

Yarning Time



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



Issue 10: July 2021



Welcome to the tenth issue of *Yarning Time* for the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA).

We are pleased to bring you news and information that showcases some of the important work that has been undertaken by DBCA and Traditional Owners in recent months.

Yarning is a term used by Aboriginal people meaning talking and sharing stories.

Yarning Time:

- shares information about the department's engagement with Aboriginal people
- provides updates on the specific DBCA Aboriginal strategies and programs
- informs the community, our partners and staff of the developments in Aboriginal affairs in the department.

Please have a read and enjoy.

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The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions respectfully acknowledges all Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters it manages, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community.

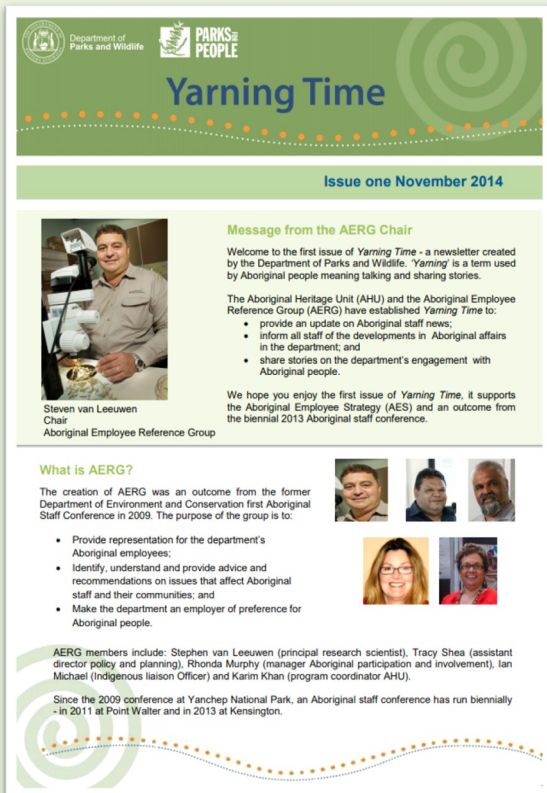
Yarning Time update

The development of *Yarning Time* was an outcome initiated from the inaugural Aboriginal Staff Conference held in 2011 at Yanchep National Park.

In November 2014 the first official issue was released with a distribution list of over 200 staff. Today, seven years later, *Yarning Time* has released eight issues for the former Department of Parks and Wildlife and nine issues for DBCA. Initially, this newsletter was an internal document released quarterly for staff to learn about what is happening with Aboriginal engagement around the department.

Today, it has expanded and flourished to become an externally available newsletter with more than 900 subscriptions. Each issue is becoming bigger and bigger as this is a reflection of the high level of relationships and partnerships formed with Traditional Owners throughout the State. With this in mind, the size of the newsletter will be reduced to keep the stories current and will now be released monthly.

Thank you to the RAP Champions and other staff that have contributed. A new e-mail address has been set up for *Yarning Time*, If you have a story you would like to feature, please send it through to yarning.time@dbca.wa.gov.au.



Yarning Time - Issue one November 2014
Department of Parks and Wildlife



Yarning Time - Issue one October 2018
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

In their words: participants speak about Aboriginal Ranger Program

The Aboriginal Ranger Program is a five-year, \$20 million government initiative launched in 2017 with the aim to create jobs, offer training and contribute to conservation outcomes. The funded ranger programs are managed by Aboriginal organisations, strongly guided by Aboriginal Elders and community, with support from government organisations to manage country and protect the environment. The employed rangers are undertaking land and sea management including conservation, cultural, tourism and education activities across a range of tenures.



Kimberley Rangers

The creation of jobs and the associated income has been identified as the key benefit from the Aboriginal Ranger Program. Jobs are often scarce and welfare dependency is high in remote areas. Being employed as a ranger not only brings income and training, but also confidence and a sense of purpose. However, other benefits have been identified including strong social and cultural impacts that are being felt throughout communities.

To build an understanding of the social outcomes of the program, Parks and Wildlife Service social scientists Dr Amanda Smith and Dr Kate Rodger undertook case study evaluation, spending time on country with some of the rangers. Interviews and participant observation were undertaken with Bardi Jawi Rangers, Nyul Nyul Rangers, Karajarri Rangers and Ngurrara Rangers in the Kimberley along with Esperance Tjaltjraak Rangers on the south coast. Early evaluation of these ranger projects is highlighting a suite of positive impacts of ranger programs far and above the expected jobs and conservation outcomes.

