



# BOAB BULLETIN

No. 85

April 2008.

## NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETINGS

7.15 for 7.30 p.m. at

Shenton Park Community Centre, corner Onslow and Herbert Roads

**Wednesday, 2 April 2008**

**Philip Playford (geologist and rock art enthusiast)**

**“Aboriginal art and culture in the Kimberley and adjoining areas: a historical perspective”**

**Wednesday, 7 May 2008**

**Mary Ann Jebb (historian)**

**“Kimberley histories told through Boab nut carving”**

**Wednesday, 4 June 2008**

**Sandy Boulter (Kimberly Toad Busters)**

**“Cane Toads”**

Members and visitors are invited to stay for supper after the meeting.  
The Society asks a \$2.00 hospitality fee from non-members.

28 March to 6 April 2008

**Cultural Connections: an exhibition of Mowanjum artwork**

Atwell Art Centre Gallery, corner of North Lake Road & Canning Hwy,  
Alfred Cove

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

When we were living in Derby ten years ago, both there and in other Kimberley communities there was often a sense of neglect and abandonment by the larger Western Australian society. Decisions were made in Perth, whence also came the funding of government departments. The control of local organisations was taken away to the big city and obviously a small and scattered population of some 30,000 souls was of little significance to the populace of Perth or at the ballot box. (However I must pay tribute to the local MPs, both state and federal who were assiduous in lending a sympathetic ear and speaking on our behalf.) The local media struggled to make its way or to carry impact and apart from the odd crocodile story or lost tourist, we were rarely mentioned nationally. One small triumph I remember was when we managed to get a ten second “bite” on a commercial TV news report concerning our small demonstration in support of the tidal power project; and of course you know what came of that. The port of Derby was closed. There was but one significant but declining mine and the dysfunctional “Aboriginal Industry” seemed to be one of the few enterprises that would persist. Even here it felt like being given a sand iron to blast your way out of the bunker but no equipment to stop you getting into the trap in the first place.

How things have changed! Big money is going in and more will eventually come out with the offshore gas and new mines. *The West Australian* has discovered problems that have existed for twenty years and does not spare column space in allocating blame. Nicolas Rothwell in the *Weekend Australian* magazine has just given a comprehensive review of the issues surrounding the onshore gas developments (which I mentioned in the last *Boab Bulletin* so I shall steer clear of that subject for a while). And The Apology of course. The Kimberley is now big news.

Through all these changes, we in the Kimberley Society will quietly pursue our enduring interests in natural history, rock art and history as well as looking at the current passions and problems.

*Hamish McGlashan*

## HONOURS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to Kimberley Society member Mandy Loton OAM who was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in the Honours announced on 26 January. The award would have been mentioned in the February *Boab Bulletin* but, having been recorded in Mandy's full name (Margaret Ellen Loton), it slipped straight past your editor. Mandy was recognised for her service to the community through support and fundraising for a range of arts, charitable, cultural and heritage groups.

Information about members and the contributions they make to the community or their professions is always welcome in your editor's in-tray.

On 4 March, the International Women's Day feature in *The West Australian* included a glamorous portrait of Margaret Albert from Broome. Margaret, a high school student, will be the face of Goolarri Media this year. She recently returned from Los Angeles where she represented Western Australia at the annual G'Day USA event. What a great advertisement for 'Kimberley Girl' modelling, grooming and deportment.

## WRITING, PUBLISHING AND NATURE IN THE KIMBERLEY

On 6 February, Pat Lowe, who is an author, publisher and environmentalist, spoke to the Kimberley Society. Flown down from Broome as a guest speaker, Pat proved very popular and attracted an audience that filled our venue. Pat's friend and fellow Kimberley Society member Sandy Toussaint brought along some of Pat's published works, and members took advantage of the opportunity to buy those books, and copies of Pat's latest book (*In the Desert*) at discount prices. The following summary, generously provided by Pat, captures the coverage that was offered on the night.

I have always been a writer. As a child I used to write stories, and I once started an Enid Blyton-inspired novel on hotel notepaper. At school, I wrote a play called 'The Stranger', and made my friends and other children play the various parts during recreation, while I directed them.

