

# Yarning Time

Issue 13: March 2022



Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions



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

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

We are pleased to bring you news and information that showcases the important work that has been undertaken by DBCA and Traditional Owners. *Yarning Time* informs the community, our partners and staff of developments in Aboriginal engagement across the State.

Aboriginal engagement involves almost every aspect of the department's work including reserve creation, science, recreation, tourism operations, conservation land management, fire management, wildlife management and heritage protection, much of which is being enabled through formal and informal joint managements and partnership initiatives.

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.

## Aboriginal Ranger Program - next round of funding

The State Government developed the Aboriginal Ranger Program (ARP) in 2017 to create jobs, training and community development opportunities for Aboriginal people across a range of tenures in regional and remote communities across Western Australia.

In 2021, Premier Mark McGowan announced the expansion of the ARP to include \$50 million over the next four years. The \$50 million expanded program is in three funding streams across four years with \$14 million planned to support new and emerging programs under the ARP Development Fund, \$22.8 million to support established programs under the ARP Expansion Fund and \$7 million under the new ARP Innovation Fund. A 20 person reference group has been developed to provide guidance on the development and rollout of this new funding.

### An expression of interest for the next funding round is now open.

Up to \$22 million is available under the new expansion fund for this round, to fund positions within established ranger programs for up to four years.

Details about eligibility and the assessment criteria can be found in the [EOI Guidelines](#). Groups wishing to apply for funding in this round should read the guidelines carefully before beginning an application.

The closing date for applications for Round 4 of the ARP is 11:59pm, Friday 8 April 2022. Applications can only be made online using [DBCA's SmartyGrants portal](#). They will not be accepted by email or post.

More funding under the ARP will be made available later this year for new and emerging ranger programs. Read more about the rollout of the [\\$50 million expansion of the ARP](#), and view the Minister for Environment Reece Whitby's [invitation to groups](#) on YouTube.

Any enquiries should be sent in writing to [aboriginalrangerprogram@dbca.wa.gov.au](mailto:aboriginalrangerprogram@dbca.wa.gov.au)



## ABORIGINAL RANGER PROGRAM

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

25 FEBRUARY TO 8 APRIL 2022

The \$50 million expansion of the Aboriginal Ranger Program is underway, with up to \$22 million available under the new Expansion Fund to support established ranger programs across the State.

The Expansion Fund is helping Aboriginal communities consolidate their ranger programs and plan for the future by supporting key ranger positions – new and existing – for up to four years.

Investment will focus on continuous learning and leadership development for rangers, and strengthening organisational capacity and partnerships.

Applications are now open for funding under the Expansion Fund (Round 4). Eligible Aboriginal organisations with established ranger programs are invited to apply.



Details about eligibility, the application process and assessment criteria are available at [dbca.wa.gov.au/aboriginalrangerprogram](http://dbca.wa.gov.au/aboriginalrangerprogram)

Article by Helena Waldmann, Project Officer - Aboriginal Ranger Program

## Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training

DBCA's Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training (ACAT) is delivered by staff from our Aboriginal Engagement Heritage Unit (AEHU) and focuses on Aboriginal culture, history and how the department is working with Aboriginal people to facilitate better working relationships between staff and Aboriginal people.

Over 2000 staff, volunteers, campground hosts, bush ranger coordinators, and tourism operators have attended ACAT sessions.

There are 13 sessions planned for the rest of 2022 at various locations around the state with other potential sessions on the horizon. The ACAT has been central to the ever-evolving journey the department is on to becoming a culturally competent agency.

For DBCA staff wishing to register for an ACAT session, please click on the following link to see the [2022 class schedule](#) (note: link only available to DBCA staff).



ACAT training with DBCA Karratha staff



Karim Khan delivering ACAT training to Manjimup staff

Article by Karim Khan, Senior Project Officer - SWNTS Joint Management

## Yarning Together, Working Together

Engaging with Aboriginal people is core to DBCA's business and a vital part of the department's Cultural Learning Program.

