

NYANGUMARTA HIGHWAY (KIDSON TRACK)



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are warned that this brochure may contain images of deceased people or name deceased people in the text.

PERMIT BROCHURE FIRST EDITION, MARCH 2015



NEW STANDARD
ENERGY



FOREWORD

Thank you for purchasing a permit to access the Nyangumarta Highway (formally known as the Kidson Track and also Wapet Road). The Nyangumarta people welcome you and wish you well as you drive through, camp and enjoy their country.

The purpose of this brochure is to assist permit holders for the Nyangumarta Highway to use the road safely and to provide background about the Nyangumarta people, their country, and their culture. The brochure also includes the Conditions of Entry applying to the Permit and to Nyangumarta country and a map showing where you can drive and where to camp.

The Nyangumarta are the Traditional Owners of a large portion of the Great Sandy Desert. In 2009 the Federal Court of Australia recognised the Nyangumarta people's ownership of their traditional country prior to the European settlement of Australia. Native title rights were determined over an area of approximately 32,000 square kilometres between Broome and Port Hedland, extending along Eighty-Mile Beach and east into the Great Sandy Desert. This area is now known as the Nyangumarta determined native title lands or "Nyangumarta Country".

Four Wheel Drive Australia has partnered with the Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation to provide and administer a permit system for the Nyangumarta Highway. The Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation is a registered native title body corporate under the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth) and it administers the native title rights and interests that Nyangumarta people now hold.

Four Wheel Drive Australia is committed to working with Traditional Owner groups across Australia to promote responsible four wheel driving and respect for Indigenous owned and managed land, as well as respect for the rights of Traditional Owners more broadly.

Four Wheel Drive Australia also issues permits for travel between Wells 16 to 39 of the Canning Stock Route (available at www.anfwdc.asn.au) in partnership with the Western Desert Lands Aboriginal Corporation (WDLAC), which is the prescribed body corporate for the Martu determined native title lands to the east of Nyangumarta Highway.

WHY A PERMIT SYSTEM?

The Kidson Track (the Track), which is now known as the Nyangumarta Highway where it passes through the Nyangumarta lands, was created in the late 1960s by an oil company for exploration purposes on unallocated crown land. It was never gazetted as a road by the Western Australian Government, so when the Nyangumarta people gained native title over their traditional lands in 2009 they were granted exclusive native title rights over the area the Track passes through. The Track effectively then became a private road owned by the Nyangumarta, just like (a very long) version of the track from the farm gate to the homestead on farms all across Australia. Therefore today, as with all private roads, the land owner's permission is required to use the Track.

Because of the Nyangumarta Highway's remote location a permit system is the most practical way to promote safe and responsible use of the road. The permit also allows the Nyangumarta to teach the wider public about their land and history, and provides a small income to assist the Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation look after the vast area of land it holds native title rights in and which it must look after on behalf of present and future generations of Nyangumarta people.

By issuing permits, Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation and Four Wheel Drive Australia collect data on the numbers of travellers using the Nyangumarta Highway. This data is then used to better plan and manage tourism on the Nyangumarta lands, as well as by Four Wheel Drive Australia to promote responsible four wheel driving. Currently the West Australia Government does not collect any data on remote road use in areas such as the Great Sandy Desert, the Little Sandy Desert, or the Gibson Desert. By purchasing a permit you are contributing to better land management and safer use of Australia's outback roads and tracks. Your permit fee is distributed to the Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation, and a percentage is also provided to Four Wheel Drive Australia to cover administration of the Permit System.



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THE KIDSON TRACK, WAPET ROAD AND THE NYANGUMARTA HIGHWAY

Wapet Road, which the present-day Nyangumarta Highway largely follows, was bulldozed through the Great Sandy Desert in 1965 by West Australian Petroleum Pty Ltd (WAPET). The road led to the 4,431 metre deep Kidson No 1 Oil Well that was spudded by the WAPET team on 21st November 1965 (later abandoned in July 1966). The Kidson No 1 Oil Well site is situated outside Nyangumarta county about 50km south-west of Canning Stock Route Well 33 on the Martu native title determined lands.

Wapet road originally covered a distance of about 660 kilometres starting from the Great Northern Highway to an airstrip about 340 kilometres south-east. It then ran 300 kilometres further to the Kidson No 1 Oil Well.

Kidson No 1 Oil Well was named by the WAPET team after Edward Kidson, an early geophysicist originally from New Zealand who conducted an expedition along the newly completed Canning Stock Route in 1914 to measure and map the earth's regional magnetic field. The Kidson Track also references the Kidson sub-basin which is the geographical sub-region also named after Edward Kidson.

The WAPET team are reported to have referred to the track as the Kidson Track because it went to Kidson No 1 oil well. Later users of the track probably called the track Wapet road after the company that built it. Both names have been used interchangeably since the late 1960s and publically available maps may show one or both names.

Since the WAPET team built the road in the 1960s it has remained the only road traversing Nyangumarta country from east to west. Most of the surrounding desert to the north and south of the road is largely impassable to vehicles in any practical sense. Nyangumarta people have used the road since it was first built and continue to use it frequently today. In 2014 the Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation renamed the track the Nyangumarta Highway to honour its significance as the only road running through the heart of their desert country.

THE CALLAWA TRACK AND MISSILE ROADS



The Callawa Track, built in 1963 by the famous outback surveyor and road maker Len Beadell, followed a roughly similar path to the Nyangumarta Highway, running around 15 to 20 kilometres north. The Callawa Track was part of the network of roads built for the British and Australian governments long range ballistic missile testing program called “Blue Streak” that involved firing missiles from the Woomera testing ground in South Australia across continental Australia into the Great Sandy Desert. A large portion of the Great Sandy Desert, including a significant proportion of the Nyangumarta lands, was declared a Prohibited Area and a facility called Talgarno was constructed on Anna Plains Station. The name Talgarno referred to the prohibited area, a huge tract of land stretching from the coast south of Broome past the Perceval Lakes in the Great Sandy Desert and south to Lake Disappointment.

The Blue Streak Missile program is associated with what the Nyangumarta, as well as their Martu neighbours to the east, refer to as the “rocket patrols”. These were circuits into the desert undertaken by government patrol officers in Landrovers in the 1960s with the aim of “clearing out” some of the last nomadic Aboriginal groups in Australia from the prohibited area due to the danger posed by falling or exploding rockets.

