

North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance



Forum Report 12, 13 September 2005

Compiled by Steve Johnson

NAILSMA 2006

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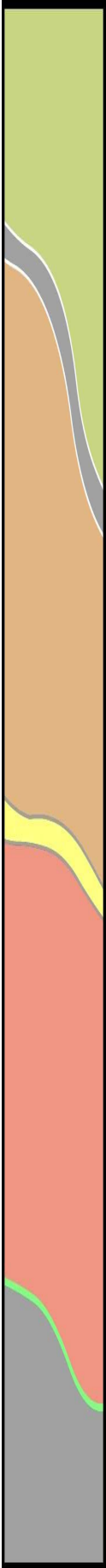
1) Background

In 2000, the Kimberley Land Council (KLC) Northern Land Council (NLC) and Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation (Balkanu) formed a partnership with the Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Savannas Management (CRC-TSM). The partnership was created to provide a strong collective voice, a strategic vision and practical on the ground support for Indigenous Land and Sea management initiatives and activities across northern Australia – the so-called wet/dry tropics or tropical savannas. Subsequently, the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA) was born and has since established offices at Charles Darwin University out of which several projects are running across the north.

On 1 and 2 September 2004 the first NAILSMA Forum was held on *Wardaman* country at Menngen in the Victoria River District 145 kilometres southwest of Katherine in the Northern Territory. More than two hundred Traditional Owners from across the tropical savannas attended the meeting and over three days discussed the NAILSMA concept and governance arrangements before lending their further endorsement to the alliance. It was also agreed that the NAILSMA Forum become an annual event.

In addition to this endorsement, TOs raised a diverse range of land and sea management issues and possible directions for the future over the course of the Menngen meeting. These varied from general concerns over the prevalence of feral animals, exotic weeds and widespread land degradation, to specific fears over the loss of knowledge, a growing gap between older and younger generations, and a limited capacity and lack of support for projects which would enable people to move and live back on their country.

These and many other concerns and fears are clearly identified and well documented. However, many people noted that the solutions they have put forward are less well publicised or supported. They are eager to move forward and find support for these



solutions. And, although a role for Western science in effective land and sea management was readily acknowledged, people also insisted that the application of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is equally important and ultimately the key to successfully caring for country. For this reason, the second NAILSMA Forum was planned around an Indigenous Knowledge theme.

This focus provided TOs with an opportunity to discuss issues around IK. For many of the people who attended, particularly those from the remoter parts of northern Australia, such opportunities are rare. Consequently, there is a general perception in these areas that debate around Indigenous Knowledge has been hijacked by ‘whitefella experts’. Therefore, the forum was intended not only to provide an appropriate venue for discussing issues but also a political platform from which TOs could reassert their claims to the ownership and articulation of Indigenous Knowledge, in Indigenous terms.

Similar considerations also inform the NAILSMA Indigenous Knowledge project. This project is funded by Land and Water Australia (LWA) and the CRC-TSM. For the first time in Australia (at least on this scale) Indigenous Australians are to be the principal architects and owners of a consistent and coherent strategic plan for the conservation of Indigenous Knowledge and its practical application to land and sea management. As this research has been underway for a year, the second NAILSMA Forum provided a timely opportunity for Traditional Owners to furnish further comments and advice on the direction the strategy was taking and how it should develop from this point forward (see [Future Directions](#) below).

2) Introduction

Against this backdrop, the second NAILSMA Forum took place on *Lama Lama* country at Bizant Homestead in Lakefield National Park, Queensland, over 12, 13 September 05. Approximately 70 Traditional Owners from across northern Australia attended (see [Appendix Two](#)).

Invitations were extended to alliance partners and individuals from across the tropical savannas. However, with the exception of key organisational staff, attendance was restricted to Indigenous participants. This approach was taken in view of the concerns highlighted in the background discussion above. The intention was to provide an atmosphere where people felt comfortable speaking plainly about their heritage, the difficulties they face and the solutions they propose in the present and for the future.

The Forum took place over two days and commenced with the hand back of country around Bizant to *Lama Lama* traditional owners (TOs). Introductions to NAILSMA staff followed before the floor was given over to TOs. The key issues and proposed solutions emerging out of these talks are briefly summarised below and formed the basis for more in depth consideration during a series of working groups held on the afternoon of the second day. These ideas and suggestions will complement research already undertaken as part of the NAILSMA Strategic Plan for the conservation and application of IK – see Future Directions below.

3) FORUM Day 1

Most participants arrived at Bizant the evening before the meeting was to take place. They were welcomed by various Balkanu staff as well as senior *Lama Lama* and *Kuku Thaypan* Traditional Owners. Food and drink was on hand and people soon shook off the dust and heat from the journey and relaxed into informal conversation around the campfires.

Balkanu had done an outstanding job setting up the site. The camping areas and facilities were first class and the food was plentiful and tasty. The countryside itself



Figure 1: Professor Tommy George *Kuku Thaypan*

is beautiful although many TOs commented on how sick it looked. They attributed this unhealthy outlook to the ignorance of the whitefellas who had taken the land from the *Lama Lama* only to find that they did not know how to care for it properly. There was optimism that with the hand back it would be possible to restore the country to health. The scene was set for celebration and serious discussion.

Lama Lama Hand back

The weather was kind – warm but not too warm – as the first formal day of the meeting arrived. Tommy George, senior *Kuku Thaypan* man, welcomed participants and prepared the ground with a brief cleansing ceremony. People passed through the smoke and made their way to the meeting tent where preparations were underway for the hand back.

Figure 2: Alan Feely and Albert Lakefield



Figure 3: Senior *Lama Lama* TOs and Alan Feely

The hand back was the culmination of years of struggle. An agreement brokered by Balkanu, between senior TOs and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services (QPWS) will see the countryside around Bizant Homestead returned to the *Lama Lama* people. Albert Lakefield and other senior *Lama Lama* representatives were on hand for the signing of the official paperwork which was presented to them by Alan Feely (Executive Director Parks Division) in company with several rangers from Lakefield National Park. After a few brief words from Feely and Jim Davis (Balkanu Indigenous Land Management Facilitator) the documents were signed and photographs were taken. It was an emotional event and a fitting introduction to the issues to be discussed over the course of the forum.

NAILSMA Introductions

After lunch the meeting recommenced with introductions to NAILSMA Staff (see [Appendix One](#)). Steve Johnson (IK Project Officer) provided a brief background to the Indigenous Knowledge project and what NAILSMA hoped to achieve over the course of the forum. He emphasised that the strategy was an Indigenous initiative and needed to be informed by Indigenous aspirations and driven by Indigenous people. In this respect, NAILSMA staff were employed to facilitate this process through enlisting support for those initiatives and activities Traditional Owners considered most important. Steve



Figure 4: Jim Davis Balkanu ILMF

noted that LWA and the CRC-TSM were already providing this sort of support and were actively involved in promoting the value of Indigenous Knowledge to the general public and other NRM organisations. They were also genuinely interested in finding ways for Western science and Indigenous Knowledge to work together caring for country.

