

CAMP WALMADAN

JAMES PRICE POINT, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

A GUIDE TO COUNTRY, COMMUNITY & CULTURE



EXTRA SPECIAL

WE WON!

EDITION

From little things big things grow...

We started in camp with just a few and there was a small group of environmentalists in town. I think the "What does a gas plant mean for your children" brochure clicked into gear and a broader group of Broome families joined the campaign and then all the people that had done the Lurujarri trail started, a heavy flow from all over the world and we watched the group grow and grow into a strong force to be reckoned with.

We had our trying times over and over, especially when the promises of great wealth swept across the Kimberley and we lost many to the other side. Though, there was never a moment that we actually believed that a gas plant was going to go here. We just knew we had to slow down and stop the process for as long and hard as possible.

We expected Woodside to give up before they did but when they did we all crashed in a heap for days. We were getting ready for a full frontal assault on the sacred Walmadan Dunes which we were expecting in the next week or two. After the announcement we were stunned and almost paralysed from burn out. We often think in hindsight that we don't know how much longer we could have pushed through as the massive burn out only seemed apparent when we stopped. We are still going through the motions of getting back to reality/normality.

But things have changed now - we can't stop until the Kimberley coast and the Song Cycle is protected. For this is the inherent duty of the Goolarabooloo, no one has done it harder than they have over the last 5 years with all turning against them for greed. We are so proud of every single one of them. As they and their ancestors have been protecting this coast line for as long as time began for humans on the planet, since Bugarregarre, creation time. Stand tall and strong Goolarabooloo as we will be standing right beside you...

~ Shauny and Keels 2013
Friends of Goolarabooloo



We wanted to put this book together to share some of the reflections, to celebrate and share this win, so it holds us through the many battles to come. We thought it would be useful to keep the original booklet intact as historical document and helpful resource for other campaigns, and wrap it up in some winning celebrations. This is just a small piece of the big picture of this win for country, community and culture - we hope you enjoy it. ~ Nicola and the Walmadan camp crew

Cover image: Big mob on dunes - Damian Kelly, Bilby illustration: Sobrane Simcock



Now Woodside's Gone (The Cup Song)

by the Walmadan Family Jug Band

We've been fighting for a long time now (boom boom boom boom)

To protect this sacred land

From the diggin and the drillin and the gas exploration

That Woodside and Barnett, they had planned

(CHORUS)

Now Woodside's gone (Now Woodside's gone)

Now Woodside's gone (Now Woodside's gone)

We're not gonna miss them now they're gone

We're not gonna miss them on this land

We fought hard and made a stand

We're not gonna miss them now they're gone

We've been fightin for a long time now (boom boom boom boom)

Can't believe the battles won

They've got money, they've got power

But still they can't devour

This big mob family at Walmadan

Now Woodside's gone (Now Woodside's gone)

Now Woodside's gone (Now Woodside's gone)

We're not gonna miss them now they're gone

We're not gonna miss them on this land

We fought hard and made a stand

We're not gonna miss them now they're gone.



REFLECTIONS ON WINNING - FROM CAMP WALMADAN

We are sometimes not very good at celebrating success - so we asked a few people who spent time at Camp Walmadan what it meant to them; and what it felt like when they heard the news. These are just a handful of the stories from camp. We know there are many more. This goes out to the thousands of people that helped make this happen.

Phil Roe, Goolarabooloo: "The fight is not over but we are very relieved. We will continue to uphold my grandfather Paddy Roe's legacy – as we've been taught to do for future generations. We won't give up until the country is safe. We won't give up 'til the government protects our Song Cycle Path."

Tegan: "That morning the whole mob of us crowded around a crackly car radio as Woodside made their announcement to the world that they will not be building a gas precinct at Walmadan (James Price Point). This is when the hugs and the tears came in their plenty. Followed by Phil arriving back at Walmadan after being in at the Woodside office. He got out of the car with the biggest smile on his face and wrapped us all up in a hug and he cried, bringing me to tears again. The evening of the announcement was one of the most special moments of my whole life. As the sun was setting over the ocean a big mob of us all sat in the dunes, arms around each other, our big Walmadan family. The birds seemed louder and more excited than I had ever heard them on the dunes before, the colours of the sunset seemed even more spectacular than usual. Country seemed to know. As the colours slid down behind the ocean, Phil sat behind us, under the Aboriginal flag, which had lately been referred to as the battle flag – but not on this day. Phil, the Song Man, with his boomerang clapping sticks started singing the old Walmadan song in language. He sang many songs - old songs of the Song Cycle - and I felt the sounds. This is one of my most precious memories."

Fergus: "It's important to show that people can make a difference... people can look to this and say 'wow, those guys did that, well we can do it too'... it proves that you don't have to let the state and big business get their way, and trample over the wishes of the people. You can make a difference. If you know you are right, don't give up"

Ben: "It felt like the pitter-patter of the first few drops of wet after a long, parched dry season."

