



Murrawarri Sovereign Nation Plan

OUR HOME, OUR COUNTRY

The Plan

The Murrawarri Nation Plan is a plan of Management for the Murrawarri Nation. It was adopted and signed off by the Chairperson of the Murrawarri Peoples Council representing the Murrawarri Nation on 8th of November 2019 and is a ten year plan for the Nation which has review periods to enable change as necessary.

Acknowledgments

This plan was prepared by the Murrawarri Peoples Council members, Aunty Vera Byno, Aunty Josie Byno, Aunty Olga Colliss-McAnnespie, Aunty Sharon (Ruby) Dykes, Phillip Sullivan, Wayne Kelly, Aunty Loreen Coffey, Steve Greentree and Fred Hooper, but a very special thank you to Aunty Ruby Shillingsworth and Beatrice Eulo for coming and sitting with the team in Enngonia.

The Murrawarri People's Council would like to extend a huge thank you to the Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations Ltd (NBAN), and Miss Sonia Yeung for their assistance in the preparation of this Plan. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service for the use of their Bourke office.

NBAN Treaty of Unity

The Murrawarri Nation signed a Treaty of Unity with seventeen Nations of the Northern Murray Darling Basin on and is committed.

- Continue to be a member of the Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations Union of Sovereign First Nations
- To continue to observe the Murrawarri obligations under the Northern Basin Treaty of Unity
- To work with NBAN Nations in the advancement of the articles of the Treaty of Unity

Copyright

All Copyright within this document remains the property of the Murrawarri Nation and its peoples and is vested in the Murrawarri Peoples Council and the Murrawarri Government. This document cannot be reproduced or copied without the written permission of the Murrawarri Peoples Council.

Adoption & Sign Off

This Nation Plan is officially adopted as the Nation Plan that will carry the Nation forward into the future. It is a reflection of the Declaration of Independence and Statehood of the Murrawarri Nation and its peoples. This is the plan that will take the Murrawarri Nation forward.

I officially adopt this plan in its entirety on behalf of the Murrawarri Nation and Its people as the chairperson of the Murrawarri Peoples Council.

Signed under seal of the Murrawarri Republic:



Signature:

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Chairperson

Josephine Byns

Chairperson

Date: 8th November 2019

Contents

Acknowledgments	1
NBAN Treaty of Unity	1
Copyright	1
Adoption and Sign Off	2
Murrawarri Nation and Our History	5
Murrawarri Apical Ancestry	7
Murrawarri Declaration of Continued Independence and Statehood	8
Murrawarri Boundaries	11
Our Murrawarri Values	13
Our Murrawarri Cultural Protocols (And Sensitivity)	14
Murrawarri State Protocols	15
Murrawarri Local Community Protocols	18
Our Nations Vision	19
Our Nations Mission	19
Our Aspirations	20
Our Strategic Development Goals and Priorities	21
Towns, Communities and Places of Significance	25
North Bourke	26
Enngonia	29
Weilmoringle	33
Murrawarri National Parks and Ceremonial Connections	37
Garera Springs	38
Culgoa River (Camp Site Culgoa N/P)	41
The Nebine River (Burban Grange)	43

Our Overall Nation Priorities	45
Relations	51
Messures of Success	53
How are we Implmenting the Plan	53

Murrawarri Nation and our History

We are an ancient people who can trace our ancestry and connection to our ancient lands water and sky for thousands of years. We are known by our neighbours as the Gidgee and River people. As an ancient people we were intrinsically connected to the landscape, sky, waters and the environment. We were a part of the landscape and the sky and they are a part of us. We lived in harmony with the animals and wildlife and they lived and live in harmony with us. We were also connected to the stars and sky, it is where our people's spirit goes when they pass into the other world, and the physical body is returned to the land (mother earth) either in the form of ashes or the whole body. The Murrawarri call this the sky camp, the spirits remain in the sky camp until it is time to be return and be reborn. The Murrawarri belief is that when the spirit is ready to return to earth it waits until a baby is about to be born and then it returns on the back of a falling star and waits until the baby is born, and it then jumps into the baby's body and give the baby its first breath and spirit. We looked after the land (Mother Earth) and she looks after us.

It is here where on our country our Physical, Spiritual, Cultural, and Political identity as a people and Nation was shaped. The Lands, Subsurface, Natural Resources, Waters and Airspace, was created for us to live in harmony with and care for by Pitangulu (Bida-Ngulu) our Creator. Here we first attained Statehood, Through Murrawarri lore/laws and customs, which were and still are observed and practiced.

The Murrawarri Nation consisted of Mayi's/Clan Groups. These groups live in harmony with each other and mother earth. Each of the Mayi's were governed by a Tribal Council and the overall Nation was also governed by a larger Tribal Council. Jimmy Barker a Murrawarri Elder explained in the Two Worlds of Jimmy Barker a book written by Janette Mathews that there were eight Mayi's/estate groups within the Murrawarri Nation. He also explained that there was a southern and Northern Murrawarri regions. The top region spoke faster than the bottom region.

The Murrawarri Nation has many stories that connect the people to the Murrawarri lands and the sky, how the ancestors would talk to the old people in the sky camp and even stories of how the lands and rivers were created. These stories connected the Murrawarri people to our country through Murrawarri LORE. Stories of our connections through the constellations in the sky, such as the emu in the Milky Way.

When the emus are beginning to lay on earth the shape of the emu in the sky changes from standing up to laying down.

The changing shape then become more prominent in the sky as it gets closer to the emus laying their eggs. This is when we knew it was time to start looking for emu nests. The eggs are a source of food for the Murrawarri at the beginning and during the winter months. This is still the case today.

Ceremony was a very important part of the Murrawarri Culture. There were different Ceremonies that took place during the year which included men's and women's ceremony within the Nations. On other occasions larger ceremony was held with other Nations outside of Murrawarri Country. Narran Lakes and the Fish Traps at Brewarrina on what is now called the Barwon River were two locations. Here several Nations would gather to undertake trade and commerce, and other ceremonial practice like marriage etc.

Our leaders were men and women of high degree who was educated in the ways of Nature and the schools and universities were the environment and the natural world. The higher you went through ceremony the high education you received from the elders of the Mayi, Nation and then international relations the more responsibility that was placed on a person. They were the carers, educators and assessors of our education.

Post-colonial contact brought many changes to the way the Murrawarri people lived and cared for our environment. The white colonial settlers took up large parcels of land, fencing off and restricting the Murrawarri access to large parcels of hunting grounds. There were conflicts with settlers which resulted in massacres on and across Murrawarri lands and the forced removal from the land through the Colonial Government policy after the 1837 Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee into the treatment of Natives in the Colony'sⁱⁱ. It was after this report was presented to the King at the time, he ordered the protection of the Natives in the Colony of what was then called New South Wales. From that time on there was forced removal to Mission Stations established by the colonising Governments. Mixed race children were removed and taken to Institutions outside of Murrawarri country. This practice continued in New South Wales and Queensland until 1969 in NSW and 1973 in Queensland.

There were several places in Queensland and New South Wales. Angledool Mission was first established and then Brewarrina. The people from Angledool were then moved to Brewarrina which included many Murrawarri people.

Murrawarri people also stayed and worked properties as domestic and stock hands. Our cultural way of life was starting to change. Gone were the days of Murrawarri Government over our lands and the lore/Laws and customs were being changed and removed dramatically. By the late 1800's and early 1900's people were becoming more depend on the white pastoralist for protection and survival.

With the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia and the declaration of World War one in 1913 and the Second World War from 1939 to 1945, the Government

rewarded returned servicemen with parcels of lands for their service. However, this was not the case for Aboriginal Servicemen. These were called soldier settlement blocks. The first wave of soldier settlements did not have much impact on the Murrawarri landscape, but the second wave did have a much greater impact did after the second world war in the 1940's and 50's on the Murrawarri people. Even though the landscape changed the Murrawarri people who were not removed stayed on country and worked on the now much smaller properties. Restrictions of movement of Aboriginal peoples also contributed to people staying and working on country. The Constitution of Australia restricted the Commonwealth Government from making laws for Aboriginal peoples in the States, therefore many Aboriginal people worked on these property's for very little or in some cases no money. They worked for rations and pays that were way less than the wages paid to non Murrawarri peoples, also under Government policies a portion of their wages had to be paid to the Protector of Aborigines. This is what is now called the Stolen Wages. After the Constitutional amendment in 1967 the Commonwealth could make special laws under their legislation for Aboriginal people. This meant that the properties had to pay Aboriginal peoples the same wages and conditions as the non-Aboriginal people working on the properties as well.

