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Purnululu National Park
World Heritage since 2003

Purnululu National Park

World Heritage Area



Visitor guide



GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



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Front cover Aerial view of the domes.

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

Purnululu National Park

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 deep *Livistona* palms (*Livistona victoriae*) lined gorges covers 45,000 hectares of the park. The walks among the Bungle Bungle Range are divided into the northern and southern ends of the range. The north is where you will find Echidna Chasm along with other walks amongst the deep gorges, open woodlands, *Livistona* palms and spinifex hummocks. The south is where you find the famous beehive domes, Piccaninny Creek, Cathedral Gorge, and other unique walks.

Purnululu National Park is generally open from 1st April until 30th November – weather permitting.

Land of the Dreaming

Aboriginal people have lived in this part of Australia for more than 20,000 years. Their lifestyle has changed considerably since Alexander Forrest led the first colonial exploration to the Kimberley region in 1879, in search for natural resources and grazing opportunities. The local Aboriginal people maintain a strong connection to this ancient land, which is expressed through, story, song, art, visits to country and continued use of resources that have sustained their lives for thousands of years.



Above Western side of Massif.

World Heritage

Purnululu national park was inscribed onto the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2003 for exceptional natural beauty and geological importance. Purnululu was recognised for its "outstanding universal value", meaning the area's cultural and natural significance is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of importance for present and future generations of all humanity. Parks and Wildlife staff work closely with the Purnululu World Heritage Area Advisory Committee on the management of the national park.

- Please respect the cultural significance of this area to the local Aboriginal people.
- Help protect and respect the fragile ancient rock formations by walking on marked walking trails only and do not climb on fallen rocks or gorge walls.
- Surveillance cameras are installed, penalties apply for interfering with cultural sites, walking off defined walk trails or climbing on rock structures.
- Take only photos – leave only footprints.



Above Double-barred finch.

The beehive domes

The incredible natural beauty and outstanding geological value of the Bungle Bungle Range is expressed in the unique grey and orange banded domes that are the most exceptional examples of cone karst formations in the world. The grey banding is a coating of cyanobacteria, which has grown on areas where moisture accumulates. The orange bands are due to the colour of oxidized iron compounds, which have dried out too quickly for cyanobacteria to grow. The domes are made of sandstone deposited about 360 million years ago. Erosion by creeks, rivers, and weathering in the past 20 million years has carved the beehive domes shapes and formations along the Piccaninny Creek and the striking gorges and chasms has created a surreal landscape. The sandstone that forms the beehive domes is extremely fragile and can be easily damaged through mechanical erosion, such as being scraped by a shoe or even touched by a hand – therefore climbing on or defacing the rock structures is strictly prohibited.

Wildlife

The Bungle Bungle Range is not only unique for the diverse landscape and sandstone formations, but also for the flora and fauna, some of which are endemic to the national park.

More than 600 plant species have been recorded for Purnululu National Park, including trees, shrubs, grasses, ferns, and mosses. The park has the highest number of spinifex in one area. Thirteen different species, 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. The very rare Gouldian Finch can be found in the park along with two endemic reptiles – the Bungle Bungle gecko (*Gehyra ipsa*) and a skink, *Lerista bunglebungle*.

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



Above Walk trail to Cathedral Gorge.

Purnululu Visitor Centre

The Purnululu Visitor Centre is generally open from early April to end of September, from 8am until 4pm. It is closed over lunch from 12 noon until 1pm. The visitor centre sells a range of cool drinks, hot 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.

Distances and travelling times by vehicle from Purnululu National Park Visitor Centre

	Distance	Time
Park visitor centre to highway	53km	1.5-2hrs
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
Piccanniny to Echidna	47km	80min

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

Fees and camping

Vehicle entry and camping fees apply.

Entry fees can be paid at the Fee Pay Pillar located at the visitors centre carpark.

Camping fees must be booked and paid online at parkstay.dbca.wa.gov.au.

Park entry fees can also be prepaid with camping fees if you do not have a valid Holiday, All Parks, Gold Star or Local – Purnululu, Mitchell River and Mirima park pass.

If you don't have a printed copy of your camp booking please fill in the perforated self-registration section on the campground brochure and display on your dash.

Purnululu National Park has two campgrounds: Kurrajong in the northern end and Walardi towards the southern end. It is essential for visitors to book online to secure a campsite. The campsites are generally open from April through to December (weather and fire dependant). Both campgrounds offer toilets and untreated bore water, and can accommodate tents, and off-road, single-axel towable units.

No fires permitted.

Camp only in designated campgrounds.

There are no bins provided – please extinguish cigarette butts and take out with you along with your rubbish.

