

# Murujuga National Park

Joint Management Plan 2013

Amendment 2023

Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

## Overview

In accordance with Section 61 of the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act), an amendment has been made to the *Murujuga National Park Management Plan 2013* (the plan).

The amendment to the management of Murujuga National Park (the park) will better-facilitate visitor opportunities, public access, and current recreation priorities for the park, and reflect changes to the planning area.

The amendments to the plan are shown below, with additions shown underlined and deletions shown with a ~~strike through~~.

The amendment was open for public comment for two months, with changes made to this amendment in light of submissions received.

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## 4. Planning area

*Part of the section to be amended—revision of text on page 5 of the plan*

Where appropriate, the plan considers possible management, by MPC via DBCA ~~DEC~~ referral, of unmanaged areas and conservation estate (where there is no existing management plan) adjacent to Murujuga National Park, as well as working with adjacent land managers.

*Part of the section to be amended—addition of sub-section on page 5 of the plan*

Proposed additions or excisions from the park

Opportunities may arise over the life of this plan to add areas of land to the park. This includes unused portions of industrial zoned land that are now unlikely to be developed. The ownership of these portions of land will be transferred in freehold to MAC and jointly managed with DBCA, in accordance with the management agreement and this management plan.

Through the life of this plan, excisions of land from the park may also be required to fulfill management objectives.

As described in the management agreement, the joint management parties may (by written agreement) add or subtract land from the Murujuga National Park. Any agreed changes to freehold areas will also need to be reflected in a variation to the lease with the state and would no longer be subject to the management agreement or this management plan.

## 13. Archaeological sites

*Part of the section to be amended—revision of text on page 30 of the plan*

13. Consider the impact on rock art and other archaeological features in any decisions relating to the siting and construction of facilities and infrastructure in the park, and identify and implement strategies to avoid or minimise potential impacts.

## 16. Geology, landforms and soils

*Part of the section to be amended—revision of strategy on page 36 of the plan*

2. Consider the impact on geological features, landforms and soils in any decisions about siting and construction of facilities and infrastructure in the park, and identify and implement strategies to avoid or minimise potential impacts to these features associated with any developments.

## 17. Hydrology

*Part of the section to be amended—addition of strategy on page 37 of the plan*

8. Consider the impact on hydrological processes in any decisions relating to the siting and construction of facilities and infrastructure in the park, and identify and implement strategies to avoid or minimise potential impacts to hydrological processes associated with any developments.

## 18. Vegetation and flora

*Part of the section to be amended—revision and addition of strategies on page 42 of the plan*

5. Ensure that off-road vehicle access is controlled to prevent disturbance to native flora and vegetation and proliferation of weed invasion.
8. Ensure the siting and construction of facilities and infrastructure in the park, and visitor usage of those facilities, avoids or minimises residual impact on regionally significant mangrove communities.

## 19. Fauna

*Part of the section to be amended—addition of strategy on page 46 of the plan*

11. Consider the impact of native fauna on any decisions about siting and construction of facilities and infrastructure in the park, and identify and implement strategies to avoid or minimise any potential impacts.

## 21. Visitor opportunities, public access and recreation

*Part of the section to be amended—revision of text on page 49 of the plan*

No tourist accommodation is available on the Dampier Archipelago islands, although residents of the City of Karratha Shire of Roebourne are eligible to become members of the Dampier Archipelago Recreational Dwellers Association and access the islands' shacks for overnight stays. Because of these factors, niches in the accommodation market exist for shore-based camping and semi-permanent tented accommodation or cabins in a natural setting. The Ngarda-ngarli have held long-standing aspirations to develop a self-sustaining tourism precinct, including a living knowledge centre, accommodation and associated facilities, on the non-industrial land of the Burrup Peninsula. Following a series of feasibility studies and concept plans, a location at Conzinc Bay has been identified for the proposed tourism precinct. ~~However~~ Additionally, social, cultural, environmental and economic considerations of the Murujuga National Park as a whole will need to be taken into consideration before any such facilities ~~facility is~~ are developed ~~made available.~~

The Woodside visitor centre on the Burrup Peninsula receives 30,000 ~~visitors~~ ~~people~~ per year, between June and September. Visitor numbers to the northern peninsula are not known but ~~access is~~ has historically been limited due to difficulties in passing the ‘jump-up’. However, anecdotal evidence suggests approximately 3,000 people a year visit the northern peninsula either for day visits, ~~for~~ fishing or to camp.

