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Purnululu National Park
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Purnululu National Park



Visitor guide

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Department of **Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions**

PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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Previous Aerial view of the Domes. *Photo – Gary Annett Photography.*
Above The Domes. *Photo – Thomas Jundt*

Purnululu National Park

Purnululu National Park is the traditional homelands of the Gija and Jaru people.

"This land, these rocks, they were put here by the Dreaming, they were made before humans existed. The Country is part of us, it's part of our being. We are one with this Country, we feel the Country running through our blood. Just like the wind blowing, creeks running, trees growing and animals getting fat."

Purnululu National Park is 304km from Kununurra and 160km from Halls Creek by road. It covers an area of 239,723 hectares and is situated between Purnululu Conservation Reserve and the Ord River Regeneration Reserve. The Bungle Bungle Range, which includes an extraordinary array of banded sandstone domes and deeply cut gorges, covers an area of 45,000 hectares. The walks are divided into the northern and southern ends of the range. The northern end is much different to the southern end, and is characterised by open woodlands and spinifex hummocks, and hidden chasms and cliffs lined with Livistona palms. It's here you will find Echidna Chasm, Mini Palms Gorge and Homestead Valley. The southern end is where you find the world famous beehive domes, Cathedral Gorge and Piccaninny Creek.

Please don't underestimate the size of the park. It is 47km (80 minute drive) from the northern end to the southern end, and there are a total of 14 walk trails. Allow at least two nights to appreciate and explore this incredible place.

Purnululu National Park is generally open from April/May until late November – weather permitting. Check park alerts before visiting.

A landscape of global significance

Purnululu National Park was inscribed onto the **UNESCO World Heritage list in 2003** under two criteria. The first criteria "area of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance" was met by the beehive shaped towers which are unrivaled in their scale, extent, grandeur and diversity to anywhere in the world! The second criteria of "outstanding example representing major stages in Earth's history" was met as the Bungle Bungles are, by far, the most outstanding example of cone karst in sandstone.




Above left Kimberley sandstone dragon. **Above right** Spinifex pigeon. *Photos – Gary Annett Photography*

Caring for Purnululu

In order to preserve this fragile land now and for the future, the Gija and Jaru people ask you to:

- Respect the cultural significance of this ancient landscape by walking only on marked walking trails.
- Leave everything as you find it including plants, animals and geological formations. Take only photos – leave only footprints.
- Do not climb on any rock structures. The rocks here are very fragile, and sections can break off easily.
- Obey park signage and warnings. We want you to be safe and enjoy your stay.

The Bungle Bungle Range

The incredible natural beauty and outstanding geological value of the Bungle Bungle Range started its journey 360 million years ago, when sand and gravel were deposited into the Ord Basin. Today, after years of erosive forces and the uplift of land, we are left with an iconic landscape like no other in the world. Most recognisable are the beehive shaped domes and their grey and orange stripes. The grey bands are formed by an ancient, single-celled organism called cyanobacteria, which grows on areas where moisture accumulates. The orange bands are iron oxide cemented sandstone which dries too quickly for the cyanobacteria to survive.

Plants and wildlife

The Bungle Bungle Range is not only unique for its diverse landscape and sandstone formations, but also for its flora and fauna, some of which are endemic to the park. More than 600 plant species have been recorded in Purnululu National Park; including trees, shrubs, grasses and ferns. The park is a biodiversity hotpot for spinifex, resulting in the highest density of species anywhere in Australia. Thirteen different species are found in the park, one of which is endemic to the area – *Triodia bunglensis*.

The Bungle Bungle Range is also home to more than 140 bird species, 85 reptiles, 32 native mammals, 12 frog species and even freshwater crabs. Gouldian finches can be found in the park along with two rare species of reptiles.

Please don't feed any wild animals or remove any flora and fauna.



Above Purnululu Visitor Centre. *Photo – Mark Phillips*

Purnululu Visitor Centre

Purnululu Visitor Centre is open from April/ May to late September – weather and road access permitting, from 8am–12pm and 1pm–4pm. The visitor centre sells a range of cool drinks and snacks along with local merchandise and souvenirs. Our friendly and knowledgeable staff can provide maps, information and assist you with suggestions to make your visit a safe and enjoyable experience. Please register your arrival at the visitor centre before continuing further into the park. Self-registration is available outside of visitor centre opening hours. Free wi-fi is also available at the visitor centre.