We recognise some staff have been engaging with Aboriginal people for a long time with great results while others are just starting out on their journey. In light of this and requests from staff, Yarning Together, Working Together sessions have been developed by the AEHU aiming to provide staff with some key considerations when engaging with the Aboriginal community. It will encourage staff to think outside of our own cultural paradigms when engaging with others, explore our own cultural biases and become more self-aware of how these unconscious biases influence how we engage with Aboriginal people.

Two mock sessions have been held to date with selected staff and another is planned in the near future before these sessions become available for all DBCA staff. Watch this space!



Holly Raudino contributed her experiences to the training session for some DBCA Kensington staff

Article by Karim Khan, Senior Project Officer - SWNTS Joint Management

## Governance training for joint management bodies

In a number of parts of the State, Aboriginal people have a formal decision making role about the management of jointly managed parks and reserves. The way of achieving this is through Joint Management Bodies (JMBs) or Park Councils, comprised of Traditional Owner members and senior staff from DBCA's Parks and Wildlife Service. In each management partnership, the JMB meets regularly to make decisions to implement the management plan, monitor the management of the land and waters, and provide advice to the department and the Conservation and Parks Commission.

A 2019 review of WA's joint management arrangements found that more effort was needed to support higher-level decision making within JMBs. A key issue is the need for a shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities of JMB members – both Parks and Wildlife staff and Traditional Owners.

In March 2021, consultants Stuart Reid and Craig Somerville were engaged by Parks and Wildlife to plan, develop and deliver governance training and capacity building for established JMBs. Governance refers to the systems and ways of working (particularly in relation to decision making) that control what work gets done and how. In joint management, governance tools include the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act), the Joint Management Agreement, management plans, Parks and Wildlife policies and procedures, and the terms of reference for JMBs. It also includes the cultural authority of Traditional Owner members and their rights and responsibilities in Aboriginal law.



Stuart and Craig with members of the Nyangumarta JMB at their governance training workshop at Eighty Mile Beach (Alexander Scott, Parks and Wildlife Service)

## Governance training for joint management bodies

Initially, two pilot governance training workshops were facilitated with the Dambeemangardee JMB (focused on jointly managed marine parks) and Bunuba JMB (jointly managed terrestrial reserves) in the Kimberley Region. Following this, four more workshops were delivered across the Kimberley (Karajarri, Nyangumarta, Ngarla and Yawuru JMBs), with three further training sessions planned for 2022 in Kununurra, Exmouth and the Goldfields. Overall, the workshops helped participants to identify governance issues to be addressed in order to improve decision making and lead to better outcomes. They also helped identify ways to build capacity both for individual members and for the JMB as a whole.

Key messages communicated at the training workshops included:

- the importance of understanding key documents,
- being clear about what you need to do your job as a member of the JMB,
- the need to ask questions and seek clarification,
- the importance of the Chair in ensuring members have a good understanding and are encouraged to actively participate in decision-making, and
- for all parties to understand the different kinds of decisions and what they do and do not have the authority to decide without further consultation.

At the end of this project, a handbook or suite of resources should also be available to complement the face-to-face training. And, recognising the importance of good governance and decision making in joint management, it is hoped that similar training and capacity building can be offered to new JMBs and Park Councils established through the Plan for Our Parks initiative and the South West Native Title Settlement.

For more details, contact Matt Fossey, Policy and Project Officer (Aboriginal Joint Management, Heritage and Engagement), on 0418 422 588 or [matt.fossey@dbca.wa.gov.au](mailto:matt.fossey@dbca.wa.gov.au).



