

Shire of Toodyay & Noongar Kaartdijin Aboriginal Corporation

Reconciliation Framework

Reconciliation Action Plan | July 2023 – June 2026



Cover artwork: *Three Moort (Families)* by Sarah Miles



Welcome to Country

Kaya gnulla moort, wandju Noongar kwabadak boodja Ballardong, Yued, Whadjuk.
Nguny koort boodja. Ngaany karlak. Noonuk karlak.
Ngyarn waangkiny mooditj weirn uk ngyarn moort – Noongar, Wadjela.
Gnulla boodja, gnulla wirn, gnulla moort.
Koort djurpin noonak djuripin. Nyinniny, waangkiny deman, maam, ngarnk kura kura.

*Hello everyone, welcome to my beautiful Noongar country, the land of three Noongar tribes.
Our Heartland. My home. Your home.*

*I call on the good spirits to look out for our people – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.
Our land, our spirit, our people. We were given our knowledge through the oral tradition from our
grandfathers, grandmothers, mothers, and fathers long time ago.*

Sharmaine Miles, Noongar Ballardong Elder

Introductions

Robert Miles

**Noongar Kaartdijin Aboriginal Corporation (NKAC) Chairperson
Noongar Yued Maaman**

It is with great pride that I am able to represent the Noongar community of this land where we meet, being the land of the Ballardong, Yued, and Whadjuk people with whom we share the Shire boundaries. I pay my respects to the Noongar Elders, both past and present, to whom we owe this document. A special thank you to my peers at the Noongar Kaartdijin Aboriginal Corporation, for not giving up on this reconciliation path that we started several years ago. I thank the Shire of Toodyay for their generosity of spirit and unwavering support for a plan that is more than just words – it is action and commitment. I look forward to this second RAP translating to real outcomes and opportunities for our First Peoples.



Cr Rosemary Madacsi

Shire of Toodyay President

With great respect I acknowledge the Ballardong, Yued, and Whadjuk Noongar culture and heritage within the Shire of Toodyay, and their Elders past, present and emerging. Once again, I am delighted to lead the Shire's commitment towards Reconciliation through our second Reconciliation Action Plan. This plan continues the important work undertaken to connect the Toodyay community with the wealth of Aboriginal history, tradition, and culture that so enriches our society. I wish to acknowledge the outstanding contribution that members of the Reconciliation Working Group have provided to the creation of these plans, and to the expression of key actions within the community.



Suzie Haslehurst

Shire of Toodyay CEO

I am very proud to present the Shire of Toodyay's second Reconciliation Action Plan. Over the last two years, the NKAC and the Shire have continued to work together to support truth telling via the Gnulla Karnany Waangkiny project at the Newcastle Gaol and Connor's Mill museums; and a sign about the Toodyay Valley from an Aboriginal cultural perspective erected beside the Bilya Track, near Newcastle Bridge. The actions contained in this RAP will continue to guide and assist the Shire to increase cultural awareness and create opportunities for meaningful engagement. These include a proposed "Welcome to Noongar Boodja" mural at the Toodyay Visitor Centre, and the development of a "Noongar Trail" – a walk trail/self-drive tour to a number of important Noongar places around the town and surrounds.





Kaya, wandju nidja Noongar boodja *Hello, welcome to Noongar country*

Pre-European history: For over 45,000 years, Noongar tribes lived and moved across the Toodyay Valley – an area culturally rich and covered in fertile lands. Noongar people were highly active gathering and hunting foods, camping at various sites, meeting and trading with others, managing the land, and tending to cultural responsibilities during all six bonar (seasons).

The Creation Time: The Nyitting (dreaming) is the Noongar ‘spiritual connection and ancestral times’. A time before time, when spirits rose from the earth and descended from the sky to create the land forms and all living things. Nyitting stories laid down the lore for social and moral order, and established cultural patterns and customs. Creation stories can vary from region to region, but they are part of the connection between all living things.

A spiritual and mythological Wagyl place: The Toodyay Brook has significant spiritual importance as a course travelled by the Wagyl (rainbow serpent) when making its way from Bolgart (north of the Shire boundary) through the waterways, including Redbank Pool, and to Burlong Pool (south of the Shire boundary), upstream of Northam along the Gogulja (Avon River) during the summer months.

Naming of Toodyay: The names ‘Toodyay’ and ‘Duidgee’ Park come from the Noongar word ‘Dudja’, meaning ‘mist’. It is not pronounced ‘two-jay’, instead sounding like ‘Dood-jar’. Toodyay is simply an area known for a lot of mist – especially during Makuru season, around June and July.