Unfortunately, my mother thought she had a child prodigy on her hands, and introduced me to a man named Mr Durrant, who was said to be interested in children's writing. After talking to me for a while, Mr Durrant asked me to write something for him, 500 words in length, on any subject.

Paralysed by this important commission, I stopped writing altogether. Writing, which I had done naturally, unselfconsciously, for myself, now became a task for someone else. Perhaps the worst thing about it was the lack of specificity: any subject, Mr Durrant had said. I never even got as far as deciding on a topic. But the commission weighed on me heavily: as long as I hadn't written anything for Mr Durrant, I couldn't write anything else. And so I no longer wrote even for the school magazine.

It wasn't until I was well into adulthood that I started writing again, just for myself. I never did it with the same casual joyfulness of childhood, and I spent far more time sitting in front of blank sheets of paper than producing anything, but just occasionally I would manage a short story.

The first thing I ever had published was a humorous feature in *The West Australian* about my first attempt to sail a boat, for which I was thrilled to receive \$50. I went on to write a few — very few — more stories for magazines: about bushwalking, about dogs, about running. I even had a very bad rhyming poem published in *Galloping On*.

My greatest ambition was to write a book. If I wrote a book and had it published, I would be fulfilled, I believed, and was cravenly admiring of anyone who had done so. My problem was, what could I write a book about? I didn't seem to have the imagination of a novelist, having lost that, along with my interest in my mentor, Enid Blyton, in my childhood.

The years went by, and by the time I was in my forties I was convinced I would never write a book. But then, almost by chance, I found my subject.

I met my muse, Jimmy Pike, in Broome Regional Prison, where I was working as a psychologist. When he was released, in 1986, I went to live with him at his camp in the Great Sandy Desert. Jimmy was an artist, and in the desert he continued painting. I, meanwhile, was a neophyte, learning new things every day, including the vocabulary of Jimmy's language, Walmajarri. I kept notebooks. I wrote down Walmajarri words and sent some of them to a linguist friend of mine, Joyce Hudson, who had been working for years on the Walmajarri dictionary. It was Joyce who suggested I write a book.

My first book was *Jilji — Life in the Great Sandy Desert*, published in 1990. To my surprise, this one book didn't fully satisfy my desire to publish, and I have been writing the same book more or less ever since. There is the desert trilogy: *Yinti*,

*desert child, Desert Dog and Desert Cowboy*. The title of my latest, *In the Desert — Jimmy Pike as a Boy*, speaks for itself.

I did branch out and write a natural history book about Boab Trees. Having found that no one else had written one, and having tried to interest someone else in doing so, I was finally persuaded to write one myself. *The Boab Tree* was published by Lothian Books in 1998 and remaindered a couple of years later, but the Kimberley Bookshop bought most of the stock. The book continued to sell slowly but surely and is no longer available. I have had orders for it from Queensland, the UK, the US, India and even Canada. I like to think of it having a small but discerning readership.

Writing in the Kimberley is probably not much different from writing anywhere else, except that the advantages and disadvantages are reversed: we have plenty of subject-matter on our doorstep and don't have to go away to look for it, but our access to workshops, conferences, writers' festivals and other writers is restricted. At different times I and some friends have formed small writers' groups, which have been useful in keeping some of us writing.

In the mid-1990s, the West Kimberley was under threat from a single developer who wanted to dam the Fitzroy River and grow 225,000 hectares of irrigated cotton. I and two friends got together and founded Environs Kimberley, which has gone on to become the peak environmental organization in the region with about 350 members. At present we have one full-time and three part-time staff members. With the Fitzroy River safe for the time being, our present all-consuming concern is the industrialization of the Kimberley coast.

In 2005, three friends, two of us semi-retired, decided to start a publishing house in Broome. We claimed to be filling a gap in publishing, specialising in books written in the Kimberley. We called it, aptly, Backroom Press, and our rather grand motto is: 'From the Kimberley to the World'. Our first two publications were stories two of us had written ourselves. However, the next one, *Looking for Bobby*, a children's picture book about Broome, we chose from several submitted to us — it's surprising how quickly word gets round about a local 'publishing house' — and, somewhat to our chagrin, it is selling rather better than the first two. We still have a lot to learn.

