

MURUJUGA World Heritage *nomination update*



Ngayintharri Gumawarni Ngurrangga – We all come together for country

Welcome to the June 2020 update on the work being undertaken by Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation (MAC) and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) to progress a World Heritage nomination for Murujuga. Since the August 2018 announcement that World Heritage listing would be pursued for Murujuga, several significant steps have been taken to advance the World Heritage nomination.

Working together to progress the nomination

A technical advisory and governance framework has been put in place to ensure the complex requirements of a World Heritage nomination can be successfully achieved.

Meeting for the first time in March 2019, the **Murujuga Heritage Committee** now meets quarterly in Dampier or Karratha. This committee comprises one representative from each of the five Murujuga Traditional Owner groups, representatives from MAC, the University of Western Australia Centre for Rock Art Research and Management, DBCA and other relevant Western Australian Government departments (Departments of Water and Environmental Regulation and Planning, Lands and Heritage), the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment and the World Heritage Advisor.



Above: Murujuga Heritage Committee members meeting for the first time in March 2019. Photo – DBCA

It plays a key role in the nomination process by providing ongoing cultural direction and advice to ensure that the nomination progresses in a way that clearly captures the meaning of Murujuga to the Traditional Owners, and their aspirations for it.

Right: June 2019: Murujuga Heritage Committee members meeting with senior government representatives to discuss how industry can coexist with the cultural values of Murujuga. Photo – DBCA



Taking advice and direction from the Murujuga Heritage Committee, the **Interagency Taskforce** is assisting MAC and DBCA to prepare nomination documents, providing input from key government agencies on other matters that need consideration as part of the nomination process such as land management, tourism, State and Aboriginal heritage, State development and the identification and protection of the rock art. This committee comprises representatives from MAC, DBCA and other relevant Western Australian Government departments (Departments of the Premier and Cabinet, Water and Environmental Regulation; Planning, Lands and Heritage; Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation;), the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment and the World Heritage Advisor.

A **World Heritage Advisor**, Associate Professor Terry Bailey, has been engaged to provide

independent, technical advice on the nomination process and requirements. Mr Bailey has considerable experience in National and World Heritage matters, having led the preparation of three successful Australian World Heritage nominations (Ningaloo Coast, Sydney Opera House and the Australian Convict Sites), in addition to the National Heritage List assessment of the Dampier Archipelago.

Throughout 2019, with assistance from the Murujuga Heritage Committee, Interagency Taskforce and World Heritage Advisor, MAC and DBCA worked together to develop a Tentative List Submission to have Murujuga added to Australia's World Heritage Tentative List. It was approved by the MAC Board and State Government in late 2019 and transmitted by the Australian Government to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in January 2020.

Murujuga is on Australia's World Heritage Tentative List

The Murujuga Cultural Landscape was officially added to Australia's World Heritage Tentative List by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre on 23 January 2020. This is the first required step in the World Heritage nomination process, as a place will not be considered for World Heritage listing by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee until it has been on the Tentative List for at least 12 months.

Tentative Listing is also an important step in having Murujuga's unique archaeological, cultural and spiritual values internationally recognised at the highest level.

About the Murujuga Tentative List Submission

MAC chose to pursue World Heritage criteria (i) and (iii) in the Tentative List Submission; (i) being that *Murujuga represents a masterpiece of human creative genius*, and (iii) that *Murujuga bears a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which is living*.

This is consistent with the September 2011 report to the Australian Heritage Council on the Outstanding Universal Values of the Dampier Archipelago Site, which identifies potential 'Outstanding Universal Value'¹ of the area under the same criteria.

The extent and definitive boundary of the Murujuga World Heritage area did not need to be determined in the Tentative List Submission and a map was not required, therefore a single geo-reference point within the Murujuga National Park has been used.

The proposed boundary of the Murujuga World Heritage area will be determined during the preparation of the nomination dossier and through extensive consultation with stakeholders.

The Tentative List Submission acknowledges the presence of industrial development on the Burrup Peninsula and outlines the current legislative and management regime in place to protect the area's cultural values and enable coexistence with industry to occur.

Industrial development and commercial activities can and do occur in or adjacent to World Heritage places around the world. The World Heritage Convention promotes sustainable development, acknowledging that it can bring benefits to World Heritage properties and support their 'Outstanding Universal Value' if carefully integrated within conservation and management systems.

Showcasing Murujuga and informing the community about World Heritage

Engagement with stakeholders and the community continues to be an important part of the World Heritage nomination process, with activities taking place in various forms and locations. Meetings are regularly held with key stakeholders, and presentations have been made

to MAC members, government, community and other interest groups. Community information stalls and open forums have also been held in Karratha and Roebourne, including during events such as the annual FeNaCING Festival.



