



Murujuga National Park

Just north of Karratha, across a wide salt flat, is the Burrup Peninsula—home to an area of immense cultural significance, which could soon gain global recognition. The Murujuga Cultural Landscape, including Murujuga National Park, has been formally nominated for inscription on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Murujuga National Park is Western Australia's 100th national park and is situated within the land

Above Murujuga National Park has one of the world's richest and most diverse assemblages of rock art.

Photo – Jo McDonald/Centre for Rock Art Research and Management

Opposite page

Top left Hearson Cove is part of the Murujuga cultural landscape.

Photo – David Bettini

Top right Nganjarli Trail in the national park.

Photo – Daniel Fowler/Fuzz Digital

Above left Mangroves and inlet to the ocean from within the national park.

Above right Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation jointly manage Murujuga National Park with DBCA.

Photos – Amy Stevens/Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation

and sea country of the Murujuga Cultural Landscape on the Pilbara coast.

There are five Traditional Owner and custodial groups, collectively known as the Ngarda-Ngarli, who have been part of this cultural landscape for tens of thousands of years instilling a deep, spiritual connection to it.

That connection is most visible through the remarkable Aboriginal rock art engravings, or petroglyphs, found amongst the area's iconic red rocks. It is one of the densest and most diverse collections of rock art images in the world.

Murujuga has an estimated 1–2 million images in an area of more than 100,000 hectares, demonstrating an extraordinary diversity of style, theme, mode of production and aesthetic repertoire.

The petroglyphs at Murujuga capture at least 47,000 years of human existence

and light up the imagination. They show human images, extinct animals, including thylacines (Tasmanian tiger), as well as the same birds and fish found there today.

The landscape of Murujuga is just as diverse. There are rock-strewn cliffs, narrow valleys, mangroves, and mudflats. More than 14 native mammal species live there including 14 species of bats. Other creatures include 58 reptile species including the Pilbara olive python (*Liasis olivaceus barroni*), as well as Rothschild's rock wallaby (*Petrogale rothschildi*) and the northern quoll (*Dasyurus hallucatus*).

WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION

In February 2023, a joint announcement between Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation (MAC) and the Australian and Western Australian Governments that the World



Heritage nomination had been formally submitted to UNESCO, was a long time coming.

In 2007, the Dampier Archipelago, including the Burrup Peninsula and Murujuga National Park, was placed on Australia's National Heritage List. And in 2020, Murujuga was added to Australia's World Heritage Tentative List.

For four years, MAC and the Western Australian Government, led by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), worked on the official nomination, with support from the Australian Government and technical experts.

The nomination was delivered to UNESCO at the end of January 2023. This was celebrated with an event on Country and a signing ceremony in February 2023 attended by Federal and WA Environment Ministers.

UNESCO's rigorous assessment process will take at least 18 months.

JOINT MANAGEMENT

Murujuga was the first national park in WA to be managed jointly between Traditional Owners and State Government.

It is owned by MAC, leased back to the State Government and jointly managed by MAC and DBCA. This joint management



approach recognises the continuing Aboriginal connection to Country and embodies the Ngarda-Ngarli philosophy "Ngayintharri Gumawami Ngurrangga" (We all come together for Country).

GEOLOGY

The rocks of Murujuga are comprised mostly of granophyre (a fine-grained granite) and gabbro that intruded as a sill of magma between layers of surrounding volcanic and sedimentary rocks. The sill is at least two kilometres thick and was formed around 2.7 billion years ago.

The archipelago was formed between 5000 and 6000 years ago when the sea

level was rising following the last ice age. This once hilly area was flooded, leaving hilltops as islands. Coastal dunes of shelly lime-sand, then accumulated around the newly formed islands, the grains of which later formed limestone.

The huge rock piles are unique to this part of the Pilbara coastline and are a result of the physical breakdown of the parent material—the fine-grained Gidley granophyre—and the coarse-grained gabbro. Both are resistant to erosion. Oxidation of the rock surface over thousands of years has created the rich red colour seen today. A recently split rock is blue-grey inside.

