



MG CORPORATION NEWS



MG Corporation Executive Chair Lawford Benning with Lands Minister Ben Wyatt with the Statement of Intent for R31165.

RETURN OF COUNTRY TO MG CORPORATION

MG Corporation is thrilled at the news it has been granted sole management of a significant parcel of land by the McGowan Government as part of the Ord Final Agreement.

MGC and DWER, advised by a Joint Management Committee of appropriate Dawang representatives, have jointly managed the Reserve since the OFA was signed in 2005. The change of management to sole vesting removes DWER's involvement and allows MGC and its Dawang advisors to effectively manage their own land. The change has been five years in the making.

MG Corporation Executive Chair Lawford Benning said sole management enabled MG people to make decisions about their land without having to consult a middle man.

He said he and the Board of Directors were thankful for the efforts of their elders who reached an agreement for land management in 2005, which was the most comprehensive Indigenous Land Use Agreement of its kind at the time.

"I especially want to recognise and acknowledge our ole ole people for their cultural integrity and knowledge of the areas of significance and cultural value," Mr Benning said.

Prior to taking over sole management, MG rangers had been jointly managing the land alongside DWER. MG Corporation intends to continue the important work of the ranger program for the Reserve.

Lands Minister Ben Wyatt said the decision would provide opportunities for MG Corporation to continue its economic and cultural development and sustainably manage the land.

"MG Corporation has provided a management plan which will ensure the appropriate care of the reserve is continued in relation to its land and its people," Mr Wyatt said.

The reserve was originally created from a pastoral estate in the 1970s to support Ord River irrigation works, better manage soil erosion and enhance the traditional culture of the MG people.

MG FIELD OFFICER CONTRIBUTING DURING CRISIS

A team from MG Corporation has been providing assistance to remote communities (while adhering to strict regulations) during the COVID-19 crisis.

Gerrard Meeway from the Wirram Dawang is a field officer with MG Corporation, but he expanded his role during the pandemic to act as a liaison between MGC and people living in communities.

He has been providing urgent relief in the form of transport and supplies to those communities.

Gerrard received special WA Police clearance to provide urgent relief in the form of supplies and transport and has been helping people to get to and from town, or helping them remain in their community by delivering supplies.

In addition, Gerrard has been assisting the MG Group audit team that has been visiting remote communities to identify their urgent needs.



MG Corporation field officer Gerrard Meeway has been assisting remote communities.



MGC Building and Maintenance general manager Dean Baker delivering the keys to Kununurra Neighbourhood House chairwoman Maria Chan.



The exterior of the new KNH built by MGCBM.



The playground at the new KNH facility.

NEW KUNUNURRA NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE COMPLETED

MGC Building & Maintenance was proud to achieve project completion on the new home for the Kununurra Neighbourhood House recently.

MGCBM handed the keys to KNH chairwoman Maria Chan after completing construction on the community facility ahead of schedule.

The finished KNH will allow the organisation to keep building on years of service and support for the local community, while fostering employment and opportunities in the region.

Construction began in March last year and the work was carried out by Indigenous apprentices and local tradespeople.

The project was able to be completed after additional funding was secured in August to allow for the building of a storage shed and further work on the Toy and Puzzle Library.

The facility was funded through Lotterywest, a Regional Economic Development grant, community sponsorships, donations and fundraising efforts.

The new centre is on Chestnut Drive, opposite Town Oval, and is expected to open after COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

MG CORPORATION CARRIES OUT COMMUNITY AUDIT

A team from MG Corporation and MGC Building and Maintenance visited remote communities to conduct an infrastructure audit, which revealed many are in dire need of building works to make them habitable.

MG Corporation took the initiative to complete the audit, which found many of the 25 communities did not have basic necessities, including running water, functioning toilets, electricity or access to waste and rubbish disposal.

Under the Remote Aboriginal Communities Directions No. 2 issued by the Minister for Emergency Services on March 20, Aboriginal people were required to go back to communities to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

MG Corporation Executive Chair Lawford Benning said MG agreed it was the right decision for people to go back to their communities, but for some of them, this posed a risk to their health and safety.

“People who have done the right thing and returned to their communities as instructed are now living out there in third world conditions, with no running water, toilets, or habitable buildings,” Mr Benning said.

“It is not good enough that Aboriginal people are being forced to live in these conditions in this day and age.”

The State Government has provided some funding to return people to communities, but has not yet committed to providing the \$4.5 million required to carry out necessary works to make the communities liveable.