Our next book is altogether more ambitious: we have edited an anthropologist's Ph.D. thesis about Aboriginal people's relationship with Argyle Diamond Mine. We chose to do this one because we think the story important, not only for Argyle but for other mining companies wanting to do business on Aboriginal land. However, because the readership is so specialised, the print run will be small, which means high costs per copy. So, more business-like than we have been in the past, we have decided only to publish if and when we have enough firm orders to cover our costs. So far, we have received over 100 orders, mainly from Argyle.

Another writing-related interest of mine, not to say obsession, is editing. No one seems to know how to write a grammatical sentence any more, and I edit everything; I even edit Radio National and my friends' conversations. However, while I shout at the radio, I usually keep my thoughts about my friends' ungrammatical utterances to myself, in order to keep my friends. I have sometimes taken on large editing jobs but I prefer the editing I do for Environs Kimberley's newsletter. The articles are about 500 words apiece, and the newsletter only comes out every three months. Although I do say it myself, we have reasonably high standards, and I worry about who is going to keep them up when I go gaga or drop off my perch. I have long nurtured a fantasy of producing a series of workshops about writing good English, and maybe turning the series into a book. There are dozens of books about writing, but one written primarily for people in the Kimberley would be a first.

## BOOKS FOR SALE AND SOLD

Robin Roe has donated (for sale to a member) a copy of E J Stuart's *A Land of Opportunities: being an account of the author's recent expedition to explore the northern territories of Australia*. Published by John Lane, The Bodley Head Ltd., in London, in 1923, this hard cover book contains 144 pages, illustrations, and maps. It describes a 1917 expedition in which the author and others sailed along much of the Kimberley coast examining localities for minerals and metals while William Jackson made a film and photographed people, buildings, wildlife and the landscape. All of the numerous plates are intact although one plate has insect damage on the top edge. The book has no dust jacket, and the front end paper is damaged where a previous owner cut out the top section, presumably to remove a name or other writing. One map appears at the front of the volume and another at the rear, with both maps folded and bound into it, whereas some copies have those maps as foldout pages at the rear. The book is otherwise in fair condition apart from the wear and foxing that is often seen in treasures of this age.

Online searches of AbeBooks.com and AddALL Out of Print Books showed the availability of 39 copies of the book throughout the world, with prices ranging from \$30 to \$275.00. The latter price is asked by Robert Muir Old and Rare Books in Nedlands (WA), and the \$30 copy, which lacks the 'front free end paper and frontispiece', is available from Haymes & Son in Polkolbin (NSW) as are other more expensive copies. It is noted that at least two versions of this book appear as first editions, and that the copy on offer through the Kimberley Society is not the one that might be described as the deluxe version. The bookshops that advertise online do not distinguish between the two, but other individual copies are on offer in Australia at \$91.50 (Basilisk Bookshop, Fitzroy, Vic); at \$90.00 (Graham Toms Fine and Rare Books, Upper Coomera, Qld); and at \$74.86 (Time Booksellers, Frankston, Vic).

A reserve price of \$60.00 has been placed on Robin's copy, and members who are interested in bidding for it should send their offers to Cathie Clement (contact details on back cover of the newsletter). The book will be available for inspection at the April meeting, and offers will be accepted up to 18 April. If the purchaser requires the book to be posted within Australia, the cost of postage will be approximately \$10.00.

Eleven members purchased 36 of the 37 Kimberley books donated by the family of our late member Athol Farrant. Those purchases provided a total of \$615 for the Old Halls Creek Appeal. One book remains available — Geraldine Byrne's *Tom & Jack*, which is about the Kilfoyles of Rosewood Station. Normally retailing at \$29.95, the book is in good condition and is on offer to a member for \$15. If it is not sold at the April meeting, it will be included in the prizes made available for the monthly raffle.

