



Kimberley Land Council

MEDIA RELEASE

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Native title at heart of Fitzroy River Declaration

The Fitzroy River Declaration released by Kimberley Traditional Owners highlights the central role of native title holders and claimants in decision-making about land management and appropriate development.

Kimberley Land Council Acting Chief Executive Officer Tyronne Garstone said the declaration sends a clear message that Traditional Owners and their native title rights are key to the future development of the Kimberley, and that the traditional and environmental values of the Fitzroy River recognised in the West Kimberley National Heritage Listing must not be overlooked.

“Kimberley Aboriginal people have made a strong statement that they will not be ignored or divided when it comes to the interests of the Fitzroy River,” Mr Garstone said.

“Traditional Owners want to see stronger protection for the Fitzroy River and are more determined than ever to work together to achieve this outcome.

“The KLC will continue to support Traditional Owners to realise the full potential of their native title rights and ensure that their voices are heard in decision making processes.

“Recognition of native title rights and the role of Traditional Owners is fundamental to managing increasing development pressures in the Kimberley, particularly along the Fitzroy catchment.”

Mr Garstone said the KLC respects the independence of each Traditional Owner group along the Fitzroy River to make their own informed decisions regarding development as well as how they may work together to manage and care for the river.

“It is pleasing to see so many people keen to work together to make decisions to ensure this iconic river system is managed sustainably into the future.”

Kimberley Traditional Owners gathered in Fitzroy Crossing earlier this month to discuss the many pressures facing the Fitzroy River catchment and how they may impact on the traditional and environmental values that led to the river’s National Heritage listing in 2011.

The meeting resulted in the drafting of the Fitzroy River Declaration, the first agreement of its kind among Kimberley Aboriginal people with interests along the Fitzroy River. The declaration includes a number of key steps Traditional Owners would like to see implemented to better protect the entire Fitzroy River catchment.

For more information about the Fitzroy River Declaration visit <http://www.klc.org.au/news-media/newsroom>