Current use of the area

*Part of the section to be amended—revision of text on page 51 of the plan*

~~Read~~ In the past, road access to the northern section of Burrup Peninsula ~~is~~ has been restricted to four-wheel drive vehicles. A section of the track north beyond Withnell Bay, known as the ‘jump-up’, is very challenging even for four-wheel drive vehicles and has served as an effective filter on visitor numbers. The difficult terrain and the resulting remote feel of the northern Burrup Peninsula has made it a favoured destination among four-wheel drive vehicle enthusiasts and a small numbers of bushwalkers.

The region around Karratha, including the Burrup Peninsula, is expected to continue the industrial, population and tourism growth it has experienced over the past three decades. This will result in greater public use and pressure on the internationally significant heritage values and the environment of the Burrup Peninsula. For these values to be protected and enjoyed in the long term, a more strategic and sustainable approach to management is required. The recent development of a visitor service plan, with designated areas for visitor use in appropriately chosen locations within the landscape, will help address increased tourism and management demands for the area, while protecting and promoting the park’s significant cultural and heritage values.

## **22. Management for public use**

*Part of the section to be amended—revision of text on page 52 of the plan*

When planning visitor facilities in the park, MPC will take into account the following criteria:

- the effects on areas of cultural sensitivity
- the protection of cultural heritage, including the rock art
- the effects on significant sites
- the effects on native fauna, flora and vegetation communities
- existing visitor use facilities
- the predicted patterns of use
- existing and future recreation opportunities
- visitor expectations
- visitor safety.

*Part of the section to be amended—revision of text on page 53 of the plan*

Fees to access protected areas and cultural sites are common throughout the world, and in Western Australia ~~DBCA-DEC~~ charges visitor fees, which can include park entry fees, camping fees or fees for services (such as guided tours) and camping fees in many national parks and reserves. In the Pilbara fees are charged at Millstream Chichester, Karijini and Cape Range national parks. Revenue from fees is used to fund a range of park management activities including visitor facilities.

*Part of the section to be amended—addition of strategy on page 53 of the plan*

5. Consider the introduction of visitor fees to the park where appropriate.

## 23. Visitor access

*Part of the section to be amended—revision of text on page 54 of the plan*

Access to the northern parts of the park ~~will be~~ is being reviewed through the development of the visitor service plan and planning for the proposed tourism precinct. as four-wheel drive, boat and pedestrian only access. Track rationalisation is being undertaken in consultation with Murujuga elders and custodians and will be subject to approval by MPC. Access may be restricted to designated tracks, ~~with some track rationalisation~~ and modification may be necessary to protect the park's values.

### Vehicular access

*Part of the section to be amended—revision of text on page 54 of the plan*

~~Public vehicle access on the Murujuga National Park is limited at present.~~ There are a number of public and private roads on Burrup Peninsula managed by different agencies and organisations including the City of Karratha Shire of Roebourne, Main Roads Western Australia, Water Corporation, Dampier Salt, North West Shelf Joint Venture and MPC (within Murujuga National Park). The sealed Burrup Road provides access to the western margin of the park, ~~and Two~~ two-wheel drive access is available to Ngajarli (Deep Gorge). ~~and beyond the Climbing Men site.~~ There is difficult four-wheel drive access to Conzinc Bay and the north-western tip of the peninsula as well as limited four-wheel drive access to other parts of the peninsula. Improved visitor access to the northern portion of the park will be provided through the planned construction of a two-wheel drive access road to Conzinc Bay and associated visitor sites and facilities. ~~There is currently no intention to improve the access to the northern Burrup Peninsula across the 'jump-up'.~~

### Cycle Access

*Part of the section to be amended—revision of text on page 55 of the plan*

Mountain bike access will be permitted on all roads within the park and consideration will be given to the development of dedicated cycle trails and management tracks in the park.

### Strategies

*Part of the section to be amended—revision and addition of strategies on pages 56 and 57 of the plan*

1. ~~Consider d~~Developing and implementing a vehicle access plan incorporating a track rationalisation program to provide improved access to visitor sites, and close tracks to protect cultural and natural values.
2. Prohibit vehicles from beaches and dunes and in areas that may impact key cultural and natural values, and close and rehabilitate those vehicle tracks over dune areas, beaches, eroded areas of deeper alluvial soils and mudflats.
6. Provide information to visitors on appropriate four-wheel drive techniques, ~~such as DEC's Caring code for the bush~~ and codes of ethics supported by organisations such as the Western Australian Four Wheel Drive Association, Tread Lightly Australia and Leave No Trace.

