



Kimberley Society

Book Note

***Kununurra: From dreams to reality* by Norma Wainwright and Keith Wright. Private Publication, Kununurra, 2006. Soft cover, 421 pages, illustrations and maps, ISBN 0-646-46490-6, RRP \$38.00.**

This book resembles *North of the 26th* in that it is a collection of anecdotes, poetry, and other material solicited from the community and welded together by an editorial team. Assembled over several years, it focuses on the early decades of Kununurra's 45-year existence, the construction of the two dams that harnessed the waters of the Ord (in 1963 and 1972), and the Ord River Irrigation Project.

No attempt has been made to provide a chronological account of events, and, given the variety of the contributions, it might have been impossible to marshal them in a way that allowed the story to unfold. The reader therefore either dips into the book—guided by the table of contents—or encounters a random coverage of events. I like things to unfold chronologically so I found it preferable to dip, starting with W A Durack's early history of the research station at Carlton Reach (page 24), Bill Wright's great account of road works in the 1950s (page 43), and Bob Wainwright's 'My years in the Kimberley: 1952 to 2005' (page 231). After that, I dipped at random, encountering letters written by Rosalie Forrest in 1965 and Spike Dessert in 1974 and gaining an immediate sense of what it was like to drive to Kununurra in those years. Further along, I was pleasantly surprised to find the burial register for Kununurra Cemetery. It appears on pages 289 to 299, at the end of the contribution titled 'The passing of a few of our pioneers'.

All told, there is much to interest the reader in this book. It will trigger memories for ex-residents, provide background for new residents, and give others a sense of how things came to be as they are in and around Kununurra.

Inquiries about the availability of this book can be directed to the [2 K Tours website](http://www.kimberleytours.com.au).

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