



Mooro Nyoongar Katitjin Bidi

Mooro Peoples Knowledge Trail



Mooro Nyoongar Katitjin Bidi (Mooro Peoples Knowledge Trail)

The Nyoongar people have occupied and managed the south-west of Western Australia for over 40,000 years. Nyoongar is the name for the Indigenous people whose ancestors originally occupied and still occupy the whole south-west area. The word Nyoongar means “person” or “people”. As Nyoongar language was not written prior to colonisation, there are many spellings of the word Nyoongar, and indeed most Nyoongar words.

Nyoongar boodjar (people’s country) is comprised of at least 14 Nyoongar groups; the Wadjak Nyoongar people traditionally occupied the country that is the Perth Metropolitan area. The Mooro people’s country lies within Wadjak country, and within the City of Stirling local government area.

The Mooro people traditionally lived in extended family groups, caring for country through cultural ceremonies such as song, dance and use of fire. Access to certain areas such as the sea was regulated according to season, status of family group member, totem and presence of sacred sites.

Mooro Movement with the Seasons

The Nyoongar year is generally divided into six seasons:

- **Bunuru** – (Feb-Mar) The Second Summer
– Season of Adolescence: Children learn the art of tool-making.
- **Djeran** – (Apr-May) The Autumn
– Season of Adulthood: Time of Marriages and courtship ceremonies.
- **Makuru** – (Jun-Jul) The First Rains
– Fertility Season: Time to travel to inland hunting areas.
- **Djilba** – (Aug-Sept) The Second Rains
– Season of Conception: Rains fill lakes and waterholes.
- **Kambarang** – (Oct-Nov) The Wildflower Season
– Season of Birth: Carpets of wildflowers.
- **Birak** – (Dec-Jan) The First Summer
– Season of the Young: Reptiles emerge from hibernation.

These were not defined by strict dates but by changes in temperature, wind, rain and food availability. In the warmer months they gathered plants and hunted animals from the coast, waterways and coastal lakes. In the colder months they retreated from the coast to the hills for shelter.

Colonial settlement had a significant impact on these seasonal movements, Aboriginal culture and way of life.

The City of Stirling is extremely committed to supporting its highly valued Aboriginal community, and is working towards this through the City’s Reconciliation Action Plan.

Mooro Nyoongar Boodjar (Mooro Peoples Land)

The wetlands and the coastal areas are a dominant feature of Mooro Nyoongar Boodjar. These were abundant with natural resources and used during the warmer months for such activities as camping, hunting, fishing, ceremony and leisure time. Bidi or the foot tracks joined the wetlands, rivers and lakes with their campsites and areas of importance.

Elder Oriel Green remembers her grandfather telling her.....“the old people used to go through the bush to the water, to the sea. And he said they’d put their fish traps down there and when we lived in North Beach he said to me.....old people used to live there a long time ago and they used to catch fish down there not far from you. And he used to talk about old people meeting up in the bush”.

Elder Beverley Port-Louis speaks about country and the stories her dad used to tell her saying“the connection of all the stories....you can still identify with just being there, so I think that’s one of the significance of us being Nyoongar is that we got connection to country straight away”.

Traditional owner and Elder Doolan-Leisha Eatts remembers early Mirrabooka saying.....“And in those days, you know, there was no Mirrabooka, there was no houses and we used to drive all over where Mirrabooka Shopping Centre is, chase kangaroos, see the emus there and pick up wood right there where the main shopping part is for our barbeques and everything”.

Nyoongar Glossary

There are often multiple names/and or spellings of similar names. As Nyoongar was not a written language before colonisation, spellings varied in interpretation according to various recorders of a given word. Pronunciation may also have varied from place to place.

Bidi	Trail	Totem	A symbol that acknowledges specific birds, animals, rocks or flora species. Distinctive to each family and passed down through generations.
Boodjar	Country	Wardung	Crow
Karda	Goanna	Wurlok	Seaweed
Kardang gurrung	Dhufish	Yonga	Kangaroo
Mamang	Whale		
Mooja	Christmas bush		

This brochure is largely based on a review of existing literature titled, Mooro Nyungar Katitjin Bidi (Mooro Peoples Knowledge Trail), and undertaken as a joint project with City of Stirling and Curtin University of Sustainability Policy Institute (CUSP). This work was done in close consultation with Professor Leonard Collard (University of Western Australia) and assisted by Angela Rooney (CUSP) and Laura Stocker (CUSP). This was a grant funded project by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population, and Communities: Your Community Heritage Program.

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Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are warned that the following information may have been provided by deceased persons.

The artwork is by Aboriginal artist Teresa Miller



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Aboriginal Place Names and Meanings

Balcatta

The name was first recorded in 1877 and was the Aboriginal name for the northern portion of Careniup Swamp. It was derived from the Aboriginal words "Bal" meaning "his" and "Katta" meaning "hill".

Karrinyup

The name Karrinyup was derived from the name of a local swamp called "Careniup", and Aboriginal word apparently meaning "the place where bush kangaroos graze".

Balga

The name was adopted in 1954 and is derived from the Aboriginal word for the indigenous grass tree Xanthorrhoea. It is a plant that possesses a wide variety of properties including: the Sap was used as a resin, or when combined with ash and kangaroo scat, a strong glue for attaching axe heads to their wooden handles, Dead flower stalks were used for carrying fire from camp to camp, or kept under the booka (skin cloak) to warm a person.

Lake Gwelup

The name Gwelup comes from an Aboriginal word meaning "to shift position". Used for hunting, camping, meeting place, water source, and ancient ceremonial site.

Careniup Swamp

Nyoongar name is Careniup

Mirrabooka

Is the Aboriginal name for the "Southern Cross" in a dialect that is not identified. It is not considered a Nyoongar placename.

Coolbinia

An Aboriginal name for "mistletoe", Coolbinia was named back in 1953 to differentiate the area from Mount Lawley.

Nollamara

Is recorded as meaning "kangaroo paw" in the Nyoongar language, probably the Black Kangaroo Paw which is a common native plant in the area.

Dog Swamp

Used for camping and water source.

Star Swamp

Used for camping and a water source.

Herdsmen Lake

The Aboriginal name for the lake is believed to be Njookenbooro.

Trigg

In the warmer months this area was used for fishing, camping and leisure time.

Innaloo

While the name Innaloo was adopted in 1927, it was originally referred to as Njookenbooro, believed to be derived from the Aboriginal name for Herdsmen Lake or a nearby swamp. Innaloo is purported to mean "woman" in Amangu/Nhanda language. This Aboriginal group is located in the vicinity of Geraldton north to the Murchison River.

Yokine

Is derived from the Aboriginal word meaning "native dog" as the area is close to Dog Swamp.