Steve said these were the things they would like to talk about during the meeting. He has travelled all over the tropical savannas for the year that the project has been underway talking to people about these and many other issues. The point of the forum was to give TOs some feedback on what had come out of this research and to seek

further guidance on whether the project was progressing in the right direction. Steve said all of the ideas put forward at the meeting would be written into the strategy which would then be presented in draft form to TOs for comment and direction at the next forum to be held in the middle of 2006 (see [Future Directions](#)).

After Steve spoke Jean Fenton introduced her role in the Indigenous Fire Management project. Jean commenced working for NAILSMA in August 2005 and has been busy meeting and talking to people throughout the north ever since. She is eager to talk further about fire issues in northern Australia and especially about Indigenous enterprise development utilising IK based fire management techniques.



Figure 5: Steve Johnson and Leigh Harris

Lisa Binge then took the microphone. Lisa has been working with TOs for some time now on issues to do with communication, leadership and scholarships. She briefly outlined her work on *Kantri Laif* (the biannual NAILSMA newsletter) and the various study assistance and scholarship programmes NAILSMA, The Christensen Fund (TCF) and the CRC-TSM are currently running. All of the NAILSMA Project Officers are eager to hear the thoughts of TOs on these and any other issues (see [Appendix One](#) for more info on Projects and Personnel).

After these brief introductions Jim Davis opened the floor to TOs. A number of people took this opportunity to speak about the many issues they confront daily in their efforts to manage culture, land and sea. Some of their comments and concerns are summarised below. In addition, over the course of the two-day meeting, Balkanu organised for Leigh Harris from *Ingeous Studios* to conduct a series of interviews with TOs. Leigh worked tirelessly during the meeting recording audiovisual footage from the main forum as well as these interviews which have since been copied onto DVD. The DVD supplements this report and provides a more detailed record of what individual TOs had to say over the course of the forum.



Figure 6: NAILSMA Open Forum

This first afternoon's discussion was lively, full of good humour and straight to the point. At all times Indigenous knowledge underpinned TOs concerns for culture, kin and country. This frank exchange of ideas set the context for the following day's meeting and working groups. A select few of these general comments are paraphrased and reproduced verbatim as follows. The sentiments they express are clear and unambiguous and need little elaboration.

NAILSMA Open Forum

Ron Archer(Northern Gulf QLD)NG Indigenous Savanna Group

Ron Archer spoke with passion about the central importance of family to Indigenous Knowledge and effective land and sea management. He also emphasised the need to stimulate the interest of younger generations through teaching them ‘...blackfella way...’ not just in a classroom but more importantly through living out on country.

I want to talk about family...family is the core issue with land. We gotta tell children our story, from this way [hand held just above the ground] to this way [hand held up high]. We teach our children by storytelling...we don't need blackboard. We live that story. It's all about the way we tell the story. We have to keep it interesting...



Figure 7: NAILSMA Open Forum

TOP: Tom Birch (KLC Chair) Joe Morrison (NAILSMA Executive)
LEFT: Topsy Chestnut (Fitzroy Crossing WA) Don Banu (TSI) Nigel Gella, Dean Yibarbuk, Matthew Ryan (Arnhem NT)
RIGHT: Visible L to R. Professor Tommy George (*Kuku Thaypan*) Ron Archer (Northern Gulf)

Col Lawrence (Kowanyama QLD)

Col Lawrence talked about widespread land degradation over succeeding generations of non-Indigenous mismanagement. He argued that Indigenous people needed to educate whitefellas about how to look after the land properly. Col also suggested that sometimes government and other NRM agencies used complicated language to disguise their lack of knowledge and to prevent Aboriginal people finding out what was really

going on. At the very least, he thought that this language made it hard for TOs to get the support they needed for management on country. In closing, Col noted that country and people needed each other to stay healthy and said the land was now suffering because of the widespread dispossession of Aboriginal people.

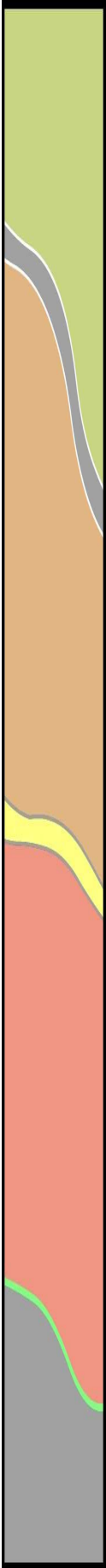
Because the country... government bugger him up [and] we gotta take him [whitefellas] to that Murray school...but [government mob] use too much big words.

Figure 8 Nigel Gellar (Arnhem NT)



Figure 9 Dean Yibarbuk (Arnhem NT)

Many other speakers picked up on similar themes. Dean Yibarbuk began with a glowing endorsement of NAILSMA and a brief description of his involvement in the early years, when the alliance was just an idea. He then talked at length about the healthy country healthy people nexus, which he explained in terms of the dynamic between wind and



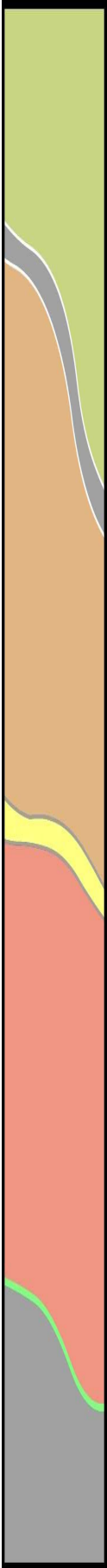
fire: wind and fire communicate and cooperate with each other and the country – ‘...maybe here, fire will go very fast because they talk, wind and fire, together’ – just as people must. Dean also spoke about various projects currently underway where Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers were successfully collaborating. These included fire mapping and back to country walks and demonstrated how people could work together. Such projects were also valuable because they brought older and younger generations back together on country, which helped stimulate interest in IK and allowed for the transfer of knowledge from older to younger people. Dean also emphasised ‘...two ways...’ learning in schools where IK was given equal time with a whitefella curriculum and stressed that it was only through maintaining IK and links with the land that culture and kin would remain strong.

The land is crying itself, because there [are] no people...that’s why fire maps and on country walks with young people are good... you see people on country. Otherwise [that] knowledge is disappearing [and] children [are] escaping into a white man’s world...but technology and old ways...they can work together – you need two way education.

If that knowledge is strong then I [can] see that spear go straight [and] then maybe I can stand straight. The knowledge is very powerful. If that knowledge is gone, we are gone too...