Helicopter flights

Scenic helicopter flights leave daily from the Bellburn Airstrip. Bookings can be made through the Visitor Centre, at the Bellburn Airstrip, or by phone on 08 9168 7335.

No drones permitted

Due to the extremely busy airspace around and above the Bungle Bungle Range and the low flying altitude of the aircraft, drones are not permitted for safety reasons and to comply with the World Heritage compliances.

Walk trail classification



Class 1 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, 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 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 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 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.

For your safety:

- Walk in the early morning or late afternoon only.
- Wear sturdy footwear, long sleeved shirt, a hat and apply sunscreen.
- Sip plenty of water – one litre per person, per hour.
- Regular rest stops in the shade to cool down.
- Do not wave at helicopters unless there is an emergency.

Your safety is our concern, but your responsibility.



1 litre, per person, per hour

Northern walks

Kungkalanay Lookout



Class 3, 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, 520m return – Allow 15 minutes
(Refer park map for location)

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

Bloodwood Lookout



Class 3, 500m 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, 4.4km return to the Bloodwoods – Allow 2 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 the Homestead Valley. Can also be walked as part of the Escarpment Trail making an 11.6km return walk to Echidna carpark.

Mini Palms Trail



Class 4, 4.4km return to the Bloodwoods – Allow 2 hours

A moderately challenging walk that follows the Escarpment Trail for 1km to the Mini Palms junction. The trail continues with steep slopes, narrow edges and large boulders to climb under, over or squeeze between, and two viewing to platforms surrounded by Livistona palms and the soaring cliffs of the surrounding gorge.

The Escarpment



Class 3, 7.2km return – Allow 2 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 and The Bloodwoods and can be up to a 17km walk.

Echidna Chasm



Class 4, 2km return – Allow 1 hour

The start of the walk is exposed to the sun along an uneven, dry creek bed lined with Livistona palms. Within the 180m deep chasm that is shaded for most of the day, there are narrow sections, uneven terrain, and boulders to scramble over. Between 11am and 1pm depending on time of year Echidna 'glows' when the sun is overhead.

Osmond Lookout Trail



Class 3, 1km return – Allow 30 minutes

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

Southern walks

The Domes



Class 3, 700m loop – Allow 30 minutes

This short uneven loop takes you up close among the beehive domes, where you can clearly see the different layers of the sediment and the protective banding of the iron oxide and cyanobacteria.

Cathedral Gorge



Class 4, 2km return – Allow over an hour

Follow this meandering uneven, sandy and sun exposed creek bed amongst the towering beehive domes and honeycomb rocks to the iconic natural amphitheatre, Cathedral Gorge. There are some steep steps, a ladder, and narrow ledges along the trail.

Piccaninny Creek Lookout



Class 3, 2.8km – Allow over an hour

This trail gives you an example of the various and different formations that are along the Piccaninny Creek. It is uneven and exposed to the sun. The lookout has views over the Piccaninny creek towards the Ord River, beehive domes, the Dixon range and everything in between. The trail is uneven, deeply eroded and exposed to the sun.

The Window



Class 4, 6km return – Allow 2 hours

Walk further along the Piccaninny Creek bed amongst the beehive domes and large potholes made by the tumbling stones in the fast-flowing floodwaters, to a natural window in a sandstone structure, which provides another interesting feature of the Bungle Bungle Range. The trail is uneven, deeply eroded and exposed to the sun. **Please do not climb on this fragile structure.**

Whip Snake Gorge



Class 4, 10km return – Allow 4 hours

Continue further along the uneven and eroded, sun exposed Piccaninny creek, past the Window, where the trail veers to the left taking you into one of the many gorges within the range. This small natural amphitheatre contains rock figs, gums, ferns, and mosses.

Hot Tip: If you are wanting to do all the southern walks start early in the morning. Do them in an anticlockwise order starting at Piccaninny lookout, to get the most sun exposed done in the cool of the day.

Piccaninny Gorge Trek



Class 5, Minimum 20km return – Allow 2 days minimum

This walk is only for experienced hikers who have first registered at the Visitor Centre and have a personal locator beacon (PLB).

This overnight trek is along uneven, stony, and sandy creek bed with large potholes, boulders and occasionally through pools of water. It is approximately 8km to the Elbow of Piccaninny Gorge and another 4km into the first of the five fingers (side gorges) The fingers terrain changes considerably as you head further up each finger. Great care must be taken when exploring the gorge. This is an unmarked hike, with no facilities or directional signage. Walkers must be prepared and take adequate food, water, and other supplies. PLB can be hired from the Visitor centre for \$20, with a \$200 refundable deposit.