The Callawa track fell into disrepair shortly after the Wapet road was completed and today it is almost obliterated.

Future Plans for Four Wheel Driving in the Nyangumarta lands

Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation is currently in talks with Four Wheel Drive Australia to create a circuit four wheel drive route in Nyangumarta country. The route proposed will use disused mining exploration tracks and establish new tracks that follow portions of Warburton’s 1873-1874 historic expedition route from South Australia via central Australia and the Great Sandy Desert to De Grey Station on the West Australian coast. It hoped that this new track and associated Permit will be operational within the next two years.

USING THE NYANGUMARTA HIGHWAY

- **There is no fuel, water or food available along the Nyangumarta Highway.** Should you continue along the Kidson Track once outside Nyangumarta country, fuel, water and food are available at Kunawarritji community (also known as Well 33). You will need a permit for the Canning Stock Route to purchase fuel in Kunawarritji.
- Please be aware that some public maps show emergency water points and camping areas at certain places along the Nyangumarta Highway. This information is out of date. Many years ago emergency water drums were placed at locations along the road but they have long since blown away, and camping is permitted only in the areas approved with your permit.
- There is very little fire wood available along the Nyangumarta Highway and travellers are advised to bring their own wood or use gas powered stoves.
- Roads conditions vary greatly. In recent years the Nyangumarta Highway has been graded in some sections, however washouts are common and the road is deteriorating with each new wet season. Please drive cautiously to suit the conditions and slow down on hills and crests.
- Should you wish to further explore Nyangumarta country Nabaru Rose’s Track is a pleasant drive and is approximately a 100 kilometre return trip from its junction with the Nyangumarta Highway.
- Check the weather report. The Australian tropical cyclone season runs from 1 November to 30 April. According to the Bureau of Meteorology, in the north-western sub region (which includes Eighty Mile Beach and the Nyangumarta lands) typically five cyclones form or pass through the area each season.
- Should you get into trouble emergency services are not close. Broome and Port Hedland are at least a half a day’s drive away from the western/coastal starting point of the Nyangumarta Highway. Medical help will not arrive quickly – take proper precautions. The airstrip at the end of the Nabaru Rose’s Track can be used for airlifts.
- Please ensure your vehicle is properly equipped for travel in remote Australia. Advice is readily available from Four Wheel Drive Australia at www.anfwdc.asn.au. Petrol vehicles are not recommended and a four wheel drive vehicle is essential.



DJIMAKARRA SOAK

Your Permit allows you access to Djimakarra Soak, which is an Aboriginal site pursuant to the *Western Australian Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*. You are free to take pictures, day camp and rest at the soak. Overnight camping is not permitted.

Djimakarra Soak is a typical soak that has been used by Nyangumarta people in the pre and post-contact era as an everyday water source. In recent times Nyangumarta Rangers have dug out the soak to ensure access to this traditional water source will remain available in the future.

For desert Aboriginal people, knowledge of the location of soaks and frequent maintenance through regular digging is extremely important and in pre-contact times it meant survival was possible. Knowledge of soaks such as Djimakarra was passed on through song and ceremony as well as through being shown country by knowledgeable older persons.

Djimakarra Soak is known to contemporary Nyangumarta as a place where older members of their group used to reside and from where they oscillated between the desert and making contact with pastoral stations on the coast. It was also one of the last places where their ancestors lived a mostly traditional lifestyle before settling on pastoral stations and in towns.

Nippa Lee "Bidjadu", a Nyangumarta man who passed away in the early 1990s, is reported to have "come from" Djimakarra Soak, meaning it was his traditional country, and to have walked into Mandora Station prior to World War Two to make contact with Europeans. Nippa's older brother Johnny Lee, another well-known Nyangumarta man, also resided at the soak and is reported to have walked into Wallal Downs as young man and from there moved back and forth between the desert and the station for much of his life.

Another brother, George Lee, walked south from Djimakarra Soak towards Callawa Station and eventually ended his days living in Roebourne.

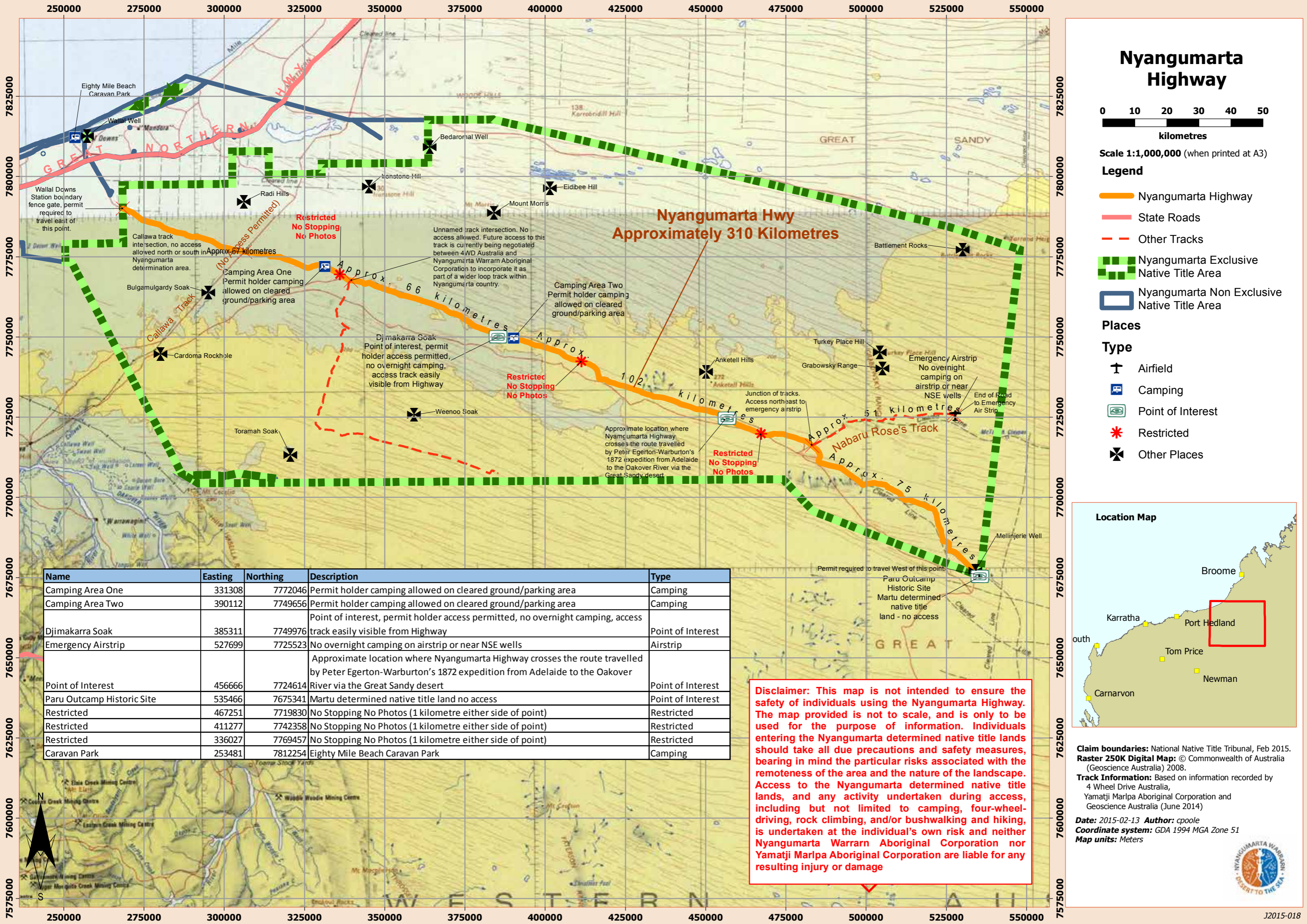
First generation descendants of the Nippa brothers and their families now reside in places such as Port Hedland, Broome, and Roebourne, and are native title holders of the Nyangumarta lands. The Nippa brothers' story of "coming from" a soak in the Great Sandy Desert, the happenstance of the direction each man walked, and how this saw family separated across cattle stations and towns in the north west over a lifetime is a typical Nyangumarta family story.