Over the entire discussion family, culture, country and knowledge were woven into a seamless whole and several TOs noted how this sometimes created problems when dealing with non-Indigenous individuals and agencies. Otto Campion and Matthew Ryan for example, noted that it was difficult to get support for things like ceremony, which, for many countrymen, were a big part of IK and looking after country. However, most NRM agencies found it hard to grasp these connections. Otto and other speakers went on to explain how TOs then find themselves in a position where they have to modify their priorities in order to make them fit a mainstream agenda. Thus, an initiative aimed at getting young and old people together on country must be put in terms of a Junior Ranger programme in order to get support.

They [whitefellas] call him junior ranger programme...I call him taking children back to country...



This discussion led John Christopherson (Cobourg NT) to pose a series of questions. How, he asked, was it possible to get whitefellas to understand the importance and value of these links and priorities? He noted that these issues arise out of different understandings of the relationship between people and place. This in turn, results in different priorities for Indigenous and non Indigenous approaches to land and sea management.

■ *Country needs laughter. If we don't look after country we'll shrivel up...*

He also said that some of these issues have come up with Indigenous recording projects. Citing an example from the NT, Christo detailed how Indigenous ownership and public disclosure of knowledge often worked according to a different set of rules than those of the mainstream. He emphasized that non Indigenous researchers must be aware that intellectual property rights in Indigenous societies are not held by any one individual:

There are collective group rights. It is the group that holds the rights not the individual.

This issue regarding the connection between kin and country and what this means in terms of ownership and property rights came up a number of times over the course of the forum, particularly in reference to IK Recording projects. Sometimes the demand to record IK and make it widely available has created divisions within Indigenous groups over ownership and rights to access. Similarly, the deep seated Western notion that knowledge belongs to all, has led many non Indigenous researchers (sometimes consciously other times unconsciously) to employ inappropriate consultation methods which ignore or override existing cultural and kinship sanctions and obligations.

In spite of these and other issues, many TOs expressed an interest in IK recording. Daniel Fischer and Barry Hunter gave a brief overview of their involvement with the *Kuku Yalanji* and *Jabuguy* recording projects, which led Frank

Davies (One Arm Point, WA) to highlight the difficulties in finding support for these initiatives:

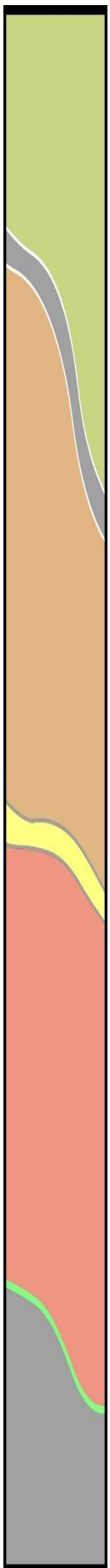
Where do we start? Young people lose interest in all these meetings, meetings...we need people to come out and stay with the community to start recording knowledge and teach young people how to do it. Kids don't want to leave home so they need training at home. How do we get funding? Where do we start?

In spite of all these difficulties most TOs were optimistic about the future. Nigel Gellar talked about the positive things already happening at *Kabulwarnamyo* on the Arnhem Land high plateau in the NT, while Clarry Rogers (Ngukurr, NT) spoke about various projects running in *Ngukurr* and emphasized the importance of language to the



Figure 10: Charles Prouse (KLC, ILMF)

maintenance and application of IK. Charles Prouse and Ishmal Croft from the Kimberley, mentioned the role of culture in building self esteem amongst younger generations and in bridging the gap between older and younger people. Anthony Watson gave some further insight into the dynamic nature of IK, when he spoke about adaptations people had made to changing social and environmental conditions. He talked specifically about the long-term drought in the Kimberley region and how people had adapted their seasonal calendar to reflect these changes.



The session continued late into the afternoon with many other speakers outlining their vision for the future and the obstacles they faced. As is often the case some of the most productive discussions took place after the meeting finished, in informal conversations over dinner and cups of tea. All in all, TOs made it clear what was important to them and what support they needed in order to realize their aspirations. The biggest challenge then remained one of articulating this vision and these aspirations with the demands and expectations of mainstream NRM, government and other agencies. It is this question as much as any other that the NAILSMA IK Strategy hopes to address.

4) FORUM Day 2

Day two of the forum commenced with a hearty breakfast and more animated discussion. Immediately after this Professor Tommy George (*Kuku Thaypan* elder) and Victor Steffensen (Balkanu Traditional Knowledge Recording Project Manager) held a demonstration of their project for meeting participants.

Bush Walk: Balkanu IK Recording Project

Tommy George spoke about fire and demonstrated his extensive knowledge of floral and faunal species – their particular qualities and potential uses – and the practical application of IK to effective land management. Victor elaborated on the action principle driving the project. He noted that while the recording was valuable in itself it also provided people with the opportunity to get back on country and to actually apply what they know to active land management in the here and now. He said that the project had stimulated the interest of younger people and opened doors for them as well as strengthening the confidence and resolve of senior custodians. In these respects the recording project facilitated the transfer of knowledge, ensured its conservation and application, provided a means for educating non Indigenous land and sea managers and demonstrated a real potential for economic development and gainful employment for upcoming and present day Indigenous researchers and land managers.

NAILSMA Introductions

After the demonstration people made their way to the meeting tent. Proceedings began with an introduction from Peter Yu, NAILSMA Chair. Peter talked briefly about NAILSMA governance issues and the direction the organization was taking. He focused particularly on the idea of a ‘...culture based economy...’ noting that northern Australia is in the grip of a resources boom and Indigenous Australians as major land owners and managers stood to benefit from this through innovative and culturally appropriate planning for commercial development. In an earlier statement, Peter argued that TOs now faced a number of new challenges in the present and for the future.

