

# MURUJUGA World Heritage *nomination update*



**Ngayintharri Gumawarni Ngurrangga – We all come together for country**

## **Introduction by the Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation World Heritage Officer, Amy Stevens**



*Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation World Heritage Officer, Amy Stevens*

**Welcome to the November 2021** edition of the *Murujuga World Heritage Nomination News*. Our work this year has seen the World Heritage project team travelling to different parts of Ngurra (Country) to meet and yarn with Ngarda Ngarli, our advisory committees and other stakeholders, to share the work we've been doing and to better understand the story of Murujuga. This is a critical part of the nomination process to ensure that the nomination adequately reflects the cultural, spiritual, and archaeological significance of this unique landscape to the Traditional Owners and Custodians. The Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation (MAC) and Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) have worked hard throughout 2021, with generous time and guidance provided by the MAC Circle of Elders. This has seen exciting advancement toward Murujuga's World Heritage bid. I hope you enjoy reading this latest update.

## **Steady progress drafting the nomination dossier**

2021 has been a busy and productive year for the Murujuga World Heritage project team. Significant progress has been made toward the preparation of the nomination dossier, the formal application for World Heritage listing.

A key focus for 2021 has been preparing the five key sections of the nomination. Drafting is now well progressed, with ongoing cultural and technical input provided through the [established advisory](#)

[framework](#); the independent World Heritage Advisor, the Murujuga Heritage Committee and Interagency Taskforce.

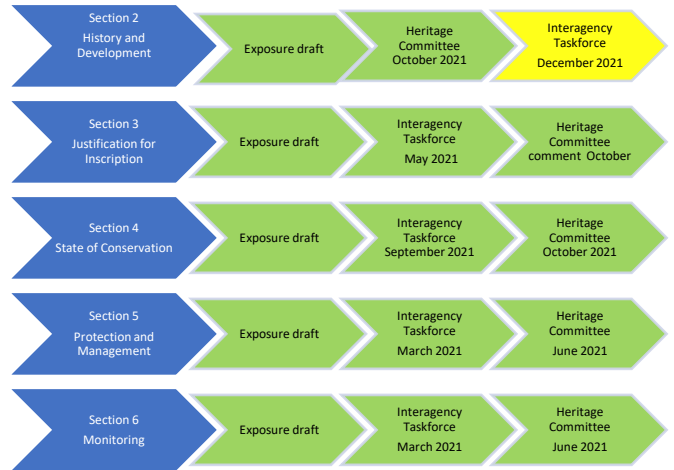
These committees have continued to meet regularly throughout the year to oversee the development of the nomination, contribute to its content and facilitate community and stakeholder engagement opportunities.



Heritage Committee members review draft sections of the World Heritage nomination  
 Images: Pilbara Site Pics/DBCA.



In early 2021, the committees began reviewing drafts of key sections of the nomination, an exciting milestone in the nomination process. Drafts of all five key sections have now been workshopped and reviewed by the Heritage Committee, with one final section to be reviewed by the Interagency Taskforce in December 2021.



Ongoing cultural advice and input remains central to the nomination process. Throughout 2021, MAC's World Heritage Officer, Amy Stevens, has been busy recording cultural information and stories provided by Ngarda-Ngarli through the Circle of Elders and community members. A World Heritage Community Day was held at Ieramugadu (Roebourne) in July 2021 and a yarning session with residents of the Yaandina Community Services was held in August.



Murujuga Elders discussing Murujuga's cultural heritage values at the World Heritage Community Day, July 2021  
 Image: Pilbara Site photos

## Describing the cultural values of Murujuga

For the Murujuga Cultural Landscape to be added to the World Heritage List, the nomination must explain why the landscape is of global significance. The nomination must justify that Murujuga meets one or more of the World Heritage criteria and be able to demonstrate by comparative analysis that the property is of outstanding value.



The World Heritage project team is currently gathering information to support the nomination in relation to criteria (i), (iii) and now also (v); (i) *Murujuga represents a masterpiece of human creative genius*, (iii) *Murujuga bears a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which is living*, and (v) being an *outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture, or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change*.

These criteria acknowledge the artistic skill evident in the petroglyphs and stone arrangements, the continuing significance and ongoing practice of traditional Law and culture and the outstanding value of the long-term use and occupation of the Murujuga landscape by *Ngarda-Ngarli*, and the continual adaption to changing climatic and ecological conditions over thousands of years.

## Strengthening Murujuga's protection and management framework

In preparing the World Heritage nomination, DBCA is reviewing existing protection and management arrangements.

Current work includes developing a new joint management plan for the islands of the Dampier Archipelago that are vested with the Western Australian Conservation and Parks Commission and preparing a recreation masterplan for these islands and the Murujuga National Park.

This work will strengthen the nomination by demonstrating there are current and coordinated plans in place to protect the cultural, environment and tourism values of Murujuga.

*A Strategic Management Framework for the Murujuga Cultural Landscape* has been prepared to support the nomination. This document will be appended to the nomination and outlines the overarching framework for integrated protection, management and monitoring across the Murujuga World Heritage area.



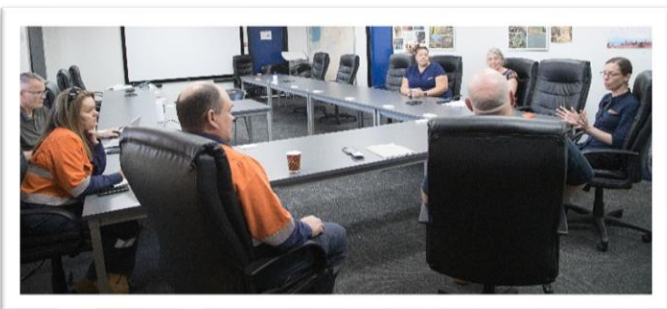
Above: View west across Marney Bay, Malus Island.  
Image: DBCA

## Sharing information about the Murujuga World Heritage nomination

MAC and DBCA have been busy in the past months sharing information about the nomination with the public at public information stands at the FeNaCING Festival and Dampier Beachside Markets. Regular engagement also continues with key stakeholders, with updates offered quarterly.