Tessa: "It is inspiring when you have a win like this... and it reminds you that you can't give up... There was a lot of people from all over Broome, across Australia, from all over the world, who were willing to stand there with Goolarabooloo and support them in any way they could... to protect this place. It was incredible, I think we really were in a bit of

shock, like it didn't really feel real... one of the most powerful emotions I ever felt in my life"

Sooty: "When you do get a win, you've got to savour it... and use it to bash your head against a brick wall, for however many years till you get the next one."

Nicola: "It didn't feel real until I went back on country a few weeks later. I felt it in my gut a couple of kilometres from camp. And seeing the beautiful faces of people who have put their everything on the line this last year or two... and then the beach... floating into an orange fire of sunset with the most wonderful, ragged sense of relief, that this place was safe. Even if just for now."

Freya: "I felt speechless, overwhelmed with joy and relief, proud of everyone who contributed and felt hope for the future!"

Karliem: "It is like a sigh of relief, but also knowing what job still lies ahead, to fight for formal protection."



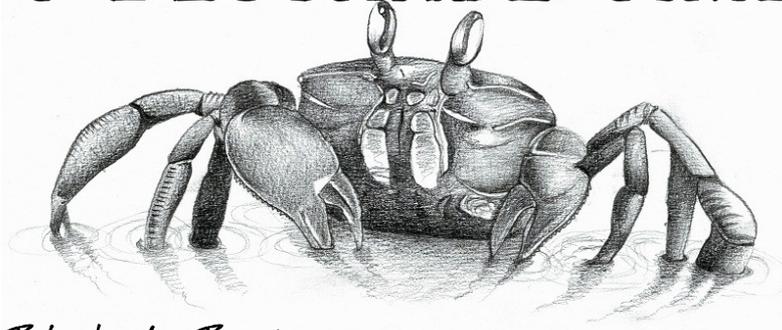
Tegan & Tessa – Damian Kelly

Kat: "Because the companies we're fighting are so huge... it just shows that people power can do really amazing things."

Joel: "Shocked. Incredible, didn't really believe it. The fact they didn't make it into the dunes is the biggest win."

Charlotte: "It was so incredible, a pretty indescribable feeling. The night before when we got the tip off... it felt like being a child waiting for Christmas, only 100 times more intense... I think it will give me a lot of momentum to continue."

FIRST BLOCKADE TIMELINE



7 June, 2011 *The Blockade Begins...*

7.30am Broome community surveillance team see Woodside security services hurtling down the Broome Highway, and follow to find a bulldozer on the back of a low loader heading out to James Price Point – site of the proposed gas hub. The word goes out and Broome people mobilise to join the crew up the coast and meet the machinery convoy on the road.

8.57am The Woodside bulldozer convoy is stopped 10km short of its destination by a lone protestor standing in the road.

Moments later, Shaun locks himself onto the bulldozer loaded on the halted low loader. Police are called. Following negotiations between Traditional Owners and police over two hours, Shaun unlocks at the request of the Traditional Owners. Police issue Shaun with a move-on order and he is told not to come back to the site for 24 hours.

The convoy proceeds a further 5km.

Meanwhile, a car body ('dragon') has mysteriously appeared on a stretch of road too narrow for the Woodside convoy to pass. About 50 protestors from all directions and walks of life – Traditional Owners, business people, musicians, artists, tourists, grey nomads, filmmakers have now turned up. Shane slips under the bulldozer and locks himself on.

Goolarabooloo woman Teresa Roe says to the gathered media throng:

"We don't want the money, we want that country alive. I want to see it for my grandchildren. I gotta fight!...Turn that tincan [the bulldozer] around and take it back to town!"



Dozens more people arrive throughout the day – they adorn the bulldozer with flags and banners and an impromptu concert begins with musicians Dave Mann, Bek Schofield and Wil Thomas playing from the back of a truck with a stage.

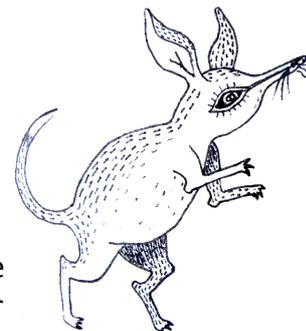
The Woodside bulldozer convoy is not going anywhere anytime soon.

The media arrive in a throng – WIN TV, GWN, The West Australian, ABC Kimberley.

12 noon The tow truck driver says it's too dangerous to remove the car body and heads back to Broome. The crowd celebrates.

2.10pm Police decide to leave Shane locked-on all night – their specialist from Perth flying in to advise on protests won't be here until the morning.

5.15pm A fire is lit in front of the low loader with the Woodside bulldozer on the back; a billy is boiled and people gather around for warmth.



YAY!
I STILL
HAVE A
HOME!

Photo by Rod Hartvigsen, cartoon by Karlien





One of the stories from the first blockade...