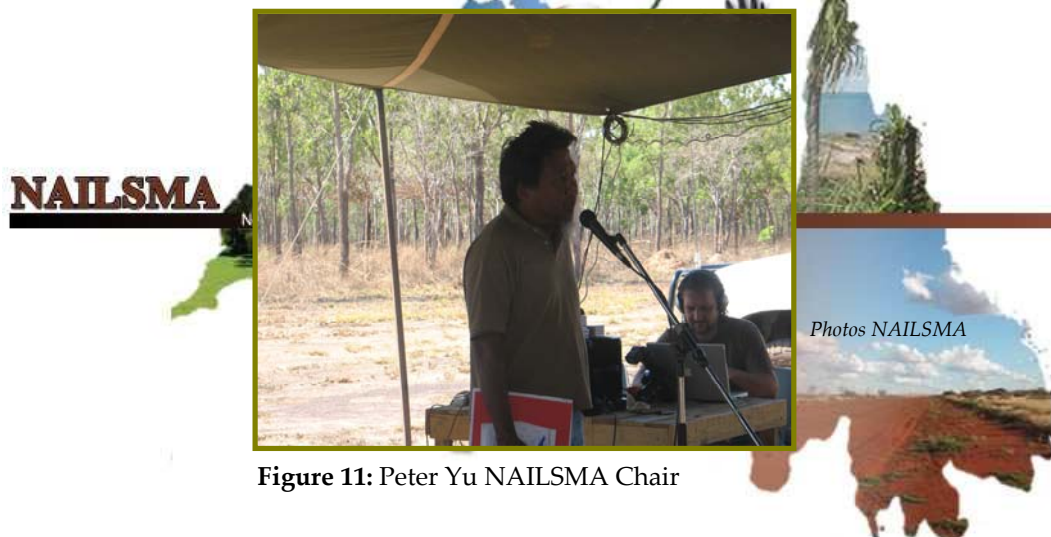
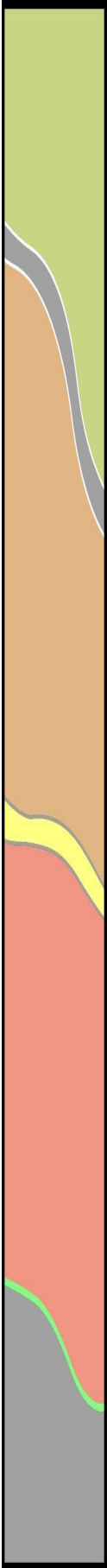


Figure 11: Peter Yu NAILSMA Chair

Now is the time to build on and move to the next phase of claiming and defending rights to country, to a time when our people can get relief, enjoyment and benefits out of exercising these rights.

Joe Morrison, NAILSMA Executive Officer, followed up on these ideas. He gave a brief summary of the NAILSMA board meeting, which had taken place on 11 September 2006, in Cairns. During this meeting further endorsement had been given to the alliance. Like



Peter Yu before him, Joe also mentioned the need for innovation aimed at ‘...securing people’s rights to manage and benefit from their country in a post land rights era.’

Toward this end, the board had discussed the notion of culture based economies and market branding. These concepts are to be researched over following months before being presented to TOs for comment and guidance. After this feedback, they will be incorporated into the IK Strategy where appropriate.

Joe then introduced Rod Kennett, the Coordinator of the NAILSMA Dugong and Marine Turtle Management Project. Rod gave a brief history to the project and a summary of progress to date. The project is funded by the Australian Government through Natural Heritage Trust Regional Competitive with substantial in-kind and cash contributions from the participating partners and communities. The projects on ground activities span north Australia from the Kimberley to Cape York and the Torres Strait and the Kimberley Land Council, Northern Land Council, Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Cape York Balkanu Development Corporation are the project partners. The planning phase of the project is now largely complete with approval from the NHT Joint Steering Committee for funds to be released to implement the Regional Activity Plans (RAPS). The RAPS were developed by the Partners through consultation with Traditional Owners in the participating ‘pilot’ communities and set out the various activities that each region will undertake. These regional activities range from mapping and monitoring projects, workshops on hunting and catch management, education programs, research partnerships, information and training exchange visits, while NAILSMA and partners will work across the region to develop projects such as a socio-economic study of the importance of dugong and marine turtles to Indigenous livelihoods.



NAILSMA Open Forum

After these introductions, the floor was once again opened to TOs. Many of the speakers elaborated on the issues raised over the course of the first day and by mid afternoon these had been sorted into theme areas as follows:

1. *Transfer of knowledge*
2. *Ownership and Knowledge Protection*
3. *Education*
4. *Developing Linkages*

Having identified these key areas of concern meeting participants broke up into smaller working groups for further discussion of the issues and to highlight possible solutions.

Working Groups

Following is a brief summary of the issues and solutions highlighted in the working groups. How these issues and solutions may be addressed, implemented and what influence they will have over the direction of the strategy is summarized under the section heading Future Directions below.

1. *Transfer of Knowledge*

Issues:

- Growing generation gap and subsequent loss of knowledge;

- Lack of expertise, funding and other support for recording projects;
- The relegation to secondary status of IK;
- A lack of commitment and understanding of IK on the part of non Indigenous researchers;


Solutions:

- Promote the social and environmental benefits of back to country activities and support for on country enterprise development schemes;
- Focus on families – kinship and Indigenous governance;
- Provide details for TOs on who to approach, what equipment/technology is appropriate, how much it costs and where to find it;
- Promote equal status IK and Western science on the basis of demonstrable benefits in terms of biodiversity, healthy country and healthy people;
- Provide incentives for researchers to travel to remoter areas and provide longer term training and expertise;

2. *Ownership and Knowledge Protection*

Issues:

- Lack of control over current IK use and future potential;
- Lack of consistent guidelines for cost benefit sharing;
- Conflicting terms of reference regarding access to knowledge;
- Lack of “keeping places” – data systems to ensure safe storage and appropriate control over access, internal and external;



3. *Education*

Issues:

- Inappropriate consultation methods;
- Lack of adequately trained non Indigenous researchers;
- Resistance to IK in mainstream education curricula;
- Resistance by other stakeholders to Indigenous activities due ignorance and fear;
- Isolation – lack of adequate infrastructure and limited access to other TOs;

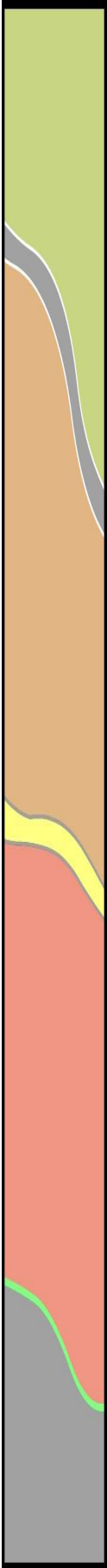
Solutions:

- Establish guidelines and protocols for consultation for application in local and wider contexts;
- Community mapping methods, with particular attention to Indigenous kinship, land custody and other governance arrangements;
- Legally binding contracts to ensure appropriate consultative methods are used;
- Enterprise development – Indigenous run cross-cultural training courses;
- Promotion of IK via various media outlets such as radio, television and DVD products;
- Round table discussions with other stakeholders;
- Sponsorship for cultural exchange visits across northern Australia

4. *Linkages*

Issues:

- Lack of access to information and expertise needed to obtain funding support;
- Inappropriate and unintelligible funding guidelines and application forms;
- Devaluation of IK by other stakeholders and research organizations;

- 
- Lack of understanding of Indigenous priorities and aspirations by government and other organizations;
 - Lack of administrative and communication infrastructure.

Solutions:

- Corporate and other sponsorship for IK and other NRM training on the Indigenous estate (see also education);
- Indigenous input from the beginning into research and design processes;
- Indigenous input into the design of application forms and other guidelines for Indigenous engagement;
- Promotion of IK and mutual benefits for all stakeholders;
- Guidelines and representations to gain corporate and other funding support;
- Guidelines and representations to establish linkages with academic and other research centers;
- General guidelines and means for adoption.

