



**BUILDING INDIGENOUS CAPACITY IN CULTURE,  
TOURISM AND CONSERVATION ECONOMIES**

An aerial photograph of a wide river flowing through a lush green landscape. The river is calm, reflecting the sky and the surrounding vegetation. The banks are sandy and covered with dense green trees and shrubs. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

**MABOO LIYAN BOOROO  
'GOOD SPIRIT COUNTRY'**

**MAPPING CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES  
YURMULUN TO BALGINJIRR**



natural resource  
management program



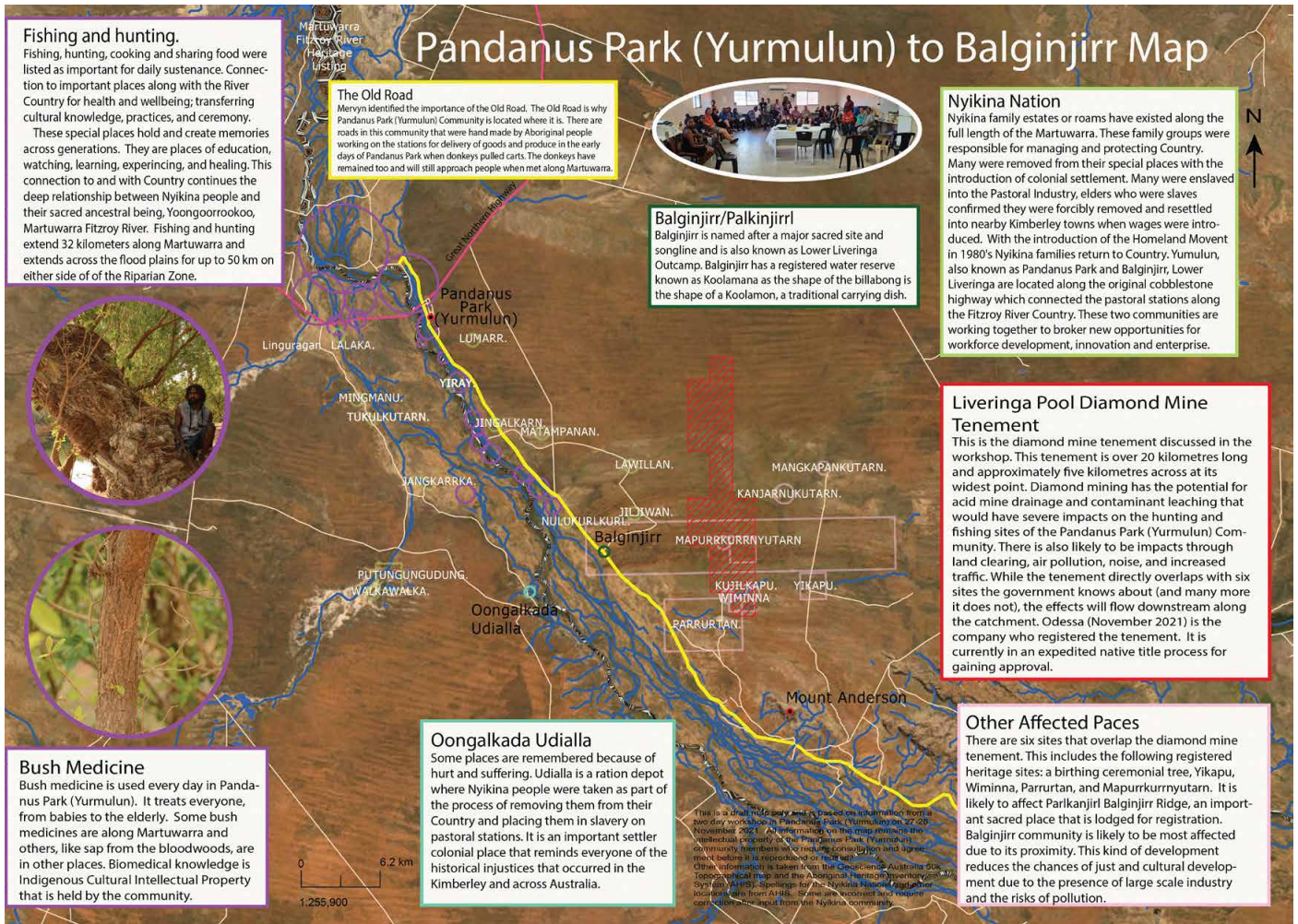
**This 'Building Indigenous Capacity in Culture, Tourism and Conservation Economies' project is supported by funding from the Western Australian Government's State Natural Resource Management Program.**

