NINGALOO COAST
WORLD HERITAGE

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
NYINGGULU JOINT MANAGEMENT

Spring | 2020

Working together on country

August 4 2020, marked a historical moment when the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) joined traditional owners from the Nganhurra Thanardi Garrbu Aboriginal Corporation (NTGAC) to formally enter into the Nyinggulu Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA).

The Nyinggulu ILUA enables the creation of about 78,000 hectares of new conservation estate, including the establishment of the Nyinggulu Coastal Reserves and the eastern extension of Cape Range National Park. The ILUA also formalises the joint vesting and ongoing joint management of the new reserves and the World Heritage-listed Ningaloo Marine Park (State waters) and Cape Range National Park.

The ILUA and Joint Management Agreement provides the department with an opportunity to gain a better understanding of traditional knowledge applicable to the planning area, and foster opportunities for integration of traditional knowledge with contemporary conservation science and management.

Joint management is about a merge of traditional and Western culture working together to look after country. In previous years, informal joint management occurred between DBCA and traditional owners while developing a plan for effective conservation of the Nyinggulu (Ningaloo) Coast, through the collaborative identification of challenges and solutions. Applying a joint management framework will enhance the protection of culture and heritage, geology and landforms, plants, animals and habitats, while allowing culturally appropriate opportunities for recreation and tourism. The joint management framework will also apply to research and monitoring and the management of fire, weeds, introduced animals, resources and utilities. **Above: Coming together for the signing of the Nyinggulu ILUA.**

World Heritage global assessment

The Ningaloo Coast is taking part in the 2020 World Heritage Conservation Outlook Assessment. Every three years the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Heritage Outlook provides an independent global assessment of the state of conservation of our natural heritage and its potential to be maintained in the future.

This is an important monitoring exercise for the Ningaloo Coast, to summarise the current state and trend of our World Heritage values, the threats to those values, and the effectiveness of protection and management currently in place.

These individual property assessments support international World Heritage management and help to determine whether conservation prospects are improving or deteriorating for protected areas worldwide.

The 2017 *IUCN World Heritage Outlook 2* revealed that climate change is the fastest growing threat to natural World Heritage.

At present hundreds of World Heritage experts are taking part in a consultation and review process - government agencies, World Heritage site managers, park authorities, non-governmental organisations, community groups, international agencies, academic researchers, IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and the IUCN Species Survival Commission.

Above: Range to reef. *Photo – Jen Hollis*

The consultation process ensures the Conservation Outlook Assessments are as accurate as possible and identify the most pressing issues facing natural World Heritage sites in 2020.

Australia is currently undergoing assessments for 12 Natural and 4 Mixed World Heritage properties. For more information on the current outlook for the Ningaloo Coast visit: worldheritageoutlook.iucn.org/explore-sites/wdpaid/555542338

The 2020 report will be available later this year!

Stopping the spread of invasive species

Parks and Wildlife staff and volunteers have been busy over the winter months removing invasive weeds along the Ningaloo Coast and Exmouth Gulf islands.

Invasive weed species like kapok bush (*Aerva javanica*) pose a significant threat to World Heritage values. They out compete native species and change the diversity and balance of the natural ecosystem.

Right: Over 40 garbage bags filled with kapok bush was removed from along the Ningaloo Coast

Pilbara inshore islands – have your say!

The Pilbara inshore islands nature reserves and proposed additions draft management plan covers over 170 islands, islets and rocks between Exmouth Gulf and Cape Preston. These remote islands have high conservation value, they are an important refuge for threatened and significant fauna, flora and habitats.

