



MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KLC celebrates the first Indigenous-led design of State Marine Parks

The Kimberley Land Council (KLC) is celebrating the creation of Western Australia's first co-designed Marine Parks with Traditional Owners in the Kimberley region.

The Bardi Jawi Garra, Mayala and Maiyalam Marine Parks will cover more than 600,000 hectares of the Buccaneer Archipelago.

KLC CEO Tyronne Garstone said the creation of these marine parks is a significant milestone for Australia as it shows true co-design between Government and Traditional Owners can be achieved.

"The way in which these marine parks have been co-designed means important cultural areas, heritage and marine life will be protected in a way that enables both sustainable and customary recreational and commercial use," Mr Garstone said.

"Throughout the co-design process there was authentic engagement with Traditional Owners. There were genuine partnerships, mutual respect, native title holders were listened to, and feedback that cultural zones should be implemented throughout the marine park was taken on-board."

Mr Garstone said the KLC is proud to have been at the forefront of sea country management supporting Traditional Owners throughout the consultation process which began in 2017.

"The KLC had extensive involvement throughout the co-design process; supporting the development and uptake of healthy country plans into the process, negotiation of ILUA terms, and the mapping of cultural zones and environmental and cultural values. The KLC represented the interests of Traditional Owners throughout the process to ensure PBCs and native title holders were able to effectively engage with Government and that Traditional Owner voices were heard."

"For the first time in the State's history Indigenous knowledge has been central to the design of a marine park. These marine parks are at the forefront of sea country management; combining traditional ancient wisdom with modern environmental management."

"This is a historic moment for the Bardi and Jawi, Mayala and Dambimangari people who have fought hard to secure native title recognition and continue to fight for protection of their land and sea country," Mr Garstone said.

"The KLC is proud of the work that has been done and will continue to support Traditional Owners to make informed decisions to get the best outcomes for their country."

The marine parks aim to protect sea country for future generations and will be jointly managed by Traditional Owners and the State Government with day-to-day management to be closely aligned with work undertaken by local ranger teams who are part of the KLC's Kimberley Ranger Network.

KLC Land and Sea Management Unit Manager Daniel Oades said the KLC looks forward to continuing to support Indigenous ranger groups to work alongside Government and developing what is best practice Joint Management in future years in particular in this case 'Sea Country Management'.

"Indigenous ranger groups are central to the protection of this sea country. For many years they have demonstrated they can work and build up the skills and capacity within the frameworks of traditional governance and knowledge structures whilst collaborating with non-Indigenous environmental organisations and stakeholders," Mr Oades said.

"Through the creation of the marine park sea country will be kept healthy and culturally significant sites will be protected. There will be more resources through the agreements to better manage and work in hand with the expected increase in tourism and commercial opportunities for Traditional Owners and other businesses. Additionally, there will be more employment opportunities on their own country for Kimberley Aboriginal people in a program we know delivers great social and community benefits.

"With visitor numbers set to more than double on the Dampier Peninsula in the next decade, it's more important than ever to have a co- designed marine park and management plan in place to protect it," he said.

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