

# FLOOD NEWS FLASH

1 February 2024

Artwork by Natalie Davey

## Lord Mayor Distress Relief Funding assisting local residents to give back to their community

A few flood-affected residents in the Fitzroy Valley have already received their vehicles under the Lord Mayor's Distress Relief fund for vehicles. We talked to local Jimmy Andrews on his new car and how it is going to help him give back to his community.

My name is Jimmy (Dylan) Andrews and I've been in this area all my life. I am a Bunuba and Walmajarri Elder and in the past I've been across Fitzroy, out at Leopold Station and even spent some time in Derby in my youth.

I started working in community housing mostly in Junjuwa and that's where I started as a tour operator. I worked, alongside my colleague, doing day runs to Windjana Gorge and Tunnel Creek.

After my colleague left, I took over the tours by myself and called it Bungoolee Tours. I'm still doing one day tours working alongside Kimberley tour companies, but I have another passion which I want to start working in.



"I want to work in my community more, back in Junjuwa and give back to my home, building back up things like veggie patches, working on a fishery and supporting struggling kids."

"It breaks my heart some of the things that happen in our community and I really want to be a part of the work that we need to do in community for the kids, supporting them and keeping them out of trouble."

My community is on higher ground but when the floods came, the tour base camp that we have out there went right up to it. A lot of cars, including mine the water was up to the bonnet and we didn't even know. I wasn't even going to put an application in or anything but the team at the Flood Hub helped me out and made it easy. I really cannot thank them and the Lord Mayor enough for giving me this opportunity. After coming in and the people here helping me put my application in, I went to Broome Toyota and they really helped me out in getting this car.

I haven't been able to get back out there before now, because my car got destroyed in the floods. Thanks to the Lord Mayor, I now have a car that I can get back out into my community and start doing some work out there.

I really want to thank the Lord Mayor for putting this funding in otherwise I would have been stuck without them and wouldn't be able to do any of my plans of making a difference in my community.





# Kimberley Wet Season - the difference a month can make

Fitzroy River Bridge - December 2023 - Bridge Opening



Fitzroy River Bridge - January 2024



## LMDRF Funding Applications still open - Vehicles and Fixtures and Contents

A reminder that applications are open for vehicles as well as fixtures and contents that were damaged in the Kimberley Floods.

People can apply for assistance of up to \$15,000 for vehicle repairs and up to \$40,000 if their vehicle has been written off. People can also apply for assistance of up to \$15,000 for fixtures and contents.

Applications for both these rounds of funding can now be made in person to the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley at the Flood Hub in the Fitzroy Crossing Visitor Centre. Contact the Flood Hub at 9191 0904 or in person on Corner of Forest Rd and 4 Flynn Drive from Tuesday to Thursday 8am to 12pm.



*"It looked like someone had picked everything up and then dropped it. Everywhere you looked there was devastation," said Sanctuary Manager, Stella Thomas.*



## Mornington mammoth clean up after Kimberley Floods

Despite a summer dominated by both fire and heavy rain, significant recovery progress has been made since record flooding swamped Australian Wildlife Conservancy's Mornington Wildlife Sanctuary (Bunuba and Kija country) in the central Kimberley.

A skeleton crew, residing in the few facilities unaffected by the extreme weather event, assisted by volunteers and contractors, cleared 18 tonnes of debris, removed up to 1,900 feral stock, and reinstated critical utilities such as water and electricity – but there is still substantial work ahead.

It was January 2023, when heavy rainfall from ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie caused river levels to rise throughout the Kimberley, backfilling into Mornington's operations base. The largest flood event on record forced staff and visiting researchers to evacuate by helicopter, as personal belongings, equipment and years of herbarium specimens floated away, and operations infrastructure drowned in the downpour.

Despite a few setbacks over the last 12 months, with unplanned fires and intense storms, the team has achieved some great conservation outcomes and is looking forward to the year ahead.

In August, AWC staff and volunteers teamed up with non-profit Disaster Relief Australia (DRA) to complete a large and urgent week-long clean-up.

Approximately 18 tonnes of waste, mostly objects destroyed in the flood, was removed from affected buildings. The clean-up was considered high priority to prevent waste distribution and further moulding during the wet season.

Items removed from the sanctuary included damaged reference books and research documents, science and land management equipment, samples from the Mornington herbarium, electrical waste, whitegoods, people's destroyed belongings and other debris. DRA sent nine volunteers made up of ex-military, former police and a nurse, to assist eight AWC regional and national staff in the mammoth Mornington clean-up.

