

# Nyangumarta Warrarn TEK survey using KAS helicopter services 1–2 May 2019

## Field visit report

### 1. Purpose of survey

The purpose of the helicopter survey was to visit landscape features within the Nyangumarta Warrarn IPA which cannot be easily accessed otherwise to collect cultural knowledge associated with these landforms additional to that collected previously.

### 2. HSE

Five passengers per flight were transported to the nominated site. For each flight the pilot (John French) gave a full briefing on safety features, safe exit from the helicopter, first aid, EPERB, emergency exits etc and ensured all seatbelts were adjusted correctly before flight. At each site the general area was surveyed by the pilot and nominated HSE person to assess the safest place for landing. Many of the ladies were elderly and had not flown in a helicopter before, but with the pilot's assistance and assurance they were able to join and enjoy the flight and alight at the sites visited. There were no hazards or incidents.



Photo: Lynette (Ranger), Ben (YMAC) and Martina (Elder)



Photo: Ishmael (Ranger) and Volker (Ranger Co-ordinator)



Photo: Lynette (Ranger) and Martina (Elder)



Photo: Safe landing points were found at each site

### 3. Results

- Seven of the ladies' present, including Elders and younger rangers, and three of the men including one Elder and two younger Rangers were able to be transported to the sites visited. In addition to this they were accompanied by YMAC personnel, one DBCA representative and the ethno-botanist who recorded the knowledge.
- One remote rockpile and six inland springs were visited during the survey.

The rockpile was visited by the men and Elder, Ian Hunter showed the young males an ochre grinding site and associated rock paintings. Photographs of this site were prohibited.

One new plant, *Nicotiana benthamii* (bush tobacco), only found in rockpile shelters and caves, was collected from this site and later discussed with the ladies back at camp. Another plant, *Tinospora smilacina* (snakevine) was also taken back for discussion. It had been previously collected but additional knowledge applicable to that species was given.

The condition of vegetation around the rockpiles was recorded for health and presence of weeds. No weeds were recorded.



Photo: Ian (Elder) with Ishmael (Ranger) at rockpile location



Photo: Bush tobacco (*Nicotiana benthamii*) at rockpile site.

- The six springs visited were the most inland and remote in Mandora Marsh and therefore many of them had not been visited previously. However, the names of some of the springs, which differed from the “whitefella names” were given by the Elders having been passed on by their Elders.

The springs provided a further three plants which had not been previously collected or discussed, *Capparis spinosa* (caper bush), *Typha domingensis* (bulrush) and *Enchylaena tomentosa* (ruby salt bush) and additional

information was provided for a further two plants (*Sesbania Formosa* (dragon tree) and *Acacia ampliceps* (salt wattle)). Martina Badal also demonstrated how witchedy grubs are located beneath salt wattle, removed and eaten.

Each of the springs was assessed for vegetation condition, TEC (Threatened Ecological Community) status and weeds were recorded.

At Salt Creek, which was also visited, two ladies who had not been in the area before, participated in a cultural acceptance ceremony to keep them culturally safe.

The use of the helicopter allowed Nyangumarta Warrarn people to visit places they knew about from stories passed down to them. The Elders were able to relate stories passed on them, as well as pass on traditional knowledge about plants and their usage, to the Rangers and younger adults in the group. Oral tradition has always been the most important form of knowledge transfer for Aboriginal people – although this knowledge is being recorded today, keeping oral tradition and language alive is integral to retaining Aboriginal culture. The use of the helicopter helped to achieve this.



Photo: Martina enjoying a witchedy grub delicacy



Photo: Discussing values of Eli Eli Spring



Photo: Martina and Lynette discussing a medicine plant



Photo: The April 2019 group