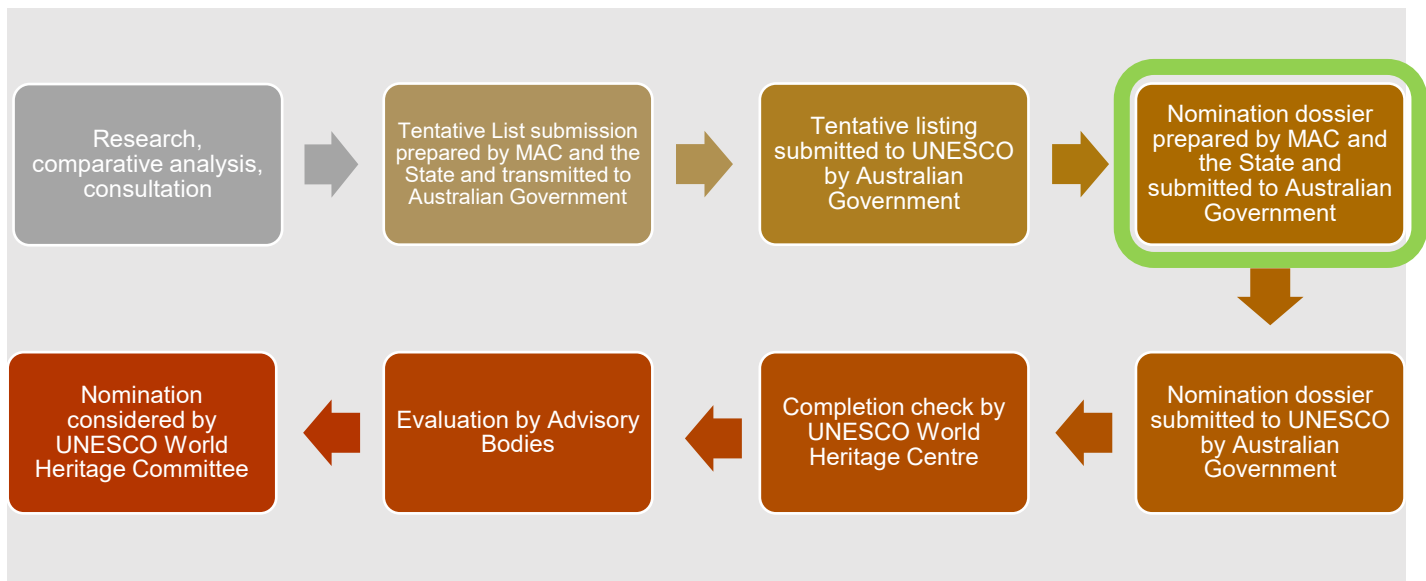
Above: MAC and the Pilbara Region's Parks and Wildlife Service hosted a community information stall providing information about the Murujuga National Park and World Heritage nomination process. Photos –

¹ Outstanding Universal Value' is defined in the UNESCO *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* and means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to

transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity.

Next steps towards World Heritage listing

MAC and DBCA have now begun preparing the formal World Heritage nomination dossier. This is a much lengthier document that must comprehensively demonstrate why Murujuga has 'Outstanding Universal Value' that can be adequately protected and conserved through a management framework and appropriate boundary.



The nomination dossier must address requirements established in the World Heritage Convention and adhere to the format and content defined by the World Heritage Committee. A nomination dossier must include:

- what the property consists of and how it is documented
- why it has potential 'Outstanding Universal Value'
- the present state of conservation and the factors affecting the property
- how the property will be protected, conserved, managed, presented, and monitored in relation to its potential 'Outstanding Universal Value'