Today: Although European colonisation caused displacement of Noongar people from their cultural lands, and led to decades of discrimination and systemic institutionalisation, a very strong sense of place and identity exists today. This continues through connection to boodja (country) and extended moort (family) relationships; and maintaining language, cultural practices and story-telling.

Boodja (tribal lands): The Shire of Toodyay is in a unique location, with its boundary being within the three Noongar lands of the Ballardong, Yued, and Whadjuk peoples. The town of Toodyay itself sits on the westerly border of Ballardong and stretches east into the Wheatbelt. Yued is in the north and north-easterly part of the Shire, while Whadjuk is to the west. Traditionally boundaries were not limited to lines on a map, with Noongar people moving across these lands for trading of goods, cultural responsibilities and ceremonies, and following the seasons.

Registered sites across the Shire: Within the Shire there are 14 registered Aboriginal heritage sites – including all waterways – with more significant sites unregistered. Most sites have been impacted since European settlement through clearing of land, over-extraction of water, river flow restrictions, fenced-off land, community activities, and building of government and private infrastructure.

Noongar Night Sky: Aboriginal astronomy is an important part of Noongar history. Worl Waangkiny (sky stories) – observing and interpreting the night sky – have been used for navigation, calendars, ceremony, cultural lore, song-lines, and art for thousands of years. Here in Toodyay (Dudja), the region is known for its clear, dark nights – perfect for telling the sky’s tales.



The Shire of Toodyay Reconciliation Action Plan

The Shire of Toodyay, bordering the north-eastern edge of the Perth metropolitan area, spans 1,683 square kilometres; has a population of approximately 4,601 people; and displays a wealth of natural and cultural heritage.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

This RAP is designed to align with the Shire’s Toodyay Community Strategic Plan.

It is the Shire’s second Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). It is viewed as a positive step for the entire Toodyay community, as it transforms good intentions and discussions into measurable actions that support and empower the Aboriginal community.

As with the first RAP, this Plan has been developed with the assistance of the Noongar Kaartdijin Aboriginal Corporation (NKAC) and the Reconciliation Working Group.

Over the course of the first RAP (1 July 2020 – 30 June 2023) many activities have taken place and achievements been made:

- a) Aboriginal flag flown at Shire buildings, and acknowledgement of country at all Shire events.
- b) Annual support for NAIDOC activities and Reconciliation Week celebrations.
- c) Aboriginal history included in the Shire museum’s online educational resources.
- d) Significant partnership between NKAC and the Shire (funded through Lotterywest) to develop the Gnulla Karnany Waangkiny (Our Truth Telling) project – a permanent visual display at Newcastle Gaol Museum and Connor’s Mill launched in 2022 – highlighting Noongar heritage relevant to this region and ensuring a more inclusive museum through the inclusion of Noongar culture and history, including dark history.
- e) ‘Welcome to Noongar boodja’ wall mural at Toodyay Visitor Centre.
- f) Support (financial and practical) to NKAC in its development of the ‘Noongar Trail’ – a walk trail and self-drive tour of a number of important Noongar places around town and surrounds. This trail will incorporate 11 sites, all close to town, and will be launched in 2023.