Fees and camping

Campsites **must** be booked and fees paid online via **parkstay.dbca.wa.gov.au**. It is recommended you book prior to your arrival as campsites can book out during peak times. Park entry fees apply and can be paid online when you book your camping, or purchased at any time from the ticket machine located at the visitor centre. You do not need to pay entry fees if you hold a valid WA National Parks Pass.

Passes should be displayed on your vehicle dashboard at all times.

If you don't have a printed copy of your camp booking, please fill in the self-registration section on the campground brochure, available at the visitor centre, and display on your dash for the rangers to see.

Purnululu National Park has two campgrounds: Kurrajong in the northern end and Walardi in the southern end. Both campgrounds offer no-flush pit toilets and can accommodate tents and off-road, single-axle towable units. Untreated bore water is available but must be treated before consuming. There is no rubbish collection or disposal within the park so please take all rubbish with you when you leave. Fires are not permitted. Please adhere to the 10km per hour speed limit within the campgrounds.

There is intermittent Optus phone coverage at both campgrounds.

No drones permitted

Due to the extremely busy airspace around and above the Bungle Bungle Range, and the low flying altitude of aircrafts, drones are not permitted for safety reasons. Drones also threaten World Heritage values and areas of cultural significance for Traditional Owners. Please respect the park as a 'no drone zone'.

Distances and travelling time by vehicle one way from **Purnululu National Park Visitor Centre**		
	Distance	**Time**
Park visitor centre to highway	53km	1.5–3hrs
Airstrip and helipad	18km	30min
Bellburn* to Accommodation Lodges	15km	25min
Echidna	20km	35min
Kurrajong Campground	7km	15min
The Bloodwoods	15km	25min
Piccaninny (Cathedral Gorge and Domes)	27km	45min
Walardi Campground	12km	20min
Kungkalanayi Lookout	3km	10min
Stonehenge	13km	20min
Piccaninny to Echidna	47km	80min

** Accommodation lodges are privately owned and must be booked in advance. Contact the Kununurra Visitor Centre on (08) 9168 1177.*

Purnululu National Park quick information:



All roads are 4WD accessible only


Single-axel towable units only
50km – speed limit on all roads


Untreated bore water available at campgrounds. Please boil or purify before drinking


Unauthorised drone use prohibited


No fires permitted, please bring portable gas cooking equipment


Rubbish bins are not provided
Please take all rubbish with you


No domestic animals

leave no trace AUSTRALIA



Above Walk trail to Cathedral Gorge. *Photo – Bungle Bungle Guided Tours*

Walking in Purnululu National Park

- Wear sturdy footwear, a long-sleeved shirt, hat and apply sunscreen.
- Avoid dehydration. Sip plenty of water–one litre per person, per hour.
- Take regular rest stops in the shade to cool down and walk in the cooler parts of the day.
- Do not wave at helicopters unless there is an emergency.



1 litre, per person, per hour

Walk trail classification



Class 1 – Easiest
Well-defined walk trail with a firm, even surface and no steep sections or steps. Suitable for all levels of experience and fitness.



Class 2 – Easy
Easy, well-defined trail with a firm surface. May include gentle hill sections and occasional steps. Suitable for all levels of experience and fitness but may present difficulties for people with mobility impairments.



Class 3 – Moderate
Moderate trail with clear directional signage. You may encounter minor natural hazards such as short, steep sections, steps, shallow water crossings, and unstable or slippery surfaces. A good level of fitness is recommended.



Class 4 – Difficult
Limited directional signage and difficult sections.
You may encounter natural hazards such as long steep sections, water crossings, and unstable or slippery surfaces. A good level of fitness and bushwalking experience is recommended.



Class 5 – Extreme
No directional signage and very difficult sections. You may encounter natural hazards such as long, steep sections and climbs, water crossings, and frequent unstable or slippery surfaces. Only very fit and experienced bushwalkers should attempt.



Above View from Kungkalanayi Lookout. *Photo – Rod Hartvigsen*

Northern trails

Kungkalanayi Lookout

Class 3 – Moderate, 500m return. Allow 30 minutes (Refer park map for location)

An impressive 360° view including the western escarpment of the Bungle Bungle Range. A great spot to capture the changing colours of the range at sunset and sunrise.

Stonehenge

Class 2 – Easy, 520m return. Allow 15 minutes (Refer park map for location)

This walk introduces the traditional Aboriginal use of trees, shrubs and grasses.