Nyangumarta Governance Training (Alexander Scott, Parks and Wildlife Service)

**Article by Matt Fossey, Policy and Project Officer - Aboriginal Joint Management**

## Working on Country—Nyinggulu Ranger Program

Working on Country is more than just a job for Traditional Owners; it is about taking care of the natural environment and looking after the lands of their ancestors and for future generations. An integral part of the Nyinggulu Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) between the Nganhurra Thanardi Garrbu Aboriginal Corporation (NTGAC) and WA State Government, which formalised the creation of Nyinggulu Coastal Reserves, was the catalyst for the development of the Nyinggulu Ranger Program. The program offers young Traditional Owners an opportunity to work on Country as a trainee ranger. Through the program, trainee rangers undertake nationally-accredited qualifications whilst being immersed in the Parks and Wildlife Service's operational programs including Marine, Nature Conservation as well as Parks and Visitor Services.

The Exmouth District is committed to providing a first-rate Trainee Ranger Program to honour the commitments given by the NTGAC Traditional Owners to jointly manage this exceptional place with the WA Government and preserve it for future generations to enjoy.

Cowan Ryan successfully completed his Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management in August 2021. He is now specialising in the Marine Program for his Certificate III which includes undertaking his Coxswains Grade 2 NC and overseeing the revamp of island nature reserve signage across the Exmouth Gulf and other Pilbara inshore islands.

“Working on Country, caring for Country and making my Elders proud makes me happy” he shared.



Cowan Ryan at work on the Pilbara inshore island nature reserves

## Working on Country—Nyinggulu Ranger Program

Alex Murphy is embedded within the Nature Conservation team for his Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management and has been involved in small vertebrate surveys in Cape Range National Park as well as cat trapping and weed management along the Nyinggulu Coast. Alex shared what it means to him being part of the Nyinggulu Ranger Program, "for me, working on Country I feel at home. Looking after native plants and animals is special. One of my goals is to learn the scientific names of animals."

Jarrid Cooyou has focused on operational park management throughout his Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management and has acquired a range of tickets relevant to that role including MR license, compliance officer training and skid steer bobcat operator.



Jarrid Cooyou on site during the Nyinggulu Archaeology Project



Alex Murphy checking pitfall traps in the September small invertebrate surveys.

Article by Exmouth District staff



## Binalup Aboriginal Corporation rangers - Warren region

The Binalup Aboriginal Corporation rangers are a group of young men working together to connect the younger generations from different family groups to protect and enhance their culture and Country. 'Binalup' is taken from the Noongar name for Middleton Beach in Albany and means 'place of morning light' or 'first light'.

The rangers have done a variety of training, with some having completed Certificate III Aboriginal Site Works whilst working on real life planning and management projects in the Warren region. They have been invaluable in assisting DBCA staff to prepare for future joint management arrangements. The team have also completed fire crew member training with DBCA in preparation to be involved with prescribed burning and protecting culturally sensitive sites and the community.

This great relationship now established between Binalup rangers and local DBCA staff has expanded the skill set of the Binalup rangers and facilitated cross cultural exchange and learning for *wadjela* (white fella) rangers from DBCA and other local staff. Chris Goodsell, DBCA ranger, recently lead the group on dune protection works and said, "These guys rock! They work hard and are willing to share knowledge. We are getting heaps done now towards the protection of Aboriginal sites on DBCA managed estate with their help".

Binalup rangers have been involved in exciting and rewarding experiences including the discovery and protection of regionally significant cultural sites, as well as the not so pretty, such as removing rubbish and graffiti from cultural places. Other interesting works include installing fences to restrict access around cultural sites, diverting trails away from sensitive cultural sites, conducting inspections prior to disturbance operations and assisting with building feral pig traps. They have provided advice to Elders where access is difficult and assist with cultural mapping and planning. "We've been working together with DBCA's Warren region for a couple of years now. Sonya has been a great support for us and the Elders. The work we do around Denmark has been great, building up skills and relationships with DBCA rangers and other Aboriginal ranger groups, it's the start of something special," comments Shawn Colbung, chairperson of Binalup Aboriginal Corporation.