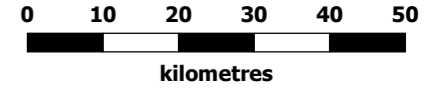
GENERAL CONDITIONS APPLYING TO THIS PERMIT

1. This Permit is valid only for the purpose and dates specified.
2. You must carry this Permit in your vehicle at all times while travelling on the Nyangumarta Highway, which is also known as the Kidson Track and Wapet Rd (the Track).
3. Individuals entering Nyangumarta land must take all due precautions and exercise appropriate safety measures, bearing in mind the risks associated with travelling in remote, arid areas and the nature of the landscape.
4. The Permit allows you to drive, camp and undertake tourism related activities at designated areas along the Track.
5. The Permit also allows access to "Nabaru Rose's Track" (also known as Nikolay Road). Access to the airstrip at the end of Nabaru Rose's Track is permitted for emergency purposes only.
6. You are permitted access to Djimakarra Soak as a daytime camping spot/rest area but overnight camping is prohibited.
7. Departure from the Track or other areas listed above is not permitted, unless you have specific permission from the Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation to do so.
8. Certain stretches of the Track are designated no stopping areas and you are required to drive straight through these areas without stopping. No stopping areas are marked on the map included with the brochure that is available with your Permit.
9. You are required to adhere to Four Wheel Drive Australia's Codes of Conduct for Off Road Driving and Camping.
10. If you are visiting an Aboriginal community, the issue of this Permit does not imply that the Traditional Owners/Community members have been advised of your intended visit.
11. You must observe all Western Australian laws, including Aboriginal Community by-laws if applicable.
12. You must not undertake any mining or prospecting (including fossicking) within the Nyangumarta Determination area unless you have a specific lease or licence to do so.
13. You must not access any areas where mining, oil or gas equipment (including well heads) is present. Interference with such equipment is dangerous and may cause life threatening injury.
14. Do not remove any Aboriginal art, sacred objects or artefacts from Nyangumarta land, unless you have written permission from an approved agency.
15. Refrain from photographing community areas and residents within the Nyangumarta Determination area, unless you have the prior approval of the resident community.
16. Use of firearms on or about the Track is prohibited.
17. Hunting on or about the Track is prohibited, unless you have appropriate written approval.
18. Littering on or about the Track is prohibited. All waste is to be carried out.
19. You must have a four wheel drive vehicle. Use of a two wheel drive vehicle or motorbikes is prohibited. Persons seeking to access the Track on foot, using a bicycle, on horseback or with camels, or any other such means of transport that is not a four wheel drive vehicle must apply directly in writing to Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation and access will be considered on a case by case basis.

Permit holders acknowledge and agree that they and their passengers access Nyangumarta land and use the Track entirely at their own risk, and that the Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation, Four Wheel Drive Australia and the Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation make no representations as to the condition of the Track and are not liable in any manner for any loss, damage, cost, expense or injury to person or property of any kind, however caused, resulting from the use of the Track.



Nyangumarta Highway



Scale 1:1,000,000 (when printed at A3)

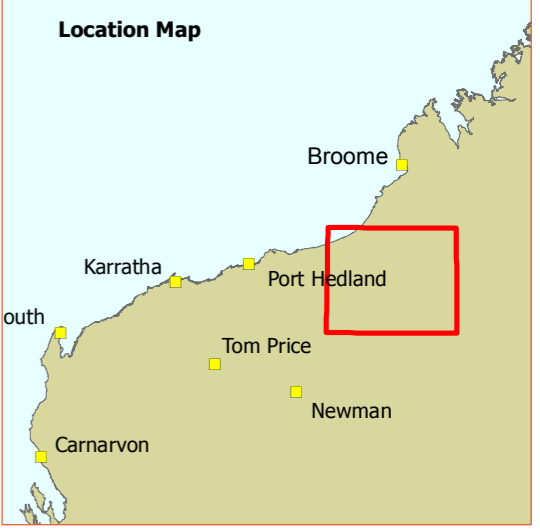
Legend

- Nyangumarta Highway
- State Roads
- Other Tracks
- Nyangumarta Exclusive Native Title Area
- Nyangumarta Non Exclusive Native Title Area