The late 1960s and 70s when restrictions on movement of Aboriginal people changed and equal pay saw Murrawarri people moving off-country for employment and other reasons because the property owners could not afford to employ them anymore in the numbers they did before the changes of Government policies.

During this period Aboriginal peoples were coming together to fight for land rights after the Wave Hill Walk Off of Lord Vesty's property in the Northern Territory, which resulted in the start of a National Lands Right movement. Many of our Murrawarri leaders were involved in this movement. People like Aunty Essie Coffee, Uncle Felix Hooper, Uncle Arthur (Musso) Hooper brother Steve Gordon and many others. This showed the resilience of the Murrawarri education system which produced our leaders of high degree who fought with passion and the need for our people's rights. This period also seen a larger movement around the world which resulted in rights being established and enforced by the United Nation. Several Covenants and treaties were signed with member countries of the UN to ensure First Peoples rights were being delivered in those countries. Australia signed many of the covenants and treaties which are highlighted such as, *Resolution 1531, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; Kyoto Protocol; Convention on Biological Diversity; Ramsar Convention; Second International Decade on the World's Indigenous People; Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination.*

After a study of what our rights are under international law and the fact that the Murrawarri Nation was not settled under the three ways of occupation set out under international norms of the day such as by Conquest, Cession or Occupation, we felt that in the absence of any documents showing the ceding of Murrawarri country and Nation to the Crown of Great Britain and Northern Island, we decided in 2013 to declare our continued Independence and Statehood of the Murrawarri Nation and our peoples.

Murrawarri Apical Ancestry



Murrawarri Declaration of Continued Independence and Statehood

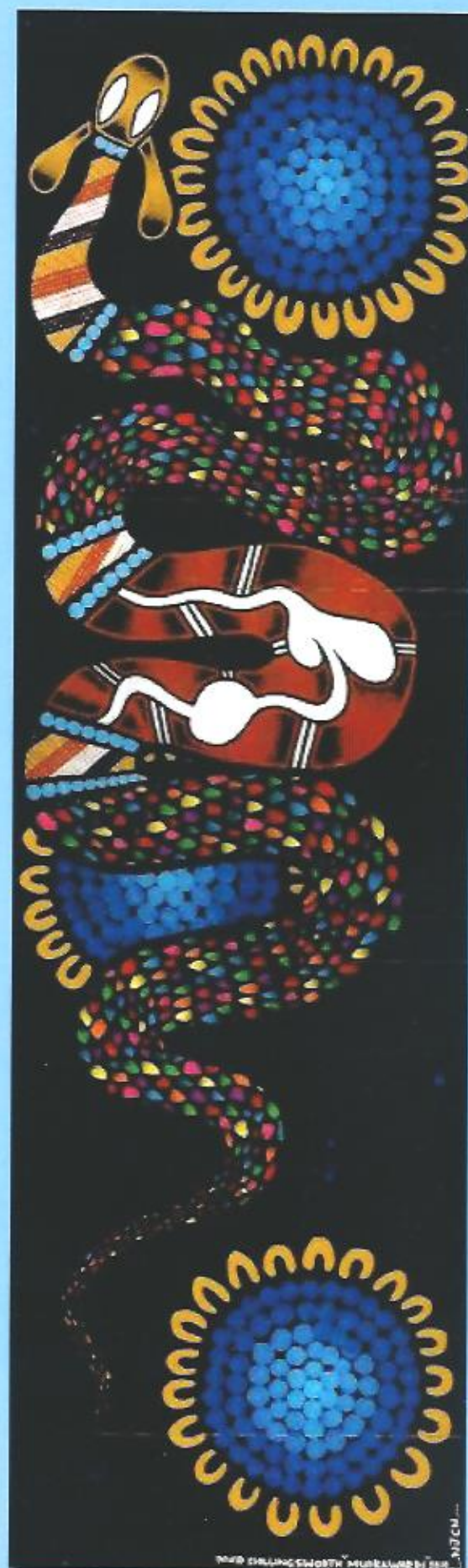
In 20013 the Murrawarri peoples declared their continued independence and statehood. The Murrawarri Ancient Lands are the Birthplace of the Murrawarri People and the Creation of the Murrawarri Nation. Here our physical, Spiritual, Cultural, and Political identity as a people and Nation was shaped. The Lands, Subsurface, Natural Resources, Waters and Airspace, was created for us to live in harmony with and care for by Pitangulu (Bida-Ngulu) our Creator. Here we first attained to Statehood, through laws and customs, which were and still are observed and practiced. Our people lived and still live in harmony with nature, the landscape and our Mother Earth.

After attempts by the colonisers to be exiled from our land through unjust and illegal acts by the British and to control our Lands, Subsurface, Natural Resources, Waters and Airspace, erase our language, wipe out our culture and cultural practices and to remove us off our lands to missions on other peoples' country, the Murrawarri people kept faith and physical connection to Country throughout our Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for the restoration within our Ancient Lands of our Spiritual, Cultural and Political Freedom.

Accordingly, we the members of the Murrawarri nation, declare our continued independent statehood on behalf of our peoples, and, by virtue of our natural ancestral and inherent right and on the strength of the resolution of our people hereby declare the continuation of the Murrawarri state, to be hereinafter known as the (Murrawarri Republic).



- **THE Murrawarri PEOPLE OF ALL GENERATIONS DECLARE** that we have never ceded our Sovereignty, Dominion or Ultimate Title over our ancient homeland nor did we give permission through treaty or any other agreement for the colonisers to enter our ancient land and for our Mother Earth to be violated through progressive illegal acts, practices or policies of the British Crown, Former British Colonies, The state of New South Wales and Queensland or the Australian Federal Governments.
- **WE THE Murrawarri PEOPLES DECLARE** that our people have maintained a physical, spiritual and cultural connection to our Ancient Lands, Subsurface, Natural Resources, Waters and Airspace and we did not cede our Sovereignty Dominion and Ultimate Title through any process of treaty or cession nor through any act of war declared on the Murrawarri Nation and its peoples by the British Crown, Governments or their servants.
- **WE DECLARE** that the Murrawarri Ancient Lands were occupied by Murrawarri peoples at the time of the colonisers taking up large pastoral leases granted by illegal acts by British, New South Wales and Queensland Governments on behalf of the Crown.
- **WE DECLARE** that, there will be a Peoples Council and a Peoples Administration established until the elections of the regular authority of the State.
- **WE DECLARE** that, with effect from the moment dated 30th day of March 2013, until the establishment of the elected, regular authorities of the State in accordance with the DRAFT Constitution which shall be adopted by a referendum of Murrawarri peoples' not later than the 1st April 2022, the People's Council shall act as a Provisional Council of State, and its executive organ, the People's Administration, shall be the Provisional Government of the Murrawarri REPUBLIC.
- **THE Murrawarri REPUBLIC** will be open for Murrawarri peoples, Non Murrawarri people currently residing within the borders of our ancient lands and others who wish to live in our country.
- **THE Murrawarri REPUBLIC WILL FOSTER THE DEVELOPMENT** of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on spiritual, cultural, freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by our peoples. It will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of culture, religion, conscience, language, and education; it will safeguard our sacred places handed down to us by our Creator and our Ancestors; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.
- **THE Murrawarri REPUBLIC** is prepared to cooperate with the agencies and representatives of the Crown of the Great British, State and Federal Governments of Australia through their nominated representatives and the United Nations in implementing the peaceful transition and development of our Sovereign State as an equal in this world.
- **WE APPEAL** to the United Nations to assist the Murrawarri people in the building-up of our State and to receive the Murrawarri REPUBLIC into the world family that is represented by the United Nations.
- **WE EXTEND** our hand to all neighbouring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighbourliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and understanding.
- **THE Murrawarri REPUBLIC** is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of other Ancestral Nations within the Continent of Australia.
- **WE APPEAL** to non Murrawarri constituents to embrace this DECLARATION OF STATEHOOD FOR THE Murrawarri NATION and accept the formation of the Murrawarri REPUBLIC and consent to its constitution.



