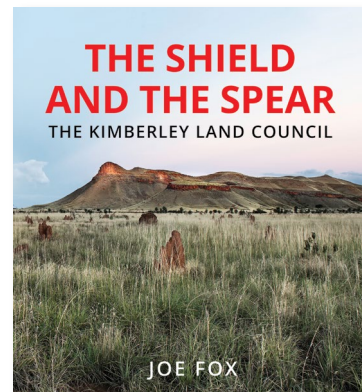




DECEMBER 2022 MEDIA RELEASE

The Shield and the Spear: The Kimberley Land Council

One of Australia's most significant Indigenous Land Councils shares over 40 years of history, protest and knowledge in new illustrated book.



From on Country meetings in the Kimberley, to the High Court of Australia, to the halls of the United Nations: for 44 years the Kimberley Land Council (KLC) has been the political voice for Kimberley Aboriginal people. *The Shield and The Spear*, released by Magabala Books, is an illustrated coffee table book filled with never-before-seen interviews, eyewitness accounts and photos that tell the KLC's incredible history.

In April 1978, leaders from Aboriginal Communities across the Kimberley met in the river bed at Malliyarn Pool in Noonkanbah. From that meeting a Cultural Festival was organised in May 1978, at which a new organisation – The Kimberley Land Council (KLC) – was officially formed and launched.

The KLC was formed as a political land rights organisation. Today it is the peak Indigenous body in the Kimberley region working with Aboriginal people to secure native title, conduct conservation and land management activities and develop cultural & economic business enterprises.

KLC Chair Anthony Watson said this book is an important record of the land-rights movement of Kimberley Aboriginal people.

“A lot of our stories have been handed down orally over the years.

“*The Shield and the Spear* brings our stories together, in a book that we can give back to our community, with the messages and voices from our elders before us. Here in the Kimberley, we must remember that we are standing on the shoulders of giants.

“In our journey, this is going to be the first volume of many to come, as we continue to fight for a better future for Kimberley Aboriginal people.”

KLC CEO Tyronne Garstone said the release of the book marked a significant moment in the organisation's history.

“*The Shield and the Spear* captures over four decades of struggles, challenges, protest and achievement from our leaders. Today, the KLC is proud to have achieved native title recognition across 97% of the Kimberley.

“This book captures that for over 40 years the KLC has been consistent with the vision and values of the Traditional Owners who first fought for our land rights at Noonkanbah.

“The KLC will remember those hard-won battles, and continue to work with native title holders and Kimberley Aboriginal people to ensure their rights stay strong for generations to come.”

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Told through firsthand contributions from the people who were there, the reader is taken on a journey through historic Indigenous land rights battles such as the Noonkanbah blockade in 1979, the formation of the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre (KALACC) and the Kimberley Language Resource Centre (KLRC) in 1984; the formation of Magabala Books in 1987; and the controversial James Price Point gas hub dispute.

Magabala Books editor Margaret Whiskin said: “this book is of national significance as it represents the social and cultural history of Indigenous rights and land rights in the Kimberley and Australia. Essential for all Australians to know our past and celebrate our future.”

The Shield and the Spear was commissioned by the Kimberley Land Council and compiled by Non-Indigenous author Joe Fox.

About the Author



Joe Fox, a kartiya (white person) from the South West, came to the Kimberley in 1985, first to Halls Creek as a music teacher then as co-ordinator of Ngaringga Ngurra Women’s Group, where he assisted the group in the establishment of the Yarliyl Arts Centre. He has also worked for the Kimberley Language Resource Centre. Moving to Broome in 1997, Joe worked for a number of small, community-based organisations, before joining the Kimberley Land Council in 2004, as media officer, policy adviser and later as project manager for the KLC’s new office development.

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