Places

Type

- Airfield
- Camping
- Point of Interest
- Restricted
- Other Places



Name	Easting	Northing	Description	Type
Camping Area One	331308	7772046	Permit holder camping allowed on cleared ground/parking area	Camping
Camping Area Two	390112	7749656	Permit holder camping allowed on cleared ground/parking area	Camping
Djimakarra Soak	385311	7749976	Point of interest, permit holder access permitted, no overnight camping, access track easily visible from Highway	Point of Interest
Emergency Airstrip	527699	7725523	No overnight camping on airstrip or near NSE wells	Airstrip
Point of Interest	456666	7724614	Approximate location where Nyangumarta Highway crosses the route travelled by Peter Egerton-Warburton's 1872 expedition from Adelaide to the Oakover River via the Great Sandy desert	Point of Interest
Paru Outcamp Historic Site	535466	7675341	Martu determined native title land no access	Point of Interest
Restricted	467251	7719830	No Stopping No Photos (1 kilometre either side of point)	Restricted
Restricted	411277	7742358	No Stopping No Photos (1 kilometre either side of point)	Restricted
Restricted	336027	7769457	No Stopping No Photos (1 kilometre either side of point)	Restricted
Caravan Park	253481	7812254	Eighty Mile Beach Caravan Park	Camping

Disclaimer: This map is not intended to ensure the safety of individuals using the Nyangumarta Highway. The map provided is not to scale, and is only to be used for the purpose of information. Individuals entering the Nyangumarta determined native title lands should take all due precautions and safety measures, bearing in mind the particular risks associated with the remoteness of the area and the nature of the landscape. Access to the Nyangumarta determined native title lands, and any activity undertaken during access, including but not limited to camping, four-wheel-driving, rock climbing, and/or bushwalking and hiking, is undertaken at the individual's own risk and neither Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation nor Yamatji Maripa Aboriginal Corporation are liable for any resulting injury or damage

Claim boundaries: National Native Title Tribunal, Feb 2015.
Raster 250K Digital Map: © Commonwealth of Australia (Geoscience Australia) 2008.
Track Information: Based on information recorded by 4 Wheel Drive Australia, Yamatji Maripa Aboriginal Corporation and Geoscience Australia (June 2014)
Date: 2015-02-13 **Author:** cpoole
Coordinate system: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 51
Map units: Meters





The Nyangumarta and other Aboriginal people in the Great Sandy Desert remained largely outside the influence of European society until the relatively recent past. Several older Nyangumarta were young children when their parents walked in from the desert and many more were the first generation of family members to be born in close proximity to pastoral stations. Some Nyangumarta oral histories tell of walking through the Great Sandy Desert to visit coastal pastoral stations to trade dingo scalps for commodities such as flour, sugar and tobacco at the Wallal ration depot. Others tell of travelling to attend ceremonies near an Anna Plains outcamp. One family group can recall encountering the Kidson Track in the extreme east of Nyangumarta country and being confounded as to how the country could have been so scarred.

THE NYANGUMARTA

The Nyangumarta are a desert and coastal people who in pre-contact times followed a pattern of seasonal mobility between the coast and the Great Sandy Desert.

The Nyangumarta native title determination area is located in the North-West Pilbara region of Western Australia. The coastal section of Nyangumarta country is transected by the former Kimberley “De Grey” stock route and the Great Northern Highway. The stock route is dotted with “government wells” many of which bear names of Aboriginal origin and would appear to have been originally sunk on top of former native soaks, claypans or wells. The Nyangumarta people’s extensive knowledge of water sources along the coastal strip is indicative of their long and sustained habitation of the area.

The Nyangumarta native title lands encompass all or part of Wallal Downs, Mandora and Anna Plains pastoral leases. The pastoral leases coexist with Nyangumarta native title rights and interests, however the

form of native title on the pastoral leases is known as non-exclusive possession.

European pastoral settlement of Nyangumarta land was sporadic in the late 19th century, unlike country to the west in the Pilbara and north in the Kimberley where settlement rapidly followed explorers’ glowing descriptions of the country’s potential for exploitation for the cattle and sheep trade. As a consequence, a significant European presence on and near Nyangumarta land did not occur until the very late 19th century, and was only well established in the early years of the 20th century.

During the late 19th and early 20th century, Nyangumarta people were most likely involved with the pastoral industry along Eighty Mile Beach. The establishment of the Wallal Telegraph Office in 1897 and the subsequent distribution of rations from the depot supplemented Nyangumarta and other Aboriginal people’s opportunistic and seasonal exploitation of coastal resources. Aboriginal use of ration depot resources to supplement traditional livelihoods was common across Western Australia from the late

19th century into the mid-20th century. It was the established way in which desert and other Aboriginal groups slowly transitioned from a traditional nomadic lifestyle to ways of living that incorporated European influences. As the pastoral industry slowly developed in the north-west in the early 20th century it also increasingly came to rely heavily on unpaid and/or underpaid Aboriginal labour. This period came rapidly to an end from 1968 onwards when the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission ruled that Aboriginal people working in the pastoral industry must be paid the same wages as non-Aboriginal people. Many Nyangumarta, however, continued to live and work on pastoral stations until the early 1970s and younger Nyangumarta people continue to work on stations in the region today.

Whilst the north-west has been associated with a pearling industry since the late 19th century, there are no major historic records or oral histories about whether Nyangumarta people were involved significantly. However, pearl shell is an important commodity in the traditional Nyangumarta economy as

it is used in male ritual; it is also the basis of long-standing regional trade between Nyangumarta and coastal Kimberley Aboriginal groups.

For Nyangumarta and other Aboriginal groups in the north-west, the transition over the 20th century from lives involving being born and living largely in the bush to new generations being born on stations and towns and adopting European custom coexisted with the maintenance of Aboriginal language and ways of living. These include ceremony, knowledge and use of country, and living in many ways culturally apart from, but intertwined with, the European population. This enduring traditional culture of the Nyangumarta people provided for their successful native title determination in 2009, and supports their efforts today to manage and care for their land and community.

An example of this enduring culture is that the Nyangumarta language (there are two dialects, north and south) is spoken in all Aboriginal communities from Yandeyarra to Bidyadanga, and also at Port Hedland, Marble Bar, and Broome. The number of speakers has been

estimated by linguists at 700-800.