## REST IN PEACE

In February, Christine Grimm passed away. Born in Broome in 1936, and raised mostly by the nuns at Beagle Bay Mission, Mrs Grimm worked in Broome before marrying Reginald Gordon Dudgeon in Darwin. She is survived by the five children of that marriage and by her second husband, Walter Wolfgang Grimm, and his two children. *The West Australian* published an obituary to Mrs Grimm on 28 February.

On 25 January, Pugjawola Barunga died in Derby. Born in the bush on the Hunter River to the Wunambul Gambera tribe, she grew up with her family around the Pago Mission. She married Worora man Albert Barunga in the 1930s and, after living at Kunmunya Mission, they were part of the move to Wotjulum and then to Mowanjium. *The West Australian* published an obituary to Mrs Barunga on 21 February.

## JANDAMARRA

The story of Jandamarra is one of the greatest tales in West Australian history, right up there with the wreck of the *Batavia* for drama, courage, love, loyalty and the struggle between good and evil, a type of Robin Hood story set in a wild west frontier. I have no doubt that in a hundred years time it will have been told and retold until it becomes one of the country's best loved legends. However, up until now the story has been little known outside the Kimberley. So I was greatly looking forward to the stage play by Steven Hawke which was billed as a major attraction at this year's Perth Festival.

Many that I have spoken to enjoyed the experience, but I must confess that I was rather disappointed. Certainly there were memorable highlights such as Ningali Lawson's performance and the clever lighting effects. The Aboriginal feeling for country shone through. But I felt bored at times. How could this be with such an enthralling tale? Too long, perhaps and repetitious; I wished they would "get on with it." The deeper aspects of conflicting loyalties were scarcely evident which was, no doubt, the fault of the script. The characters were one dimensional. I know that brutality, drunkenness were rife in both settlers and police, but I do tire of seeing all white men portrayed only as being greedy, stupid, drunk and violent and Aborigines as wise, gentle and downtrodden in any play that addresses race relations or history, usually in the name of reconciliation.

I do hope that the play can be rewritten, made tauter and deeper, for the story deserves no less.

*Hamish McGlashan*

**Editor's note:** Audience reactions to this play were mixed. Efforts were made to fine tune it as the Festival progressed, and a report by arts editor Stephen Bevis (*West Australian*, 7.3.2008, "Arts", p. 8) noted that: "The director made big cuts after the first preview performance and again after its February 12 opening night which saw its sprawling, ponderous 210-minute running time slashed by about 50 minutes." In a review in *The West Australian* on 14 February, theatre critic Ron Banks described the play as a disappointment. He remarked that the "script would have benefited from tighter editing" but he acknowledged the portrayal of the young Jandamarra as "an engaging, sometimes forceful performance by Jimi Bani". Further work on the play may make it more dynamic, and, if funding can be secured, it may tour the Kimberley on the way to the Darwin Festival. There is also talk of the long-awaited Jandamarra film going into production.

## REST IN PEACE

The Kimberley continues to lose its well known identities. Jim Hughes, who has been described as the father of the Ord Valley sugar industry, collapsed and died on 23 March. Mr Hughes went to Kununurra in 1968 to take up a posting with the CSIRO. He then went farming and, in 1983, he became the CEO of Ord River District Cooperative. His extensive community service included being part of the team that organises the Ord Valley Muster and Kimberley Moon Experience. In keeping with a life lived to the full, his wife Judy encouraged people to see his funeral at the Kununurra Cemetery as celebration of his life rather than a sad affair.

Wyndham also lost a long time resident with the death Vivienne McMicking in February. Mrs McMicking was widely known for her long service to the Wyndham Historical Society Museum, where she welcomed hundreds of visitors and told them about the exhibits. Failing health eventually obliged Mrs McMicking to move to Kununurra Aged Care Facility. A Memorial Service was held for her in Wyndham following a cremation in Darwin.

## **OLD BROOME: FIVE GREAT STORIES THAT BRING BROOME'S HISTORY TO LIFE**

On 7 February 2007, the feature of our first meeting of the year was a showing of the DVD produced by the Broome Historical Society. The DVD features five stories of historical significance gathered from places of interest in the town, and is available from the Historical Society for \$25.00. The Broome Historical Society was able to produce this collection of stories with the aid of a grant from the WA Lotteries Commission (Lotterywest).

