



## Kimberley Land Council

### MEDIA RELEASE

#### **Karajarri people declare IPA to protect country and culture**

Karajarri Traditional Owners have declared an Indigenous Protected Area across their country to manage biodiversity hotspots and protect some of the Kimberley's most vulnerable and threatened species.

Karajarri country extends from the sandy beaches, tidal creeks and reef systems of 80 Mile Beach and Gourdon Bay, inland towards the vast arid country, wetlands and dunes of the Great Sandy Desert. It is home to many rare animal species such as the nationally endangered bilby, marsupial mole and northern quoll as well as turtles, migratory birds and reptiles.

The Karajarri IPA, which was declared on May 7, 2014 along the coast at Mangkuna (Corkbark) about 35km south of Bidyadanga, covers 24,797 square kilometres and includes parts of the Fraser Downs Pastoral Lease and inland areas towards the Great Sandy Desert.

Senior Karajarri Ranger Jessica Bangu said the declaration of the Indigenous Protected Area promoted Aboriginal leadership and would ensure Traditional Owners were at the forefront of managing their country.

"Indigenous Protected Areas let us look after and protect our country, the way our old people want us too. It provides the right cultural match as having an IPA is not just about looking after the environment but making sure our people, our culture and our heritage is strong as well," she said.

"It makes us proud to have this IPA. It is recognition of the hard work we have done over the years to make this happen. Today's declaration is the start of the next chapter in our journey as a community and we look forward to protecting our country to make sure it can be enjoyed by our future generations."

Indigenous Protected Areas are an initiative of the Australian Government and Karajarri Traditional Owners worked with the Kimberley Land Council, The Nature Conservancy and Pew Charitable Trusts to develop the Healthy Country Management Plan which sets out the long-term conservation targets and strategies for the management of the IPA. The Karajarri Rangers will be responsible for implementing the plan under the guidance of a cultural advisory committee.

Ms Bangu said the Healthy Country Plan set out the targets and objectives Karajarri Traditional Owners wanted to see happen on-country.

"Protecting and enhancing cultural knowledge is our number one priority. Our culture can be passed on through many different ceremonies but it is also present in our everyday life. The best way to keep our culture strong is by being out on country and telling stories, hunting and speaking language. Our IPA will enable us to do more of this," she said.

"Our other target areas include increasing our ability to participate in the modern economy and maintaining a sustainable livelihood from living on country, looking after our vital wetlands and springs, food sources and saltwater habitats.

“We also need to make sure we work to minimise the threats to our country and people including climate change, lack of access to country, loss of knowledge and culture, commercial fishing, alcohol and drugs, mining and exploration and insufficient fire regimes.”

Karajarri Traditional Owners have taken a staged approach to the IPA and will look to declare a sea country IPA into the future with the support and assistance from other agencies and interested parties.

The Karajarri IPA will become one of eight IPA's in the Kimberley, covering more than 90,000 sq km across the region.