

MURUJUGA World Heritage *nomination update*



Ngayintharri Gumawarni Ngurrangga – We all come together for country

Introduction by World Heritage Advisor, Terry Bailey



*Above: Associate Professor
Terry Bailey*

Welcome to the February 2021 edition of the *Murujuga World Heritage Nomination News*. It has now been one year since the Murujuga Cultural Landscape was officially added to Australia's World Heritage Tentative List. Despite the unprecedented challenges presented by COVID-19, Murujuga's journey toward World Heritage listing continues forward thanks to the high level of commitment, cooperation and flexibility demonstrated by the Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation (MAC) and the Western Australian Government, other government agencies and stakeholders involved. I hope you enjoy reading this brief summary of this work.

Regards, Terry.

Time to celebrate

The addition of Murujuga to Australia's World Heritage Tentative List was celebrated at an on-Country event held in August 2020 when the new [Ngajarli Art Viewing Trail](#) was officially opened. The \$1.3 million project is a milestone for the area as it is the first recreation site to be developed within Murujuga National Park.

Visitors now have improved access to viewing some of the most easily accessible rock art with a new walking trail and signage to educate visitors about the cultural importance of the area to Traditional Owners.



Above: MAC Chief Executive Officer Mr Peter Jeffries and Minister for Environment, the Hon Stephen Dawson MLC open the new Ngajarli Art Viewing Trail. Image MAC

Tentative Listing is the first important step in the World Heritage nomination process, as a formal nomination will not be considered for World Heritage listing by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Committee until a property has been on the Tentative List for at least 12 months.

Heading in the right direction

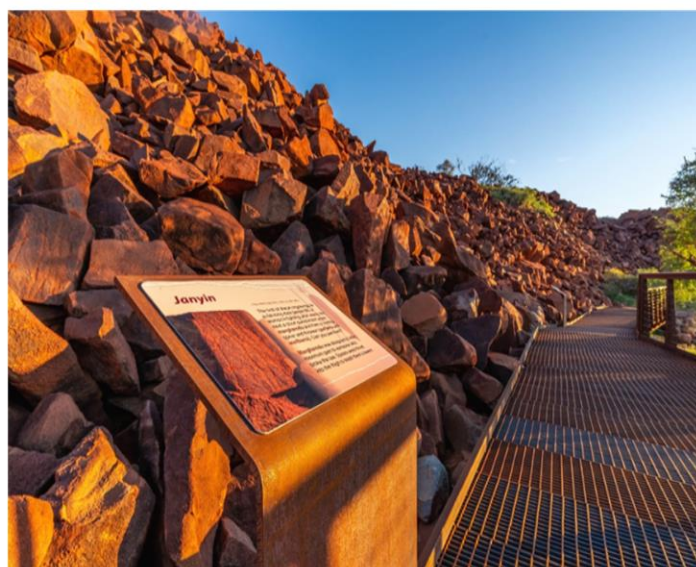
Steady and encouraging progress has since been made in drafting key sections of the nomination dossier. This is the formal nomination document that must comprehensively demonstrate why Murujuga has 'Outstanding Universal Value' and how this value can be adequately protected and conserved through a management framework and appropriate boundary. The nomination must adhere to format, content and technical requirements outlined by the World Heritage Committee and is subject to a rigorous assessment process. Because of this, nomination dossiers often take several years to prepare.

The current focus is preparing five key sections on the nomination:

- Chapter 2: Description of the property
- Chapter 3: Justification for (World Heritage) inscription
- Chapter 4: State of conservation and factors affecting the property
- Chapter 5: Protection and management
- Chapter 6: Monitoring.



Above: Guests view rock art from the new Ngajarli Art Viewing Trail. Image MAC



Above: New Ngajarli Art Viewing Trail and interpretive signage. Images Fuzz Digital

Ongoing collaboration

While MAC and Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) are leading the preparation of the nomination, it is a collaborative effort, with cultural and technical advice being provided by MAC members, Western Australian and Australian Government agencies, and stakeholders. technical advice being provided by MAC members, Western Australian and Australian Government agencies, and stakeholders.



Above: Members of the Heritage Committee and Interagency Taskforce meeting in July 2020. Image MAC.