Hikers must de-register at the Visitor Centre after completion of the walk.

Visitor safety

Be prepared for a remote experience – it may just save your life.

Driving into Purnululu National Park

- There is no fuel available in the park – please ensure you have enough fuel for a minimum of 200km.
- Spring Creek Track is a high-clearance 4WD only, 53km track. Allow 2–3hours.
- Single axle towable units only. Dual axle towable units are not permitted.
- Reduce tyre pressure to vehicle specifications to make your ride more comfortable. Reinflate before you get back onto the highway.
- The track is winding, hilly, corrugated, with creek crossings that can be dry towards the end of dry season, and can be rocky and sandy.
- Drive slowly and carefully. Maximum speed limit on the track is 50kph. Look out for livestock.
- There is **NO PHONE SERVICE** for 53km. Limited OPTUS coverage in park.
- Please stop and read the information signage at the entry to 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.

Walking the trails in Purnululu national park

- Walk in the early morning or late afternoon only. Wear sturdy footwear, long sleeved shirt, a hat and sunscreen.
- Avoid dehydration, carry enough water to sip 1 litre per person per hour when bushwalking and take regular rest stops in the shade to cool down.
- Do not wave at helicopters unless there is an emergency.
- Untreated bore water is available at campgrounds, please treat water before consuming.

Your safety is our concern, but your responsibility.

In an emergency

Emergency contact to the Purnululu Visitor Centre

UHF Channel 1 DUPLEX – Northern end

UHF Channel 4 DUPLEX – Southern end

There is OPTUS signal at the Visitor Centre and campgrounds.

Ph: (08) 9168 7300

Warmun Police Facility (08) 9167 8437

Halls Creek Police Station (08) 9168 9777

More information

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

17 Dick Perry Avenue, Kensington WA 6151

Ph: (08) 9219 9000

Email: enquiries@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

Purnululu National Park

Ph: (08) 9168 7300

Email: purnululuvisitorcentre@dbca.wa.gov.au

Campground Bookings

parkstay.dbca.wa.gov.au



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could save
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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



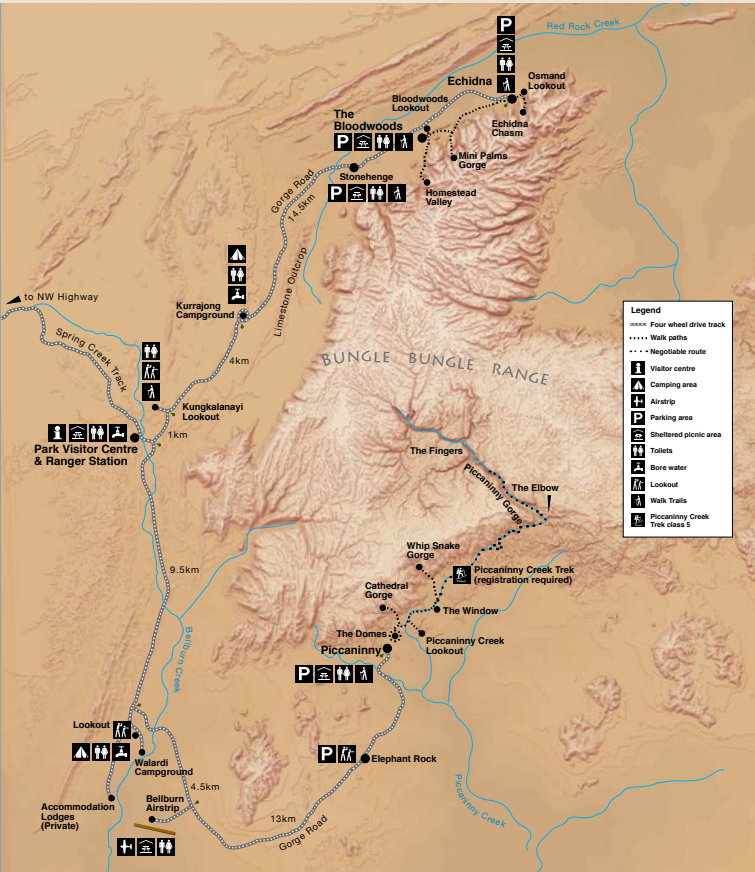
Information current at June 2022.

Publication available in alternative format on request.

Purnululu National Park World Heritage Area



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



Purnululu national park quick information:

All roads are 4WD accessible only



Single axel towable units only



50km – speed limit on all roads



Bore water available at Campgrounds



No recreational flying/usage of
drones



No fires permitted, please bring
portable gas cooking equipment



No rubbish bins provided



No dogs