MURDOCH UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

Murrawarri Boundaries

We have always been the Sovereign owners a vast track of land which straddles what is now known as the New South Wales and Queensland borders. There are many descriptions of Murrawarri country by many anthropologists and writers since the mid to late 1800's and into the 1900's, including William Ridley (1873), Edward Curr. H Mathews, (1898, 1902/3, 1886-7, 1905.1905/8/9), Alfred Ratcliff Brown (1918), L Eherlich (1922), Norman Tindale (1940) Arthur Capell (1956/7), O'Grady, Wuran and Hale (1966), Jimmy Barker and Janette Mathews (1977), Judy Trefry (1971), Thomas W Blake (1979), Max Kamien (1978), Gavan Breen (1981) Hazel McKellar (1984), Annette Schmidt (1981) Lynette Oates (1988/1992)

Steven Davis (1993), David Horton (1994) and Mary Gill (1996), Murrawarri Declaration of Continued Independence and Statehood (2013). There have been many maps drawn describing the Nations and tribes of Southwest QLD and Northwest NSW. The best descriptions is described by Mathews, but is not entirely correct, where he describes in a paper: Notes on the Aboriginal Tribes of Queensland" in relations to the Sociology of the Murrawarri Tribe at page 52:

In an article contributed to this journal in 1902, I supplied a grammar and vocabulary of the Murrawarri language. This tribe occupies an extensive region in the southern frontier of Queensland, between the Warrego and the Culgoa Rivers, reaching also some distance into New South Walesⁱⁱⁱ

Others that put the boundary of the Murrawarri Nation as far west to the Paroo River and east to the Narran River. Jimmy Barker describes it extending to the Paroo in the Two Worlds of Jimmy Barker, Lynette Oates also uses Jimmy Barkers description in her publication the Muruwari (MOO-ROO-WARRI) Dictionary when describing the Murrawarri Language area shown in the following map. Later Oates extends the Murrawarri boundary east based on a drawing by B.R Hymans^{iv}.

However, others like Max Kamien, Tindale, A. R. Brown, and many others have produced maps and descriptions that show the Murrawarri Nation existed between the Warrego and Culgoa rivers with some even placing us further east. The explorer Thomas Mitchell and others records the language being spoken at the junction of the Narran and Barwon rivers and in Queensland also at the junction of the Balonne and Narran River in his journey into Queensland.

After careful consideration of all of the writings, publications and materials the Murrawarri peoples decided in 2013 that the final boundary of the Murrawarri Nation is to be described as follows, which is in line with the Murrawarri Declaration of Independence and Statehood:

"The Murrawarri boundaries are described as commencing at the junction of the Warrego and Darling rivers at GPS coordinate 30 24'14.75"S 145 20'51.06"E travels north northeast along the Darling river to the junction of the Cato Creek GPS coordinate 29 52'48.39" S 146 46'21.61"E. It then travels north joining the Bokhara river where it continues north to the junction of the Bokhara river and Birrie river, it then continues northwest through GPS coordinate 28 18'18.63"S

146 32'12.81"E to GPS coordinate 28 15'31.34"S 146 18'28.48"E then dips slightly to the southwest to GPS 28 18'53.21"S 146 11'57.83"E then turns westerly direction to GPS coordinate 28 17'13.18"S 145 05'33.07"E continues to GPS coordinate 28 09'29.00"S 145 52'11.85"E to the northwest. Then follows the Warrego river in a southerly direction back to GPS coordinate 30 24'14.75"S 145 20 51.06"E which is the junction of the Warrego and Darling rivers".

The boundary is also shown in the following maps and where the Nation is in relation to the rest of Australia:



Our Murrawarri Values

There are both tangible and intangible values. Tangible values are the values that are seen and intangible values are the unseen values that are practiced unknowingly. Both values can be found in the following environments.

- **Social:** Our Social values include family values of looking after each other, developing and maintaining social and family activities. They are no different to other social values.
- **Cultural:** Our cultural values, are a call for thinking, learning, sharing, and for keeping our culture alive for our future generations' health, wellbeing and connection to country.
- **Spiritual:** Spiritual elements cannot be seen, such as belief, integrity, responsibility, respect and recognition that we as individuals and family groups practise unknowingly, to strengthen our tradition, values and activities, our connection to country, and our spiritual beliefs. We can have a holistic wellbeing of mind, body and spirit, these are spiritual values.
- **Economic:** Our economic values have changed over time. We have moved more towards modern economics. These may include trading traditional arts and crafts to other more contemporary trade and commerce.

- **Environmental:** Our environmental values have not changed. The values of caring for the environment has also not changed, we still have a deep association with the environment and it for us. We still value what it can provide and the respect we have for it. Like mother earth it gives us our survival as a people and the fact she can provide for our people even in the hard times.

Cultural and environmental sensitivity, safety and cultural intelligence are very important aspects of Murrawarri values, which impacts heavily on behaviour, habits and respect. Encompassed in these values also are things like Ethical Leadership, Respecting others, and observing Protocols while doing business on and off country.



Our Murrawarri Cultural Protocols (and Sensitivity)

- **Murrawarri State Protocols:** State Protocols are the Nations protocols and are set down for state visits by Leaders and Ministers of State. These are set out in the state visits protocol policy, which includes how visitors are to be received and how they are treated while on country.
- **Murrawarri Local Community Protocols:** Community Protocols are established by the community and are administered by the community for visits to community by visitors and guests. These may include meetings or conferences on country in communities etc.
- **Acknowledgment of Country, Elders and Spirit:** We would like all who visit our country to acknowledge, Pitangulu (Bida-Ngulu), who is the creator of our country, our environment including all the lands, waters and all animals and plants within the environment, and our people. Our elders past present and future.
- **Minute of silence:** A minute silence is to show our respect for the old people who have gone before us and their contribution to our Nation.
- **Smoking Ceremony:** Smoking Ceremony is performed to take the bad spirits away from a person when they enter our country and to keep our spirits on country when they leave.
- **Respect:** While people are on country, and within our communities, we would expect them to respect the environment, the elders and the people.
Specific sites sacred for men and women, cannot be accessed by the opposite gender, to ensure cultural safety and to protect cultural intelligence and cultural sensitivity. We also wish people a safe journey when leaving country by the saying (Go Well).
- **Respect goes both ways:** we would expect our citizens to respect other people when they visit our country, as we would want them to treat us, while we are on their country. We would expect people to observe our laws and would expect our citizens to respect and observe the laws of other people's country which they are visiting or calling their home.



Murrawarri Rights

The Nation has three sets of rights, that of Mother Earth (Our Land Our Mother), the rights of the individual people who live in and on Country and International rights as a Nation and peoples. These rights go back to the beginning of time and are enshrined in International Law.

Rights of Mother Earth

Whereas Mother Earth has rights as she is the giver of sustenance for life for the people. She provides for the people and she keeps us safe in her hands. She is sometimes the giver of strength and support for all life. She gives us good seasons and seasons that test our commitment and resolve; however, she has rights that must be preserved and protected. She has a right of Protection, Preservation and Replenishment. She has a right not to be violated and ripped of her natural resources to an extent to where those natural resources cannot be replenished through a natural process of growth or rehabilitation, and she also has a right to speak on her own behalf.

Rights and freedoms of the individual

Every person who resides within the Nation is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, that is to say, has the right, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinions, color, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest, to each and all of the following freedoms of *life, liberty, cultural identity, security of the person, the enjoyment of property and the protection of the law, the freedom of conscience, of expression and of peaceful assembly and association, and the respect for his private and family life*. The subsequent provisions of this Part have effect for the purpose of affording protection to those rights and freedoms, subject to such limitations of that protection as are contained in those provisions, being limitations designed to ensure that the enjoyment of those rights and freedoms by a person does not prejudice the rights and freedoms of other persons or the public interest.

International Rights and Freedoms

Aside from the rights under the Murrawarri Constitution. The Nation also has international rights which have been set down by the families of the world through the United Nations.

These rights are set out in the following Conventions, Covenants and Treaties to which the Commonwealth of Australia is party to:

- Resolution 1541 (XV) VI;
- Resolution 61/295;
- Resolution 1/2 of 29 June 2006;
- Resolution 61/178 of 2006;
- A/R/Res 69/2 2014;
- United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples;
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- Kyoto Protocol;
- Convention on Biological Diversity;
- Ramsar Convention;
- Second International Decade on the World's indigenous People; and
- Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination.

Our Traditional Lore/Law

Lore

The Murrawarri Lore is the Kangaroo lore. The Murrawarri People acknowledged and followed the Lore, from how our bloodlines are separated, where a person gets their totems, and where that right comes from. Lore connects us to the land, sky, rivers and the environment. It is where our stories, responsibilities to each other, and the environment we live in come from. It gives us our stories and connections to certain places for ceremonial purposes for both men and women. It connects us to the afterlife and our connections to our ancestor in the sky camp. This is the Lore of the land. It also informed the decision-making processes within the Mayi's/Clans/Hordes and the overall Nation. It also informed International relations or what could be called Continental relations (nation to nation relations).

