

ICOMOS

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МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

Our Ref. GB/AR/1709_IR

Charenton-le-Pont, 19 December 2024

H.E. Ms Greer Alblas
Ambassador, Permanent Delegate
Permanent Delegation of Australia to UNESCO
Ambassade de l'Australie
4, rue Jean-Rey
Paris Cedex 15 75724

World Heritage List 2025

Murujuga Cultural Landscape (Australia) – Interim report and additional information request

Dear Ambassador,

As prescribed by the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* and its Annex 6, the Advisory Bodies have to submit a short interim report for each nomination by 31 January 2025. We are therefore pleased to provide you with the relevant information outlining issues related to the evaluation procedure.

The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission to the “Murujuga Cultural Landscape” was carried out by Dr Xavier Forde (New Zealand) between the end of August and the beginning of September 2024. The mission expert highly appreciated the availabilities and support provided by the experts in your country for the organisation and implementation of the mission.

On 20 September 2024, an additional information letter was sent by ICOMOS to request further information regarding the boundaries, the attributes, and the protection, conservation and management of the nominated property. Please convey our thanks to all the officials and experts for the additional information you provided on 6 November 2024 and for their continued cooperation in this process.

At the end of November 2024, the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel evaluated the cultural and mixed properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List in 2025. The additional information provided by the State Party, together with the mission and desk review reports were carefully examined by the Panel members. This process will conclude in March 2025.

We thank you and your Delegation for your availability and your participation in the meeting held on 26 November 2024 with some representatives of the ICOMOS Panel. The exchanges during this meeting were of great help for the third part of the ICOMOS Panel meeting. During this last part of the meeting, the Panel has identified areas where it considers that further information is needed.

Therefore, we would be pleased if the State Party could consider the following points:

Boundaries of the nominated property

ICOMOS notes that announcements have been made in July-August 2024 by the Western Australian government regarding the additions to the Murujuga National Park of areas formerly zoned for future industrial activity, as well as the integration of West Intercourse Island and Legendre Island into the Murujuga National Park or the Dampier Archipelago conservation estate. ICOMOS would appreciate if the State Party could provide some clarification on this matter. Will these changes imply any modification

of the boundaries of the nominated property as proposed in the nomination dossier, and if so, could the State Party please provide a revised map showing the changes made to the boundaries and indicate the time frame for the completion of this extension?

Besides, ICOMOS understands that the boundaries are the result of a thoughtful and inclusive process that takes into account both the perspective of the Ngarda-Ngarli and the aspects inherent to the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property. However, there are still some cultural components related to the Ngarda-Ngarli, located within the industrial areas, which are not part of the nominated area. Could the State Party please indicate if, and how, the continuity of Murujuga as a cultural landscape is ensured, even without these cultural components being part of the proposed boundaries? Is there any legal and/or traditional protection in place to ensure that these sites are maintained?

In addition, the boundaries of the nominated property cover a large marine area. ICOMOS has understood that there is continuity, in terms of indigenous cosmology, between the landscape and the seascape, however ICOMOS would be pleased if the State Party could provide further explanation as regards the rationale for the delineation of the boundaries in the marine area.

Buffer zone and wider setting

The State Party has explained that they consider there is no need for a buffer zone as *“the nominated property is protected through a comprehensive range of existing measures”* including *“traditional customary practices, and Australian, Western Australian and local legislation, management plans and strategies which provide statutory protection”* (nomination dossier, p.2). However, ICOMOS would welcome clarification from the State Party as regards how activities in the immediate and wider setting are regulated in order to ensure that the attributes supporting the proposed Outstanding Universal Value are adequately protected in the long term.

In addition, ICOMOS has found several media articles referring to severe pollution issues from chemical-producing industries outside the nominated property as a major threat against rock arts within the site and their conservation in the next decades. ICOMOS would be grateful if the State Party could specify how this threat is being controlled or mitigated. What regulations are in place to control levels of emission from industries in the region? ICOMOS understands that studies are currently being undertaken to assess the impact of these industries on the petroglyphs and on the nominated property. ICOMOS would appreciate to receive the results of these studies in their current state.

Underwater cultural heritage and biodiversity

ICOMOS also notes that other studies are being undertaken to understand and document the underwater cultural heritage that is part of the nominated property, in particular through the collecting of high-resolution bathymetry data. Are there any studies also undertaken regarding underwater biodiversity? Could the State Party please specify how the underwater cultural heritage and biodiversity are being managed and protected?

The nomination dossier informs in particular of the existence of the Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018. ICOMOS would be grateful if the State Party could share this document. Is there any other legal or management document which would allow to ensure that the underwater cultural heritage and biodiversity are properly preserved?

Tourism strategy

ICOMOS acknowledges the additional information provided regarding the Tourism Precinct project, and in particular that the schematic design for Tourism Precinct has been completed. Would it be possible to share this design with ICOMOS? Has the State Party conducted a Heritage Impact Assessment for this project?

Copy to Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage
UNESCO World Heritage Centre