Nyangumarta language is considered to have been mythologically inscribed on country by ancestral beings during the Pukarikarra (the Dreaming). The Nyangumarta term *marrngu* literally means “person” and is used by Nyangumarta and other related language speakers in the north-western Pilbara to distinguish Aboriginal people from *walypila*, *kartiya*, or ‘whitefellas’ i.e. persons of European descent. Linguistically speaking, Nyangumarta language is “closer” to the languages of their northern neighbours, the Karajarri and the Mangala.

A number of Nyangumarta women including Winnie Gray, Rosie Munro, Ada Stewart, Lynette Hunter, Margaret “Nabaru” Rose, Nabaru Wellington and Janet Stewart have been actively involved in various Nyangumarta language programs. Northern Nyangumarta has been taught at the Bidyadanga School and Nabaru Rose holds a regular spot on Port Hedland local Maripa Radio where she conducts on air Nyangumarta language lessons. Janet Stewart has been a primary school language worker for many

years. Most recently Winnie Gray, Ada Stewart, Nabaru Rose and Janet Stewart were involved in the Wangka Maya Language Centre production of the educational language CD Nganyjurruku Nyangumarta Muwarr.

Contemporary Nyangumarta land use and subsistence practices are governed by seasonal availability. Nyangumarta people’s knowledge of seasonal patterns has been handed down to them from their “old people” and much of this information is best described as being of an ethno-ecological nature. Nyangumarta people recognise four seasons: *Yurra* (summer or ‘hot-time’); *Wirralpuru* (autumn/early winter when cold wind blows from the south-east); *Partunu* (winter or ‘dry time’ cold, windy); and, *Jijimarra* (wet season, time of thunder storms, lightning and rain; term also used to describe the country after good rains). Nyangumarta people look for indicators in the landscape that signal when certain species are considered to be at their best. For example, Nyangumarta people say that *Partunu* is recognised as cockatoo breeding season. When the plain grass is dry and has lost

its seed the following animals are hunted: salmon, mullet, catfish, turkey, kangaroo, lizards, *pilyirri* (big grey blue tongue), *lungkurta* (small grey blue tongue). In the *yurra*, turtle eggs, goanna, lizards and *karlaya* (emu) are sought.

Turning to the future, today Nyangumarta people are active in a range of industries: conservation/land management, mining, oil and gas, pastoralism, tourism, fishing, and native title and heritage. In particular, oil, gas, and mining exploration has increased on the Nyangumarta lands and is seen as significant for the future. However, there is nowhere near the level of activity that can be found in the western Pilbara and there are no active oil, gas or mining projects in the Nyangumarta lands. Tourism to the Nyangumarta desert lands is only just developing, and the

Nyangumarta Highway permit system is a first, cautious step towards promoting sustainable tourism to the region.

Nyangumarta people also unfortunately remain representative of many of the issues that characterise Indigenous disadvantage across Australia. This includes a significant gap in health, education, life expectancy, child mortality and employment when compared with non-Indigenous Australians. Programs such as the Nyangumarta Warrarn Indigenous Protected Area, which incorporates the Nyangumarta Highway Permit System, and Joint Management of the Eighty-Mile Beach Marine Park with the Department of Parks and Wildlife, are flagship initiatives supporting employment, training and improved futures for Nyangumarta people.



As you leave the eastern end of the Nyangumarta Highway, only a few metres into the Martu native title lands, you will see just off the road the remains of an outcamp known as Paru. Paru was originally set up during “strike time”, referring to the famous 1946 to 1949 Pilbara Aboriginal pastoral workers strike. Some Nyangumarta participated in this strike which saw hundreds of Aboriginal workers walk off pastoral stations and is seen by many as the beginnings of Australia’s post war Aboriginal equal rights (and land rights) movement.

After the strike Paru became associated with Nomads Pty Ltd (Nomad) which was run by Don McLeod (famous for being the main agitator of the 1947 Strike). Nomad attempted to set up Aboriginal mining and residential co-operatives in the Pilbara and at its height ran several communities and stations. Strelley Station is still owned by Nomad and an Aboriginal school operates there today.

From the period of the strike until the late 20th century, Paru was run as a “punishment camp” for Aboriginal people caught drinking or causing trouble in Nomad communities. Drinkers and others were driven out to Paru along the Nyangumarta Highway on the back on old tractor (which is still visible) and left for weeks at a time to “dry out” and live a semi subsistence lifestyle within walking distance of the water bore. Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation cannot grant access to Paru because it is on the Martu native title lands, however you can easily see remains of the camp from the end of the Nyangumarta Highway. Please consider this place’s historic significance to the Nyangumarta people and Martu people and do not enter.

Paru outcamp



THE NYANGUMARTA WARRARN INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREA

Since 2009, Nyangumarta people have actively pursued ways to proactively manage their native title lands for a range of purposes and the Nyangumarta Highway permit system has been established to fit within a much broader program of land management. In 2015 the Nyangumarta Warrarn Indigenous Protected Area Management Plan will be finalised. The Management Plan addresses the conservation and management priorities for a range of significant biodiversity and cultural values of the Nyangumarta lands.

The Commonwealth Department of the Environment administers the Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) program. An IPA is an area of Indigenous-owned land or sea where Traditional Owners have entered into an agreement with the Australian Government to promote biodiversity and cultural resource conservation. IPAs make a significant contribution to Australian biodiversity conservation – making up over a third of Australia’s National Reserve System. IPAs deliver more than environmental benefits. Managing IPAs helps Indigenous communities to protect their significant cultural values for future generations and receive spin-off health, education, economic and social benefits (see <http://www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/ipa/>).

The Commonwealth Government has funded an extensive IPA consultation process with Nyangumarta. Once the Management Plan is approved it will mark the end of this process and the Nyangumarta Warrarn IPA will be officially declared and become part of the Australian National Reserve System. Commonwealth funding will then be provided for ongoing management activities undertaken by members of the Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation, while Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation will have responsibility for coordinating and implementing the project.

In parallel with the IPA consultation process, a group of ten Nyangumarta rangers is currently going through a training program that will provide them with the skills and knowledge necessary to implement land management activities over the IPA once it is declared. These activities include fire management, feral animal control, weed management, protection of cultural sites and tourism monitoring. This training program is carried out with the technical support of Greening Australia and financial assistance of BHP Billiton.

