

Welcome to our Country

Our land, our people

Wherever you go in Australia the lands and waters are significant to one or more of the many Aboriginal groups. Aboriginal people are located in cities, towns, islands and remote communities. The (tribal and language) groups speak different languages and can vary in their protocols and traditions. Despite these differences, each group of Aboriginal people shares a bond with their places of Dreaming, family origins and culture. This is what we term an Aboriginal person's 'Country'. It may also be called homeland or tribal area.

Welcome to the land of the Yamaji people. 'Yamaji' is a Wadjarri word to identify Aboriginal people from the Gascoyne/Murchison and Mid West region of Western Australia. Yamaji people have a strong connection to their Country. There are approximately twelve tribal groups in this region. Each group has a distinct language, and may have variations in its culture and customs. These groups associate with each other through marriage and/or kinship. Traditional ceremonies and gatherings are often celebrated by different language groups coming together on special occasions.



Past, present, future

Our spiritual ancestors created the land and introduced language and customs. Our beliefs are based on the journeys of these ancestors during the creation period known as the Dreaming. There are many powerful ancestral beings, and different groups in Australia have distinct stories about each being. Some examples are the Waggyl: a powerful Rainbow Serpent who created the waterways; and the Wandjina: spiritual beings with special gifts and powers, depicted in many artworks throughout the Kimberley region of WA.

The responsibility to care for the land is held by family groups and individuals. It is the role of the Elders and senior people in the community to be custodians for their traditional lands and waters; they are often referred to as the traditional owners. Responsibilities include acknowledging and paying respect to our spiritual ancestors.

Today Aboriginal heritage is an important link to our people's culture and history. Some families prefer to live in their homelands, building a strong relationship with the land and waters of their Country. This relationship carries a certain responsibility to look after the spiritual and environmental wellbeing of the land. It also provides a way to teach children their culture and traditions and to respect the land.