

My Journey on Coastal Noongar Boodjar (Noongar Country)

Kaya! This means ‘Hello’ in the local indigenous language in the South West of Western Australia.

The Noongar language is endangered with few people speaking it fluently, amidst around 35,000 people who identify as Noongar heritage. The Noongar nation spans from Dongara (south of the town of Geraldton) to Esperance, inland towards Burracoppin and the entire south-west corner of Western Australia. This is the largest geographical location of one Aboriginal language group in Australia.

With 2019 announced as the ‘International Year of Indigenous Languages’ (IYIL2019) by the United Nations General Assembly, it’s an opportunity to acknowledge the great work involved to preserve and protect First languages. <https://en.iyil2019.org/>

In Bunbury, located around 180 km south of Perth (the capital city of Western Australia) is the Noongar Boodjar Language Centre (www.noongarboodjar.com.au). The centre exists to “keep the Noongar language alive”, through recordings, transcribing, analysing and archiving of the Noongar language, with the identified 14 clans, broken into 3 dialect groups of “South Eastern, Northern and South Western’.



Noongar map courtesy of Noongar Boodjar Language Centre

The teachers from the specialised Aboriginal Languages Program as part of the Department of Education undertake the task of bringing a unified Noongar language to help in the revival of the language in the school curriculum.

The vast expanse of **Noongar boodjar** (Noongar country) covers an array of rich beauty with coastlines to inland dirt tracks, landmarks to encounter of city to country living.

Below I share some of my personal selected highlights as I travel on **Noongar boodjar** mostly around **Wardandi**, but taking the coastal views and visits through **Pindjarup**, **Wadjak**, **Yoowat** and on to **Amangoo** country (refer to map above).

WARDANDI COUNTRY

Surrounding the small town of Margaret River are many wineries or for the adventurous, caves to explore. The Margaret River Youth Precinct holds a great skate park for young people.



Margaret River Skate Park

The neighbouring town of Cowaramup (locally known as Cow Town) are scattered many cow statues throughout.



Cow at Cowaramup

The attractive tourist stop is that of Candy Cow where you can witness the fudges being made (arriving at the right time) and taste the various flavours. www.candycow.com.au



Candy Cow, Cowaramup



Candy Cow shop

Another popular tourist stop is that of Simmos where ice cream, milkshakes, cappuccinos or hot waffles can be found in Dunsborough. Mini golf and rides for young **koolangka** ('children' in Noongar language) are also available. www.simmos.com.au



Simmos entry

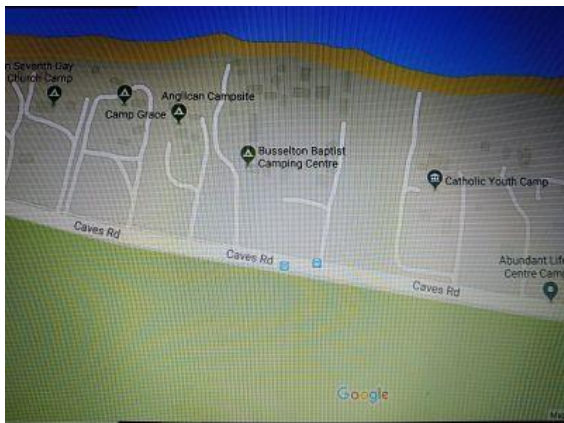


Ice cream at Simmos

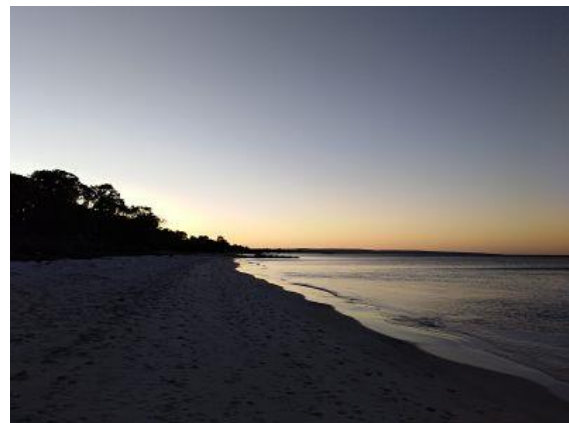


Play area at Simmos

Known as the Holy Mile, there many campsites that stretch between Busselton and Dunsborough located right along the beachside owned by various church groups and organisations.



Organisational Campsites on Caves Road, Geographe



Campsite beach, Geographe

The popular Busselton Jetty www.busseltonjetty.com.au is the second longest wooden jetty in the world at 1.8 kilometres long, available for walkers for fitness or fishing, or if you prefer a train ride the option is there. A new playground close to the entrance enticing families to visit and enjoy the outdoors with café places nearby.



Busselton Jetty

A short walk from the Busselton Foreshore, is an art zone.



Busselton Art Society



Glass making in Art Geo complex

Living in Bunbury, the opportunity to enjoy a 'cuppa' (colloquial word for 'cup of tea') can be had whilst 'people watching' in the city on the 'Cappuccino strip' of Victoria street or down by the water.