You may encounter Nyangumarta Warrarn Rangers on your journey along the Nyangumarta Highway. Please feel free to stop and chat, ask questions, and support their work managing such a vast area of Australia for future generations.



LAND MANAGEMENT IN THE GREAT SANDY DESERT

The Northwest Pilbara region is arid-tropical semi-desert with an annual rainfall varying from 180 to 300 mm. Rainfall is unreliable, however unusually high rainfall resulting from tropical cyclones can occur in the summer months. Tropical cyclones typically form at sea between northern Australia and the Indonesian Islands and travel in a south-westerly direction parallel to the coast, before turning inland. Summer daytime temperatures often reach 45° C+. It is common for cyclones to cross the 80 Mile Beach stretch of coastline into Nyangumarta country and continue inland into the desert in the vicinity of the Nyangumarta Highway.

The majority of Nyangumarta country is located within the Great Sandy Desert (GSD) and Dampierland Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia, sub-regions both of which are under-represented in the National Reserve System.

The GSD portion of the Nyangumarta country consists of vast sand dune complexes broken occasionally by rocky outcrops and open expanses or dune swales. Mound springs (*jila* or *jamarra*) feature prominently in the landscape east of Anna Plains Station homestead. Adjacent to these springs is an extensive marsh system called the Mandora Marsh (Nyamaringu). This area is subject to spectacular flooding following rainfall associated with cyclonic activity.



Nyangumarta Warrarn ethno-botanical survey team 2014

NYANGUMARTA VALUES AND LAND MANAGEMENT

Nyangumarta have a holistic approach to land management. The landscape, plants and animals within Nyangumarta country have been inseparable from Nyangumarta law, culture, language and traditional knowledge since creation-time (the Dreaming). Nyangumarta people see maintenance and protection of their law, culture, language and traditional knowledge as integral with the maintenance and protection of the natural environment.

Nyangumarta collectively hold an extensive body of ecological and cultural knowledge concerning the biophysical environment. This extensive knowledge of ceremonial and utilitarian sites (e.g. sacred sites and water sources) and resources within Nyangumarta country is coupled with a deep spiritual attachment. Nyangumarta ecological knowledge is inseparable from the knowledge of the supernatural events and forces that shape the Nyangumarta world view. For example, many of the names of flora and fauna as well as rules about how to prepare and cook them or when to pick them were “given” to Nyangumarta in the Dreaming. Seasonal hunting and gathering patterns are maintained and Nyangumarta frequently travel to their country to hunt, fish, and gather. Hunting of bush turkeys is common along the Nyangumarta Highway in grassy areas as well as gathering of bush tomatoes and other plant species.

A common concern amongst Nyangumarta is that the oldest members of their society are

respected and that their traditional knowledge and stories of life in the “old days” are actively passed on to younger generations. Typically the best way for this to occur is through regular trips out bush with older Nyangumarta – hunting, camping, talking and learning about country. For most Nyangumarta people, access to their desert country is difficult and expensive as they live where amenities, services and schooling are available, such as Broome, Port Hedland and Bidyadanga. Furthermore, older Nyangumarta struggle to travel long distances from town to reach Nyangumarta country and due to illness often cannot camp out bush for long. The Nyangumarta Warrarn IPA Management Plan is intended to address many of the above issues through its ranger program which involves young Nyangumarta working on their country alongside older Nyangumarta – seeing active knowledge transfer about culture and country in the best place it can happen – on country.

ECOLOGICAL VALUES

The following ecological values have been identified by Nyangumarta and are included in the IPA Management Plan. Of special significance in the proposed IPA are:

- The complex wetland system associated with Mandora Marsh known to Nyangumarta people as Nyamaringu. This system is part of the Eighty Mile Beach Ramsar site (Convention on Wetlands of International Importance).
- Walyarta (or Salt Creek) within the Mandora Marsh area holds the most inland distribution of mangroves (*Avicennia marina*) in Australia. Walyarta is also significant for its microbialite community.
- Mound springs associated with the Mandora Marsh area such as Yalayala (Eil Eil) with its distinctive tall paperbarks (*Melaleuca leucandra*); also recognised as being important bird nesting sites.

Apart from minor specific survey work there has been no systemic review of biodiversity in the GSD; as a consequence there is very little data available for most areas of the proposed IPA. Therefore, the following list of threatened species is indicative rather than comprehensive.

Key threatened or vulnerable fauna species listed as occurring in the Nyangumarta determined native title area include:

- Greater bilby
- Australian bustard
- Northern marsupial mole
- Flatback turtle

Flora species listed as being threatened:

- Olax spartea

Threats to the Great Sandy Desert include:

- Unregulated visitor access to sites of significance to Nyangumarta people.
- Old people's knowledge of the area passing with them.
- Uncontrolled hot summer wildfires resulting in loss of biodiversity.
- Feral camels eating bush foods and damaging water sources.
- Potential mining, oil and gas exploration and/or exploitation to adversely affect natural and cultural heritage values.
- Continued spread of medium sized patches of buffel grass located on the Nyangumarta Highway.



Buffel grass, an invasive species threatening ecological values of the Great Sandy Desert



Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation and Four Wheel Drive Australia Kidson Track Permit Sydney Survey Team



COMMON FLORA & FAUNA OF THE NYANGUMARTA HIGHWAY



Purntakarnu (*Acacia hilliana*)



Minta (*Grevillea wickhamii*)
Common name: Wickhams grevillea



Kawarr (*Acacia monticola*)
Common name: Curley-bark wattle



Rankurri
Common name: Australian Bustard or bush turkey



Ngujarna (*Eragrostis eriopoda*)
Common name: Woollybutt grass



Ngalyanta (*Grevillea wickhamii*)
Common name: Wickhams grevillea



Pulpi (*Acacia ancistrocarpa*)
Common name: Fitzroy Wattle



Pirna (*Acacia hilliana*)
Common name: Witchetty grub



Paru (*Triodia epactia*)
Common name: Soft spinifex



Yalakurtu (*Corymbia candida*)



Purarrpurarr (*Jacksonia aculeata*)