The first story features the area known as Winyirr Park. The park surrounds the town of Broome and is a very important area to the local indigenous people as it forms part of a song cycle. The meaning of Winyirr is "birthplace" or "creation place". The park includes the area from Willie Creek, north of Broome, the Broome peninsula area of town taking in Cable Beach, the Turf Club, Golf Course and extends east as far as Crab Creek. Young indigenous people are being trained as tourist guides for the walk trails through the various areas so that they can learn about their own heritage and to keep the knowledge for the coming generations. The segment included interviews with a number of Broome's indigenous residents.

The second story is about the Chinese stores (once known as Jap Town) situated between Carnarvon Street and the foreshore. Originally known for its Japanese residents, the precinct became known as Chinatown after Chinese migrants settled into the area and quickly became very successful business people. The stories were recounted by a number of the descendents of the original families who operated the stores and restaurants in Chinatown, and they were accompanied by historical photos and movie footage of Old Broome. At the outbreak of World War II many of the European population left Broome and moved south and the Asian population far outnumbered the Europeans until after the war when the pearling industry picked up again.

The Broome Court House is the third story. Built in 1889 as Cable House it was the first north west link to the rest of the world, the cable entering the ocean at Cable Beach. The building was pre-fabricated in Britain and shipped to Singapore and then to Broome. The labourers brought from Singapore had to drag the prefabricated sections across the mud flats to the building site where it was reassembled. It served as the Cable Station for 25 years before closing in 1914. The cast iron work was manufactured in Glasgow. The story of the building was told by a number of speakers including Kathy Watson JP, Antoine Bloeman (a court judge) and Tim Willing who was the gardener at one time and who also started the Botanical Society. Again there were historical photos together with more recent ones showing the damage done by cyclone Rosita in 1984. Also shown were the Courthouse Markets. At the time of inception, when stalls were run by locals and the monies went back to the community groups, the event was the only one of its kind and the concept was adopted by a number of other towns.

The next story was about Streeters Jetty. Neil McKenzie, Doug Fong, Stephen Albert and others related stories of its history accompanied by old photos and film footage.

Built in the 1890s to service the pearling industry, which, at its peak, had up to 400 luggers anchored offshore, the jetty accommodated numerous dinghies that took on water from the nearby fresh water wells and off-loaded pearl shell that went on trolleys to the sorting sheds. The Indigenous and Asian residents used the jetty for swimming and fishing as this was the only town area they could use for this purpose. World War II had a devastating impact on the pearling industry, which had to shut down, and many of the luggers were confiscated. The industry did not start again until the 1950s when new crews of divers arrived from places that included Kupang (Timor), China and Japan.

The last story is about the Sun Picture Theatre. This theatre has been in operation since 1916 when it was built on the site of the old Japanese Emporium by Ted Hunter and introduced a new entertainment to the residents of Broome. With the screen situated outside in the gardens, it was a three sided structure made of corrugated iron with jarrah floorboards. The seating was segregated with the Europeans sitting in cane chairs with cushions and the Asian/Indigenous population seated in a separate section without the comfortable seating. In the 1980s, with the introduction of TV and VCR's, the picture theatre was forced to close and fell into neglect. More recently the theatre has been restored, taking three months to complete. Unfortunately the 45-year-old projector "died" but happily an exact match was found to replace it. The major problem now is that the theatre is under the flight path of the Broome airport and the sound is ruined by jets passing overhead! Once again the stories are told by descendents of the families involved and with the addition of old footage and photos it adds life to the history of Broome.

*Susan Clarkson*

## **NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT TASKFORCE**

The Northern Development Taskforce was established in June 2007 as a whole-of-government initiative to coordinate the issues relating to the development of Browse Basin gas in the Kimberley, and the National Heritage Listing of the Burrup Peninsula.

The State Government recognises that the Kimberley has unique environmental features and that it is on the brink of a new phase in its development. The Northern Development Taskforce role is to make sure that the government gets all the information it needs to ensure the Kimberley stays protected now and in the future.