Law

Law is the enforcement of lore. Law are the rules set out by the Lore such as, who could marry whom and when, who could visit special places and when, who could make decision, who is responsible for certain ceremony or dance and how they can use it etc. (i.e. Rules/Legislation. The Tribal Council was responsible for the enforcement of the rules/Legislation. If the rules/Legislation was broken then the appropriate punishment would be administered according to that rule or piece of Legislation.

Continental Lore/Law

When we meet with other Nations for Regional Ceremony the old men would attempt to arrange the marriages in a way in which the nation could gain influence within the government structure of that Nation. The nation and its peoples would have certain rights and interest while participating in Ceremony. One such place is the Narran Lakes where we had responsibility under the Continental lore/law to look after a certain part of the lake while there on ceremony. The Tribal Councils enforced the laws that are set down by the lore.



Murrawarri Contemporary Law and Leadership

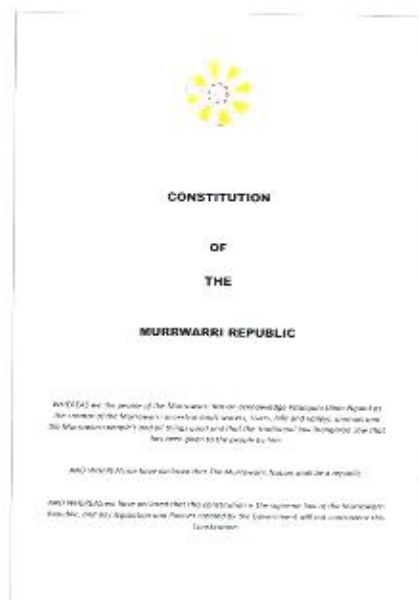
The Murrawarri Nation had decided to manage our own affairs through a process self-determination and self-Government which is in line with several United Nations Resolutions such as 1541 (XV) VI, Resolution 61/295, Resolution 1/2 of 29 June 2006 and Resolution 61/178 of 2006. The United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples adopted by the United Nations and Australia, and to govern the Nation under our own Constitution.

In 2013 the Murrawarri people decided that for the Nation to be accepted by the families of the World, we would need to provide leadership and our laws would need to conform to the current international accepted standard of Government and Leadership. Therefore, when the people declared our continued independence and statehood, we outlined how the Nation was going to achieve this International requirement of Government and Leadership.

The declaration sets out how the Nation's leadership was to be structured in the interim and into the future. The declaration established a Peoples Council and a Peoples Administration until the elections of the regular authority of the State. The Constitution sets out a more permanent Government Structure for the Nation into the future. The Peoples Councils job is to establish the administration of the Nation and to negotiate **Nation to Nation** with other Governments including State and Federal Governments of Australia and in the international arena.

The Constitution sets out the regular Governance structure of the Nation from the first election. The government of the Nation will consist of a President, the Tribal Council and the Cabinet. There shall be a President of the Republic, who shall be elected by Peoples who are citizens of the Republic every 5 years commencing from the first election of the President. The Tribal

Council of the Republic shall have 54 members with an equal standing of male and female representation. The Tribal Council will have representatives appointed by their respective ancestral family groups through a fair and just election process within their respective Mayi/horde and family group. The Tribal Council will also consist of representatives elected from the Non-ancestral citizens (two from each Mayi/horde one male and one female). There shall be a Cabinet established and will consist of: The President, Speaker and Deputy Speaker and Ministers appointed by the President with advice from the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Tribal Council to fulfill the ministry which will make up the Cabinet. A member of the Cabinet shall, before entering upon the duties of his office, take and subscribe the oath, they shall not hold an office of profit in the service of the Republic or of a statutory corporation.



Our Nation's Vision

Vision Statement

The Nation's vision is to provide for the freedom of our Nation and our People by becoming Self-Determining and Self-Governing.

Mission Statement

The mission is for the Peoples Council to provide positive changes through the development of Legislation, Policy, Procedures and Programs, whilst working with the Australian, States Governments and international partners on a Nation to Nation basis, in a culturally appropriate manner that is in the best interest of the Nation and its Peoples.

In achieving the Vision and Mission Statement, we need to ensure cultural sensitivity and cultural safety protocols are established and adhered to in a manner that protects all Nation Sovereign Data, Cultural Property, Intellectual Property and Copyright.

Our Aspirations

- **Develop and maintain good government and governance of the nation through transparent and ethical leadership:** Good leadership is the key to good government and Leadership. Strong leaders have good ethics and transparency. They must be there for the People and the Nation. We aim under this aspiration to develop and maintain good legislation, policy and programs that will benefit the Murrawarri people and our Nation. We aim to achieve this through the Peoples Council and Peoples Administration, and later through the Murrawarri Parliament.
- **Maintain a strong and healthy Murrawarri culture for our people and nation:** Our identity is defined by our culture and our wellbeing is dependent on having a strong and thriving culture within our community, and to have our Murrawarri culture valued by the wider community.
- **Reinforce our strong and valued spiritual connections to our country and spiritual world:** Spiritual elements cannot be seen, such as belief, integrity, responsibility, respect and recognition that we as individuals and family groups practise unknowingly, to strengthen our tradition and cultural values and activities, our connection to country, and our spiritual beliefs. As Murrawarri people, we can have a holistic wellbeing of mind, body and spirit.
- **Maintain and further develop our strong social environment for the Murrawarri nation:** The social fabric of a nation is its most important asset. We need to build and maintain a very strong social environment for the Murrawarri peoples and the Nation. This include the social interaction with other Nations Governments and their peoples.
- **Provide for sustainable economic development opportunities within and outside the nation:** Economic development and sustainability are the cornerstone to any Nations development and prosperity. We aim through this aspiration to develop a vibrant economic environment for the Nation and our peoples through innovative legislation, policy, programs and partnerships.
- **Develop and maintain a healthy environment for our people and the nation:** A healthy environment is good for the country and the people. We have lived with and cared for the environment for thousands of years. A healthy environment requires a commitment from the Murrawarri peoples to the rights of mother earth the environment and landscape created for us by our creator Pitangulu (Bida-Ngulu). We aim through this aspiration to replenish our waterways, take over the management of our National Parks, and work with the people, the Commonwealth, and State Governments to restore and look after our environment our way.

Our Strategic Development Goals and Priorities

Governmental Goals and Priorities

- Reform the Murrawarri Peoples Council
- Establish the Peoples Administration
- Refurbish and update website
- Develop online citizen register
- Scope out a business case for the establishment of an administration and cultural centre at North Bourke
- Develop a number of Murrawarri Information, Cultural and Language centres with permission from the various First Nations in areas with populations of Murrawarri People
- Develop policy and programs to achieve our aspirations
- Establish the Murrawarri Sovereign Trust
- Establish Diplomatic relations with other First Nations and State and Federal Governments
- Develop partnerships with philanthropic and other organisations
- Develop Diplomatic relationships with other International First Nation groups
- Continue to push for inclusion on the United Nations Decolonisation List
- Continue to be a member of the Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations Union of Sovereign First Nations
- To continue to observe the Murrawarri obligations under the Northern Basin Treaty of Unity
- To work with NBAN Nations in the advancement of the articles of the Treaty of Unity

Cultural Goals and Priorities

- Develop a back to country program to reconnect our people to country
- Develop education programs which enables us to keep our stories alive and keep our culture alive
- Develop a healthy country healthy culture program
- Develop a cultural exchange program with other First Nations

Our Strategic Development Goals and Priorities

Spiritual Goals and Priorities

- Assist Murrawarri people to be free to choose our identity of who we are and where we come from
- Reconnect and maintain the connection with our ancestor in the sky camp
- Maintain our belonging to Murrawarri country
- Maintain Murrawarri cultural practises on country and in the wider world

Social Goals and Priorities

- Establish processes that can see our people being able to live in two worlds
- Establish a data technology platform which connects our people no matter where they choose to live
- Develop an Murrawarri appropriate education system within the Nation
- Develop and integrated language program across a number of mediums



Our Strategic Development Goals and Priorities

Economic Goals and Priorities

- To develop Murrawarri native food horticulture industry in the Nation
- To develop Murrawarri cultural and tourism opportunities in the Nation
- To approach IL&SC to purchase properties and water within the Nation
- To establish a Murrawarri Sovereign Trust Fund
- To establish intra Nation and International Trade
- To establish Murrawarri owned nurseries and fish farms
- To establish individually based enterprises for Murrawarri people
- To establish Murrawarri Credit Union



Environmental Goals and Priorities

- Write environmental legislation that included water for the Murrawarri Nation
- Develop environmental policy and programs to achieve a healthy environment within the Nation
- To develop Murrawarri water policy to ensure water runs through the Nation on a regular basis (**Cultural Flows**)
- To work with other First Nations and the State and Federal Governments to create healthy environments and waterways for our current and future generations
- Work with State Governments to manage the nations parks and nature reserves under a Murrawarri cultural management program
- To create programs so our people can look after country
- To work with our partners to be resourced to look after our country
- To work with other First Nations to ensure First Nations water laws are observed | and maintain (i.e. Water running through our country at least four times a year
- To own and manage all of the protected areas within the Murrawarri Nation



Towns, Communities and Places Of Significance



North Bourke

North Bourke is situated on the western side of the Darling River on the Kidman Way which runs south to north. It is 10 kilometres from the township of Bourke and has a population of about **150** people mostly, non Murrawarri decedents.