Bloodwoods Lookout

Class 3 – Moderate, 200m return. Allow 15 minutes

A short walk with views of the northern escarpment of the Bungle Bungle Range and the surrounding woodlands.

Homestead Valley



Class 3 – Moderate
4.4km return to The Bloodwoods, allow 2.5 hours

This trail cuts deep into the range, through open woodlands and an uneven, dry creek bed ending at a shaded rest area with views overlooking Homestead Valley.

Mini Palms



Class 5 – Extreme
4.4km return to The Bloodwoods, allow 2.5 hours

A difficult and challenging walk that follows the Escarpment Trail for 1km to the Mini Palms junction where you turn off and follow the dry, stony creek bed. The trail continues with steep slopes, narrow edges and large boulders to climb under, over or squeeze between before reaching two viewing platforms surrounded by Livistona palms.

The Escarpment



Class 3 – Moderate 7.2km return, allow 3 hours

This trail runs along the range through open woodlands and spinifex hummocks. It is exposed to the sun and crosses dry, uneven and stony creek beds. This trail links all the trails together from Echidna carpark to The Bloodwoods carpark and can be up to a 18km return walk.

Echidna Chasm





Class 4 and 5 – Difficult to Extreme
2km return, allow 1 hour

The start of this walk is exposed to the sun along an uneven, dry creek bed lined with Livistona palms. Once you enter the chasm, there are narrow sections until you reach the main chamber where it widens. Here is the perfect area to witness the chasm come to life as the sun passes overhead – usually between 11am–1pm depending on the time of year. If you continue from here, there are boulders to scramble over which require 3 points of contact and the trail changes to a Class 5.

Osmand Lookout



Class 3 – Moderate 1km return, allow 30 minutes

A short walk with a moderate slope takes you to an elevated ridge with panoramic views of the ancient and rugged Osmand Range.

Southern trails

The Domes



Class 3 – Moderate 700m loop, allow 30 minutes

This short, uneven loop takes you up close among the beehive domes, where you clearly see the protective coating of the orange iron oxide and grey cyanobacteria bands the domes are famous for. There is a 350m optional side trail which takes you to a small ampitheatre

Cathedral Gorge



Class 4 – Difficult 2km return, allow over an hour

Walk along the dry creek bed surrounded by domes and honeycomb rock formations before entering the gorge that leads to the iconic natural amphitheatre. There are some steep steps, a ladder, and narrow ledges along this trail.

Creek Lookout



Class 3 – Moderate 2.8km, allow over an hour

From the Cathedral Gorge turnoff, follow the trail into Piccaninny Creek which is uneven, deeply eroded and exposed to the sun. 200m along the creek bed is the turnoff to the lookout where you will discover sweeping views of Piccaninny Creek as it winds its way south towards the Ord River.

The Window



Class 4 – Difficult 6km return, allow 2 hours

Continue along the dry, exposed creek bed and discover large potholes made over thousands of years by tumbling stones trapped in water whirlpools after each wet season. Follow the signs to a defined sandstone structure featuring a naturally formed window.

Please do not climb on this fragile structure.

Whip Snake Gorge



Class 4 – Difficult 10km return, allow 4 hours

Continue along the uneven and sun exposed creek bed, past The Window for a further 400m and veer left at the Whip Snake Gorge turnoff. Continue into the gorge as it narrows and leads to a shaded natural amphitheatre which supports rock figs, gums, ferns, and mosses.

Hot Tip: If you wish to combine some of these walks, start early in the day and do the longer walks first to help avoid full sun exposure along Piccaninny Creek.



Above Cathedral Gorge. *Photo – Audrey Bourne*

Piccaninny Gorge Trek

Exceeds walk trail classification.

Minimum 20km return to The Elbow. Total walking distance can be 40km+ if you explore all the side gorges.

The Piccaninny Gorge Trek is for extremely experienced hikers only. Before commencing, hikers must first register at the Purnululu Visitor Centre (during office hours) and have an in date and registered personal locator beacon (PLB).

You must be self-sufficient and have a high level of fitness and navigational skills. Considerable preparation and a minimum of two days walking and supplies are required.

This multi-day trek has no facilities, designated camping areas or directional signage, and natural hazards should be expected. You will encounter large boulders to climb over, narrow edges and drop offs, and water crossings. Safety and navigation can be affected by storms, flooding and extreme weather events.