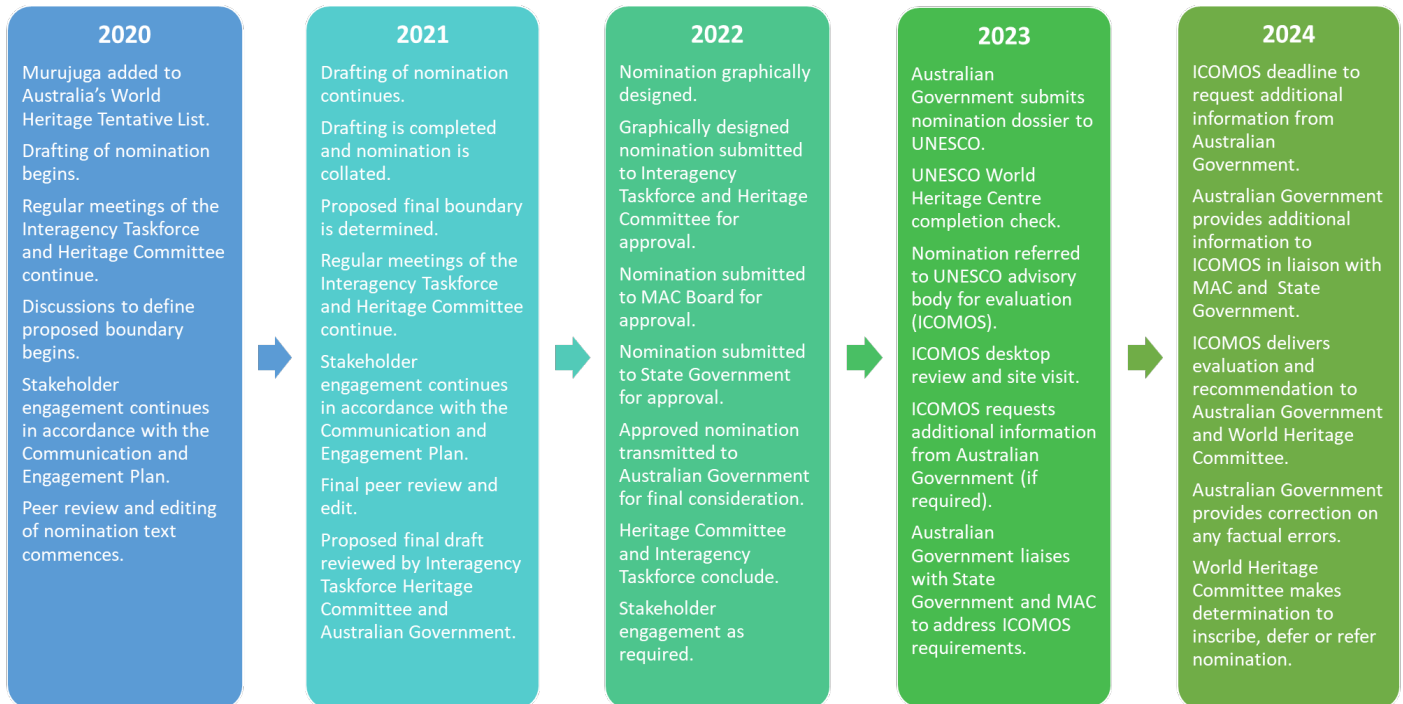
Work on different sections of the nomination is being undertaken by project teams including MAC, DBCA, members of the Murujuga Heritage Committee and Interagency Taskforce. The World Heritage Advisor and external experts will edit and peer review sections of the nomination where required.

In preparing the nomination, a review of the existing protection and management arrangements for Murujuga will be undertaken to ensure they are consistent, coordinated and complementary. This will include a review of the *Dampier Archipelago Nature Reserves Management Plan 18 1990*, which covers 25 of the 28 islands vested with the Conservation and Parks Commission. These islands are part of the Dampier Archipelago National Heritage listed area and will likely form part of the proposed Murujuga World Heritage area. Working closely with MAC, DBCA is also in the process of developing a recreation masterplan for the Murujuga National Park, to determine the most appropriate recreation activities, visitor facilities and services to provide within the park. Having contemporary plans in place to protect the environmental, cultural heritage and visitor values of Murujuga, will considerably strengthen the management framework for the World Heritage area.

The Australian Government estimates that preparing a World Heritage nomination generally takes at least two and a half years, with the UNESCO assessment process taking a further 18 months. Based on this, an

indicative timeframe has been developed anticipating that the earliest Murujuga is likely added to the World Heritage List is 2024.

Indicative timeframe for the preparation and assessment of the Murujuga World Heritage nomination dossier



What about COVID-19 restrictions?

While COVID-19 restrictions have temporarily changed the way stakeholder meetings and engagement takes place, different ways of providing information and seeking advice are being used to ensure the nomination continues to progress. It is hoped that engagement activities can begin to take place face-to-face and on-Country again soon.

New additions and improvements to Murujuga National Park

In July 2019, the State Government began transferring unused portions of industrial zoned land on the Burrup Peninsula to the ownership and management of MAC, celebrating the addition of 'Site L' to the Murujuga National Park in August 2019, an addition of 221 hectares. The transfer demonstrates the State Government's ongoing commitment to protecting Murujuga and complements the World Heritage nomination process.



Right: Signing ceremony formalising the transfer of 'site L' to Murujuga National Park. Photo – MAC

Art viewing trail project underway

To assist in protecting and showcasing some of Murujuga's most easily accessible rock art, in 2019, DBCA and MAC completed construction of stage one of the Ngajarli Art Viewing Trail Project. The site, formally known as 'Deep Gorge' was renamed to Ngajarli (pronounced Nah-jar-li) meaning 'secret/sacred place' in the local language. This project is a milestone for the area, as it is the first recreation site to be developed within the Murujuga National Park.

Stage One comprised the installation of a carpark that holds 19 car bays and two long vehicle bays. Stage Two, which has now commenced, includes the construction of approximately 45m of raised boardwalks and a cultural walk trail that will protect the rock art while showcasing its significance and the values the World Heritage nomination is seeking to have recognised. Stage Two is expected to be completed in August 2020.

Right: Photos of the Ngajarli Art Viewing Trail project – stage 2 is currently in progress.
Photo – DBCA



Thank you

Thank you for your interest in progress on the World Heritage nomination of Murujuga Cultural Landscape. MAC and the Western Australian Government welcomes stakeholder involvement in the nomination process. Stay tuned for more updates as we develop the nomination.

For more information about the proposed Murujuga Cultural Landscape World Heritage area please visit:

- pws.dbca.wa.gov.au/murujuga
- murujuga.org.au/world-heritage