As part of their scientific process to evaluate the social outcomes of the program, Amanda and Kate spoke to rangers and key partners. This is what they had to say:

Employment

“Pretty hard to get job around here and seeing the application on the board I really wanted it and wanted to be a ranger.” Ranger, Bardi Jawi

“Since I have become a ranger it has helped out a lot. Got my own place now, was staying with my older brother before but since I got a job and stable income got my own place. I’ve also now got confidence in speaking in front of people. If you asked me a few years ago to speak in front of high school I probably wouldn’t have but it has helped out a fair bit.” Ranger, Tjaltjraak



Bardi Jawi Rangers

In their words - continued

“You can start from scratch and build something for yourself and get qualified even if you have nothing. You can make a better future for yourself and family.” Ranger, Karajarri

“We see significant benefits for Aboriginal people through that employment [as rangers] and we also see the individuals who are employed really develop a skillset and confidence and being able to get out on country and undertake those land management activities. From this we see a real benefit to the individuals.” Key Partner

Empowering women

Aboriginal women play an important role in strengthening social and family networks in the community. The Aboriginal Ranger Program focuses on employing women rangers to promote social change whereby women act as leaders in the community and drivers of change.

“Get more women looking after country. All men used to get the jobs so good to have women getting jobs. Provide for family. Getting our certificates and education which is good.” Ranger, Bardi Jawi

“Two different reasons for really promoting women. One is that within Australia we do still have really significant gender inequality. This is part of bridging that gap. There is also a concept of right people right country. Women often speak for different country and they open up the ability to manage in different ways. Women also have different knowledge bases and they bring different things to the program and different sets of knowledge that let you do more so you manage in a fuller way. Then there is also the community aspect of it. In community it is really well evidenced that women are leaders and that women are a big part of shaping the positive drivers in a community. Women demonstrating what it is to have a job, women having money and using that in a really positive way. I think women are key change agents in community and getting them into the ranger program is essential.” Key Partner



From top: Esperance Rangers; Karajarri Rangers; Kimberley Rangers.
Below: Kimberley Rangers.



In their words - continued

Country, culture and community

“Culture, makes me feel good. Living on the land. Being with family. Trying to find out about our heritage. As a kid we would go out in bush. I remember we would go out in big family groups. That is what my childhood was like, being out on the land.” Ranger, Tjaltjraak

“Elders are teaching us. Being back out on country to see where our ancestors came from. Elders are happy and proud that sharing knowledge to us – being a ranger gives us that opportunity.” Ranger, Ngurrara

“We play a big role in the community, even though we are rangers I think about half of the time they think we are super rangers, they think we are powerful enough to take on the world.” Ranger, Nyul Nyul

“My family and people in community, every day when I walk to work with my uniform on they look at me and are very supportive. I have got the whole community behind me. Seeing me as first young ranger at the age of 18 when I first started. I felt really proud of myself.” Ranger, Karajarri

“It feels awesome, knowing that we are looking after the country and doing our ancestors proud and bringing the country back to life. Makes me have all sorts of emotions but happy is the most.” Ranger, Tjaltjraak

“They were very shy, some of them to start with, when it comes to speaking in front of other people and groups and now they are just shining. We get so much positive feedback from the school groups and community groups that go through the program with the Tjaltjraak Rangers, they are like ‘Wow this is amazing, can you please keep coming and offering this service to our community’.” Ranger Coordinator, Tjaltjraak

The case study evaluation is about to enter the second and final phase of the assessment with more field trips about to begin. This will determine longer-term social, cultural and environmental outcomes of the program.

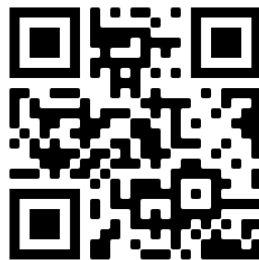
Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Karajarri Rangers, Ngurrara Rangers, Nyul Nyul Rangers, Bardi Jawi Oorany Rangers, Esperance Tjaltjraak Rangers and key partners and stakeholders in this research.

Learn more about WA's

Aboriginal Ranger Program

Scan this QR code or visit Parks and Wildlife Service's 'LANDSCOPE' playlist on YouTube. [Youtube - Aboriginal Ranger Program](#)



Nyul Nyul Ranger water sampling.



Top: Ngurrara Rangers.
Above: Esperance Rangers.

Cultural connection at Matilda Bay

The newly completed interpretation site installed at Matilda Bay Reserve is a collaborative project between DBCA's Parks and Wildlife Service and the WA Parks Foundation, made possible by support from Woodside.

It promotes the historical values and connection Whadjuk people have with the Matilda Bay area and the Swan River. It is the eighth site to be developed as part of this project which aims to develop a network of interpretation sites along the foreshore paths located at key sites of environmental, historical, and cultural significance.



Whadjuk Elder Theresa Walley and WA Parks Foundation Chair, the Hon Kerry Sanderson AC, CVO at the official opening of the Matilda Bay interpretation site.

