

Western

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4WD DRIVER

WA's own 4WD Magazine

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PARTNERSHIP WITH MARTU

By Rod Durston

The WA outback is rare earth. With its unique landscapes, flora and fauna it's undeniably precious, not just to Australians but indeed, to the world.

In 1997, out of a desire to care for and preserve this unique part of the planet, concerned 4W drivers formed Track Care WA and so began a long association with the communities and Traditional Owners along the Canning Stock Route. Track Care WA has undertaken dozens of projects along the entire length of the CSR such as BBQs, signage, shelters, well restoration and composting toilets as well as annual maintenance runs to ensure everything is in working order. Collaboration with Martu people has been on a number of projects, including toilets at Jurrpa to ranger stations at Lampa.

As part of our developing relationships, Track Care WA has proudly signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Jamukurnu-Yapalikurnu Aboriginal Corporation (JYAC - formerly WDLAC). This MOU acknowledges Martu ownership of their lands (Martu

ngurra) as reflected by the Martu Native Title Determination. Martu cultural, social, economic and scientific connection to their ngurra is an essential part of what we all encounter when travelling on this country.

The MOU provides the framework for a continuing relationship and partnership between Track Care WA and Martu to ensure conservation of one of the most



Signing the Memorandum of Understanding ▲ to continue the partnership between Track Care WA and Martu.

Dune-top tow on the CSR. ▼



iconic areas of Australia. It facilitates opportunities in areas of common interest and will see a working group of Track Care WA and JYAC representatives established. The MOU reflects Track Care WA's evolution as an organisation into an environmental and conservation group that makes a positive contribution to the protection of bush heritage and advocates for responsible access for off-road recreational use.

To protect Martu ngurra, Track Care WA and JYAC will work collaboratively to identify and promote sustainable 4W driving and camping opportunities, provide volunteer support in maintenance of vehicular tracks and infrastructure, facilitate controlled access and promote minimal-impact driving techniques to protect the Western Desert's cultural and environmental heritage. Our MOU will also allow us to give advice to members where there are changes to 4WD tracks and infrastructure, such as seasonal track closures or closures in areas affected by fires and flooding.

Our collaboration will also look for opportunities for Martu employment in works programs, including Martu monitors and advisers for Track Care WA projects. Track Care WA and JYAC will also work to maintain commonly used infrastructure and identify opportunities for Track Care WA members to engage with Martu

communities for 4WD workshops and seminars where members and Martu can share 4W driving skills and experiences.

Ultimately the MOU aims to maintain sustainable 4W driving through promotion and awareness of Martu culture, maintenance of commonly used infrastructure, implementing controlled access where required as well as promoting minimal-impact driving techniques and providing good bush camping opportunities.

Importantly, the MOU will help to build organisational, as well as personal relationships, between Martu, Track Care WA members and JYAC.

Track Care WA will look for opportunities to establish similar arrangements with other Native Title holders along the CSR and other parts of our great state.

JYAC (formerly WDLAC) is a Prescribed Body Corporate established by the Native Title Act. JYAC acts as the trustee for Martu native title rights and interests, including Martu rights to exclusive possession of their ngurra, an area of more than 130,000 square kilometres across the Western Desert region. JYAC is involved in numerous projects for the cultural, social and economic benefit of current and future generations of Martu (www.wdlac.com.au).

CSR long road ahead. ▼