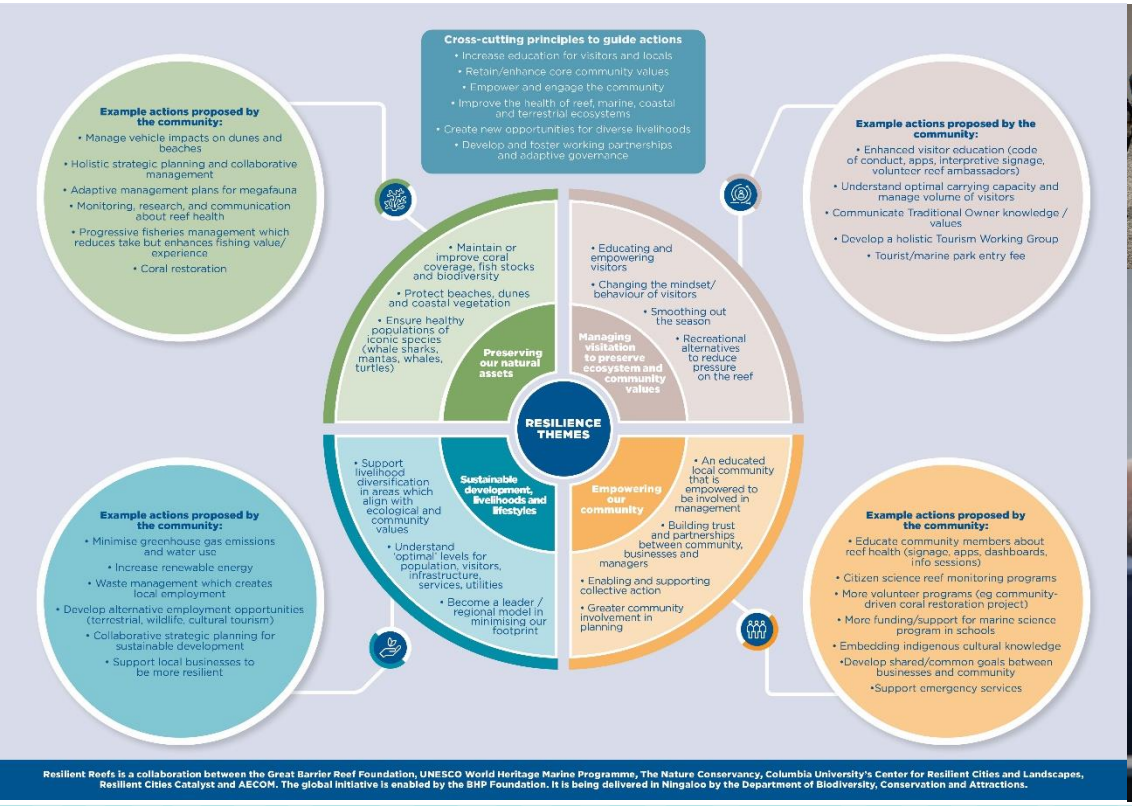
The plan outlines how the natural, cultural and social values of the islands will be conserved, threatened species including turtles and birds are to be protected, and how people are encouraged to enjoy the area in a sustainable manner to ensure the values that attract visitors are maintained for future generations.

You can access the draft plan, watch a short video about the islands, and complete an online submission at dbca.wa.gov.au/haveyoursay. Submission close Wednesday 18th November 2020.

Resilient Reefs and the community

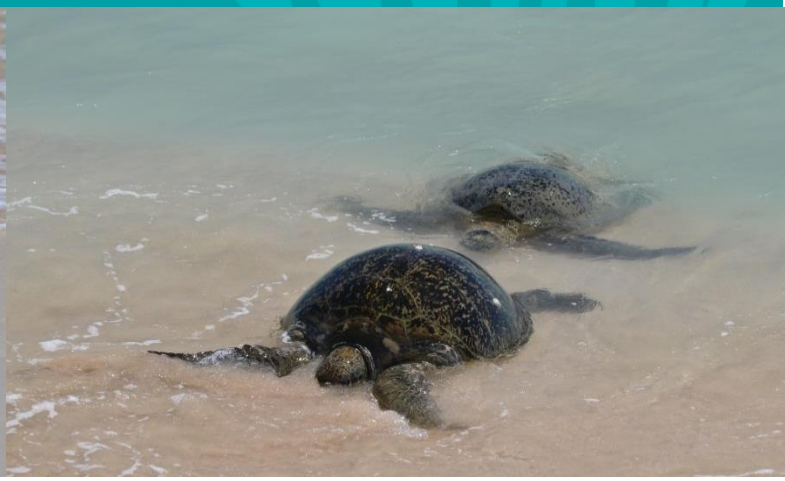
August was a particularly busy month for the Resilient Reefs team, and the community. Interactive workshops were held in Exmouth and Coral Bay with over 100 community members sharing their priorities for the Ningaloo Coast over the coming decades. These discussions generated 200+ suggested actions within four key areas: *Preserving our natural assets; Sustainable development, livelihoods and lifestyles; Empowering our community;* and, *managing visitation to preserve ecosystem and community values*.

The values, priorities and actions that were put forward by the community will inform the development of a Resilience Strategy for the Ningaloo Coast. The strategy will outline objectives and actions to strengthen the reef, coastline and community in adapting to changing conditions in the future. The strategy will also guide the allocation of up to $1 million in seed funding that is available as part of the Resilient Reefs program, in partnership with the Great Barrier Reef Foundation and BHP Foundation. To find out more, or to sign up to the newsletter to be informed of further opportunities to engage in action planning, head to the Resilient Reefs website: www.resilientreefsningaloo.com.