It is the gateway to the real outback and many tourists pass through the town on their way north and south during autumn, winter and spring, on their way to the Back of Bourke, while travelling to places like Wanaaring and Fords Bridge and even Hungerford and Cameron's Corner. They also travel north into Queensland and south out of Queensland. These include grey nomads, general road traffic and visitors for pleasure and business. There is some Crown owned land available and some land with no titles that could be negotiated with the New South Wales Government, which could be transferred to the Nation and its peoples.

It offers the best opportunity for the Murrawarri Nation to establish a seat of Government and Administration Centre. It also offers opportunities to establish a Research and Development Centre, Cultural Centre and Murrawarri Cultural Tourism with tours from North Bourke to Leadnapper Nature Reserve and other areas of interest within the Nation.

It could also serve as a transport distribution hub through air freight of native food industry which could be developed within the Nation. North Bourke is expanding with residential estates being opened up and many people moving from the other side of the river to the town.

Current Services and Benefits

The town have infrastructure that can be utilised in the growth and future development of the Nation, which currently provides services and benefits to both North Bourke and the Town of Bourke itself.

Towns has infrastructure such as:

- A fully functional airport
- Two motels
- A caravan park
- Takeaway café
- Ovals and sporting ground
- Town services
- Tourism opportunities
- Major cotton farm and cotton gin
- Packing sheds and some horticulture enterprises
- A small meat abattoir has just been built north of the town
- It is the home of the paddle steamer the JANDRA and has an art gallery
- Emergency Service Centre

Future Services and Benefits

- Murrawarri cultural tourism
- Establish a native food horticulture research centre
- Employment for Murrawarri peoples
- Enterprise development opportunities for Murrawarri people
- Regeneration of a part of our country
- Murrawarri ranger program
- Murrawarri seat of Government
- Murrawarri people's administration centre
- A range of services administered from the centre such as health, education, employment and other services

Deficiencies in Services and Benefits

- The ownership of land within the town
- Money to develop the Goals and Priorities for the town and site
- Skilled people to carry out the administration required
- Murrawarri descendant's living in the town
- Support from State Federal and Local Government
- We don't have control of the Crown land around the town
- Partnerships with local industry

Place Of Significance: Port of Bourke Maritime Heritage Trail

The site was previously a camping ground for Murrawarri People. It is located some three kilometre south of North Bourke, along the Darling River. The site provided services and benefits such as: water and food, Spiritual Services, Gatherings between neighbours, and serves as the border between Murrawarri and Ngiyampaa. The site was also a place for corroborees between different Nations to share song and dance. To also trade and barter goods and materials. The area was looked after by Murrawarri people through customary Lore/Law. Whilst the Darling River was a shared responsibility of Murrawarri and Ngiyampaa peoples, both Nations had a responsibility to let water flow to First Nations further downstream under Continental Lore/Law.

After the European invasion of our Country, the Murrawarri people were forced off the land, and the site was cleared of native vegetation for a golf course. The area was a tourist destination. The movie "Robbery under arms", shot on this site and near May's Bend a few kilometre up river. It was the first film to be made with First Nations people.

The site is now under the management of the local council. It has been named Port of Bourke Maritime Heritage Trail. There is a dirt road on the site which is inaccessible during the wet. Signs that are placed regarding the heritage information of the site are not correct, and no land management program is in place that we know of.

This site has potential for tourism and truth telling by the Murrawarri people. It is a site which is being used to highlight the colonial history of the town, including the paddle steamer period. However, it is also near a place of conflict between the second white explorer Thomas Mitchell and the Murrawarri people. It is said that Mitchell established Fort Bourke to defend himself and his party from what they called the Natives.



Objectives for this site:

• **Spiritual:**

- To re-establish Murrawarri links to the river red gums on the site which will allow people to re-connect to country in a spiritual way.
- Maintain a flow of waters to revitalise the site, and re-establish native flora and fauna in and around the site which can be used for spiritual purposes again.

• **Cultural:**

- To introduce regenerative land management program on this site, which includes cultural burns in specific areas, and other cultural land management practices.
- To correct the signage at the site which explain Murrawarri history of the site and Murrawarri cultural protocol including the non Murrawarri history.
- To use the place for cultural storytelling.
- To reconnect people back to country through a number of programs including education, employment and other back to country programs.

• **Environmental:**

- To develop a program which will provide for the regeneration and re-vegetation of the area with native flora and fauna over the next ten years.
- To establish the site as a Murrawarri interpretation garden which explain and highlight Murrawarri flora and fauna values and uses.

• **Social:**

- To identify this site as a place for Murrawarri people to socialise.
- To nominate this site as an Aboriginal Place
- Establish a program which will allow for the construction of facilities which will include picnic areas, and toilets around the site

• **Economic:**

- Develop a program which will enable cultural interpretation tours of the site.
- Work with agencies to establish a Murrawarri cultural, music and ceremonial festival which is ongoing to showcase Murrawarri Nation's culture and heritage.

Enngonia

Enngonia is situated on the eastern side of the Warrego River on the Kidman Way which runs south to north. It is 90 kilometre from the township of Bourke and has a population of 300 people mostly Murrawarri and Budjiti decedents. It is the border between the Murrawarri and Budjiti Nations. For years both mobs lived in harmony and shared the fruits that have been provided by Mother Nature.

Most of the Aboriginal peoples live at Clara Hart Village which is owned and managed by the Murrawarri Land Council. Other people live in the township in either privately owned or rented accommodation. There is a mixture of Non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people living in the town itself.

A Murrawarri and Budjiti elder before he passed away told ecologist Peter Dykes in a workshop about Cultural Values on Plants in Western NSW, that if it was not for the hop bush the people would not be living at Enngonia. It is the essence of the people's very existence.

Current Services and Benefits

Currently there is:

- School
- Ovals and Sporting Ground
- Tourism Opportunities
- Police Station
- Pub which sells some food
- Race Course
- Local Land Council Office
- Ambulance Station
- Bush Tucker Garden
- Some Health Service Visit

Future Services and Benefits

- Murrawarri cultural tourism
- Establish a Murrawarri native food horticulture Industry
- Employment for Murrawarri peoples
- Enterprise development opportunities for Murrawarri people
- Regeneration of a part of our country
- Murrawarri Caring for Country program

Deficiencies in Services and Benefits

- Lack of Skills
- Money to develop the Goals and Priorities for the town and site
- Support from Local, State and Federal Governments
- We don't have control of the Crown land around the town
- Regular Health Service
- People have to drive 90 kilometres to Bourke to do shopping
- Lack of transport services



Place Of Significance: Warrego River

The Warrego River is the border between Budjiti and Murrawarri Nations. Previously a camping site for the Murrawarri and Budjiti Peoples, the Warrego River provided water and food for those inhabiting the site. Ceremonies were held at the site, where knowledge of the land was shared. It was also a site for corroborees, bartering and trading, between Murrawarri People and Budjiti People.

As the boundary, both Budjiti and Murrawarri people have a shared responsibility in looking after the Warrego River and its ravines, as per the customary laws of the land. Both Nation peoples must adhere to the shared cultural protocols when at the site, and can only take what they needed from the river and the land, so that nations downstream can enjoy the resources as well.

Enngonia continues to serve as a township for both Budjiti and Murrawarri Peoples. The site is no longer a camping site, but is an area for social activities, like fishing, picnicking and gatherings for the public. The Enngonia Primary school also utilises the site to teach the students about the local environment, flora and fauna. The Warrego River, runs dry during extreme dry periods, like the ongoing drought, and people are unable to fish during this period and have to rely of food bought from the supermarket in Bourke or the local pub/store.



Objectives for this site:

• **Spiritual:**

- To develop programs in conjunction with the Murrawarri Local Aboriginal Land Council and REDI to ensure the maintenance of population of lignum and hop bush.
- Work with QLD Government and the Budjiti, Kunja and Bidjara Nations to ensure no development is undertaken upstream in line with the four pack Water Resource Plan. This will ensure water connectivity is achieved for spiritual purpose for both the Murrawarri and Budjiti peoples.