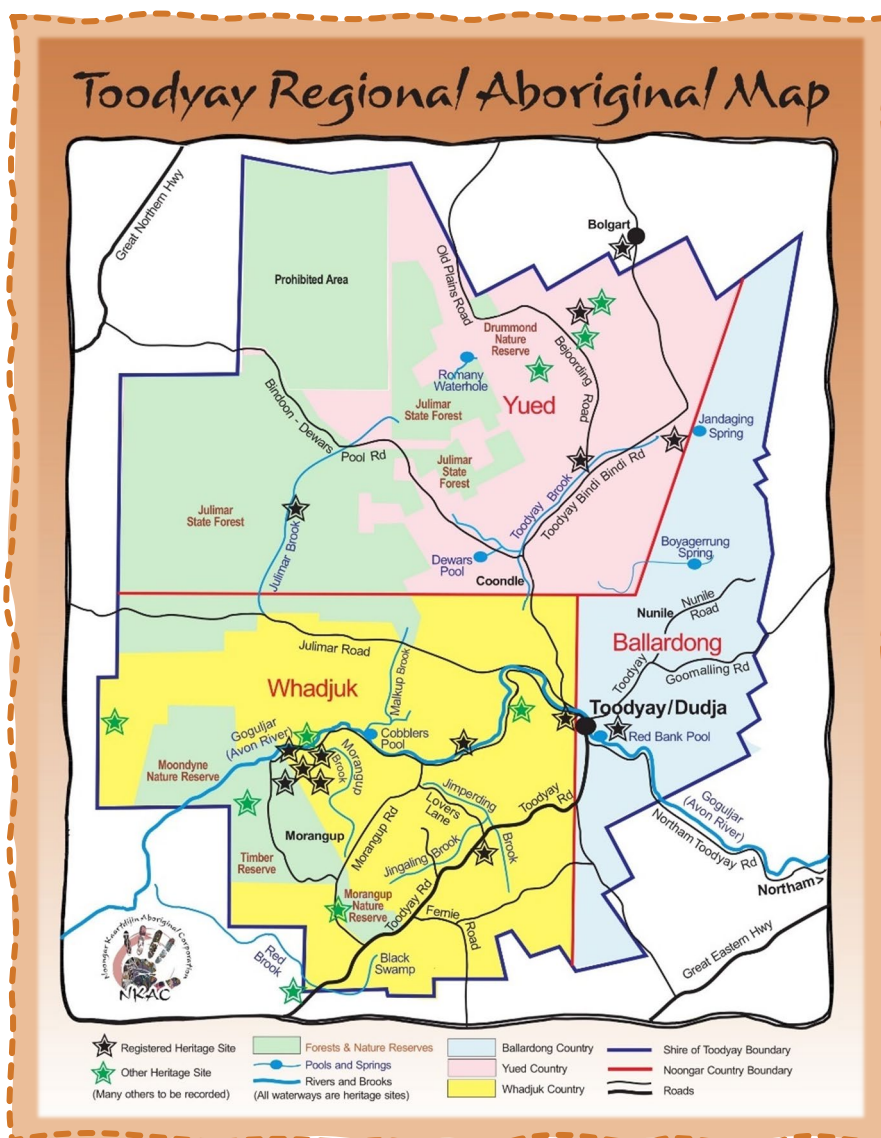
Our continued vision for reconciliation



Reconciliation is an ongoing process. We want our RAP to be meaningful and achievable, and to continue to deliver realistic outcomes that benefit the whole community.

As guided by the Reconciliation Working Group, the Shire is committed to providing meaningful actions and achievable outcomes which will create a wider community understanding of our vision – an inclusive community where we share stories, history, and knowledge. We seek to provide a framework which actively promotes respect, equality, understanding, and partnerships between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community.

We acknowledge the Aboriginal people – the Ballardong, Yued, and Whadjuk people – as the traditional custodians of the land. We respect and value the diversity of Aboriginal culture and stories.





The four core pillars of the RAP

1: Relationships	2: Respect	3: Opportunities	4: Governance
Build and maintain meaningful relationships through shared partnerships and trust. These relationships are vital to improve the way we all work together and deliver on our objectives.	Recognise and respect the Ballardong, Yued, and Whadjuk Noongar culture and heritage within the Shire of Toodyay through acknowledgement, events and activities, and supporting an inclusive community.	Increase communication and advocacy undertaken for services and initiatives within the Shire of Toodyay for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.	Commit to taking responsibility and accountability to deliver the actions contained in the plan.

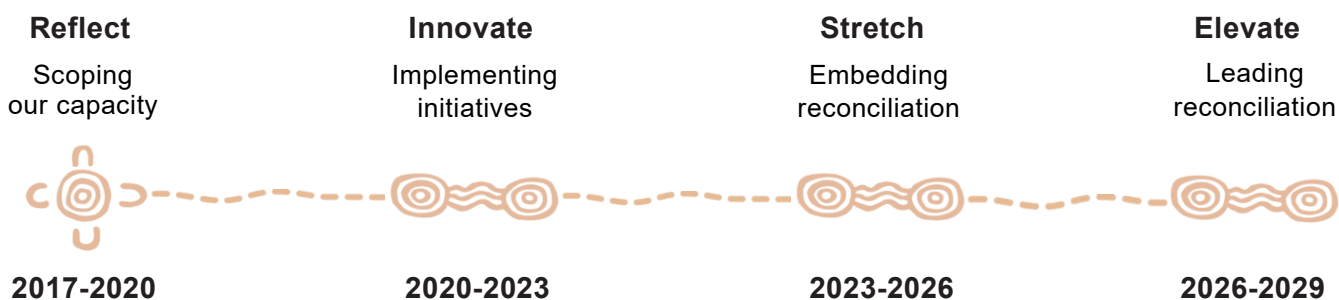
Our reconciliation journey

Under the pillars of the RAP are the four stages of the Shire’s reconciliation journey. At the **Reflect** stage, we learned what was important, prepared for future reconciliation initiatives, committed to developing relationships with Aboriginal stakeholders, and decided on our vision.