Joint Management Central Support - update

The Aboriginal Engagement and Heritage Unit - Joint Management Central Support team provides a high level of support to the regions and divisions of the department by communicating what joint management is to the regions currently engaging and those starting to enter into joint management.

Below are some of their key milestones:

- Developing a Statewide Communication Plan which includes the preparation of six draft fact sheets on joint management. These fact sheets will be useful for internal and external resources.
- Working towards updating the DBCA website to include information on joint management for the public.
- Governance training for Joint Management Bodies (JMB) started in May 2021 in the Kimberley, delivered by Stuart Reid and Craig Somerville.
- A PowerPoint and flyer has been developed for the partner groups about training opportunities.
- A learning exchange visit by Yinggarda (Midwest) Traditional Owners to the Kimberley was held in June. They spent a few days in Broome with Yawuru Traditional Owners and rangers. Allison Donovan (Moora District Manager), Rufu Morse (Operations Officer - Joint Management, Midwest Region) and Veronica Newbury (Planning Officer, Aboriginal Engagement, Planning and Lands Branch) represented Parks and Wildlife Service.
- A new [JM intranet page](#) for DBCA staff was developed and launched during Reconciliation Week.
- Barbara Culbong (Project Officer—Joint Management and Aboriginal Strategies), Matt Fossey (Policy and Project Officer - Aboriginal Joint Management, Heritage and Engagement) and Justin McAllister (Senior Project Officer - Native Title) delivered a training and information session for the Regional and Fire Management Services - Operational Training Unit at their Planning Week in Bunbury in late April. Topics included Native Title, Plan for Our Parks, the Aboriginal Ranger Program, joint management 101, lessons from the regions, and the SWNT Settlement.
- Rhonda Murphy (Coordinator Aboriginal Engagement and Heritage Unit) and Matt Fossey were invited by the Kimberley Region to attend a Regional Joint Management forum for Parks and Wildlife Service staff at Dangggu on 16-17 June. The unit will have a role in presenting on the current initiatives and support available to the region, as well as leading some discussions on progressing recommendations from the joint management review process.

Celebrating Reconciliation Week 2021

Reconciliation Week was held from the 27 May to 3 June 2021. Reconciliation is a journey for all Australians as individuals, families, communities, organisations and importantly as a nation. At the heart of this journey are relationships between the broader Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This year also marks 20 years of Reconciliation Australia and almost three decades of Australia's formal reconciliation process. The theme, 'More than a word. Reconciliation takes action,' urged the reconciliation movement towards braver and more impactful action.



Reconciliation Week was celebrated by the department with staff attending events around the State. The week was officially launched in Kensington by Peter Sharp (Executive Director Parks and Visitor Services and Chair of the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group). The event started with a Welcome to Country by Karen Jacobs, followed by an address from Peter Sharp on the achievements of the department and its predecessors on Aboriginal engagement, policy and programs over the past 20 years. The event ended with staff mingling over morning tea.



Above: Presenters and attendees of the department's Reconciliation Week Launch at Kensington.

Right: Staff were encouraged to write down a personal commitment to the reconciliation effort and add it to the Reconciliation Tree. By the end of the week, the tree was covered in messages of positivity, hope and commitments to action.



Celebrating Reconciliation Week 2021 continued



Discovery and Learning at Perth Zoo organised some bush tucker ingredients and shared them out among staff ahead of time for them to try one of the suggested recipes or a creation of their own using the ingredients to bring and share at the lunch. There was an amazing turnout and so many yummy treats to try. During this lunch staff were also asked to decorate a leaf to represent themselves on the Perth Zoo Reconciliation Tree.



DBCA staff attending the Botanic Gardens Parks Authority cultural walking tour.



DBCA's East Kimberley District hosted a barbecue breakfast at Mirima National Park on 31 May for all staff, Traditional Owners and guest speakers, David Newry Margaret Moore and Cissy Gore-Birch.

Working with Bardi Jawi Rangers to defend biodiversity

Indigenous communities around the world have not forgotten what it means to live in harmony with Earth. They make up around 5% of the world's population and yet safeguard 80% of the planet's biodiversity. The natural wealth they defend makes them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse (Source: Earth Rise 19 May 2021).

Below is a link to a 26-minute story that highlights the crucial role Indigenous peoples play in protecting our planet and the importance of living in reciprocity with Mother Nature. The video showcases the Bardi Jawi Rangers working with DBCA Principal Scientist Scott Whiting to create a fresh approach for marine conservation.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/program/earthrise/2021/5/19/natural-wisdom-indigenous-communities-and-defending-biodiversity>



Clockwise from top left: the Bardi Jawi community in the Kimberley; Bardi Jawi Rangers; Principal Scientist Scott Whiting working with Rangers to catch, tag and release turtles.

We hope you have enjoyed reading *Yarning Time*.