The working groups continued late into the afternoon. Many of the issues and possible solutions highlighted have been identified over the course of project consultations and research to date: there are recurrent themes and oftentimes common cause for frustration. Nevertheless, given the diverse range of experience – cultural, economic, political and environmental – brought to the table, this consistency reaffirmed the value of strategic planning at a northern Australian level. At the same time, the differences in local contexts highlighted the need for flexibility in planning and implementation to ensure that local needs and aspirations were not compromised. TOs agreed that all of this was possible and necessary in order to move forward into a ‘...post land rights era...’ where people received the support they needed to manage land and sea on their own terms and to derive substantial benefits from those management activities.

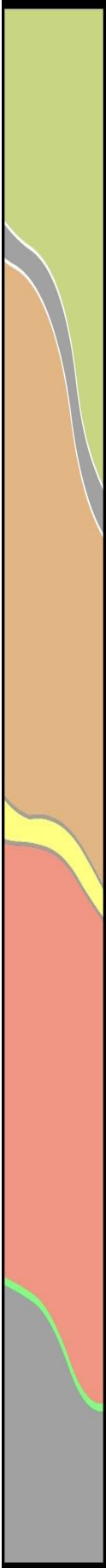
Bunngal

Similar discussions continued over dinner on both nights of the Forum. On the first night, Victor Steffensen gave a power point presentation on the Traditional Knowledge Recording Projects (TKRP) currently underway across Cape York. He again demonstrated the research methods used, how the data base was constructed and touched on various issues around access and Intellectual Property. Victor also pointed out that the data base not only ensured the conservation of IK but could also serve as an Educative tool for non Indigenous land managers. Danny Fischer (China Camp, *Kuku Yalanji* and Daniel Brace Girdle (Arakun) also gave brief presentations on their



recording projects, which have only recently commenced and are drawing on the expertise Victor Steffensen and *Kuku Thaypan* elders like Professors Tommy George and George Musgrave have accumulated over the time their TKRP has been running.

After these presentations, Otto Champion and Dean Yibarbuk (Arnhem NT) performed a few songs from their country. Another singer from Arrakun way followed them and the evening eventually drew to a close.



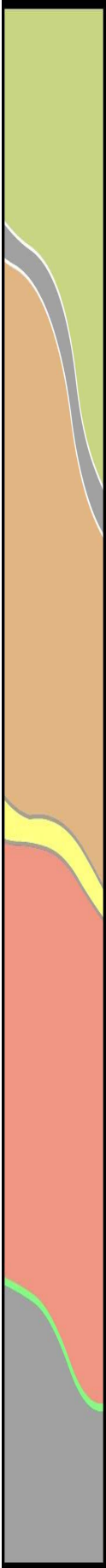
The second official night of the Forum was given over to entertainment. Balkanu had organised a band and they played long into the night. Slowly the crowd thinned as people headed off to their camps to make preparations for what for many would be a long journey home.

5) Future Directions

The following summary (divided into three sections) provides an overview of how the IK Strategy is currently being developed in direct response to the concerns of TOs (as expressed at Bizant and elsewhere) and under their tutelage and guidance. It should also be noted that NAILSMA staff and TOs are also actively concerned with articulating the needs and aspirations of Indigenous land and sea managers with those of the wider NRM community. These considerations inform all levels of strategic planning and their resolution is considered vital to the success of the strategic plan and the subsequent implementation of recommendations made. Arguably, this concern represents one of the most challenging aspects of the project.

Field Manual

The final plan, due for delivery in October 2006, will serve two main purposes. Firstly, it will provide TOs with practical information on many issues of concern to them. These include questions regarding intellectual property and the ownership of IK, how to ensure appropriate benefit sharing arrangements, how to go about finding appropriate funding, the costs and equipment involved in setting up IK recording projects and how to successfully market Indigenous Knowledge initiatives, without compromise, to government and other agencies. Appendices to the plan will also contain various templates for TOs to use. These will include examples of a draft MOU, legal contract, benefit sharing agreement, informed consent form, IP schedule and a number of other legally accredited documents.



Attention will also be given to innovative Indigenous enterprise developments and schemes revolving around the concept of a culture based economy and market branding. All of this information will be backed up with practical examples drawn from a variety of Indigenous Knowledge projects and activities currently underway across the tropical savannas.

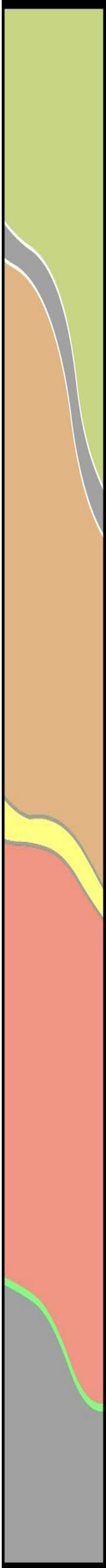
Educative Tool

Secondly, the plan is intended to educate non-Indigenous organisations as to how to work appropriately and effectively with Indigenous individuals and groups. This section will contain detailed guidelines on informed consent, Indigenous governance (that is, kinship relations) community mapping, cultural protocols on country and appropriate research and design processes. All of these initiatives aim to dispel misconceptions currently surrounding IK, prevent those misunderstandings TOs have highlighted (as above and previously) and thus facilitate truly equitable and collaborative research and other working relationships. The finished document will be made available (in plain and high English version) to Traditional Owners right across northern Australia as well as LWA, the CRC-TSM and other interested agencies, government and otherwise.

Adoption and Strategic Planning

One of the most challenging aspects of the Indigenous Knowledge Project concerns provision for adoption. As noted above, TOs are well aware of the difficulties they face and have posed a number of innovative solutions. However, without an effective means for adoption little will be achieved in terms of delivering practical on the ground support.

This is where the strength of the alliance may be brought to bear. NAILSMA through its partners and other affiliates possesses the expertise and access necessary to represent

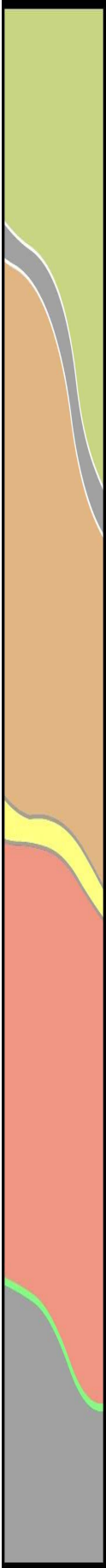


the interests of TOs effectively at local, regional and national levels. It is this objective that will inform a good deal of strategic planning over the final year of the project. In general terms, this planning will include further publicising the organization and the aspirations of TOs in print and other media, actively pursuing corporate, philanthropic and other sponsorship (see Outputs) as well as continuing representations to government and other interested agencies. The culture based economy and market branding concepts will form core elements in these promotional activities.