Representatives from MAC and DBCA at the 2021 FeNaCING Festival  
Images: DBCA.



Representatives from Yara International, including General Manager Laurent Trost, receive an update on the nomination from the World Heritage project team. Image: Pilbara Site Pics.



## The nomination is on-track

MAC and the Western Australian Government remain on-track to achieving the goal of having the World Heritage nomination submitted by the Australian Government to the World Heritage Centre before the 1 February 2023 deadline.

The next key steps in preparing the nomination are:

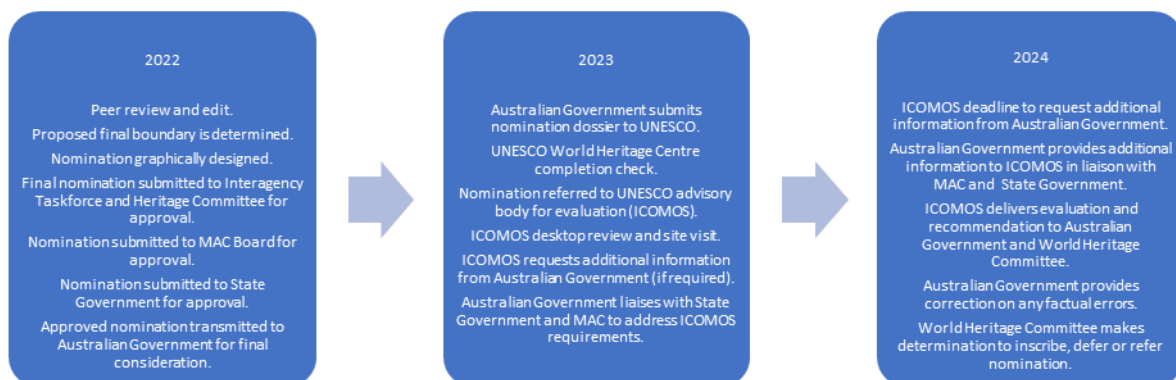
- Collate completed key sections of the nomination and prepare remaining sections
- Edit the draft dossier to ensure consistency in style and content
- Submit the draft dossier for independent peer review
- Define the proposed World Heritage boundary
- MAC and Western Australian Government approvals and transmittal to the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### When is Murujuga likely to be added to the World Heritage list?

It is anticipated that the nomination will be submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre before 1 February 2023. The nomination will then be assessed by international experts and discussed at a session of the World Heritage Committee. Based on this timing, the earliest Murujuga could be added to the World Heritage List is mid-2024.

Indicative timing for the process ahead is:



### Why does it take so long to prepare a World Heritage nomination?

Nominations take a long time to prepare because they need to follow a prescribed format that comprehensively justifies why a place should be added to the World Heritage List. This means demonstrating that the place has 'Outstanding Universal Value' that can be adequately protected and managed for future generations. Once submitted to UNESCO, the nomination is rigorously assessed before a final decision is made by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. Researching and writing the nomination is undertaken with great care to ensure we have the best chance of a successful nomination.

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

- <https://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/parks-and-wildlife-service/world-heritage-areas/murujuga-world-heritage-nomination>
- [murujuga.org.au/world-heritage](http://murujuga.org.au/world-heritage)

Email: [murujugaforworldheritage@dbca.wa.gov.au](mailto:murujugaforworldheritage@dbca.wa.gov.au)



## What will World Heritage listing mean for Murujuga?

World Heritage listing is the highest global recognition of the importance of a place. For Murujuga, this will mean international understanding of the cultural and spiritual significance of Ngurra (Country). This recognition provides opportunities to celebrate, through community events, the outstanding and exceptional values of Murujuga.

The addition of a place to the World Heritage List brings a commitment at local, State and national levels to protect and manage Country for present and future generations. In Australia, World Heritage places are strongly promoted, and many have received increased tourist visitation from overseas and within Australia.

## Is development allowed in World Heritage areas?

Yes. Development and commercial activities can and do occur in World Heritage places around the world. In Australia, there are many examples: commercial fishing in Shark Bay World Heritage area; agriculture in Willandra Lakes World Heritage area; and extensive tourism infrastructure in the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage areas.

## Can I recreate in a World Heritage area?

World Heritage listing will not in itself change existing land uses and activities. Recreation activities can continue and will be managed under existing Western Australian and local government laws.

## What about the World Heritage boundary?

The boundary is one of the last parts of the nomination to be completed, as the potential 'Outstanding Universal Value' needs to be clearly established and justified first. To-date, the boundary of the [Dampier Archipelago National Heritage area](#) has been used as guide in the drafting process. As there is a better understanding of Murujuga's 'Outstanding Universal Value', discussions have recently commenced to determine the proposed World Heritage boundary area. The final boundary will be decided following extensive discussion between MAC, Western Australian and Australian Government and negotiation with stakeholders.

## Thank you

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

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

- <https://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/parks-and-wildlife-service/world-heritage-areas/murujuga-world-heritage-nomination>
- [murujuga.org.au/world-heritage](http://murujuga.org.au/world-heritage)

Email: [murujugaforworldheritage@dbca.wa.gov.au](mailto:murujugaforworldheritage@dbca.wa.gov.au)

