern.edu.au/projects/nesp/knowledge-brokering-indigenous-land-management)

*“Myself, I came to a Northern Territory Sea Country Forum in Maningrida, inspired me to come back and start Rangers here, gave me the drive and inspiration. Some people here will be inspired in the same way.”*

Daniel Oades, Bardi Jawi Ranger Coordinator



*All photos by Kimberley Land Council. To respect cultural protocols, photos cannot be copied or reproduced in any way without written permission from the KLC.*



**Northern Australia  
Environmental  
Resources  
Hub**

National Environmental Science Programme

[nespnorthern.edu.au](http://nespnorthern.edu.au)

[nesp.northern@cdu.edu.au](mailto:nesp.northern@cdu.edu.au)



/NESPNorthern



@NESPNorthern

This project is supported through funding from the Australian Government's National Environmental Science Program.

December 2017