The Taskforce wants to hear from all groups and individuals who are interested in the future of the Kimberley. It will hold a series of meetings in the Kimberley to hear directly from the community. The times, dates and locations of these meetings will be advertised in local papers, on local radio and online ([www.doir.wa.gov.au](http://www.doir.wa.gov.au)).

### **Strategic Assessment Agreement, Terms of Reference: Public Comment**

The Western Australian Government, through the Northern Development Taskforce, is undertaking an extensive consultation process to help identify possible sites for a proposed multi-user LNG (liquefied natural gas) hub for future Browse Basin gas processing in the Kimberley.

The State Government has also entered into an agreement with the Commonwealth Government to undertake a strategic assessment of a preferred hub site and an assessment of the national heritage values of the West Kimberley. The strategic assessment will run under the *Environmental Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The planned hub will also be assessed under the WA Environmental Protection Act through a concurrent and collaborative process.

Under the Strategic Assessment Agreement the WA Government is required to provide the Draft Terms of reference for public comment before they are implemented. Copies of the Draft Terms of Reference and Draft Site Selection Criteria can be downloaded from: [www.doir.wa.gov.au](http://www.doir.wa.gov.au)

### **Taskforce Members**

Members of the Taskforce include the following Directors General:

- Dept. Industry and Resources (Chair) - Dr Jim Limerick
- Dept. Environment and Conservation – Keiran McNamara
- Dept. Indigenous Affairs – Jackie Tang
- Dept. Planning and Infrastructure – Eric Lumsden
- Office of Native Title – Gary Hamley
- Tourism WA – Richard Muirhead
- Heritage Council WA – Ian Baxter
- Kimberley Development Commission – Jeff Gooding
- Landcorp – Ross Holt
- Fisheries – Peter Millington
- Secretariat/Chair, Northern Development Taskforce – Duncan Ord

Kimberley Society Vice-President Kevin Kenneally was in Broome to attend the three day WWF 'Kimberley Coastal Values Workshop'. He also attended the public meeting. Approximately 75 people, some of whom are members of the Kimberley Society, were at the meeting. The following official record of the meeting is reproduced in full to give Kimberley Society members not just insight into what is happening but also access to the questions posed and answers given on the night.

### **NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT TASKFORCE — NOTES OF MEETING**

#### **Public Meeting, Broome, 4 February 2008, 6.00pm – 8.00pm**

Jim Limerick, Chair of the Northern Development Taskforce opened the meeting by welcoming attendees. He began by comparing the Browse Basin gas field to the North West Shelf and explained the State's relationship with the Commonwealth through the development of the Strategic Assessment Agreement. He went on to outline the community engagement process and the structure of the working groups, including the Experts' Environmental Working Group, which overlaps with the WWF process taking place over the following three days.

Jim Limerick referred to a Commonwealth map which outlined the boundary of the strategic assessment process, and explained that proponents were considering a range of options for LNG processing, including off-shore processing, and piping gas to either Darwin or the Burrup.

He explained that the Taskforce had recently commissioned an engineering study which will be carried out by Gaffney Cline, a highly reputable company which has worked nationally and internationally on a range of oil and gas issues. Gaffney Cline's remit is to examine proponents' existing site proposals and test their technical validity. It is anticipated that the

study will further narrow the number of locations being considered to three to four, not including site submissions from environmental non-governmental organisations and the Indigenous community.

At this point, the short listed sites will undergo specific strategic assessments through the bilateral State and Commonwealth strategic assessment process. At the same time, a broader regional strategic assessment will be taking place which will look at a much larger area of the Kimberley, with National Heritage Listing implications. This broader assessment is also part of the Commonwealth's process through the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act.

Jim Limerick outlined the community engagement and consultation process of the Taskforce, including the established working groups and their remit. Groups have been formed to cover the whole range of interests and concerns attached to the development of LNG processing on the Kimberley. They include an experts' environmental group, a general environmentalist group largely made up of non-governmental organisations, a tourism group, the aquaculture industry, the gas industry itself, and the Indigenous community.

