



Kimberley Land Council

MEDIA RELEASE

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New conservation areas declared across Eighty Mile Beach

Karajarri Traditional Owners and the State Government will jointly manage five conservation areas including a marine park across 80 Mile beach as part of a new agreement.

An Indigenous Land Use Agreement declaring the four new and one existing conservation zone was signed on June 4 and covers marine, coastal sand dunes, salt flats and inland desert areas. It was signed by the Karajarri Traditional Lands Association and the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW), the Department of Lands, Department of Environment, Conservation Commission and the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority on behalf of the State Government.

The five conservation areas include the:

- The Karajarri section of Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park which extends from Jinmarnkur (Cape Missiessy) in the north down to Anna Plains Station in the south. The new marine park generally extends seaward from the high water mark out to the limit of coastal waters of Western Australia.
- Jinmarnkur Kulja Class A Nature Reserve which includes the sand dune area between Eighty Mile Beach and Anna Plains Station. This area has high biodiversity and cultural values as a turtle nesting and bird migration area.
- Jinmarnkur Conservation Area which adjoins the nature reserve at the northern end of Eighty Mile Beach, also known as Cape Missiessy.
- Dragon Tree Soak Nature Reserve which will be renamed Kurriji Pa Yajula Nature Reserve. This area is rich in cultural and spiritual values along with unique freshwater spring habitat.
- Walyarta Conservation Park Area which is inland from the Eighty Mile Beach and includes ecologically sensitive salt plains and is rich in cultural values. Anna Plains Station has agreed to excise this land from its pastoral property so it can be conserved and protected.

A Joint Management Body, comprised of three representatives from DPaW and three Traditional Owner representatives including a Chair, will be formed to oversee management of the conservation areas.

DPaW will work with and engage the Karajarri Rangers in fee-for-service contracts to manage the conservation areas and undertake the day-to-day biodiversity activities.

Karajarri Traditional Lands Association Chairman Joe Edgar said the creation of the conservation areas provided a win-win opportunity as it ensured the protection of high biodiversity areas while highlighting the importance of Indigenous management and knowledge of country.

“The coastal strip is a resting place for seabirds and turtles coming onto the beach but also a nursery for juvenile and big turtles too. There’s also a reef that’s a significant place for all these animals and turtles and a Ramsar wetland just behind the dunes,” he said.

“Our rangers will play a key role and will do the management of the conservation reserves which is great because it provides real jobs for our people.

“As part of the joint management agreement we also get a seat at the table so we can decide on the governance and protocols.”

Mr Edgar said it was the first Indigenous Land Use Agreement to be signed under the State Government’s Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy which aims to conserve significant environmental areas in the region.

“It’s very good to have this joint management agreement in place so we can have a say in the management of our important coastal and inland areas and play a lead role in looking after them and making them better,” he said.

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