The communities in the most dire need included Ningbing, Kneebone, Kumbarumba, Worreworrem, Alligator Hole and Goose Hill, with \$50,000 needed immediately to make them safe.

Mr Benning and the other members of the audit team were also asked to carry out a similar audit of communities around Halls Creek.

“The communities in that area have not been audited since the 1980’s, and the people were so happy to have us there, to know that someone cared about their living conditions and what they need to be safe,” he said.



MG Corporation Director Ted Carlton inspecting Ningbingi with the audit team.



MGC Building and Maintenance general manager Dean Baker carries out an inspection of a remote community.

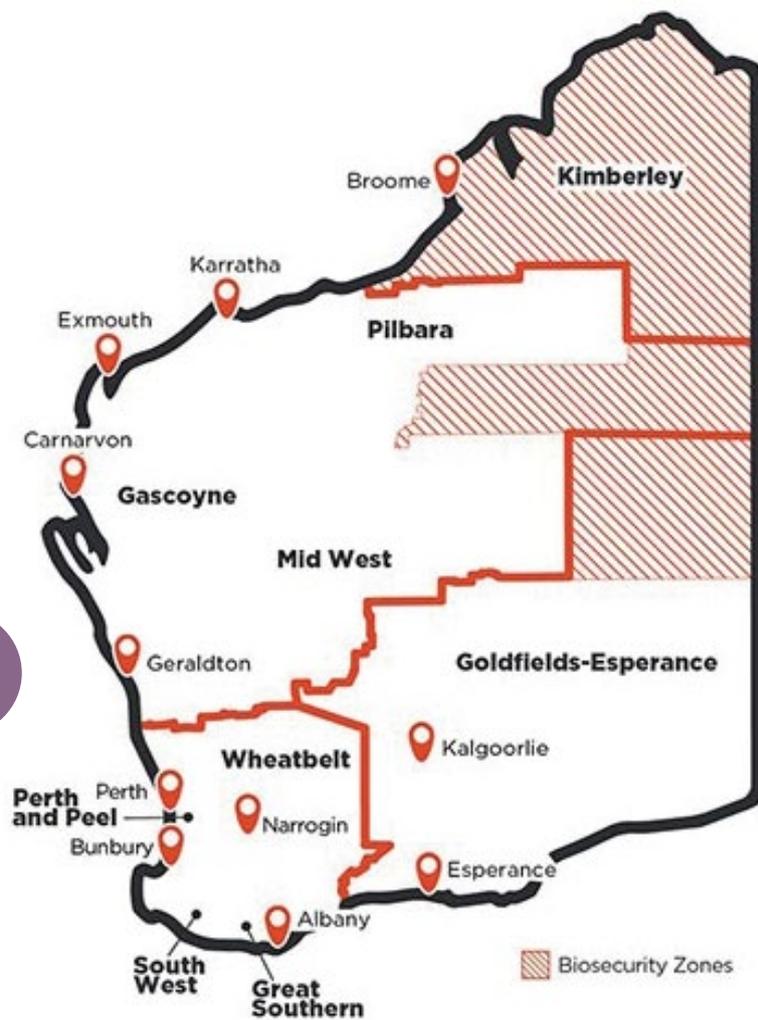
KIMBERLEY COVID-19 UPDATE:

The Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service has confirmed there are currently no active cases of COVID-19 in the Kimberley. There were 18 confirmed cases in the region, and all of those people have since recovered. However, KAMS has warned that now is not the time to get complacent about hygiene and physical distancing measures.

While the State Government will lift some travel restrictions around the state from May 18, restrictions on travel to the Kimberley will remain in place to protect vulnerable Aboriginal communities. The changes will allow travel between local government areas within in the Kimberley, but access to remote Indigenous communities will remain restricted.

People still need to apply for an exemption to travel outside of the regional boundaries.

Phase 2 of the COVID-19 WA roadmap will allow gatherings of up to 20 people, and up to 30 people can attend weddings or funerals held outdoors.



GREEN SHOOTS ON LOT 16

The cotton trial on MG land at Goomig is producing some very promising early results. MG Corporation signed an MOU with Queensland cotton giant Cubbie Farming last year to start the cotton trial on Lot 16. The MOU was part of MG Corporation's long-term plan to realise economic benefits from MG land that can support the social and emotional wellbeing of MG people into the future.

MGC is already in discussions with Cubbie, KAI and other local growers about the potential for a cotton ginny in the region and is actively working with that group to secure State and Federal funding for the infrastructure required.



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