The next priorities for the partnership include finalising a cultural heritage management plan for William Bay National Park to present to Elders, and being engaged in DBCA's prescribed burning during the autumn burning season. Sonya Stewart, DBCA Aboriginal Engagement Officer has led the ranger team; "the team have been involved in pre-burn cultural field searches in the areas that they will be assisting in prescribed burning. These field trips have provided them with a solid foundation to understand the key issues about burning these areas. Together with Elders, they have also been able to provide recommendations to the prescriptions for pre burn, day of burn and post-burn actions. Some of the guys that have been trained as fire crew members still need to get their hours up in the field to finalise their qualifications so this will be a priority for us in 2022".



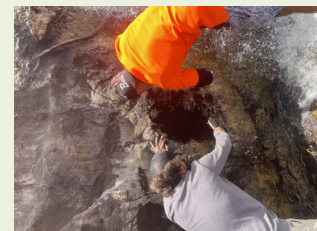
Installing dune fencing at Quarram - Photo by Chris Goodsell



On country at Mehnip Nature Reserve - Photo by Nathan Rammage



Quondong discovery outside its natural range during a pre-burn survey - Photo by Sonya Stewart



Removing graffiti from waterfall beach - Photo by Shawn Colbung

Article by Sonya Stewart, Regional Aboriginal Engagement (Warren Region)

## Valley of the Giants trails project

The Valley of the Giants trails project has been funded through the WA State Government Recovery Plan 2020 as part of the Great Southern adventure trails project.

The proposed trail network is within the Walpole Nornalup National Park, found east of Walpole and west of Bow Bridge. The project consists of a number of sub-projects including extensions to parts of the existing Ancient Empire walk creating a wheelchair accessible loop, realigning and developing new mountain bike trails linking to Nornalup and Walpole townsites, and construction of new walk trail links creating a loop walk to other nearby forest features and back to the Tree Top Walk, all of which add opportunities and value to the current visitor experience.

Before any works were planned in detail, the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) officers met with local Elders to ensure that Aboriginal values and sites are protected and that the project concept is supported.

The first on-Country trip was in the depths of a Walpole winter and ended up with everyone huddled around a fire pit in a hut. Particular concerns that were raised by Elders while yarning around the firepit included dieback and hygiene management, possible trail creep, minimising environmental impact and tree removal, avoiding Aboriginal sites, providing Noongar interpretation opportunities and proving local employment opportunities.

During the course of further on-Country trips and other separate family and Elder discussions, DBCA and Elders have worked through these and other issues to agree upon a way forward for some parts of the project. There is still a lot of work to be done and DBCA will be continuing to meet with Elders to get advice on planning and implementation of future works.

Elders are keen to include stories about the little hairy men called *woodartji* or *pulyits* or *mummies* which live in the deep forest, in the bottom of fallen trees who blend into caves and dark places and hide during the day and come out at night. During the onsite meetings, Elders have been entertaining DBCA staff with many stories about these little hairy men whilst pointing out the best spots for some little figures and stories. Interpretative signage is an important part of the trail development process and there is no shortage of places for these intriguing stories to be told.

One excellent initiative suggested by Elders that has stemmed from this project is for DBCA to organise White Card and Aboriginal monitoring training to upskill more of the local Noongar community to be able to provide the required monitoring for projects that are occurring on DBCA-managed estate. DBCA is currently organising this training in partnership with Elders. It is planned to expand the training to include an archeological component. Knowledge gained from a greater appreciation and understating of Aboriginal sites will be valuable in ensuring appropriate aboriginal heritage protection during project planning and construction and other disturbance works.

**Article by Sonya Stewart, Regional Aboriginal Engagement (Warren Region)**



Aunty Lynette Knapp exploring Ancient Empire's current accessibility - Photo by Shem Bisluk



Group of Elders near the Pleated Lady tree

## Culture in the Parks, Discover the Dreaming pilot - Midwest region

DBCA’s Culture in the Parks program provides opportunities for Aboriginal people to share their culture through tourism in WA’s national parks. The program aims to promote Aboriginal culture as well as enrich visitor experiences.