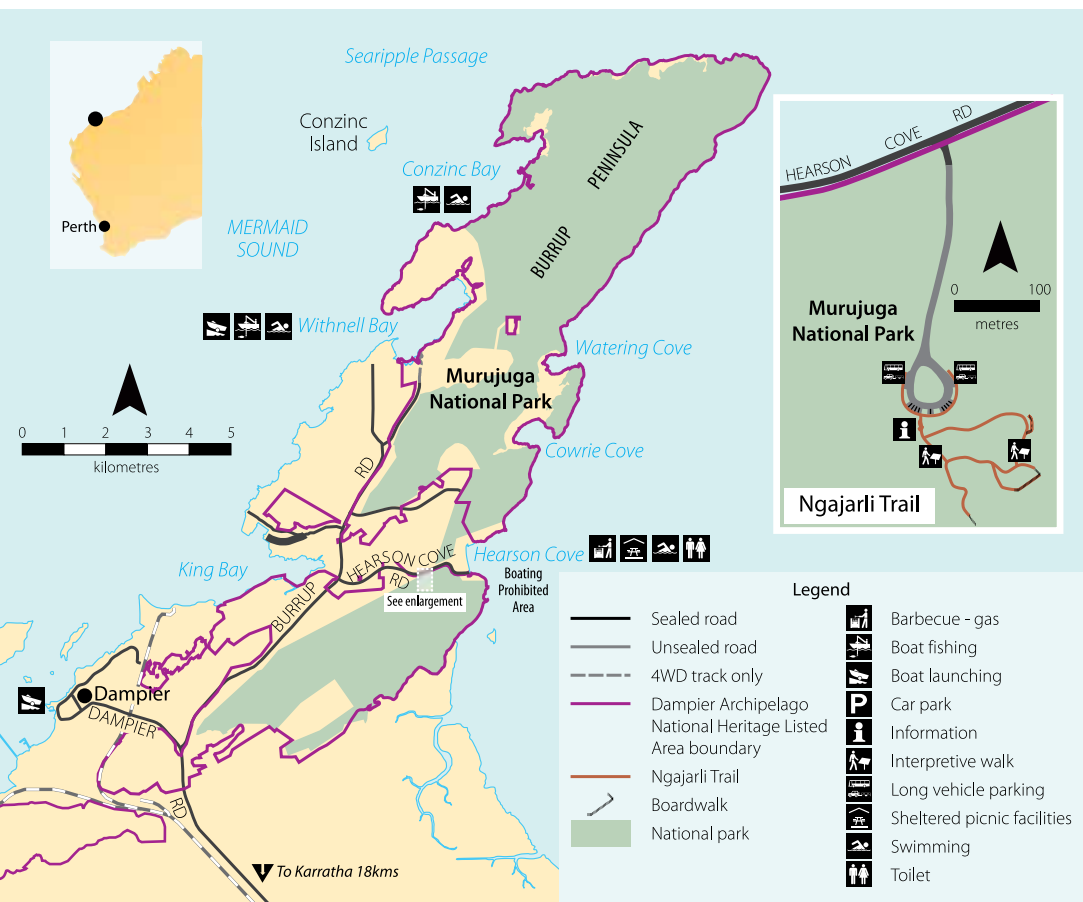


Discover more about Murujuga National Park

Scan this QR code or visit Parks and Wildlife Service's 'LANDSCOPE' playlist on YouTube.



Parks for people Murujuga National Park



Top Intertidal flats are exposed at low tide.
Photo – DBCA

Above Mudskippers (*Periophthalmus argentilineatus*) are abundant at Murujuga.
Photo – Ann Storr

BIRD LIFE

Every year, thousands of migratory shorebirds visit the beaches of Western Australia's north-west on their mega journeys across the globe.

Murujuga National Park provides sand bars, rocky shores, beaches, salt marshes, intertidal flats and mangroves, all of which are important feeding and nesting habitat.

Migratory birds visit this habitat during spring and summer, when they escape the winter of their breeding grounds in the northern hemisphere. Some migratory shorebirds, mostly first year birds, stay all year round.

NGANJARLI TRAIL

Located off the Hearson Cove Road, the Ngajarli Trail enables visitors to view an array of rock art, a shell midden, grinding stone and other cultural artefacts.

The 700-metre Class 2 trail is designed to be accessible for wheelchairs and features interpretive signage, viewing

platforms and an elevated boardwalk following the edge of natural rock piles.

The rock art is deeply meaningful to Aboriginal people as it provides a link to stories, customs and knowledge of their land and resources. It connects them to the events and people of the past and to their beliefs today.

PARTIAL CLOSURE

A section of Murujuga National Park, north of Withnell Road, is currently closed due to preparatory works ahead of the Murujuga access road and day-use site development. This closure will remain until late-2024, with no unauthorised access permitted to sites including Conzinc Bay, Casper's Pool and a drive trail known locally as the 'Jump-up'. Ancient Pools are now protected from unauthorised access under the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021*.

The Withnell Bay boat ramp is still accessible, and boats are still permitted to visit Murujuga National Park.

For further information visit alerts.dbca.wa.gov.au

Do it yourself

Where is it? 1540 kilometres north of Perth and 30 kilometres north-west of Karratha.

Things to do: Boat launching and fishing, bushwalking, bird watching, picnicking, swimming, snorkelling and cultural tours. For more information on cultural tours visit experiencemurujuga.com. No camping is permitted in Murujuga National Park.

Facilities: Interpretive signage, walk trail, viewing platform and elevated boardwalk at Ngajarli (also known as Deep Gorge).

Public toilets are located at Hearson Cove beach, managed by the City of Karratha, and at Windy Ridge Oval in Dampier.

Nearest Parks and Wildlife Service office: Pilbara Regional Office, Cnr Anderson and Mardie roads, Karratha Industrial Estate, Karratha, (08) 9182 2000.

Know before you go: Visitors should be prepared for extreme summer temperatures. Please visit exploreparcs.dbca.wa.gov.au for important safety information.