"Not sure if you know the story of this day, so will share it with you here ... we (a crew of a few) had been doing surveillance around all the light industrial areas of Broome, knowing that something was about to happen. We'd staked out this particular dozer at a yard when it was brought down from Derby, and saw the day when the blade was changed from an earth moving blade to a rake blade - this was a sure sign it was destined for JPP to begin clearing. That night it vanished ... we looked 'everywhere' ... the next morning a few of us were at the Cape Leveque turn off. Soon everyone was gone back to town for work or whatever.

I was the last to leave at around 7.30am. Just as I came to turn right at the highway, a ute with lights and markings that I recognised as Woodside, flashed past me heading towards 12 mile way. I turned left and followed the ute to the tourist pull-over bay, a short way up the highway. Just as the ute turned into the tourist bay, over the rise from out of town way came the low loader - lights flashing - the missing dozer on the back -(they had taken it in the dead of night out to Roebuck Roadhouse and were attempting to get it to JPP when everyone was going to work). It too turned into the tourist pull-over area to rendezvous with the ute and other security that had been waiting there. They spotted me as I'd turned and bolted. I started working the phone to alert everyone. The security tried to get in front of me; we were doing 100+kph side by side along the Cape Leveque Road; low loader with dozer not far behind. I managed to stay in front and got the car sideways at the first Willie Creek turn off. Was able to block them there while others got out there (from Broome) to join me. Once there were a few more crew and 'just' before the police rocked up, I bolted again to go and support crew further up the road.

Then the lightbulb moment when I realised I had 'a lock-on device' in the car (which I'd been meaning to take elsewhere for ages) and that I could use ... so I did!

~ Broome resident and friend of the Goolarabooloo, Shane Hughes

Photo: Law Bosses Philip Roe, Joseph Roe, Richard Hunter – by Damian Kelly



JAMES PRICE POINT



In a single-sentence to the Australian Stock Exchange on Friday, April 12 this year, Woodside and its joint venture partners announced that they would not be building gas refineries at James Price Point on the Kimberley coast.

Eight years after proposing the site, 50km north of Broome on the Dampier Peninsula, and following a lengthy campaign against them, Woodside claimed that onshore refineries were not economically feasible. Had the gas refineries been built at James Price Point, they would have been the thin end of the wedge in industrialising the Kimberley. With all his threats, pleas and lobbying, the WA Premier, Colin Barnett, could not convince the Browse Joint Venturers or the Broome community that the site he had chosen was the best site for processing offshore gas. While Mr Barnett has left the door open for development at James Price Point, Woodside has made it clear they have no interest in the site.

This was a historic decision for the Kimberley. The region has been in industry's sights for decades. In 2005 a report, *Developing the West Kimberley's Resources* by the Department of Industry and Resources, was published as a mining blueprint for the region. A key element of the blueprint was a gas hub on the Kimberley coast to power mining and mineral processing industries.

Mr Barnett, a previous Minister for Resources Development and Energy, said in 2010, "Just as the Pilbara was critically important to the development of WA from the '60s, over the next 50 years the Kimberley will play a similar role...". This mindset, and the blueprint, set the WA Government and industry on a collision course with the community. It was like the quest to protect the Franklin River from damming 30 years earlier.

***The wrong place, the wrong people,
the wrong community.***

Mr. Barnett picked a fight with the wrong community. The campaign to protect James Price Point was driven by Broome people, an eclectic mix of black and white,

workers, tradies, doctors, teachers, lawyers, artists, writers, retirees, small business owners, social workers, nurses, labourers — people from all walks of life.

When residents learnt what was being proposed, they realised what they were about to lose and joined the campaign. As awareness of the plan spread, supporters from across the country mobilized. Groups of people at concerts and meetings eventually grew to 6,000 at a gathering in Melbourne, and 20,000 in Fremantle.

Dozens of arrests in Broome galvanized the community; the police's Operation Archon spent over \$1 million in taxpayer funds on the James Price Point protests, and actions escalated. Woodside's private security firms could not operate covertly in Broome; protesters saw every move, then documented and publicized it through text messages and social media.

Delaying tactics by the community included blockades (including a month at 'Black Tank'), mass submissions and actions in the courts. These actions cost the companies and government millions and shook shareholder and investor confidence. James Price Point is seen by multi-national miners as a benchmark for proposals in the Kimberley, a case study in project failure through lack of social licence.

This was a multi-faceted, organic campaign, fuelled by creativity, ingenuity and a fierce sense of independence and justice. It was driven locally, with national and international support. The significance of what has happened has yet to resonate across the nation, but you can be sure it's resonating in board rooms across Australia and overseas. When a community stands up to protect itself against a bad proposal, it can win.

~ Martin Pritchard

*Martin Pritchard is the Director of Broome based environmental group Environs Kimberley
www.facebook.com/environs.kimberley*





WHY WE MUST KEEP WINNING!



Barnett still wants to compulsorily acquire JPP & Industrialise the Kimberley!



No Lasting heritage protection for sacred Aboriginal sites & living song cycle, yet!



World's largest Humpback whale nursery not included in WA's Marine Sanctuaries, yet



No World Heritage protection for globally significant dinosaur track ways, yet