7. Implement a monitoring system to determine visitor numbers in the park using the four-wheel drive access to the northern Burrup Peninsula and Cowrie Cove and the environmental conditions of the track. Depending on the outcomes of this, consider implementing a permit system, limiting the number of vehicles accessing the park area and ensuring that the park's cultural and natural values are protected and environmental conditions remain stable.
8. ~~Consider disabled visitors in the d~~Design and construct new trails to be accessible to all visitors, where appropriate.
10. Look at the feasibility of developing commercial tourist and hire operations to access remote areas of the park ~~by boat.~~
13. ~~Ensure that the appropriate safety standards are considered in the provision of all walk trails.~~
14. Develop a brochure on the walk and cycle trails that includes directions, safety advice and information about the natural and cultural attributes to be seen enroute.
15. Provide for two-wheel drive vehicle access to designated visitor areas identified in the visitor service plan, including Conzinc Bay, Withnell Bay and Ngajarli (Deep Gorge), consistent with this management plan and the management agreement, and subject to appropriate assessment and approval processes.
16. In the event of a major road upgrade, ensure sufficient funding is allocated for safe parking areas and safe pedestrian access to known sites of cultural significance, such as petroglyphs.

## 24. Visitor activities

Day use

*Part of the section to be amended—revision of text on page 57 of the plan*

~~Based on its size and its proximity to a range of visitor accommodation, it is expected that Murujuga National Park will primarily be a day trip destination. Ngajarli (Deep Gorge) will remain a~~ may provide the primary site for day visits due to the abundance and accessibility of petroglyphs. This site is suitable for providing opportunities for guided tours and self-guided interpreted areas. Access to An all access standard path has been ~~may be established at this site and provides~~ for group and universal access.

~~It is also expected that, at least in the foreseeable future, the majority of visits to the northern parts of the park will be by local people accessing the swimming beaches at Conzinc Bay, and fishing spots on the north-west shores. This will require a complete review of access to the northern part of the Murujuga National Park.~~

A review of access to the northern part of the Murujuga National Park has identified a number of sites that may be appropriate for day use and recreational activities such as fishing and swimming. Designated visitor sites and facilities on the northern Burrup Peninsula will help meet the needs of increased visitation expected following the construction of the two-wheel drive access road, address management pressures associated with unauthorised use and will complement the development of the proposed tourism precinct. The priority for the development of day-use facilities will be at Conzinc Bay. Other locations for additional day use sites may also be considered providing that potential impacts to cultural and natural heritage values can be mitigated and that they do not detract from the visitor experience and sense of place within the park.

## Overnight stays

*Part of the section to be amended—revision of text on page 58 of the plan*

~~Accommodation options in the region are limited due to the requirements of the resource industry expansion. Hotel and motel accommodation and caravan parks are available in Dampier, Point Samson, Karratha, Roebourne and Wickham. As a consequence, gaps~~ Gaps exist in the tourist accommodation market, particularly as there are few opportunities in the region for tourists to stay overnight in the natural environment without local knowledge or access to a boat to reach some of the more remote camping areas such as on the Dampier islands.

~~At present, the economic cost and potential impact on values outweigh the development of safari tent accommodation in Murujuga National Park (as was proposed by the draft management plan). This follows an assessment subsequent to the draft management plan by potential investors and Tourism WA that found the development opportunity was not exclusive and that there was only limited supporting infrastructure and few commercial operators to make the operation viable and appealing to visitors at this time. Concerns were also raised by DIA that this type of development may have adverse effects on the values of the area, particularly if management presence was limited. MAC also have concerns about the effects on cultural values of the area.~~

~~Currently Camping occurs informally across the park, particularly along Sea Ripple Passage and at Conzinc Bay beach. Generally, people accessing these areas are in four-wheel-drive vehicles or boats and use tents or swags to camp for short periods of one to two nights. Visitors are generally accessing the area for camping, fishing and swimming and have historically had only a limited appreciation of the cultural values of the area. Access will be reviewed by MPC in order to protect culturally sensitive and heritage values.~~

MAC's proposed tourism precinct includes different accommodation options that will help address gaps in the existing tourism market and formalise camping arrangements. The development of the associated living knowledge centre will provide a state-of-the art facility for interpretation, promotion and understanding of the area's cultural significance.

