

Project Synopsis

Project commencement:	April 2003
Project completion:	February 2005
Total project investment:	\$105,150

'Educating the Shark Bay Community'

Project Aim

As a key area for the world's evolutionary history which is home to threatened species, geological processes and natural beauty, Shark Bay is one of the world's most naturally significant places. In an effort to sustain this area Rangelands NRM Coordinating Group and the Western Australian State Government are working together to educate tourists and Shark Bay locals about the importance of preservation and conservation.

The world heritage community education and interpretation program aimed to increase the profile of Shark Bay as a heritage listed area positively within the Shark Bay community and with tourists.

Key Outcomes:

- Establishment of the Shark Bay World Heritage Discovery Centre.
- Creation of educational stands found at Cape Peron, Monkey Mia Walk Trail, Skip Jack Point and the Wanamalu Walk Trail.
- Greater understanding of the importance of world heritage.

The Challenge

Stemming from the interpretation action plan project officers wanted to role out a plan that was throughout the world heritage area. This included a series of interpretation panels at Cape Peron, Monkey Mia Walk Trail, Skip Jack Point and the Wanamalu Walk Trail highlighting the history and significance of the area and the establishment of the Shark Bay World Heritage Discovery Centre.

"This project required a high level of involvement by the Shark Bay community including the Malgana people, who were consulted when determining appropriate Indigenous messages," said Community Education Officer Mr. Rory Chapple. Throughout the process project officers aimed to align the project with the local Shark Bay community.

"There were members of the community who were previously opposed the Shark Bay being a world heritage area. By opening the dialogue between the residences through community meetings we were able to involve as many people in the process and change perceptions," said Rory.



Our Successes

Through the world heritage community education and interpretation program the following outcomes have been achieved:

- Establishment of the World Heritage Discovery Centre.
- Establishment of educational material.
- Positive relationships were formed with Shark Bay's local community.
- Greater appreciation for Indigenous culture through Indigenous language panels.
- Understanding about local ecology and history through educational stands found at Cape Peron, Monkey Mia Walk Trail, Skip Jack Point and the Wanamalu Walk Trail.

"Because of the actions of the scientific advisory and community consultative committees we have addressed a number of issues which had the potential to affect the sustainability of the world heritage area. We are now able to provide better protection to Shark Bay's community, industry and environment," said Project Officer Cheryl Cowell.

Benefits to the Gascoyne/Murchison Community

Through the World Heritage Community Education and Interpretation Program:

- Greater understanding of the importance of World Heritage listing amongst Shark Bay residence and tourists.
- Diversification of tourism due to the status of World Heritage
- Greater understanding of Indigenous and European history.
- An increase in environmental awareness.
- Increase in tourism employment.

"The Shark Bay World Heritage Areas has become a point of interest within Shark Bay. Attracting local, national and international visitors, this centre teaches visitors about the environment, the history of shark bay and why we are world heritage listed," said Shark Bay World Heritage Discovery Centre Customer Services Ms. Glenda Francis.

This project was made possible through assistance from:

- Rangelands NRM Coordinating Group
- Australian Government
- Western Australian Government

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