Equipped with safety gear, two tractors, and a backhoe, the crew cleared thousands of damaged and destroyed items from buildings such as the Wildlife Research Office and Mornington Wilderness Camp Restaurant and Bar. All waste was loaded into nine skip bins and two semi-trailers which were kindly provided by the Shire of Derby in West Kimberley.

"The scale of what was achieved was utterly outstanding," said Chloe Kobel, AWC Assistant Operations Manager, who coordinated the event. "The most commendable effort was the removal of all the fridges and freezers and their contents by DRA staff in full hazmat protective gear with AWC crew on the tractor and backhoe."

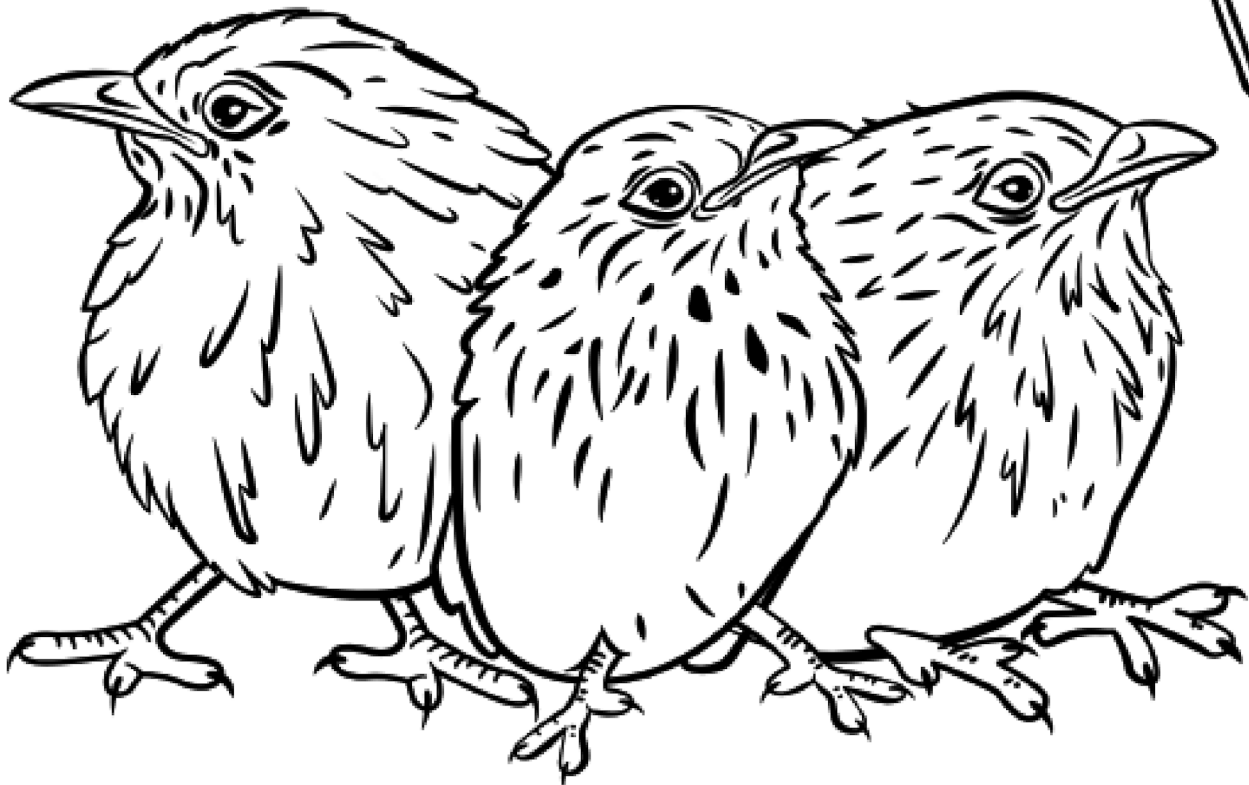
# Australian Wildlife Conservancy - Kids Corner

Have you seen this bird before anywhere in the Kimberley?

## Black Grasswren

The Black Grasswren is only found in the north-west Kimberley in Western Australia. This bird loves rocky sandstone country with big rocks and grasslands.

Male and female Grasswrens have slightly different colours – can you tell them apart? Try colouring them in below.



### Did you know?

Black Grasswrens live in pairs or groups of up to 8 birds. You can tell males and females apart based on their feathers! Males have a black front with rich brown-back feathers. Females have a paler red-brown front.