• **Cultural:**

- To ensure gatherings at the site continue to continue the teaching of our young peoples
- Establish a back to the Warrego River program to bring people back to country.
- Work with family to record the oral history with Auntie Ruby and other elders on pre-contact (relations between Budjiti and Murrawarri), traditional laws and language.
- Develop a cultural conservation program to ensure language and culture is passed onto the next generation.

• **Environmental:**

- In conjunction with the Murrawarri Local Aboriginal Land Council and REDI establish site maintenance program for the site, which provides for an enjoyable and safe place for people to visit.

• **Social:**

- To manage the space, to ensure that it is clean and safe for children to access.
- To look at whether alcohol is an issue for the town of Enngonia.
- To take elders out on country for day trips.

• **Economic:**

- To use the site for Murrawarri cultural tours and can provide opportunities for local organisations to provide catering for visits and to provide interpretation service about the site.
- To work with the Murrawarri Land Council to expand their current bush products program into a commercially viable enterprise.

Weilmoringle

Weilmoringle is a very small community situated on the Culgoa River about 100 Kilometres north of Brewarrina in NSW. It is the heart of Murrawarri Country. It has a population of around 50 people which live in the village. There is a small store which sells groceries and a primary school. Weilmoringle is the last of what they used to call station camps in New South Wales. It is situated on Weilmoringle Station which was originally 500 thousand acres but is now been reduced to only 42 thousand acres. The run was taken up in 1861. Murrawarri people have been living and working on the property since then. The property was purchased by the Indigenous Land Corporation in 2000 for the Murrawarri peoples and is now owned and managed by the Gundugari Murrawarri Aboriginal Corporation.

It is 20 Kilometres from the Culgoa National Park which could provide opportunities for Murrawarri people.

People say that Weilmoringle is the heart of Murrawarri Country and that it is the Spiritual home of our people. This is where we come to regenerate our spirit and our soles. It is the home of many Murrawarri people and where many lived and grow up.

Current Services and Benefits

Currently there is:

- Store
- School
- Local Land Council Office
- Tennis Court
- Weilmoringle Station
- Community Park
- Community Development Program
- Works on local properties
- School bus service
- Health services

Current Benefits which could be provided

- Cultural Tourism
- The development of a Native Food and other Horticultural industries
- Employment for Murrawarri People
- Enterprise development opportunities for Murrawarri People
- Regeneration of a part of our country
- Working together with National Parks to provide a range of opportunities, including employment prospects, and land management practices
- Development of an aquaculture enterprise and other cottage industries

Deficiencies in Services and Benefits

- Funding to develop the Goals and Priorities for the town and site
- Skilled and qualified people to carry out the required tasks
- Support from Local, State and Federal Government
- Community transportation
- Support from the local land council
- High school education and support
- Talent and career development and relevant opportunities
- Local community enterprise
- Cultural events
- Cultural and language awareness in school
- Technology and language hub
- Access to community facilities
- Community facilities (i.e. swimming pool)



Place Of Significance: Gooroman Swamp

Gooroman Swamp is a very important site to the Murrawarri People. It is a place where a range of food sources can be found during good times. Uncle Robin Campbell describes how he used to go out into the swamp and collect bird's eggs in a bark canoe that his father cut in 1902. It is also an area where large river red gums grow which have an exceptional Spiritual value to the Murrawarri. It is where the old people would go and sit under the gum and speak to our old people in the Sky Camp and the old people in the Sky Camp would speak back to them through the leave.

This was the communication method of our people with the afterlife.

This site is also within a voluntary Indigenous Protected Area which is managed by Gundangri Aboriginal Corporation for conservation and Cultural protection. It will be continued to be protected because it is on land owned by the Murrawarri people and the Nation.



Objectives for this site:

• **Spiritual:**

- Re-establish and maintain condition of culturally significant ceremonial, spiritual and exceptional value plant species (as per Dykes et al. 2006) to allow continued practice of cultural activities.

• **Cultural:**

- Improved condition of water dependent riverine and floodplain plant species of exceptional cultural importance, including Wirrara (lignum, *Duma florulenta*), Thawinj-thawinj (Nardoo, *Marsilea drumondii*), Kimay (yam, *Triglochin* sp.).

• **Environmental:**

- **Improved condition of floodplain and wetland plant species of ceremonial and spiritual significance by 2020, including Kuruwa (river red gum, *Eucalyptus camaludensis*) and Wumbul (tea tree/swamp paperbark, *Melaleuca trichostachya*).**
- Increased abundance of key fish harvest species (especially cod (*Maccullochella peeli*), but also yellow-belly (*Macquaria ambigua*), and catfish (*Tandanus tandanus*).
- Increased cultural management activity including seed collection and fire management.

• **Social:**

- Increased use of country for intergenerational training and community participation in cultural activities.

• **Economic:**

- Establish an agreement on cultural management of water for cultural, socio-economic and Aboriginal environmental outcomes.
- Conduct Cultural tours to the site.

Murrawarri National Parks and Ceremonial Connections

There are five protected areas within the Murrawarri Nation. The Ledknapper Nature Reserve is a 47864ha reserve which is protected and managed by the NSW Government through the NSW National Parks act and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Culgoa National Park is a 352.4 km² park which is also protected and managed by the NSW Government. One part of the Toolralie National Park and the Culgoa Floodplains National Park are within the Murrawarri Nation, however not formally recognised by the NSW and QLD Government through the National Parks and Wildlife Service in both states. The Weilmoringle IPA is a three thousand five hundred Acre area situated on Weilmoringle Station and is protected under Australian Federal legislation and policy. It is a non-funded Indigenous Protected Area which is managed by the Gundanguri Murrawarri Aboriginal Corporation.

The Murrawarri people and the Nation through regional ceremony have connections to the places like the Narran Lakes, Brewarrina Fish Traps, Cawarra Lake which are not in Murrawarri country but are still

sites of significance to the Murrawarri Nation and its people. All of these areas are also protected by Federal or State legislation and policy. There is a section on the Southwestern section of the Narran Lakes which is recognised as the Murrawarri camping ground. There are also burial ground which through Lore/Law the Murrawarri people are responsible for maintaining, however the State only recognises the Nation where the Reserve is on and not the many connections through Lore/Law and customs. This would have been the same with the Brewarrina Fish Traps and Cawarra Lake.

In 2009 the Murrawarri people entered into an MOU with the NSW Government around the management of both the Lead napper Nature Reserve and the Culgoa National Park. The committee of eleven meet at least four times a year to assist in the plan of management of both areas. Currently we do not have arrangements with the QLD Government on the management of the Culgoa Floodplains National Park or with the NSW Government in relation to the Toolralie National

Park. There are several sites within both the reserve and the park that are of significance to the Nation and the people.

There are also other sites of significance for the Murrawarri people within these other parks such as Tego Springs in the Culgoa Floodplains National Park which the Murrawarri Nation would like to own and manage.

The Murrawarri Nations goal is to manage these protected areas under Murrawarri Lore/Law and the Murrawarri Contemporary Law under our Constitution, Legislation, Policies and Programs.

Place Of Significance: Gerera Springs

The Gerera Springs is a natural groundwater hole, which is part of the Mundaguddah dreaming story. It is one of the three water holes created when the rainbow serpent came up onto the surface. The site is both spiritually and culturally significant for the Murrawarri People. Ceremonies were carried out at the site, where knowledge transfer takes place.

Murrawarri People have known Gerera Springs to be a water source that never runs dry, and would travel to the site during extreme dry periods. They would use the site as a stopover, whilst traveling across the country. Other nations, such as Budjiti, are also allowed to use the site whilst traveling across Murrawarri country during Ceremony.

Gerera Springs is now part of the Ledknapper Nature Reserve under National Parks, and access to the area is now restricted to the public, and fenced off to prevent pest from entering the site. This has however prevented native animals from entering the site to reach the water hole. Murrawarri People can enter the site after informing National Parks, and are part of the co-management of the reserve. A native plant regeneration program has been started by the National Parks. There are plans for an interpretation sign to be placed at the site and the site to be used for future cultural education programs.