## BACKGROUND

The Martuwarra Fitzroy River is Western Australia's largest River and largest listed Aboriginal cultural heritage site. It has been cared for by First Law and Indigenous land management practices for millennia. Over the last 150 years, it has experienced multi-scalar damage from agriculture, mining and invasive species. Interventive measures are now required to improve the health of the River and the communities that live along it's banks.

In November 2021, a consortium of researcher; Dr Martin Brueckner (Murdoch University), Dr Sven Ouzman (University of Western Australia), Dr Tod Jones (Curtin University of Technology), and Dr Naomi Godden (Edith Cowan University), in partnership with Prof. Anne Poelina, Managing Director (Madjulla Inc.) Chair of the Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council and Professor and Co-Chair Indigenous Studies, University of Notre Dame secured external funding for this 'Murdoch Science Team' to travel to the Kimberley. The November workshop created the opportunity for the researchers to hear first-hand from community members about cultural, environmental, and spiritual values along the Martuwarra Fitzroy River.





## MAPPING CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

This map identifies sacred sites between the two communities. It was developed to showcase how these values can be threatened by unjust development. It identifies the need for good two-way science: Aboriginal and Western science coming together to consider new, non-extractive economies which sustain Aboriginal peoples' lifeways and livelihoods. A report was provided to the community after the November 2021 workshop.







## BUILDING CAPACITY

In August 2022 the Murdoch Science Team secured additional resources to conduct a 3 day workshop at Yurmulun (Pandanus Park) Community in partnership with Ian Perdrisat from Madjulla Inc. Ian acknowledged the WA state government investment through the State Natural Resource Management (NRM) Program funding from the 'Boab Science Project' has strengthened the Community Research Practitioners' confidence and competence through learning and sharing. They have expanded their capacity to co-design this 3 day work in partnership with the Murdoch Science Team.





## REGENERATIVE PATHWAYS

Senior native title holders on the Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council (MFRC) have identified the need for regenerative development pathways for Martuwarra communities. They have directed the research team to co-design a pilot initiative with Yurmulun Pandanus Park that can be replicated along the length of the River and its catchment. This process is documented in the 'Indigenous consultation and engagement' section.

The Murdoch Science Team, in partnership with Yurmulun Community, are proposing a co-designed programme of mapping 'Country is Changing' stories and riparian zone management through mechanical removal and burning along a 23 kilometre stretch of river upstream of Yurmulun Community. Using a collaborative process, the Yurmulun Community identified the concept Maboo Liyan Booroo, 'Good Spirit Country'. The Murdoch Science Team will develop, document and communicate a replicable model for regenerative riparian socio-economic management for Aboriginal research users along the Martuwarra.

The Murdoch Science Team will present the Research Plan to the Yurmulun and Balginjirr communities to secure education, research, and training investment to support the applied research work of the Yurmulun Martuwarra Fitzroy River Keepers.

## WHERE TO NEXT

These 'Community Research Practitioners' have led the co-design of the evaluation of the Building Indigenous Capacity in Culture, Tourism and Conservation Economies Project. We look forward to sharing this evaluation, including a short film about the project and where to next. The State NRM Program investment has created the opportunity for the Community Research Practitioners to establish a diverse workforce, with further education, training, and research. Watch this space and follow the development and investment in to the Yurmulun Martuwarra Fitzroy River Keepers.

For further information please contact:

Ian Perdrisat  
Director of Operations, Madjulla Inc  
E: [ian.perdrisat@uon.edu.au](mailto:ian.perdrisat@uon.edu.au)

Prof. Anne Poelina  
Chair, Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council  
E: [chair@martuwarrafitzroyriver.org](mailto:chair@martuwarrafitzroyriver.org)