Wamulu (*Solanum diversifolium*)
Common Name: Bush Tomato



Lirringkin (*Acacia coleii*)
Common name: Soap bush; River tree



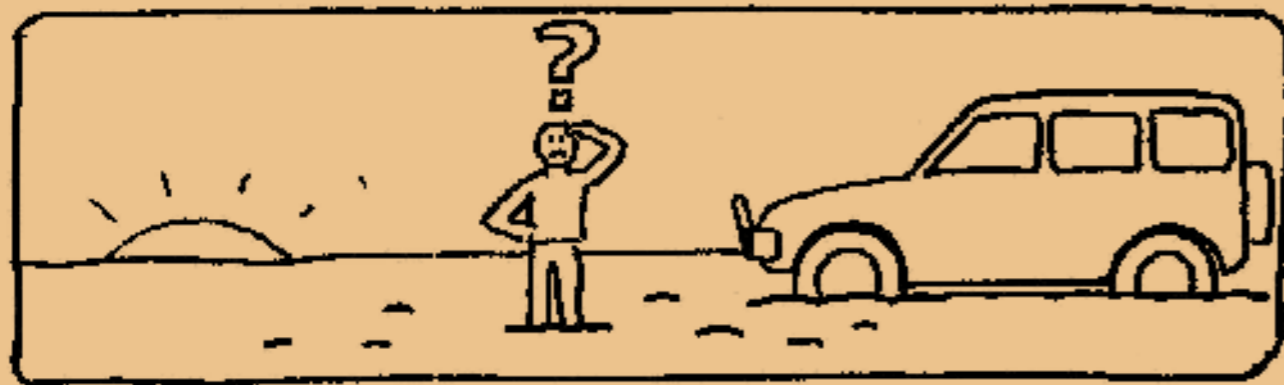
Karrarl (*Triodia epactia*)
Common name: Soft spinifex



Pirtnyuru (*Acacia stellaticeps*)
Common name: Poverty Bush

Four Wheel Drive Australia recommends that Permit holders follow the advice and procedures contained in the following safety cards. Where there is any conflict between Permit conditions and the Four Wheel Drive Australia advice the Permit conditions shall apply.

IF STUCK IN SAND OR MUD



1. Check for 4WD and lock hubs



2. Try high and low range 4WD



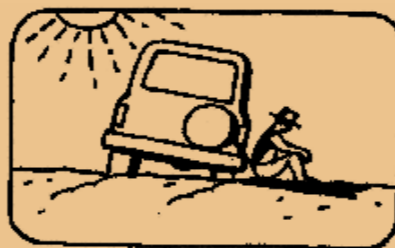
3. Lower tyre pressure to between 150-250kpa



4. Clear sand or mud and lay brush in wheel tracks



5. Light a single fire if lost



6. Wait by vehicle for rescue



7. Do not camp in river bed

REMOTE TRAVEL HINTS FOR 4X4 TOURISTS



Take warm clothing for cold nights



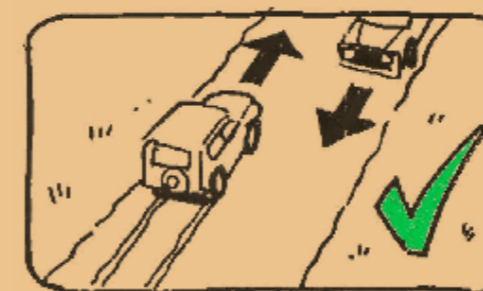
Do not use soap in lakes or streams



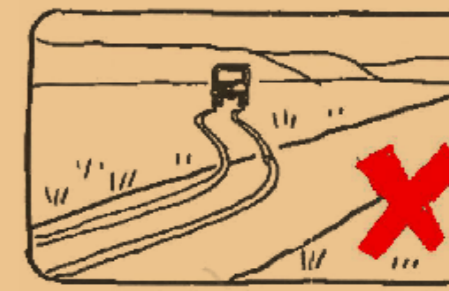
Carry 5 litres of water per person per day



Do not leave rubbish



Keep to the left



Stay on tracks



Report your remote trip plan to an official

FOUR WHEEL DRIVE AUSTRALIA CODE OF CONDUCT

The Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation asks that you follow Four Wheel Drive Australia's Codes of Conduct for Off Road Driving and Camping when using the Nyangumarta Highway.



CODE OF CONDUCT – OFF ROAD DRIVING

1. Obey the laws and regulations for Recreational Vehicles that apply to public lands.
2. Respect the cultural, heritage and environmental values of public/private land, by obeying restrictions that may apply.
3. Respect our flora and fauna. Stop and look, but never disturb.
4. Keep to formed vehicle tracks.
5. Keep the environment clean. Carry your own, and any other, rubbish out.
6. Keep your vehicle mechanically sound and clean to reduce the environmental impact.
7. Adopt minimal impact camping and driving practices.
8. Seek permission before driving on private land. Do not disturb livestock or watering points, leave gates as found.
9. Take adequate water, food, fuel, basic spares and a first aid kit on trips.
10. In remote areas travel with another vehicle and have Royal Flying Doctor Service, or equivalent emergency contact by radio or satellite phone.
11. Plan ahead and lodge trip details with a responsible person.
12. Enjoy your recreation and respect the rights of others.
13. Support four-wheel drive touring as a legitimate family activity.
14. Consider joining an affiliated four-wheel drive Club.

This code supports the National Recreational Four Wheel Drive Vehicle Policy. Produced by Four Wheel Drive Australia in the interest of promoting responsible recreational vehicle use.



CODE OF CONDUCT – CAMPING

Four Wheel Drive Australia supports dispersed vehicle based camping. Campers stopping in unspoilt areas are responsible for the next camper's enjoyable stay. This is achieved by those who have been there before you, having left nothing but footprints when they have departed. Upon departure, leave the area as if no one had been there and in the same or better condition than previously. Ensure that the area you are visiting is not so sensitive that your presence will leave a permanent impact.