Current Services and Benefits

- Limited cultural education services
- Limited access to the site by Murrawarri people
- The site is protected
- Rehabilitation work is being carried out on the site
- Site is used for visits by the Weilmoringle School

Current Benefits which could be provided

- Murrawarri cultural tourism
- Regeneration of a part of our country
- Future Cultural Education site
- The protection of the Mundaguddah at the site

Deficiencies in Services and Benefits

- The ownership of land
- Total control of the site
- Accommodation at or near the site
- Full management of the site



Objectives for this site:

- **Spiritual:**

- To ensure that the story of the Mundaguddah is being told by using this site for tours and education camps.
-

- **Cultural:**

- To introduce regenerative land management on this site, which includes cultural burns in specific areas, and other cultural land management practices.
 - To correct the signage at the site which explain Murrawarri history of the site and Murrawarri cultural protocol.
 - To use the place for cultural storytelling.
 - To reconnect people back to country through a number of programs including education, employment and other back to country programs.
-

- **Environmental:**

- To develop a program which will regeneration and re-vegetation of the area with native flora and fauna over the next ten years.
 - To employ and train Murrawarri rangers to manage the site, and to properly monitor the site.
 - To upgrade the walking track, which is wheelchair accessible.
-

- **Social:**

- To identify this site as a place for Murrawarri people to socialise.
 - To nominate this site as an Aboriginal Place.
 - Establish a program which will allow for the construction of facilities which will include picnic areas, and toilets around the site.
-

- **Economic:**

- Develop a program in conjunction with Gundungari Aboriginal Corporation and NSW National Parks, which will enable cultural interpretation tours of the site.
-

Place Of Significance: Culgoa River (Camp Site Culgoa N/P)

The Culgoa River is one of the main arteries that runs through Murrawarri Country. The water that runs through it is like the blood running through our veins. It keeps the country healthy and provides nourishment for the people. This site is located in the Culgoa National Park. Pre-contact, this site was a transient camping ground for Murrawarri People, when they are walking across the land and working nearby. The site provided water and food. Fire hearths and other cultural artefacts can still be found at the site. Cultural protocols and customary laws were in place to

ensure that the Murrawarri People looked after the site through holistic land and water management, and the resources of the area is shared amongst the Murrawarri Nation.

Post contact, settlers took over the area and it became a station for cattle and sheep. The station owners built their residence at the site, with the posts of the original house still standing nearby. Some Murrawarri People were employed by the station, but the site no longer served as a camping ground.

In the 1996, the Culgoa National Park was formed, which the site is part of, and is a designated camping

ground. The area to the river has been cordoned off from vehicle access, and signage put up regarding the old station, but there is no mention of Murrawarri, the land where it sits.

The Culgoa River landscape is reliant on overland flow, and without major rain events and flooding the landscape cannot survive. The site has been completely dry since 2012. There are no sign of flora and fauna along the river bank or in the floodplains. All signage, including those regarding the environment, are weathered and illegible.



Objectives for this site:

• **Spiritual:**

- To re-establish Murrawarri links to the river red gums on the site which will allow people to re connect to country in a spiritual way.
- Maintain a flow of water in the River at the site so water can be used to revitalise the site and re-establish native flora and fauna in and around the site that can be used for Spiritual purposes.

• **Cultural:**

- To introduce regenerative land management on this site, which includes cultural burns in specific areas, and other cultural land management practices.
- To correct the signage at the site which explain Murrawarri history of the site and Murrawarri cultural protocol.
- To use the place for cultural storytelling.
- To reconnect people back to country through a number of programs including Education, Employment and other back to country programs.

• **Environmental:**

- To develop a program which will regeneration and revegetation of the area with native flora and fauna over the next ten years.
- To employ and train Murrawarri rangers to manage the site, and to properly monitor the site.
- To upgrade the walking track, which is wheelchair accessible.

• **Social:**

- To identify this site as a place for Murrawarri people to socialise.
- Establish a program which will allow for the construction of facilities which will include picnic areas, and toilets around the site.
- To erect a sign at the nearby camp ground explaining Murrawarri Culture and Protocols.

• **Economic:**

- Develop a program in conjunction with Gundingari Ltd and NSW National Parks, which will enable cultural interpretation tours of the site.

Place Of Significance: The Nebine River (Burban Grange)

The Nebine River is part of Murrawarri's song line, the dreaming track. It served as a transient camping site for Murrawarri People, providing food and water to travellers. Hunting and gathering was common, with the abundance of food at the site both on land and in the river, including Quantong's. A camping ground for Murrawarri people, upstream of the site on the Nebine, contains fire hearths and other cultural artefacts.

Post European contact, Murrawarri people resided in the area in humpies, to work at the station at Burban Grange, and ceased walking across the landscape. The landscape also changed through the introduction of foreign animals to our country.

Burban Grange is now part of the Culgoa National Park. The site was transformed into staff residence. No staff is currently based in the area, and the area access is restricted from the public. The Nebine River is an unregulated River and relies on overland flow and rain up stream.

Current Services and Benefits

- Limited cultural education services
- Limited access to the site
- The site is protected
- Work is being carried out on the site

Current Benefits which could be provided

- Murrawarri Cultural Tourism
- Regeneration of a part of our country
- Future Cultural Education site

Deficiencies in Services and Benefits

- The ownership of land
- Total control of the site
- Accommodation at or near the site
- Management of the site

Objectives for this site:

• **Spiritual:**

- Undertake and endorse Murrawarri spiritual and cultural practises at the site, and protect artefacts and adhere to cultural protocols.
- Maintain a flow of water in the River at the site so water can be used to revitalise the site and re-establish native flora and fauna in and around the site that can be used for Spiritual purposes.

• **Cultural:**

- To introduce regenerative land management on this site, which includes cultural burns in specific areas, and other cultural land management practices.
- To correct the signage at the site which explain Murrawarri history of the site and Murrawarri cultural protocol.
- To use the place for cultural storytelling.
- To reconnect people back to country through a number of programs including Education, Employment and other back to country programs.

• **Environmental:**

- To develop a program which will regeneration and revegetation of the area with native flora and fauna over the next ten years.
- To employ and train Murrawarri rangers to manage the site, and to properly monitor the site.
- To upgrade the walking track, which is wheelchair accessible.

• **Social:**

- To identify this site as a place for Murrawarri people to socialise.
- To nominate this site as an Aboriginal Place.
- Establish a program which will allow for the construction of facilities which will include picnic areas, and toilets around the site.

• **Economic:**

- Develop a program in conjunction with Gundungari Aboriginal Corporation and NSW National Parks, which will enable cultural interpretation tours of the site.

Our Overall Nation Priorities

Governmental Priorities

Priorities	Responsibility	Timeframe
Reform the Murrwarri Peoples Council	Peoples Council	1 year
Establish the Peoples Administration	Peoples Council	ASAP
Refurbish and update website	Peoples Administration	6 months
Develop online citizen register	Peoples Administration	6 months
Scope out a business case for the establishment of an administration and cultural centre at North Bourke	Peoples Administration	2 years
Develop a number of Murrwarri Information, Cultural and Language centres with permission from the various First Nations in areas with populations of Murrwarri People	Murrwarri Language Committee	Within 5 years
Develop legislation policy and programs to achieve our aspirations	Peoples Council	ASAP
Establish the Murrwarri Sovereign Trust	Peoples Council	ASAP
Establish Diplomatic relations with other First Nations and State and Federal Governments	Peoples Council Chairperson	Ongoing
Develop partnerships with philanthropic and other organisations	Peoples Council Chairperson	Ongoing
Continue to push for inclusion on the United Nations Decolonisation List	Peoples Council Chairperson	Ongoing
To continue to observe the Murrwarri obligations under the Northern Basin Treaty of Unity	Peoples Council	Ongoing
To work with NBAN Nations in the advancement of the articles of the Treaty of Unity	Peoples Council	Ongoing

Cultural Priorities

Priorities	Responsibility	Timeframe
Develop a back to country program to reconnect our people to country	Murrawarri Administration	Within 3 years
Develop education programs which enables us to keep our stories alive and keep our culture alive	Murrawarri Administration	Within 3 years
Develop a healthy country healthy culture program	Murrawarri Administration	Within 5 years
Develop a cultural exchange program with other First Nations	Murrawarri Administration	Within 4 years

Our Overall Nation Priorities

Spiritual Priorities

Priorities	Responsibility	Timeframe
Assist Murrawarri people to be free to choose our identity of who we are and where we come from	Murrawarri Peoples Council	Ongoing
Reconnect and maintain the connection with our ancestor in the sky camp	Murrawarri Peoples	Ongoing
Maintain our belonging to Murrawarri country	Murrawarri Peoples	Ongoing
Maintain Murrawarri cultural practises on country and in the wider world	Murrawarri Peoples	Ongoing

Social Priorities

Priorities	Responsibility	Timeframe
Establish processes that can see our people being able to live in two worlds	Peoples Council and Peoples Administration	Ongoing
Establish a data technology platform which connects our people no matter where they choose to live	Murrawarri Administration	Within 3 years
Develop an Murrawarri appropriate education system within the Nation	Peoples Council and Peoples Administration	Within 5 years
Develop and integrated language program across a number of mediums	Peoples Council and Peoples Administration	Within 2 years