Resilient Reefs is a collaboration between the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, UNESCO World Heritage Marine Programme, The Nature Conservancy, Columbia University's Center for Resilient Cities and Landscapes, Resilient Cities Catalyst and AECOM. The global initiative is enabled by the BHP Foundation. It is being delivered in Ningaloo by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.

It’s turtle time at Ningaloo!



Did you see lots of turtles throughout October?

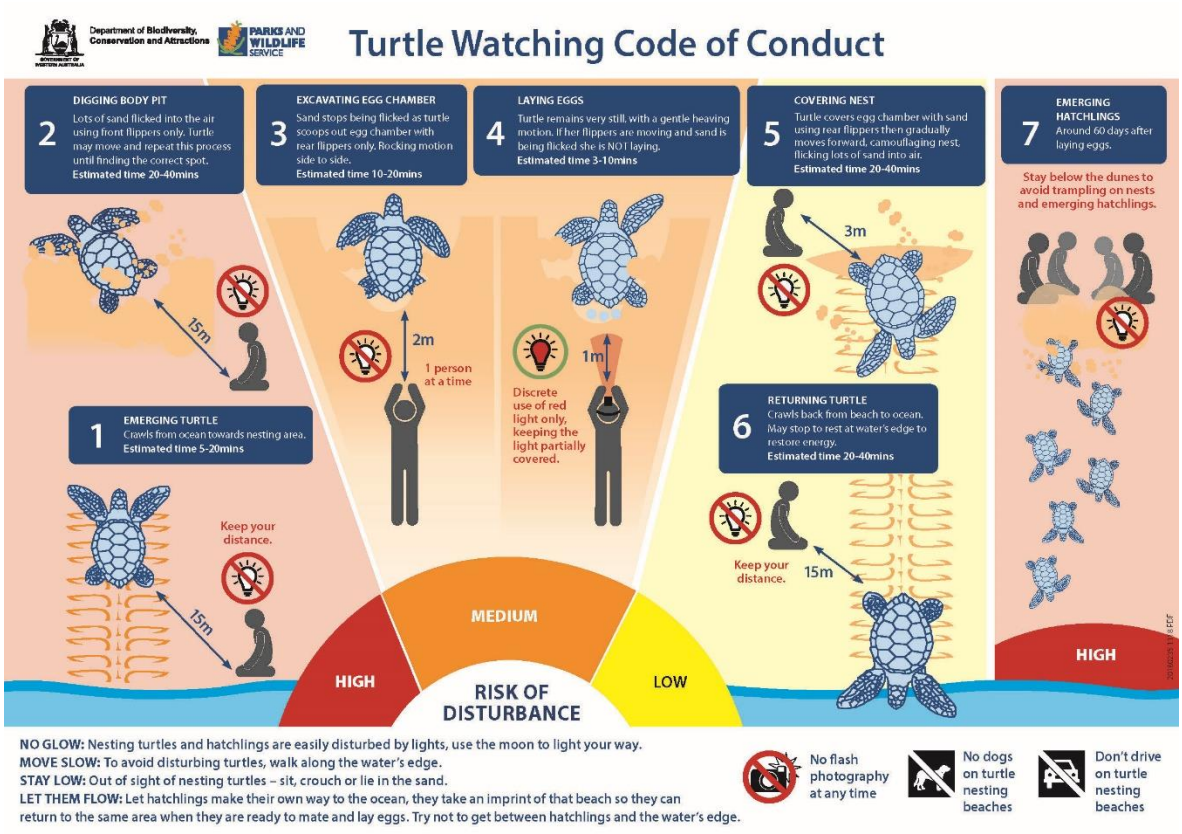
Along the Ningaloo Coast in October you can view turtles mating in the shallow waters of the lagoon. Female turtles often come ashore to rest and recuperate after prolonged mating activity. It is important that they are left to rest. Disturbance by people getting too close or pushing them back into the water can cause them to use up energy needed for breeding and put them back into the environment they are trying to avoid.

The diversity of turtle species found here along the Ningaloo Coast is one of the key reasons for the World Heritage listing. The beaches along the Jurabi Coast are important habitat for turtle reproduction. Parks and Wildlife anticipate a busy turtle breeding season based on the turtle activity seen already.

To witness a turtle nesting in the natural environment it is recommend joining a guided Turtle Eco-Education tour at Jurabi Turtle Centre between December and February (contact the Ningaloo Visitor Centre for bookings).

Follow the Turtle Watching Code of Conduct so that your presence on the beach does not impact them successfully laying their eggs.

We are extremely privileged to have such an amazing natural phenomenon on our local beaches.



Above: Green turtles resting during mating season. Photos – *Maggie Wright*

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