Water must be carried in or collected and treated from Black Rock Pool which is located 1km past The Elbow.

There is strictly **NO SWIMMING** or use of soaps or detergents at Black Rock Pool or any other water source to protect the water quality.

Hikers must de-register at the Purnululu Visitor Centre (during office hours) after completion of their walk.

Online bookings are essential as numbers are restricted. Please book and pay your Piccaninny Gorge Trek camping fees online via **purnululunationalpark.rezdy.com**

For more information please contact the Purnululu Visitor Centre.



Heat stress can kill. Kimberley heat can be extreme and temperatures can rise sharply in the gorge. Carry and drink one litre per person, per hour when hiking and more in hotter weather. There is no drinking water available on walk trails. Wear loose long sleeved clothes and a hat. Avoid the heat of the day and hike early in the morning.

Visitor safety

Be prepared for a remote experience – it may just save your life. Consider travelling with a personal location beacon (PLB) or satellite phone. There is NO PHONE service driving into the park. Be prepared for hot weather conditions as temperatures can reach over 40°C (104°F) and radiant heat can increase the temperature to over 50°C (122°F).

Driving into Purnululu National Park

- The Spring Creek Track is 53km from the highway but allow 1.5–3 hours to drive. It can be accessed by high clearance 4WD only.
- There is no fuel available in the park – please ensure you have enough fuel for a minimum of 300km.
- Single-axle towable units only. Dual-axle towable units are not permitted.
- Reduce tyre pressure for a smoother ride – refer to vehicle manual for recommended deflation pressure.
- The track is natural earth, not paved or sealed and is corrugated, winding and has hills and numerous creek crossings.
- Drive slowly and carefully. Maximum speed limit on the track is 50km per hour. Drive to conditions and look out for livestock and wildlife.
- Please stop and read the information signage at the entry to the Spring Creek Track.

In case of a breakdown

- **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR VEHICLE.**
- If able, move vehicle to edge of track.
- Raise the bonnet to indicate assistance is required.
- Wait for the next vehicle to approach.

In an emergency

There is intermittent Optus signal at the visitor centre and campgrounds. In case of an emergency phone:

Purnululu Visitor Centre (08) 9168 4295
UHF Channel 1 DUPLEX – Northern end
UHF Channel 4 DUPLEX – Southern end

Warmun Police Facility (08) 9167 8437

Halls Creek Police Station (08) 9168 9777

More information

Purnululu National Park

Ph: (08) 9168 4295
Email: **purnululuvisitorcentre@dbca.wa.gov.au**

Parks and Wildlife Service – Kununurra Office

Lot 248 Ivanhoe Road, Kununurra WA 6743
Ph: (08) 9168 4200
Email: **kununurra@dbca.wa.gov.au**

dbca.wa.gov.au

Download a geo-referenced **Avenza map** of Purnululu National Park to your mobile device and locate yourself without the internet.

Small fee to WA Parks Foundation may apply.

000 EMERGENCY

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Download the free Emergency+ app before your visit. Use the app in an emergency to call for assistance. If there is no mobile phone coverage you **WILL NOT** be able to call **000** but the app will provide you with your GPS location.

Check for alerts and updates directly related to parks and major trails at **alerts.dbca.wa.gov.au** and for all emergency information in Western Australia at **emergency.wa.gov.au**

Find more park visitor information, book campsites and share your experiences at **exploreparks.dbca.wa.gov.au**

@waparkswildlife | **@exploreparkswa**

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Red Rock Creek
Echidna
Osmand Lookout
Echidna Chasm
Bloodwoods Lookout
The Bloodwoods
Mini Palms Gorge
Homestead Valley
Stonehenge
Gorge Road
14.5km
Limestone Outcrop
Kurrajong Campground
to Great Northern Highway
Spring Creek Track
Kungkalanayi Lookout
4km
1km
Park Visitor Centre & Ranger Station
BUNGLE BUNGLE RANGE
The Fingers
Piccaninny Gorge
The Elbow
Whip Snake Gorge
Piccaninny Gorge Trek (registration required)
Cathedral Gorge
The Window
The Domes
Piccaninny
Creek Lookout
9.5km
Bellburn Creek
Walardi Campground
Accommodation Lodges (Private)
4.5km
Elephant Rock
13km
Bellburn Airstrip
Gorge Road
Piccaninny Creek