Progress would not be possible without the important ongoing work of the [Murujuga Heritage Committee](#), [Interagency Taskforce](#) and the independent [World Heritage Advisor](#), who oversee the development of nomination, contribute to content and facilitate community and stakeholder engagement opportunities.

In particular, the Western Australian Minister for Environment, the Hon Stephen Dawson MLC, has conveyed his appreciation to current and former Heritage Committee members, acknowledging the hard work that they have put into the nomination process so far to ensure that it conveys the cultural value and meaning of Murujuga to the Traditional Owners, which is critical to the success of the nomination.

The Heritage Committee and Interagency Taskforce held joint meetings at the MAC office in Dampier in July and September 2020. Ongoing COVID-19 restrictions meant that several members joined the meetings online from locations as far east as Canberra and Tasmania.

Members received briefings and provided input on key sections of the nomination dossier, in addition to hearing updates about other key Murujuga projects including the [Murujuga Rock Art Strategy and Monitoring Program](#), the proposed [Conzinc Bay Tourism Precinct](#), and rock art research projects taking place through [The University of Western Australia's Centre for Rock Art Research and Management](#). The meetings were led by Yindjibarndi Traditional Owner, Mr Vince Adams, who was elected Chair of the Heritage Committee by the MAC Board of Directors in June 2020.



Members of the Heritage Committee and Interagency Taskforce receive an update on the preparation of the nomination July 2020. Image DBCA.

At the July meeting, members also welcomed MAC's new World Heritage Support Officer, Ms Amy Stevens. With qualifications in archaeology and social research and nearly 20 years spent working in the Pilbara, Amy is very well placed to be involved in managing the preparation of the nomination and leading the drafting of Chapter 2.

Amy is working with Elders and community to gather stories and content which demonstrate the connection between the rock art and the cultural

landscape with the stories for Murujuga and the way culture is practiced today, which is a very important part of the nomination.

Moving forward

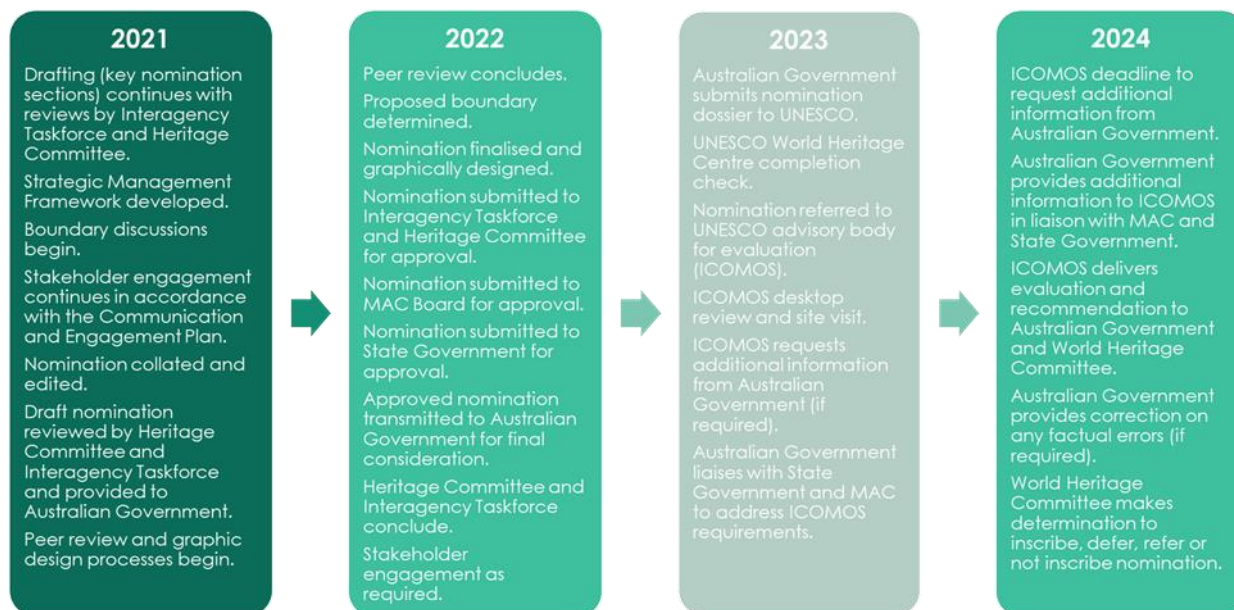
MAC and DBCA remain on-track to achieving the goal of having the nomination submitted by the Australian Government to the World Heritage Centre before the 1 February 2023 deadline. Based on this timing, the earliest Murujuga could be added to the World Heritage List is 2024.