Our Overall Nation Priorities

Economic Priorities

Priorities	Responsibility	Timeframe
To develop Murrawarri native food horticulture industry in the Nation	Murrawarri Peoples Council and Murrawarri Administration	Within 1 year
To develop Murrawarri cultural and tourism opportunities in the Nation	Murrawarri Administration	Within 2 years
Approach IL&SC to purchase properties and water within the Nation	Murrawarri Administration	Ongoing
To establish a Murrawarri Sovereign Trust Fund	Murrawarri Peoples Council	Within 1 year
To establish intra Nation and International Trade	Peoples Council and Peoples Administration	Ongoing
To establish Murrawarri owned nurseries and fish farms	Murrawarri Administration	Within 2 years
To establish individually based enterprises for Murrawarri people	Murrawarri Administration	Ongoing
To establish Murrawarri Credit Union	Murrawarri Peoples Council	Within 5 years

Environmental Priorities

Priorities	Responsibility	Timeframe
Write environmental legislation that included water for the Murrawarri Nation	Murrawarri Peoples Council	ASAP
Develop environmental policy and programs to achieve a healthy environment within the Nation	Murrawarri Peoples Council	ASAP
To develop Murrawarri water policy to ensure water runs through the Nation on a regular basis (Cultural Flows)	Murrawarri Peoples Council	ASAP
To work with other First Nations and the State and Federal Governments to create healthy environments and waterways for our current and future generations	Murrawarri Peoples Council	Within 2 years
Work with State Governments to manage the nations parks and nature reserves under a Murrawarri cultural management program	Murrawarri Peoples Council	Within 5 years
To create programs so our people can look after country	Murrawarri Peoples Administration	Within 2 years
To work with our partners to be resourced to look after our country	Murrawarri Peoples Council	Within 2 years

Domestic Relations

NBAN Treaty of Unity

The Murrawarri Nation is an Inaugural member of the Northern Basin Aboriginal Nation NBAN. NBAN is a Union of Sovereign First Nations of the Northern Murray Darling Basin.

The NBAN Treaty was signed in on 10 May 2017 in Canberra at the Aboriginal Embassy. This site is the most important site in Australia for First Nations, Land Rights, Recognition and Sovereignty.

The Treaty can be found on the Murrawarri Nation and NBAN Websites.



Fred Hooper and Phillip Sullivan Signing of the NBAN Treaty of Unity in Canberra on behalf of the Murrawarri Nation on 10 May 2017.

ULURU Constitutional Convention

The Murrawarri Nation was represented at the First Nations Dialogue at ULURU in from the 23 to 26 May 2017, which brought over 250 First Nations Leaders to discuss how First Nations want to move forward in a number of aspects. The Most important Statement that came out of the Convention was this which is included in the ULURU Statement:

"Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs".

"This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors."

"This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown".



Fred Hooper Peoples, Council Chair, Sharon Dykes and Phillip Sullivan from the Murrawarri Peoples Council attending the conference.

International Relations

Fiji Meeting

In 2014 The People Councils Chair attended a meeting in Fiji with Fijian Officials to discuss Diplomatic relations. The meeting ended on a very positive note with the Fijians giving the Chair some very good advice in relation to what to do and how to achieve recognition, which this plan is a part of the plan moving forward in regards to International Relations.



The Murrawarri Nation Peoples Council Chair meeting with Fiji Government officials.

Measures of Success

The Murrawarri Nation will measure the success of the plan through regular reports back to the Murrawarri Peoples Council by the Murrawarri Peoples Administration. Legislation, Policy, Procedures and business cases will be written which will enable programs to be implemented within the life of the Plan.

The Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure targets are being met.

We will work with NBAN to achieve this plan and apply for funding on an individual basis to achieve the aspirations, objectives and goals of the plan.

How are we implementing the plan

The plan implementation will be achieved by through a collaborative approach with all parties including other First Nations, the Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations, State and Federal Government and other Partners who are prepared to come on this exciting journey of self-determination and self-governing with the Murrawarri Nation and our people.

There will be Legislation, Policies, Procedures and Programs developed and comprehensive Business Cases written for each program that has to be delivered.

The Peoples Council and Peoples Administration will have the overall carriage of the delivery of this Nation Plan.

The plan has a periodic review after 3 years and five years and adapted as appropriate. A major review will be undertaken at the 10-year mark and a new plan will be developed taking into account the success and failures of the previous 10 years.

The Murrawarri Peoples Council will undertake a number of strategies to gain funds to develop the Murrawarri Nation including achieving all of the aspirations outlined in this plan.

Source Materials

ⁱ(Mathews J, 1977/1988) 'The Two Worlds of Jimmy Barker, The life of an Australian Aboriginal 1900-1972'

ⁱⁱ'Report to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes 1837 Published by William Hall, Aldine Chambers, Patersonoster Row and Hatchard & Son Piccadilly 1837

ⁱⁱⁱR. H Mathews Notes on the Aboriginal Tribes of Queensland

^{iv}Muruwarri Dictionary by Oates Lynette F 1986

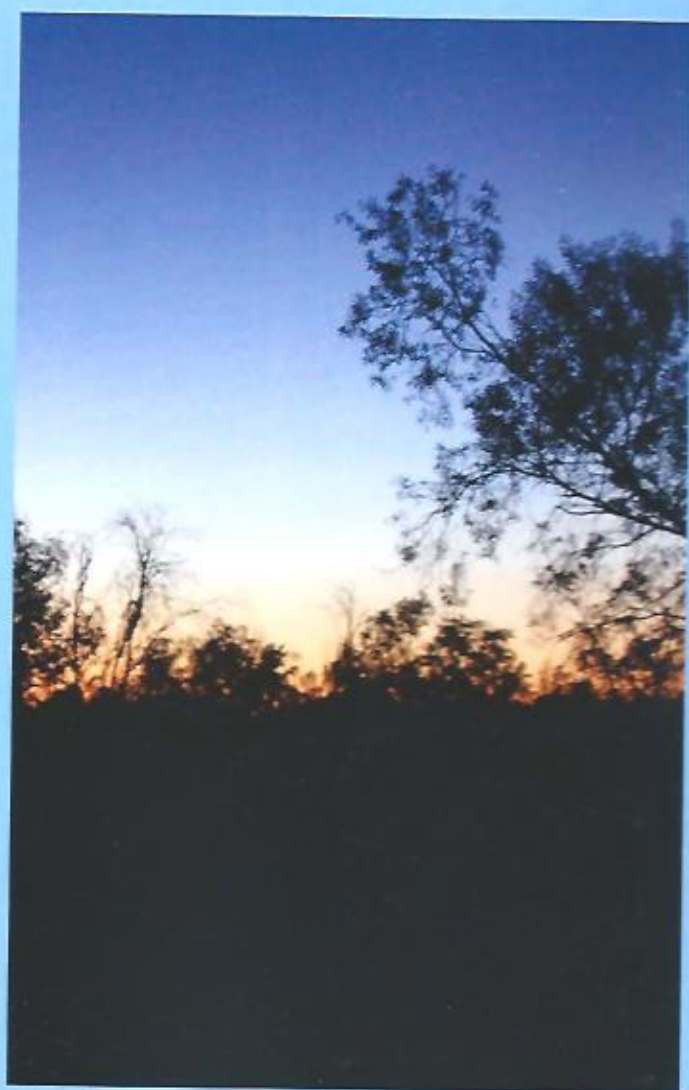
^v'National Native Title Research Report Moorawarri People 2002

^{vi}'Murrawarri Declaration of continued Independence and Statehood 2013

Contact Details

Fred Hooper
0427957960
fredhooper6@gmail.com

Phillip Sullivan
0438462065



Famous Quotes about self-determination:

"Freedom is what we do with what is done to us"

- Jean-Paul Sartre

**"In the long run, we shape our lives, and we shape ourselves.
The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are
ultimately our own responsibility"**

- Eleanor Roosevelt

"The best way to predict your future is to create it"

- Abraham Lincoln

Quotes from Murrawarri People about Land and Culture:

**"When Captain Cook arrived here in 1770, he said he was claiming the
continent in the name of the Crown. But on what legal grounds did he take our land?"**

- Sharni Hooper. Time Magazine online May 2013

"My mum told me that every time there is a falling star someone is being born"

- Sharon Dykes Murrawarri Elder

"Our laws were much stricter than the laws that were set up by the whites"

- Uncle Roy Barker Murrawarri Elder