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## Workshop 3.3 : “Effective and equitable governance of the seascape”

17<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2014; 8.30 - 12:15 m

Kimberley Sea Country Network

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Kimberley Land Council





# Cultural Governance: sea country management in the Kimberley region of Australia

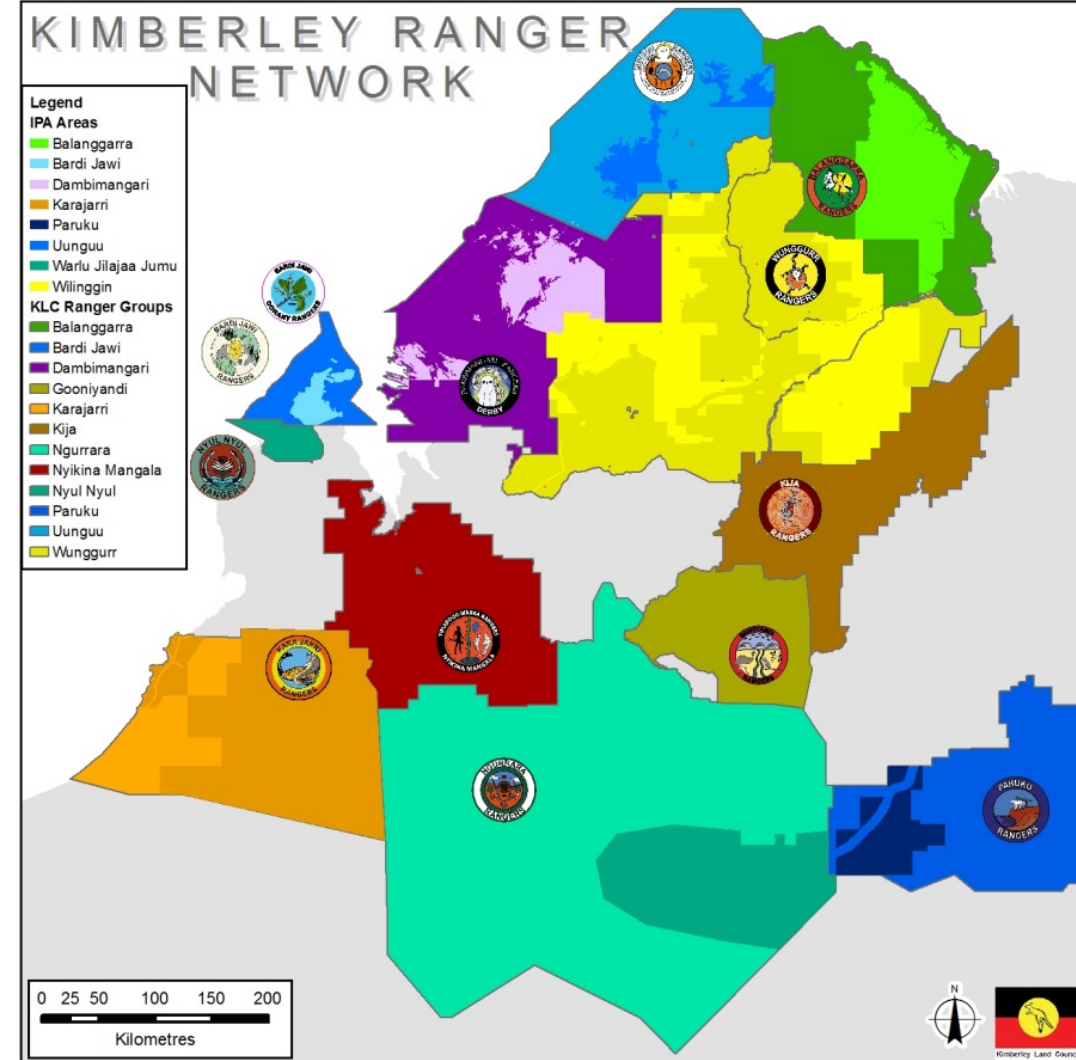
## ISSUES

- Unmanaged charter boat tourism
- Damage to coastal cultural sites and reefs
- Commercial fishing
- Increased offshore oil and gas activity
- Limited access for Traditional Owners to visit country
- Limited engagement with government and industry on management of country

*“We want to get something started for the next generation to carry on caring for Country. We will set up a permit system or a visitor pass to manage tourism on our Country. We will continue to build up our ranger groups so that we can properly manage our Country.”*

*“We want to work in partnership with government agencies, tourism companies, commercial fishers and others so that together we can look after our Country.”*

Saltwater Country Plan 2010





# The key question

***How to strengthen community governance to be able to cope with different challenges and external pressure, without depriving the local communities / stakeholders of their decision-making power? What role for the central authorities, NGOs and others?***

## Successful components

- Recognition of Traditional Owner rights to manage country and Indigenous-led decision-making based on cultural values, are the two components essential to ensuring the Kimberley IPA and ranger initiative has achieved positive results.

## Enabling factors

- Indigenous leadership and community support backed by a strong regional governance network has been instrumental to the success of the Kimberley IPA and Ranger Network. This has led to Traditional Owners taking a lead role in management of both land and sea country.





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## Lessons learnt *(from your concrete experience)*

- Good information to underpin free, prior and informed decision making
- Mandate and support of regional representative organisation – Kimberley Land Council
- Proactive planning and implementation of initiatives, like Indigenous Protected Areas, visitor pass and cultural tours that assert Indigenous peoples right to manage country
- Strong partnerships
- Focus on common interests
- Resilience and united voice





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## Key recommendations

Recognition of Indigenous Peoples relationship with sea country and acknowledgement of the benefit that arises from Indigenous led management.



*We, the Saltwater Traditional Owners in the North Kimberley, are often treated as just another stakeholder on a long list of interest groups, which includes industry, conservation, and recreational groups, local government and State government agencies. In the past this has sometimes resulted in our interests being marginalised and made invisible by these competing interests. Yet we have rights and interests in country that place us in a unique situation compared to all other groups. We are more than a stakeholder.*

Saltwater Country Plan 2010