He expanded on the role of the experts' environmental group, explaining that the group will not only fill the gaps in our environmental knowledge of the Kimberley, but will also identify those areas where further research is needed to present an accurate picture of the Kimberley's environmental 'health'. He welcomed the crossover with WWF's workshop, stating that it could only enhance the Taskforce's process to secure the most thorough-going knowledge base for its site assessment procedures.

He talked about the role of the Kimberley Land Council (KLC), and the recent agreement between the KLC and the government which has given the KLC the mandate to negotiate on behalf of the Traditional Owners in the Kimberley for the benefits package arising out of a potential hub site. The governing principle of the KLC's remit is that benefits must accrue to all Indigenous groups across the Kimberley, not merely the Traditional Owners upon whose land a site might be located.

Jim Limerick also expanded on the role of the Community Reference Working Group, which would be meeting for the first time the following day, saying that it has a vital role in extending the Taskforce's awareness of social impact issues. He then talked about the timing of the Taskforce's report to the Ministerial Committee, explaining that it would be finalised when the Taskforce had the informed consent of the Indigenous community as well as broad community support, both of which are essential aspects of the rationale for industry to participate in a single hub.

Following Gaffney Cline's report and advice on the identified preferred sites, a short list will be established for the site specific Strategic Assessment process. There will be a public comment period on the Terms of Reference for the Strategic Assessment, once the Agreement between the State and the Commonwealth had been signed.

Jim Limerick ended his talk by listing the members of the Taskforce, and explaining the reporting structure.

### **Keiran McNamara, Director General, Department of Environment and Conservation**

Keiran McNamara briefly described the unique aspects of the Kimberley coastline and the current threats to the wildlife.

He elaborated further on the environmental selection criteria matrix, explaining that it is a work in progress which is dependent upon input from the Experts' Environmental Working Group.

He said that hub site selection was one part of the Taskforce's work, and that as importantly, it is establishing a new approach to protecting the environment through its collaboration with the Commonwealth on the Strategic Assessment Agreement.

The other priority area for the Taskforce is to set the framework for the joint management of the region with the Aboriginal community.

He reiterated that the Kimberley is recognised nationally and internationally as having unique values and that through the Taskforce, there is now a chance to accommodate development in a way which delivers positive outcomes for both the indigenous community and the environment.

### Questions from the Floor

Q. What is the likely size of the hub?

A. The size will largely be determined by the findings of the Gaffney Cline report, but 1000 ha is a workable figure, depending upon the infrastructure required, such as airstrips, potential accommodation, etc. The Browse Basin has the potential to rival the North West Shelf in its gas reserves.

Q. Could the hub be compared with the Burrup or Kwinana industrial sites?

A. Neither is a good comparison given their emotive resonance.

Q. Is the timeframe for the strategic assessments being determined by the proponents' need for a speedy resolution, and is the idea of a single hub still viable, or has Inpex pre-empted that process?

A. Proponents are in the Browse Basin now, and that it is the imperative for governments and industry to come to an agreement on the way forward as soon as possible. Heritage issues will necessarily take longer through the assessment process.

The importance of avoiding ad-hoc development was reiterated, as well as the need to balance the requirement for supplying an attractive site to service both the world markets and domestic gas. For the sake of energy security, it is important to move quickly to resolve the site issue. For technical reasons, very few sites have the potential for use as a hub. Establishing the biodiversity values of the region will take longer than the technical assessment. There is necessarily tension between the two timelines, and it is the job of the Taskforce to manage that tension.

Q. The Taskforce was congratulated on the way in which it is handling Inpex issues and asked if a) the potential sites would be identified in the current meeting, and b) if other options such as the Pilbara and Scott Reef were being considered by the Taskforce?

A. It was explained that other options were being explored by proponents, including piping gas to the Pilbara, Darwin or off-shore processing. Gaffney Cline will be investigating the potential for those alternatives.

Q. Given the volume of gas available from the North West Shelf and the eastern states, as well as the 15% requirement from government, what is the incentive for proponents to supply the domestic gas market?