Undoubtedly, one of the most marketable aspects of Indigenous Knowledge is a successful and long term track record. In contemporary context, there is mounting evidence to argue that where Indigenous managers have remained on country biodiversity, water purity, habitat, and overall environmental integrity has been maintained/preserved to a much greater degree than elsewhere in northern Australia and across the continent.

These outcomes have not come about simply through reference to a catalogue of environmental facts and figures. They are instead, a result of a 'total package' which may be termed Indigenous Knowledge (or perhaps more appropriately Indigenous Law) and encompasses all aspects of Indigenous experience, from ceremony to kinship to hunting and harvest. IK cannot be abstracted out of this context and the strategy will emphasise how these more 'elusive elements' to IK contribute to positive environmental and social outcomes at both local and national levels.

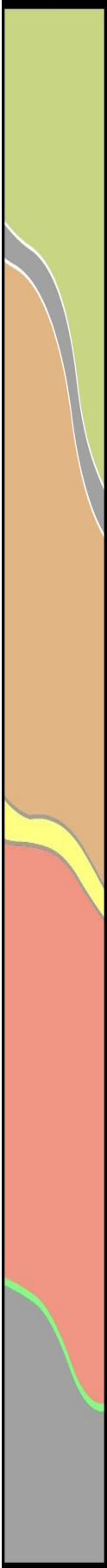
For example, kinship alliances and ceremonial activities, to name but two such elements, provide social support networks as well as established rules regarding individual and group responsibilities to country and each other. These alliances and rules inform all aspects of IK and all manner of land and sea management practice from fire regime to hunting and harvest calendar. The success of Indigenous land and sea management practices is as much attributable to such social and environmental conventions and



guidelines, as it is to a detailed knowledge of flora and fauna. As noted above, TOs are constantly frustrated by the inability of non Indigenous NRM and government agencies to formulate this link. It is this failure as much as any other that has contributed to the frequent breakdown of collaborative projects around Australia. Consequently, the IK strategy will clearly articulate this link and market its value in terms of the tangible outcomes this 'total package' has produced, in past and contemporary contexts.

In addition, the activities of TOs on country are producing outcomes of even wider national significance. These outcomes are eminently saleable to government and NRM agencies and the general public. For example, over 2005, Indigenous ranger groups from One Arm point to the Gulf of Carpentaria made significant contributions to border protection. These activities in combination with a number of other initiatives, ranging from participation in ghost net projects to the accrual of carbon credits and gas emissions offsets through Indigenous burning, all demonstrate a real potential for the development of culture based economies around land and sea management themes.

Significantly, these activities too link back to those cultural protocols and mores noted above and NAILSMA will promote them in this fashion whilst also highlighting outputs and outcomes in terms of the national interest. The aim will be to dispel misconceptions, avoid misunderstandings and ensure proper recompense and support for Traditional Owners so that they may achieve economic viability while continuing to manage land and sea as they have always done.



The careful articulation of these issues and solutions represents core NAILSMA business and the focus of research conducted over the course of the IK and other projects. In many ways, Indigenous Australians across northern Australia stand at a cross roads. Having won back a substantial part of the Indigenous estate, a second struggle now ensues; a quest to find appropriate support for Indigenous land and sea management initiatives and activities. Various NRM agencies, such as LWA and the TSM-CRC are sympathetic to this cause. NAILSMA, as a peak representative body in cooperation with these and other organisations, is committed to developing a strategic vision and consistent planning method to ensure the delivery of such practical on the ground support when and where it is needed. As such, the second Forum was responsive to the needs of TOs while the Indigenous Knowledge Strategy has been and will continue to be, informed and driven by them at each stage in its development. The words of Don Banu from the Torres Strait Islands succinctly sum up the general feelings of TOs from across northern Australia, as expressed during the Forum and over the course of previous and ongoing research:

Indigenous Knowledge needs to form the basis for all management plans...



Outputs/Outcomes and Thanks

As noted earlier, a DVD will either accompany this report or be available from NAILSMA in early February 2006 (see contacts).

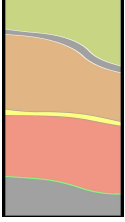
Outputs

- DVD;
- Report;
- Draft strategy – plain and ‘specialist’ English;
- Comprehensive literature review and practical ‘toolkit’ for land and sea managers across northern Australia;
- Prospectus, brochures and other promotional literature;

Outcomes

- Design and implementation of innovative and practical support mechanisms for Indigenous land and sea managers;
- Adoption of strategic recommendations to inform existing policy and research methods;
- Enterprise developments enabling Indigenous land and sea managers to travel to, live on and work with country;
- Promote wider understanding of land and sea management needs of Aboriginal land owners;
- Develop appropriate research and working relationships between Indigenous and non Indigenous land and sea management groups and agencies.

A special thank you to Kerri Kiss, Jim Davis, Leigh Harris, Victor Steffensen, Gail Fischer, Rod Bennett, Albert Lakefield, Tommy George and all the other *Lama Lama, Kuku Thaypan* people and Balkanu staff, who worked so tirelessly to help organise this event.

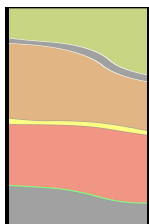


6) Appendices

Appendix One: Photo Gallery, NAILSMA Staff and Projects

Appendix Two: NAILSMA Flyer and Forum Attendance

Appendix One: Photo Gallery



Left to Right: Joe Morrison, Matthew Ryan, Nigel Gellar, Rod Kennett, Otto Campion, Clarry Rogers, Dean Yibarbuk, Simon Ponto, Paul Josif
(Photos NAILSMA)

Kuku Thaypan Country near Laura.(Photos NAILSMA)

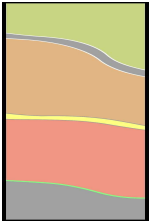


Bizant Work Group *(Photos NAILSMA)*

Bizant Work Group (Photos NAILSMA)



Kuku Thaypan Country - Split Rock near Laura



Appendix One: NAILSMA Staff and Projects



Project Officer Biography

Personal

Joe Morrison was born and raised in Katherine in the Northern Territory. His heritage is Dagoman and Torres Strait (Moa Island). Joe spent his youth schooling in Katherine and going bush with his father to many pastoral stations around the Katherine region.

Professional

Over the last 13 years, Joe has worked with Indigenous communities across the Top End of the NT, and recently across north Australia, supporting communities develop local action to care for their country. The majority of his time has been with Nunggubuyu, Ngandi, Mara, Wandarang, Alawa and Ngalakgan people in south-east Arnhem Land, whilst working with the Parks & Wildlife Service of the NT. Joe also sits on various Australian Government Advisory Committee's relating to Landcare, and Caring for Country. He has a BA in Natural Resource Management from the University of Sydney.