Henry's Cafe, Bunbury



Served at Henry's Café



Back Beach Cafe overlooking water, Bunbury



Served at Back Beach Cafe, Bunbury

Walk the streets of Bunbury and enjoy the street art.





Enjoy Koombana Bay foreshore where the *'Wardandi Boodja'* sculpture stands and let the kids have fun at the playground.



Wardandi Boodja sculpture



'Kwilena'(dolphin) at Koombana Beach Foreshore

Walk across to the must-see Dolphin Discovery Centre. A place where conservation, education and research of the wild dolphin *'kwilena'* (Noongar name) population and marine environment with an interpretive centre and interactive displays or just enjoy beachside dining.

If you choose, a booking can be made for a Dolphin Eco Cruise or Dolphin Swim Tour. On the occasion I ventured was a beautiful sunny day and what an awesome sight to view the pod of dolphins. More information can be found at www.dolphindiscovery.com.au



Dolphin Discovery Centre

Wildlife on land can be found at www.bunburywildlifepark.com.au where you can see the iconic kangaroo '**yongka**' (Noongar name). At the front of the park is a plaque that recognises the City of Bunbury's commitment to the Nyungar people.



City of Bunbury commitment plaque to Nyungar people

Next to the Bunbury Wildlife Park is the Big Swamp Playground where it is accessible for all abilities.





Big Swamp Playground

Nature lovers can further enjoy a wander on the boardwalk through Mangrove Cove and observe the many species of water birds.

With cultural tours to embark on going solo or in groups, it's an opportunity to connect close with local tour guides as they share the knowledge and heritage. One such experience I personally enjoyed in Bunbury can be found with Troy Bennell at www.ngalangwongi.com.au



Ngalang Wongi Tours



Troy Bennell from Ngalang Wongi Tours

To get a panoramic view of Bunbury harbour and Koombana Bay, head to the Marlston Hill Lookout Tower.



Marlston Hill Lookout

PINDJARUP COUNTRY

Traveling through on Forrest Highway, there's a convenient 'Public Rest Stop' in Shire of Waroona.



Shire of Waroona - Public Rest Stop

WADJAK COUNTRY

The '*djerap*' (Noongar word for bird) emblem of Western Australia is the black swan, known as '*maali*' in the Noongar language.



'Maali' (black swan)

In Perth (the capital city) the black swans can be seen along Swan River. The view of the city can be enjoyed both by day and at night on the high grounds of Kings Park.

www.bgpa.wa.gov.au/kings-park

Capture entertainment equipped for large capacities at the Perth Arena.

www.racarena.com.au



RAC Arena, Perth



Stromatolites , Lake Thetis

At Molah Hill Lookout, you can learn about the “**Waakgardy and the Coastal Dreaming**”.



Waakgardy and the Coastal Dreaming



Molah Hill Lookout



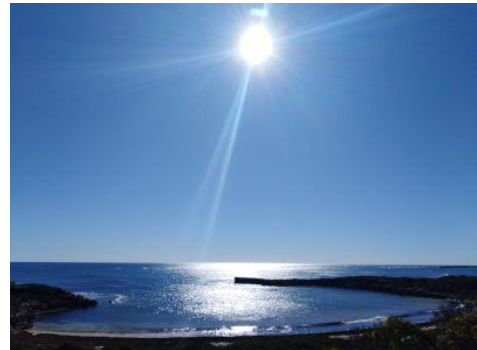
Wedge to Green Head

AMANGOO COUNTRY

In Amangoo, a small country town called Green Head holds a general store, fuel station and liquor store all in one. Three bays lookout is worth a visit as you enjoy the scene of Dynamite Bay, South Bay and Anchorage Bay.



Green Head General Store



Dynamite Bay, Green Head

Known for the sea lions and cray fish in this region, make sure you log in with the Volunteer Marine Rescue when out at sea to ensure your safety.

<https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/contactus/Pages/volunteermarinerescueservices.aspx>

Volunteers are valued members of any community and often go unrecognised. However the Leeman branch was presented by the Shire of Coorow with an Active Citizenship Award 2018 as 'Australia Day WA, Community Citizen of the Year'.





Leeman Volunteer Marine Rescue



Log On & Log Off

Western Australia has many accessible roads with good signage and public transport available thanks to the three key transport agencies of Main Roads, Department of Transport and Public Transport Authority. For more info, visit <https://www.mainroads.wa.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>



Perth city train station



Road Coach stop at Green Head



Road and landscape along Indian Ocean Drive (Yoowat country)



Road signs in WA

Much more can be explored and to view Western Australia Indigenous Tourism visit www.waitoc.com .

Google has given me an opportunity to take snap shots of Noongar country and place some of these spaces on the world map. Culture is important and with so many types, I select an array to present. Not just on heritage, but youth, church, food, art or other. It's wonderful to display what we have here and entice visitors to the region, thereby creating tourism and business opportunities. I love sharing my experiences and know we as individuals have a valued insight. It's also about helping raise awareness of what's out there. There are many communities to be showcased, but particularly my focus is on Bunbury. This is my special place, my home.

Boorda! (later – as in 'see you later' in Noongar language).



Esther_Bunbury

Link to more photos - <https://photos.app.goo.gl/c1k2bwKvUDkrsAZ29>