*Part of the section to be amended—revision and addition of objectives and strategies on page 59 of the plan*

### Objectives

- ~~1. To provide a range of sustainable opportunities for visitors to experience the cultural and natural values of the park while Burrup Peninsula ensuring they are consistent with the management agreement, this management plan and the visitor service plan.~~
2. To ensure that any developments subject to appropriate assessment and approval processes, and do not unacceptably impact on the park's cultural heritage, including the rock art and natural values, in particular its National Heritage and potential World Heritage values or detract from the visitor experience of Murujuga National Park.
3. Support surveys and ongoing research and monitoring of natural and cultural values within the park to inform decisions relating to siting, construction and use of infrastructure and facilities, and park management activities.

### Strategies

- ~~1. Consider providing a major day visitor site and interpretation, possibly at Deep Gorge.~~
- ~~2. Consider developing additional interpretive sites pending further surveys.~~
- ~~3. Consider establishing basic facilities, such as parking and information, at trailheads.~~

- ~~4. Determine the appropriateness of developing camp sites to cater for current and future demand.~~
- 1.5. Manage existing and future use to minimise impact on cultural and natural values and visitor experience.
- ~~6. Visitors to camping areas, if developed, will be required to bring their own gas or fuel barbeque.~~
- 2.7. Permit campfires in approved areas or in accordance with Ngarda-ngarli use of the park.
- ~~8. Ensure that visitors to the park are aware of the relevant fishing regulations by providing information at, for example, boat ramps, visitor centres and the Karratha DEC office.~~
3. Ngajarli (Deep Gorge) to remain a major visitor site for interpretation of petroglyphs and cultural heritage.
4. Develop visitor facilities at Conzinc Bay as main area for day-use and recreational activities in this part of the park.
5. Facilitate the development of the proposed tourism precinct, including the living knowledge centre and appropriate accommodation options.
6. Consider opportunities for additional day use sites and visitor facilities at other areas in the park, subject to visitor and recreation demands.
7. Undertake necessary assessment and approvals processes to ensure that any developments in the park do not unacceptably impact on the natural and cultural heritage values, or the visitor experience of the park.
8. Use a range of interpretation and information materials to promote a greater understanding of the area's cultural significance.

## **25. Visitor services**

*Part of the section to be amended—addition of strategy on page 60 of the plan*

6. Consider the provision and location of other services to improve visitor experiences including the provision of power, water, waste water treatment and communications in the park.

## **27. Commercial operations**

*Part of the section to be amended—revision and addition of objectives and strategies on page 63 of the plan*

### Objectives

1. To encourage and promote Ngarda-ngarli ownership of, and participation in commercial enterprises ~~involving Aboriginal cultural heritage in the park~~, and to ensure that the use of Aboriginal cultural material by commercial tour operators is appropriate.
2. To ensure that commercial tourism activities are compatible with other management objectives and to extend the range of services and recreational opportunities available in Murujuga National Park through the involvement of private enterprise and the Ngarda-ngarli.

### Strategies

1. Give due consideration to the interests and aspirations of the Ngarda-ngarli, ~~and encouraging appropriate Aboriginal commercial initiatives, such as the proposed tourism precinct, that are consistent with the management agreement and this management plan.~~



3. Promote Ngarda-ngarli ownership of, and participation in commercial enterprises and activities within the park.
4. ~~Provide~~ Where possible, assist with training and other support to enable the Ngarda-ngarli to meet service expectations and associated tourism operations.
5. Ensure all commercial operations in and adjacent to the park operate under a licence or other agreement with appropriate conditions that:
  - protect and promote the cultural and natural values of the park, in particular its National Heritage, and potential World Heritage, values
  - ensure the operation does not unacceptably impact on the visitor experience, and the sense of place of the park
  - ensure the operation is consistent with other management objectives within Murujuga National Park this plan and the management agreement
  - facilitate park management
  - provide a service or facility to visitors that DBCA ~~DEG~~ or MAC would not otherwise be able to provide.
- ~~10. Do not provide concessions within the park if adequate facilities or services exist, or if they can be developed outside the park that meet visitor needs.~~
12. Consider excisions from the park, and lease options where possible, to help facilitate Ngarda-ngarli ownership of, and participation in commercial enterprises and activities.