CAMPING

- Dispersed camping is recommended so as not to compact the ground surface and inhibit vegetation growth or regrowth.
- Use huts where provided only under the advertised conditions of use – many are for emergency shelter only. Use established campsites. When on a camping trip campers must be self-reliant and carry their own tent or swag.
- Do not dig trenches or gutters around tents or swags.
- Locate your camp out from the drop zone of suspect trees and in particular keep clear of eucalypts which may shed branches at any time.
- Camp on elevated land and avoid at all times dry river beds, which are extremely dangerous as flash flooding can and does occur.
- Camp at least 30m from any natural waterhole, creek or river in such a way that you do not prevent native fauna and station stock from gaining access to water.
- Do not camp within a 500m radius of a dam or constructed stock watering point.
- Do not camp within a 100m of any building unless specific permission has been granted.

CAMPFIRES

- Always check for fire restrictions with local authorities and comply with their regulations.
- A Total Fire Ban is applicable to all types of fuel other than electricity, so be prepared.
- Do not create a new fireplace where one already exists.
- If a fire pit needs to be dug, try to remove the topsoil as a sod and place to one side. When the fire has been extinguished and is not to be used again, replace the sod over the cold ashes.
- Keep the area surrounding any open fire be clear of vegetation for a radius of 4m, or as required by the local authority.
- Spare firewood is to be kept a minimum of 3m from a fire.
- Do not use stones in the construction of a fireplace as they are prone to explode from the heat of the fire sending dangerous fragments in all directions.
- Use only dead fallen timber for fuel if permitted.
- Campers are not to cut standing trees as these are a key part of the environment.
- Never burn 'treated' timber in a fire. Suitable alternative fuels are heat beads, shellite, gas and unleaded petrol used in appropriate cookers.
- Never leave a fire burning unattended.
- Campfires should not exceed one metre in diameter and 0.5m in height.
- Separate cooking fires may be permitted if fuel is in abundance but should be kept to as few as possible. Set a time at which combustible rubbish, food etc, may be reduced in the fire.
- Do not place plastic/foam/metal objects in a campfire.
- When decamping, ensure that the fire is completely extinguished as residual hot ashes present a fire hazard and are likely to cause injury to foraging animals.
- Dispose of cold ashes around plants as these will liberate nutrients in the soil.

WASHING

- Don't wash anything using soaps or detergents in streams and lakes.
- Wash points should not be located within 50m of any creek, stream, river or waterhole to prevent contamination of such waters.
- Care must also be taken to ensure that a wash point is not located over a watercourse that feeds into the water supply.
- When disposing of waste water spread it across the ground to enable natural filtration.
- Do not use waste water to feed the root systems of native flora as the residue contained within the water could be harmful.

RUBBISH

- Adopt the practice of "leave no trace" camping.
- Take out what you bring in and dispose of rubbish in designated rubbish bins or dumps.
- Carry suitable containers in which to store rubbish and re-use where possible.
- Avoid carrying high rubbish potential items such as bottles, cans and plastics, and remove unnecessary packaging prior to departure on trips.
- Do not bury rubbish as it may be dug up and scattered by native animals.
- Dispose of plastics in disposal facilities provided or take it home with you for approved disposal.
- Nappies and sanitary napkins must not be disposed of in composting or deep pit toilets but should be packed safely and taken out to an approved disposal point.

TOILETS

- Use properly constructed toilets where provided.
- Self-dug toilets should be not less than 100m distant from campsites and water courses or water holes.
- Individual toilet holes should be as deep as practicable to prevent excavation by fauna.
- Do not attempt to burn toilet paper in toilet holes. Bushfires have been started by this practice.
- Fill in hole with removed soil and compact as much as possible.
- Chemical toilets should be used in those areas where the ground surface prevents digging adequate toilet holes or the soil is of a type that is not suited to such a purpose. They should also be used in those areas which have a sensitive environment and ecology which is easily disrupted. Waste from chemical toilets should be disposed of at authorised sewerage points.

Environmentally sustainable vehicle based camping is a shared responsibility. (Produced by Four Wheel Drive Australia in the interest of promoting responsible camping practices.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

The following contact details are provided in case of an emergency and have been sourced from publically available material. Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation and Four Wheel Drive Australia makes no guarantee of their accuracy.

Please note 1800 and 1300 numbers generally do not work from a satellite phone, therefore direct land line and mobile services are provided. Some satellite phone providers may also require the Australian international prefix (+61) dialled before local numbers.

EMERGENCY POLICE / FIRE / AMBULANCE

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POLICE

Karratha

(08) 9182 2222

51 Welcome Road, Karratha WA 6714

Port Hedland

(08) 9173 8100

3 Anderson Street, Port Hedland WA 6721

Broome

(08) 9194 0200

Cnr Hamersley & Fredrick Street, Broome WA 6725

ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE

Port Hedland

(08) 9172 0700

Waldron Rd, Port Hedland WA 6721

Perth

(08) 9417 6389

ST JOHNS AMBULANCE

(08) 9172 1333

(08) 9192 0710

20 Cable Beach Road East, Broome

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Perth

(08) 9172 1333

(08) 9192 0710

20 Cable Beach Road East, Broome

Port Hedland

(08) 9140 1300

0419 909 744

Waldron Drive Port Hedland Airport Great Northern Highway, Port Hedland, 6721, WA



**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
PLEASE CONTACT**

Four Wheel Drive Australia

Permits Manager, Lee Smith
PO Box 712, St Agnes, SA 5097
Phone: 0438 853 342
Email: csrmanager@4wdaustralia.asn.au

Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation

Contact Officer, Margaret Rose
PO Box 2319, South Hedland WA 6722
Phone: (08) 9172 5433/0448 350 618
Email: mrose@yamatji.org.au

The following organisations and individuals have provided their time, commitment and/or funding to make the Nyangumarta Highway permit system possible.

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Charlie Wright, Charmaine Wright, Kitty Imbally, Margaret "Nabaru" Rose, Martina Badal, Richard Hunter and Teddy Hunter

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation

Clive Poole, Donny Wilson, Dr José Kalpers, Greg Young, Marnie Tonkin, Melbermoore Mashindi, Olivia Norris and Tamara Murdock.

Four Wheel Drive Australia

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New Standard Energy

Marcus Gracey, Matthew Hansen and Troy Tinker

La Trobe University

Dr Nic Smith, lecturer

Independent

Dr Bill Kruse, consultant anthropologist.

Photographs provided courtesy of Vicki Long & Associates, Four Wheel Drive Australia, Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation, New Standard Energy and Bill Kruse.



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