

Indigenous Community Water Facilitators Network

2008 – 2011



Who are we

The Indigenous Community Water Facilitators Network (ICWFN) is an initiative created and facilitated by NAILSMA.

Under the direction of the Indigenous Water Policy Group (IWPG) and its partner Land Council Organisations, NAILSMA has established a northern Australia network of six regionally based Indigenous Community Water Facilitators. This network of facilitators is supported by a Coordinator based in Darwin at the NAILSMA Office. The six facilitators are placed in the Fitzroy and Ord catchments in Western Australia, the Katherine-Daly catchment in the Northern Territory, the Gregory in the Southern Gulf, and Mitchell and Wenlock River catchments in the Cape York Region.



Windjana Gorge, Kimberley WA, photo by Lorrae McArthur.

What we do

The primary goals of the ICWFN are to:

- Establish a community based network to advance Indigenous engagement in research and management of tropical rivers, water use and conservation across north Australia;
- Act as a catalyst to ensure that Indigenous interests are articulated, encouraged and incorporated in water policy;
- The network will provide these multiple purposes and work closely with TRaCK, the IWPG, Land Council partners, the NWC and State and Territory governments.

Objectives

The ICWFN major objectives of the Project are:

- Support proactive participation and development of collaborative engagement by Indigenous communities involved in research, planning and creating management frameworks for tropical rivers;
- Create and support mechanisms in which Indigenous people across the north can engage and enhance State, Territory and the Australian Government water management frameworks;
- Foster collegial and collaborative partnerships between Indigenous people and other sectors including researchers, government and other land users such as pastoralists, irrigators and developers;
- Promote awareness and understanding amongst Indigenous people of the National Water Initiative;
- Promote awareness amongst non-Indigenous people of Indigenous interests, values, rights and cultural obligations with respect to management of tropical rivers;
- Develop effective tools for the establishment and management of water resources to foster community led research initiatives that achieve quadruple bottom line outcomes – economic, cultural, environmental and social benefits;
- Act as a conduit between communities and those initiatives that are created and implemented specifically through the National Water Initiative;
- Provide a mechanism which two-way education and training can occur alongside the suite of initiatives operating across the north; and
- Work with relevant agencies towards achieving appropriate water quantity and quality in local Indigenous communities.

This project is supported by:



Australian Government
National Water Commission

Our structure

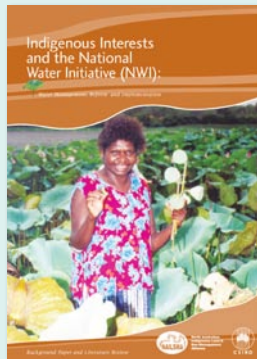
The ICWFN is made up of key Indigenous representatives from major regional organisations in the north that represent a large number of Indigenous communities and Traditional Owners. Core partners include: Kimberley Land Council (KLC), Northern Land Council (NLC), Balkanu – Cape York Development Corporation, and Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (CLCAC). The Yawoorroong Miriuwung Gajerrong Yirrgeb Noong Dawang Aboriginal Corporation is a key stakeholder and member of the ICWFN.

Stakeholders

The ICWFN attempts to work with as many Indigenous stakeholders as possible. The network will provide these multiple purposes and work closely with TRaCK, the IWPG, Land Council partners, the NWC and State and Territory governments.

Case studies have been used to develop an expanded research program. Issues examined have included customary water management, water planning, international water rights, Australian water policy and Indigenous interests, and the interaction between water markets and the customary sector.

The overall outcomes will include health, economic, cultural, environmental and social benefits among Indigenous participants.



Outcomes

The expected Outcomes of the Project are to:

- Increase engagement and participation for Indigenous people across the region in water planning and management, leading to greater benefits from and acceptance of water allocation plans;
- Improved capacity for Indigenous people to feed into State, Territory and National water management frameworks, leading to improved plans that properly meet Indigenous needs, aspirations and cultural requirements;
- Increased collegial and collaborative research and management of water resources across the north, in particular the work of the TRaCK consortium, leading to more efficient use of research funding;
- Increased recognition and protection of the values, use and customary regimes held by Traditional Owners across the region, leading to optimal use of available resources and acceptance of plans;
- Increased ability to inform communities, other stakeholders (e.g. representatives of catchment management groups), water planners and policy makers of the views and intellectual knowledge held by Traditional Owners regarding water use and management across the region, leading to better plans that demonstrably satisfy Indigenous interests.

Map of northern Australia showing the network of six regionally based Indigenous Community Water Facilitators. Fitzroy and Ord catchments (WA), Katherine-Daly catchment (NT), Gregory (Southern Gulf) Mitchell and Wenlock River catchments (Cape York Region).