A. The 15% domestic gas allocation does not have to come from a specific field: the Government is currently encouraging proponents to explore in basins closer to an existing pipeline network.

Q. What is the calendar of events and what is the Taskforce's budget?

A. An outline of consultative groups and meetings which had taken place so far was provided, along with the proposed locations for future public meetings. The budget process will be finalised at the end of February.

Q. Will the Taskforce accept written submissions from the public?

A. The Taskforce will be consulting with the Ministerial Committee at its next meeting on public comment.

Q. How will indigenous groups not represented by the KLC participate in the consultation process, and will historic owners be consulted as well as traditional owners?

A. The Taskforce is open to approaches from autonomous groups.

Q. Should the Inpex process of approvals be put on hold until the NDT's process is accomplished?

A. The Inpex process has slowed down, however, it is important to note that any company is entitled to submit a proposal for development.

Q. Is there a relationship between the Taskforce's site identification and bauxite mining on the Mitchell Plateau?

A. None.

Q. Given an announcement by Hydro Alumina in November 2007 relating to proponents exploration of LNG, how can site identification issues be separate from bauxite mining?

A. Irrespective of bauxite mining on the Mitchell Plateau, offshore gas is too expensive for use by the alumina industry.

- Q. What is the consultation process with the fishing industry?  
 A. The Director General of the Department of Fisheries has recently joined the Taskforce.
- Q. Is the concept of a multi-user hub a foregone conclusion and if so, is one hub enough to accommodate all proponents?  
 A. The Taskforce's job is to find a hub which has minimum input and maximum beneficial outcomes. It is possible for companies to co-exist and at the same time, to be competitive. If a hub site is approved through the environmental approvals processes, companies will not be encouraged to locate outside the hub.
- Q. Why aren't the Pilbara and the Burrup options being considered?  
 A. The onshore option is one of four, within which the driver is indigenous benefits. If gas is processed elsewhere, there will be no benefits to the Kimberley Indigenous community.
- Q. Is Ronsard Island sites being considered?  
 A. Yes.  
 It was pointed out that LNG is not clean energy, and that more investment is required into solar energy.  
 Kimberley Marine Tourism Association provided a statement on its position on development on the coastline.
- Q. What weighting has the Taskforce accorded community opinion?  
 A. Weightings have yet to be determined.
- Q. Is there a conflict of interest in the State/Commonwealth involvement over revenue from the development?  
 A. No conflict because the State does not receive any royalties.
- Q. Clarification was requested on indigenous benefits, and whether native title overrules negotiations by developers, and why is the State not able to assign benefits when it controls the approvals process.  
 A. There is no statutory head of power to impose benefits.
- Q. Is the termination of the site being addressed?  
 A. Yes
- Q. How is the carbon footprint being dealt with?  
 A. Referred to Commonwealth legislation last year.

A member of the audience compared the development with the North West Shelf, and suggested that one option may be to decentralise the operation and locate away from the Kimberley coast.

Malcolm Douglas thanked the Taskforce for its work and for holding a public meeting.

Jim Limerick introduced Duncan Ord, who outlined the structure of the Secretariat.

The meeting finished at 8.00pm.

## **KIMBERLEY SOCIETY AGM**

Publication of the draft minutes of the AGM, and the associated financial statement, has been held over for a future newsletter.

### **© Kimberley Society Inc. 2008**

Dr Cathie Clement OAM edits this newsletter for the Kimberley Society. The material it contains is copyright but may be cited with acknowledgment. Correspondence, including requests to reproduce articles, reports or book notes, should be directed to The Editor, Kimberley Society, PO Box 8471, Perth Business Centre, Perth, WA, 6849; E-mail [clement@q-net.net.au](mailto:clement@q-net.net.au); telephone (08) 9272 3308; or facsimile (08) 9272 2087.

**DISCLAIMER:** The opinions and the information presented in this newsletter are offered solely to inform members about matters that may interest them. The Council of the Kimberley Society accepts no responsibility for the newsletter's content, and it advises readers to obtain appropriate advice before they either apply information from the newsletter to particular circumstances or use it as a basis for formulating decisions.