



# MURUJUGA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION

**Update: June 2020**





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 were taken to advance the World Heritage nomination.

**Ngayintharri Gumawarni Ngurrangga – We all come together for country  
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 Water and Environmental Regulation and Planning, Lands and Heritage), the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment and the World Heritage Advisor. 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.



*Murujuga Heritage Committee members meeting for the first time in March 2019 Photo DBCA*



*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 in preparing the nomination documents and provides input from key government agencies on other matters that need consideration as part of the World Heritage 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 Water and Environmental Regulation; Planning, Lands and Heritage; Jobs, Tourism, Science, and Innovation; the Premier and Cabinet), the Australian Department of 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. Terry 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 submission supporting the addition of Murujuga Cultural Landscape to the World Heritage Tentative list. It was approved by the MAC Board 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 an important step forward in having Murujuga's unique archaeological, cultural and spiritual values internationally recognised at the highest level.

### **About the Murujuga Tentative List Submission**

MAC has chosen 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'<sup>1</sup> of the area under the same criteria.

The extent and definitive boundary of the Murujuga World Heritage area does not need to be determined in the Tentative List Submission and a map is 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**

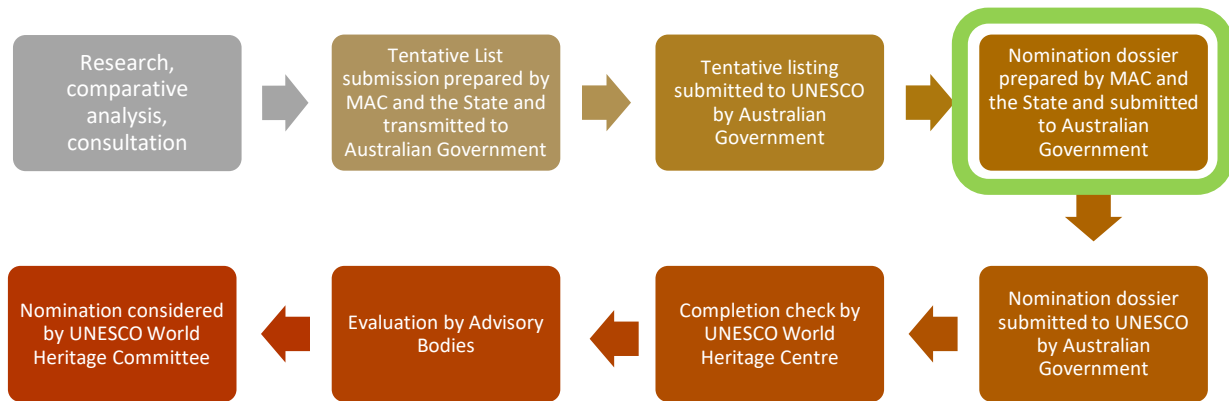
Engagement with stakeholders and the community continues to be an important part of the World Heritage nomination process, with activities taking place in various forms and locations. Meetings are regularly held with key stakeholders, and presentations have been made to MAC members, government, community and other interest groups including commercial tour operators and recreation user groups. Community information stalls and open forums have also been used to provide information in Karratha and Roebourne at events such as the annual FeNaCING Festival.



*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 DBCA*



## Next steps towards World Heritage listing



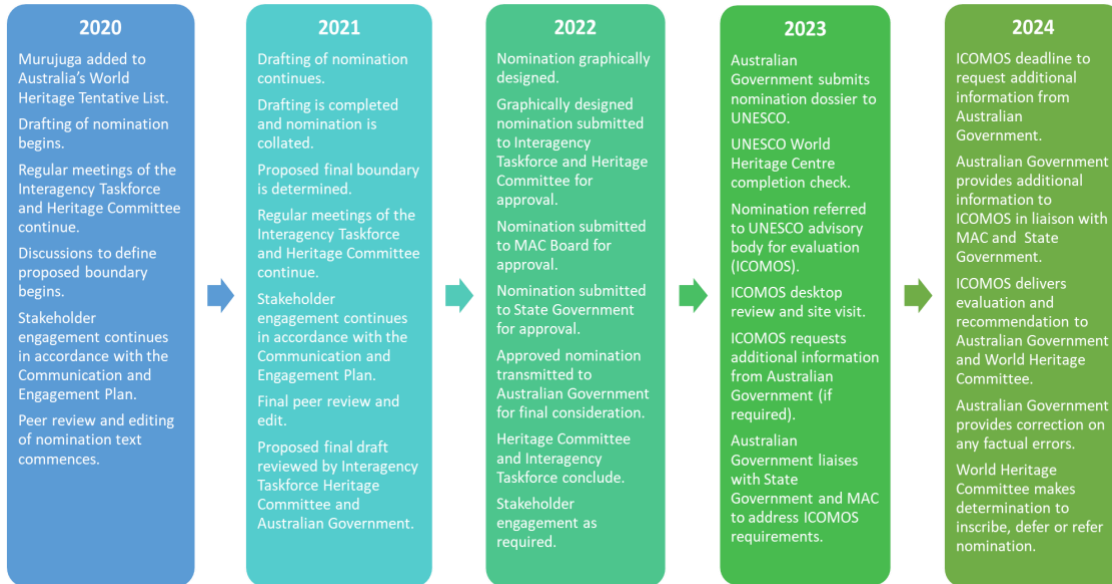
MAC and DBCA have now begun preparing the formal World Heritage nomination dossier. This is a much lengthier document that must comprehensively demonstrate why Murujuga has ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ and how this value can be adequately protected and conserved through a management framework and appropriate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

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 meetings and stakeholder engagement takes place, different ways of engaging and seeking advice and input are being used to ensure the nomination continues to progress. It is hoped that meetings and 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.



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



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 a cultural walk trail that will protect the rock art while enriching visitors' experience of the area through interpretation that showcases its significance and the values the World Heritage nomination is seeking to have recognised. Stage Two expected to be completed by in August 2020.

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 further updates as we develop the nomination.

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

- [DBCA – Murujuga World Heritage Nomination](#)
- [MAC – World Heritage](#)

<sup>1</sup>'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.