This has led to increased Aboriginal participation and engagement through cultural tourism ventures. Currently, there are more than 30 Aboriginal tour operators who hold commercial licences with DBCA, providing unique tour experiences in WA. A new initiative in the Culture in the Parks program is *Discover the Dreaming*, where DBCA engages Aboriginal tour operators to deliver a series of short cultural talks in identified parks, increasing the range of experiences that explore the diversity of Aboriginal culture.

The department has partnered with Colleen Drage, from cultural tourism business Kurlaji Wangga to present cultural talks at the Skywalk at Kalbarri National Park. Colleen is a Nanda woman who lives and works on Yamatji Country in the Midwest, sharing stories and knowledge of her culture and Country. Colleen and her daughter Mauretta are two of three Nanda artists selected to design artworks which now adorn the area surrounding the Skywalk, including a ‘forest’ of metal poles symbolising message sticks, and featuring the Beemarra creation spirit incorporated into the paths.

Colleen will be delivering talks in Kalbarri National Park over the Easter weekend. The proposed dates and times are outlined below, and you can [book an experience](#) online.

Thursday, 14 April 2022	Saturday, 16 April 2022	Sunday, 17 April 2022	Monday, 18 April 2022
10:30am – 11:30am	10:30am – 11:30am	10:30am – 11:30am	9:30am – 10:30am
12pm – 1pm	12pm – 1pm	12pm – 1pm	
5pm – 6pm	5pm – 6pm	10:30am - 11:30am	



Colleen and Mauretta Drage. Kalbarri Skywalk. January 2022

Article by Barbara Culbong, Project Officer - Aboriginal Programs

## Victor Mourambine on Nanda Country

I am a proud Nanda man who started with the Department in May 2019 as a Ranger Assistant. Last year I was promoted to a Grade 1 Nanda Ranger to promote early recruitment opportunities through the Plan for Our Parks consultations with our Nanda mob across the Nanda determination area. Nanda is from my father's side and has strong ties to southern boundaries (Bowes River) and northern boundaries (Wooramel River). My ancestors travelled throughout Nanda Country to which we have strong connections. Working on Country makes me feel privileged to care for the Country as my ancestors did. My Ranger Assistant position was created through the Kalbarri Skywalk capital project, and if you visit the Skywalk, you will see my face and my story and that of the local Nanda people.

I have completed my certificate III in Conservation and Land Management (CALM) and am about to start my certificate IV in Conservation and Ecosystem Management. Completing these certificates through the Department will allow me to develop my career further.

Since my time in the Department, I have been fortunate to complete many training opportunities. These include:

- ✦ 4wd training
- ✦ Visitor risk management
- ✦ Firefighter crew member
- ✦ Cert II of Public Safety (Firefighting Operations)
- ✦ Water bomber reloader
- ✦ Chainsaw
- ✦ Leadership course
- ✦ First aid
- ✦ Authorised officer course
- ✦ MR truck licence
- ✦ Chemical handling



Victor, after completing his Cert III in CALM. Picture courtesy of Mr Greg Kitson (DBCA Regional Training Officer)

## Victor Mourambine on Nanda Country

The training has given me the knowledge and confidence to mentor and guide the new trainee rangers. The Plan for Our Parks initiative will provide further opportunities to Nanda people to live and work on Country through joint management of the land.

The best parts of the job include;

- ✦ being connected to the Country
- ✦ sharing and welcoming others to Country
- ✦ fire duties (travelling into other people's Country)
- ✦ visitor services and telling Nanda stories
- ✦ seeing the changes in seasons
- ✦ bush tucker
- ✦ wildflowers
- ✦ protecting native animals



The worst part of the jobs is people who do not respect the land (e.g. leaving rubbish on the land).

My advice to others visiting Nanda Country – respect the land, and the land will respect you back.

Article by Victor Mourambine, Ranger Assistant

We hope you have enjoyed reading *Yarning Time*.