Project

Joe is the Executive Officer of NAILSMA, and co-leader of theme 4 within the Cooperative Research Centre of Tropical Savannas Management (CRC-TSM) in Darwin. The CRC funded theme that Joe leads, aims to integrate Indigenous research (values, aspirations and desires) into the broad suit of activities of the CRC-TSM. This manifests itself to be the activities and projects of NAILSMA. Joe's time is spent managing theme 4 activities as well as that of general NAILSMA business.



Project Officer Biography

Personal

Lisa Binge is Kamilaroi, from north western New South Wales. She grew up in Tamworth and moved to the Northern Territory in 1999 to study at the Northern Territory University (Charles Darwin University). She has been living in the north for 6 years, and enjoys travelling across North Australia to work with communities.

Professional

After completing a degree in resource management, Lisa joined the land and sea management unit at the Northern Land Council in Darwin. In 2003, she moved to Borroloola in the Gulf of Carpentaria to work as a Project Officer in the Northern Land Council's regional office. In 2004 Lisa joined NAILSMA as the Leadership, Scholarships and Communication's Project Officer.

Leadership, Scholarships and Communication Project

Lisa's job involves developing a new Indigenous land and sea management *scholarship* program to be offered in mid 2005 for 3 years: a sub-committee with representatives from WA, NT and QLD will assess the applications on a 'as-needs' basis. "**Kantri Laif**" a biannual newspaper for Indigenous land and sea managers in North Australia will be produced and distributed as part of this project. In addition, Lisa will be talking to countrymen across the north about *leadership* issues for the next generation of land and sea managers, in order to develop a program that we hope will commence in approximately 3 years time.

These projects are supported and funded by the *Tropical Savannas Cooperative Research Centre* based at Charles Darwin University, Darwin with additional support from *The Christensen Fund*, a US based philanthropic organisation.



Project Officer Biography

Personal

Steve Johnson was born and grew up in Darwin in the Northern Territory during the 1960s and 70s. Over the years, his family lived and worked with Indigenous communities on the Daly River, at Retta Dixon Homes and in Borroloola. As a child, Steve also spent a lot of time out bush with Aboriginal people on the Mary River and in places like Kapalga.

Professional

After living down south for many years, Steve travelled back to the Northern Territory in 1996. In Borroloola he caught up with lots of family and friends he hadn't seen in a long time. A while later he began working with Yanyuwa people on a collaborative research project looking into Indigenous Knowledge and perceptions of country. This work is still going on. In addition, Steve has conducted a number of consultancies with Aboriginal organizations and communities in Queensland and the Northern Territory. He has a BA (Hons Class 1) in Anthropology and is currently finishing his PhD research, once again working closely with the Yanyuwa community in Borroloola. This work is supported by the University of Queensland and the Tropical Savannas Management Cooperative Research Centre.

Indigenous Knowledge Project

Steve is now living back in Darwin and started working for NAILSMA in September 2005. He has been employed for two years to write a strategy for the conservation and application of indigenous knowledge across the tropical savannas region, from the Kimberley to Cape York. The project is funded by Land and Water Australia and the Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Savannas Management. Steve has been talking with countrymen all over this region to find out what is important to them. One of the biggest problems people bring up is that they have a lot of their land back but don't have any resources to look after it: they want to get back on country to care for it properly and part of the strategy will be aimed at finding ways to let this happen.



Project Officer Biography – Rod Kennett

Personal and Professional

Rod Kennett was born and grew up in suburban Sydney, NSW. In the mid 1980s, after completing a science degree at Macquarie University in Sydney, he travelled north to Darwin to enjoy the tropics, go fishing and study crocodiles. Some twenty years later he is still in Darwin. While in Darwin he has worked on a range of wildlife research and management projects. He has completed an Honours degree in Zoology at The Australian National University and then a PhD in Zoology at the University of Queensland and the (then) fledgling Northern Territory University (recently re-named Charles Darwin University). In addition to this formal education, Rod worked with Aboriginal people across the Top End building his experience and gaining an understanding of Indigenous perspectives on wildlife management and looking after country.

In the mid 1990s as a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Indigenous Natural and Cultural Resource Management at the Northern Territory University, he worked with Aboriginal people in eastern Arnhem Land and the Gulf country on Indigenous management of marine turtles. In 2001 he moved to Kakadu National Park as the Natural Resource Management Project Officer before taking on the newly created position of Natural and Cultural Programs Manager.

Dugong and Marine Turtle Project

In 2005 he moved back to Darwin to take on the role of Coordinator of the Dugong and Marine Turtle Management Project. The project is a collaboration of NAILSMA partners across northern Australia aimed at developing regional and community capacity for the sustainable community based management of dugongs and marine turtles.



Project Officer Biography

Personal

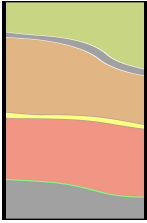
Jean Fenton was born on Thursday Island in the Torres Strait thirty five years ago. As a child she spent a lot of her time growing up in and around the rainforests of Tully and Mission Beach before moving to Inala, Brisbane at the age of ten.

Professional

After spending close to seventeen years in Brisbane, Jean moved back to Townsville to complete her Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Anthropology at James Cook University. After completing her degree five years ago, she has worked in many jobs relating to natural and cultural resource management across Northern Australia. These being cultural heritage management in Townsville, Indigenous Coastcare for Coastal Queensland, Indigenous Rivercare in the Kimberley, and also working natural & cultural resource management planning with Traditional Owners in the Wet Tropics. Jean recently started working for NAILSMA, in the position of Indigenous Fire Project Officer which is funded out of the Northern Australia Fire Project, a Tropical Savannas Cooperative Research Centre (TSCRC) project coordinated by Dr Jeremy Russell-Smith.

Project

Jean has worked for Aboriginal organisations, State government, conservation groups, regional NRM Groups and is now working collaboratively with a research organisation. Working for these organisations has given her a good insight into how these groups currently work and how they can improve the way they work with Aboriginal people, communities and organisations across Northern Australia. One of the primary roles in her current position is active lobbying, relationship building and the advocacy of Aboriginal fire management interests with and within the above mentioned organisations.



Appendix Two: NAILSMA Flyer and Forum Attendance

NAILSMA FORUM FLYER

NORTH AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS LAND & SEA MANAGEMENT ALLIANCE

FORUM 2005

Location: Bizant, Lakefield National Park Queensland
Dates: 13, 14 & 15 September 2005
Focus: Annual NAILSMA Forum – Indigenous Knowledge/Law.

Background: NAILSMA was formed in early 2003 to support Indigenous Land & Sea Management activities across north Australia. This meeting will focus on the development of a Strategic Approach to the conservation of **Indigenous Knowledge (IK)** or **Law** across the wet/dry tropics of northern Australia.

Please note that this forum will not be a ranger conference. It will focus on the development of a strategy to support Indigenous Knowledge or Law across north Australia.