Key goals for 2021 are to:

- finalise key sections of the nomination through ongoing consultation with the Heritage Committee and Interagency Taskforce.
- develop a strategic management framework to support the nomination and demonstrate that the proposed World Heritage area can be adequately protected and managed.
- begin determining and negotiating the proposed World Heritage boundary.

While COVID-19 temporarily took the wind out of our sails in 2020, restricting opportunities for face-to-face community engagement, a priority for 2021 (COVID-permitting) will also be to facilitate more opportunities for on-Country community involvement, and continue to engage with stakeholders.

Indicative timeframe for the preparation and assessment for the Murujuga World Heritage Nomination 2021-2024



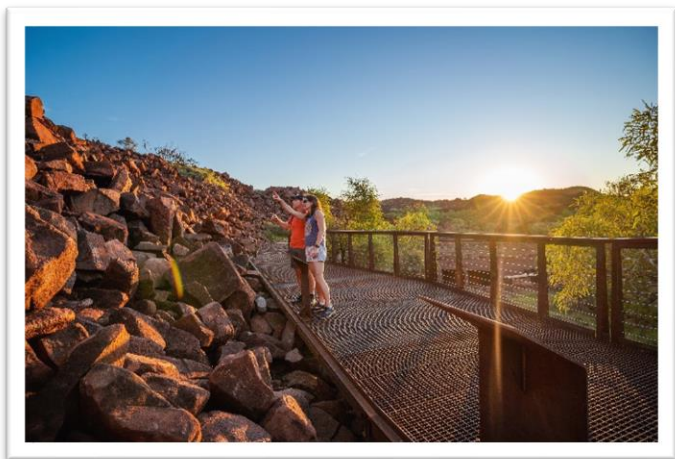
In the meantime

A review of existing protection and management arrangements continues to be undertaken by DBCA, in collaboration with MAC and other stakeholders. This includes the commencement of a review of the *Dampier Archipelago Nature Reserves Management Plan 18 1990* and the development of a recreation masterplan for 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.

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.



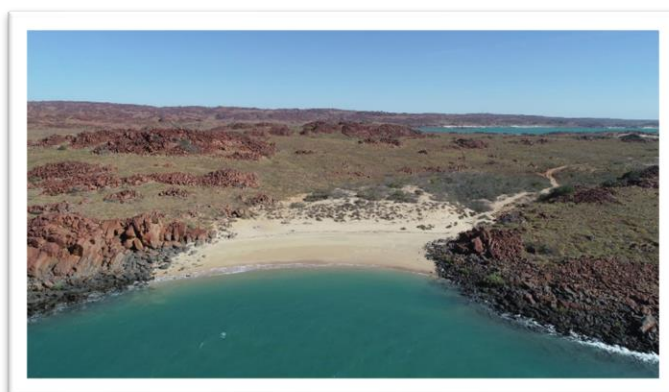
Above: Visitors enjoy the new Ngajarli Art Viewing Trail.
Image Fuzz Digital

Recreational and commercial fishing will still be permitted in or around the Murujuga World Heritage area, and commercial tour operations under *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* leases and licences will continue to be managed under existing legislation and consistent with existing management plans. More information about visiting Murujuga can be found on DBCA and MAC websites.

What about the boundary?

The proposed boundary of the World Heritage area has not yet been determined. The boundary of the Dampier Archipelago National Heritage area is still being used as guide in the drafting process.

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. The final boundary will be decided following extensive discussion between MAC, Western Australian and Australian Government and negotiation with stakeholders.



Above: Aerial view of Murujuga. Image: 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:

- <https://www.dbcwa.gov.au/parks-and-wildlife-service/world-heritage-areas/murujuga-world-heritage-nomination>
- murujuga.org.au/world-heritage

Email: murujugaforworldheritage@dbcwa.gov.au

