

Kimberly Marine and Coastal Science symposium May 2011

Held on the 20th May 2011 at the Western Australian Maritime Museum Fremantle, the Kimberley Marine and Coastal Science Symposium was attended by over 220 participants including Royal Society members, WAMSI staff and affiliates, representatives from Government and nongovernment bodies, researchers from across

Australia, and Traditional Landowners. The steering committee charged with organizing the symposium consisted of representatives from the Western Australian Marine Science Institute (WAMSI), RSWA, WA's Department of Environment & Conservation, CSIRO, the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS), and the Kimberley Land Council. This timely Symposium encompassed physical and biological aspects of the Kimberley Marine and Coastal environment.

This symposium and the proceedings, published as the RSWA June Volume, bring to fruition nearly two years of planning, manuscript submission, peer-review, and the subsequent publication. From the outset, the steering committee decided to have the special issue published and available for distribution at the symposium, and this was achieved. This landmark special issue covers many aspects of Kimberley coastal and marine science, from the wholly abiotic to the complex ecological, and presents new and summary aspects of the science of the Kimberley coastal and marine environment into a single compendium, a first for the region. Although the Kimberley coastal and marine region is a globally unique environment and thought to be in the last four per cent of undisturbed tropical marine ecosystems left on Earth, it would be true to say that the Kimberley region has not historically had the same focus of research funding and coordination as other marine regions in Australia, highlighting the importance of summarising what we currently know about this region.



Ari Goring –Kimberley Land Council. Land and Sea Manager, Representing the Kimberley Traditional Owners



Ian Cresswell – CSIRO Wealth from Oceans Flagship



Alec Coles – CEO WA Museum



Lindsay Collins - Curtin University

The objective of the symposium therefore, was to bring together the latest research, and reviews of work carried out to date on the Kimberley marine and coastal environment into a single symposium and publish a seminal RSWA special issue volume to provide Western Australian, national and global scientists with the available information in the public domain. In view of the Aboriginal custodianship and traditional knowledge of the Kimberley region, representatives of traditional owners of the Kimberley Saltwater Country (the Kimberley rocky coast) and the Dampier Peninsula were consulted and involved in the planning and presentations at the Symposium and the special issue. In recognition and respect of the aboriginal custodianship, the symposium commenced with a Noongar Welcome to Country, and ended with Bibido McCarthy (a regional Bardi Jawi ranger) describing the monitoring and management of the coastal and marine environment under the auspices of the aboriginal traditional owners. The symposium presentations were broadly organised into a sequence reflecting abiotic versus biological aspects of the region, with biological components arranged from the lower to the higher trophic levels. Presentations ranged from the global significance of the geological features of the Kimberley, to sedimentation, coral reefs, coastal vegetation and mangroves, plankton, invertebrate fauna, whales, fish, crocodiles, sharks, turtles and fisheries, covering nearly every aspect of the Kimberley environment, with reference lists that will enable readers to further research these fascinating natural history facets of the region. At the end of the Presentations, following Steve Blake (CEO, WAMSI), Vic Semeniuk, on behalf of the RSWA, rounded off the day with thanks to WAMSI and the steering committee, the Major sponsors (AIMS, CSIRO Wealth from Oceans Flagship, VCSRG and Woodside Energy), the Traditional Owners, the RSWA Editors (K. Meney, and M. Brocx), the authors, the reviewers, the speakers, and the audience, who had all contributed to the success of the event.



An engaged Kimberley Symposium audience



From Left to Right, Vic Semeniuk, Senior Vice President, Hon Editor Kathy Meney, and Margaret Brocx, RSWA; Linda McGowan and Steve Blake WAMSI