The purpose of the Forum will be to:

- Celebrate the presentation of title to TOs for Bizant;
- Ensure the management of Indigenous Knowledge remains with Traditional Owners;
- Provide information to TOs about what NAILSMA has been doing through a draft prospectus;
- Develop a comfortable atmosphere where TOs can talk about their views on IK conservation;
- Discuss the development of appropriate mechanisms for the future conservation of IK;
- Discuss current Indigenous Knowledge initiatives;
- Bring Indigenous people together to assist in planning for the future;
- Develop a consistent but diverse voice on IK from TOs;
- Hold workshop groups (informal and formal) regarding the future of IK;
- Promote and support Indigenous leadership and culture;
- Provide a forum for TOs to talk about north Australian Indigenous land and sea management issues.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Catering: NAILSMA will cater for Indigenous participants. We ask that others attending please provide their own tucker, although depending on numbers we may be able to provide limited additional catering.

Registration: See your representative body: BALKANU, NAILSMA, TSIRA, CLCAC, NLC, KLC.

Notice: Bizant is owned by *Lama Lama* TOs, Please show respect by not bringing firearms, alcohol or illegal drugs to this event.

Medical: We aim to have a doctor on site, however if there is anyone that requires medication please ensure that you bring it with you as it's a 5 hour drive back to Cairns.

Please Bring: Plate, bowl, cutlery, cup, tent, chair, swag & blankets. NAILSMA will provide food for the full 2½ day meeting (maximum of 100 people).

Directions: Drive approx. 5 kms past Laura and then turn right towards Lakefield NP. From there, BALKANU will try to ensure adequate signposting all the way to Bizant. If in doubt, see Alan Wilson at Laura RH. REFER MAPS below.

Road Conditions: 4WDs preferred. However, access with other vehicles is possible and safe if caution is exercised.

NAILSMA FORUM AGENDA

DAY ONE: 13 September 2005

<i>Date/Time</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>Day One: Tuesday 13 September 2005</i>	Morning Agenda <i>Introductions</i>	LOCATION: Bizant QLD
1000-1230	<p>1. Meeting Opening 1.1 Welcome to Country;</p> <p>1.2 Introduction of delegates;</p> <p>1.3 Two minutes silence in recognition of Elders who have passed on;</p>	<p>1. TOs, NAILSMA and BALKANU: 1.1 Albert Lakefield, McGinty Salt, Alan Salt, Sunlight Bassani, Margie Bassani, Eric Harrigan and other Traditional Owners;</p>
<i>1100 - 1115</i>	<i>Morning Tea</i>	
1115 - 1230	<p>2. Organizational Matters 2.1 General Meeting Aims; 2.2 Handout Prospectus/Brochure; 2.3 General Housekeeping.</p> <p>3. Presentation of Title for Bizant</p> <p>4. Dancing – Yanyuwa/Wardaman</p>	<p>2. NAILSMA;</p> <p>3. Albert Lakefield, Gerhardt Pearson and Government Representatives;</p>
<i>1230</i>	<i>LUNCH</i>	

NAILSMA FORUM AGENDA

<i>Date/Time</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>Day One: Tuesday 13 September 2005</i>	Afternoon Agenda Current IK Projects and Issues	
2:00 – 3:00	1. NAILSMA Developments 1.1 Report back to TOs 2. Specific Meeting Aims 2.1 Agenda Discussion 2.2 Scene setting questions re: IK 2.3 General Discussion of existing IK projects	1. Joe Morrison, Peter Yu; 2.3 Back to Country, Recording, Data storage, Ethno ecology etc.
<i>3:00 – 3:30</i>	<i>Smoko</i>	
3:30 – 4:30	3. Project Talks 3.1 Kuku Thaypan 3.2 Kabulwarnamyo 3.3 Kimberley	3.1 3.2 3.3
4:30 – 5:30	4. Project Workshops – revisit questions 2.2	4. Breakaway into project areas, women's group/s.
<i>6:30</i>	<i>DINNER</i>	
	<i>Bunngal, Videos, Bands</i>	

NAILSMA FORUM AGENDA

DAY TWO: 14 September 2005

<i>Date/Time</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>Day Two: Wednesday 14 September 2005</i>	Morning Agenda <i>Future Directions with IK and Law</i>	
0900 – 1000	1. Review and Planning 1.1 Feedback and review from Tos 1.2 Planning for day's events 2. General Review of Issues Raised 3. Workshop Question: what is the best way to manage IK and/or Law?	1.1 Closed shop – TOs and staff 1.2 NAILSMA, BALKANU 2. TOs and staff to introduce, include all participants
<i>10:00 – 10:30</i>	<i>Smoko</i>	
10:30 - 12:00	4. Project Workshops	4. Workshops – breakaway groups
<i>12:00 – 1:00</i>	<i>LUNCH</i>	
<i>Day Two: Wednesday</i>	Afternoon Agenda <i>Developing Appropriate Methodologies</i>	
1:00 – 3:00	1. Report back from groups 1.1 Identify what's wrong? 1.2 Identify how we fix it? 2. Future Directions 2.1 Consolidate the issues 2.2 Where to from here?	1. TOs and facilitators 1.1. General discussion 1.2 General discussion 2. NAILSMA 2.1 Facilitators, participants 2.2 Facilitators, participants
3:00	<i>Dancing</i>	
	<i>DINNER, Bunngal, Videos</i>	

NAILSMA FORUM AGENDA

DAY THREE – 15 September 2005

<i>Date/Time</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>Day Three: Thursday</i> 15 September 2005	Morning Agenda <i>Future Directions with IK and Law</i>	
0900 – 1000	1. Review and Planning 1.1 Feedback and review from TOs 1.2 Planning Meeting	1.1 Closed shop – TOs and staff 1.2 NAILSMA, BALKANU, TOs
1000 - 1100	2. NAILSMA 2.1 Future Directions – prospectus feedback 2.2 Call for Endorsement 2.3 Next Forum	

NAILSMA FORUM MAPS



WA	NT	QLD	TSI
Yiriman Youth Project	<i>Djelk Rangers</i>	<i>Lama Lama</i>	Don Banu
Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre	<i>Maningrida</i>	<i>Kuku Thaypan</i>	
Kimberley Regional Fire Management Project	<i>Ramingining</i>	<i>Kuku Yalanji</i>	
<i>Bardi Jawi</i>	<i>Ngukurr</i>	<i>Kaanju</i>	
<i>Nyikina Mangala</i>	Cobourg Peninsula	Balkanu	
<i>Karajarri</i>	<i>Larokia</i>	Northern Gulf	
<i>Walmajarri</i>	Northern Land Council	Kowanyama	
Kimberley Land Council	<i>Djelk</i>	Lakefield Rangers	
Peter Yu – NAILSMA Chair		QPWS	
		Australian Conservation Foundation	