0 1 2 3 4
approx. kilometres

Legend

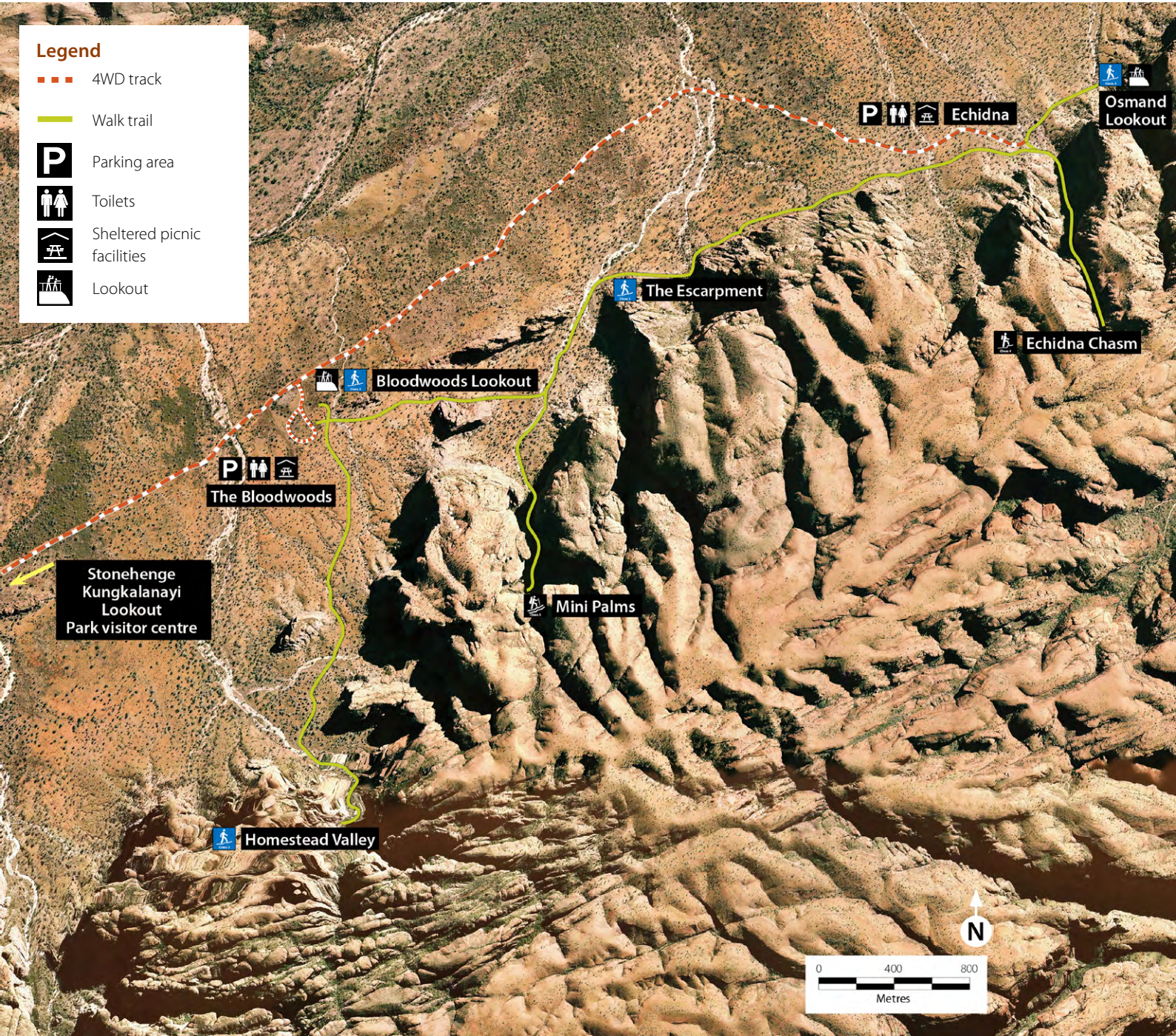
- Four wheel drive track
- Walk trails
- Piccaninny Gorge Trek
- Distance marker
- Walk Trail
- Visitor centre
- Camping area
- Airstrip
- Helicopter
- Parking area
- Sheltered picnic area
- Toilets
- Bore water
- Lookout
- No swimming

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Purnululu National Park – Northern trails

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Purnululu National Park – Southern trails

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