At the **Innovate** stage, we launched our first RAP, focused on developing and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal peoples, and focused on developing and piloting innovative reconciliation strategies.

At the **Stretch** stage – our current stage – we have developed a strong approach to advancing reconciliation, and are focusing on longer-term strategies and working towards defined targets and goals.

When we move into the **Elevate** stage, we will develop the next RAP, aiming to advance reconciliation and champion initiatives that empower Aboriginal people and create societal change.



Reconciliation Action Plan

1. Relationships

Action	Deliverable	Timeline
1: Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal stakeholders and organisations	Meet with local Aboriginal community members, NKAC, and other established groups to ensure future partnership.	Quarterly
2: Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Continue Reconciliation Week lunches and connecting with local Aboriginal community b) Encourage and support staff and senior management to participate in Reconciliation Week activities 	Annual, May/June
3: Promote reconciliation through the Shire's sphere of influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Communicate our commitment to reconciliation b) Collaborate with Aboriginal organisations and community groups to develop ways to advance reconciliation c) Acknowledgment of Country in strategic and Shire documents 	As required
4: Australia Day celebrations	Liaise with NKAC and the community to consider a new date for the annual Australia Day event.	Within the 2023-2026 RAP period



Reconciliation Action Plan

2. Respect

Action	Deliverable	Timeline
5: Increase understanding, value, and recognition of Aboriginal culture, history, knowledge, and rights through Aboriginal learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Shire staff participate in Cultural Awareness Training, Public Sector Training, and a local introduction session b) Shire to keep up to date with Aboriginal Heritage Legislation c) Support an NKAC-led external on-country heritage training workshop (with Noongar participants) 	Ongoing
6: Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal people by observing cultural protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Include an Acknowledgment of Country at the commencement of important events/meetings b) Include Welcome to Country by local traditional owners/representatives at Shire events 	As required
7: Build respect for Aboriginal culture and history	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Support NAIDOC Week activities b) Incorporate Aboriginal history at appropriate Shire locations c) Aboriginal flag to be flown at Shire Administration and Visitor Centre 	Continued



Reconciliation Action Plan

3. Opportunities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline
8: Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal recruitment	Identify (other model and partnership) opportunities for Aboriginal people to participate in work experience at the Shire in order to improve employment prospects	Ongoing
9: Promote/support Aboriginal events and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Promote Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week via Shire advertising streams b) Continued support of NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week activities via venues/sponsorship 	Annual
10: Include Aboriginal history in new projects and further develop Aboriginal context for Aboriginal history in Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Engage with NKAC and local Aboriginal people to develop historical content in Shire museums b) Encourage Aboriginal art in public spaces (including through identified partnerships) c) Include interpretive artworks/signage in key Shire projects 	Ongoing
11: Noongar interpretive signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Work towards creating and establishing interpretive signage at strategic locations throughout the Shire (NKAC will seek joint support in any funding requirements) b) These could include the Noongar Trail, Toodyay walk tracks, nature reserves, entrances, and other agreed sites 	Ongoing
12: Aboriginal admin/cultural space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Communicate any Shire facilities/options NKAC and other Aboriginal groups can access for regular meetings b) Make aware and provide reasonable support for any grant opportunities to NKAC 	Ongoing
13: Collaborative Land Management Practices on nature reserves (for future planning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Commence discussion, and identify opportunities where Aboriginal engagement in or joint management of Shire nature reserves is possible (i.e. a long-term aspiration for a collaborative/partnership of traditional and contemporary land management practice) b) During this RAP period, activities may include consulting Noongar traditional land management experts (such as Noongar Land Enterprise Group) to visit and provide guidance and advice 	Ongoing

Reconciliation Action Plan

4. Governance

Action	Deliverable	Timeline
14: Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group to drive governance of RAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Maintain Aboriginal representation on the RAP Working Group b) Meet at least four times a year to drive and monitor the RAP implementation (possibly twice, with more informal meetings each quarter) 	Quarterly
15: Provide support for effective implementation of RAP commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Council to lead and allocate resources needed for RAP implementation b) Engage community and Council in the delivery of the RAP commitments 	Quarterly
16: Build accountability through RAP reporting (achievements and challenges)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Complete and submit annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia b) Report progress to Council, Senior staff, and the local community 	Annual
17: Shire logo/brand	Start discussion on making a change to existing logo to reflect name of area, known for its mist (long-term goal for the future 2026-2029 RAP)	Ongoing

Contact information

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 Toodyay WA 6566

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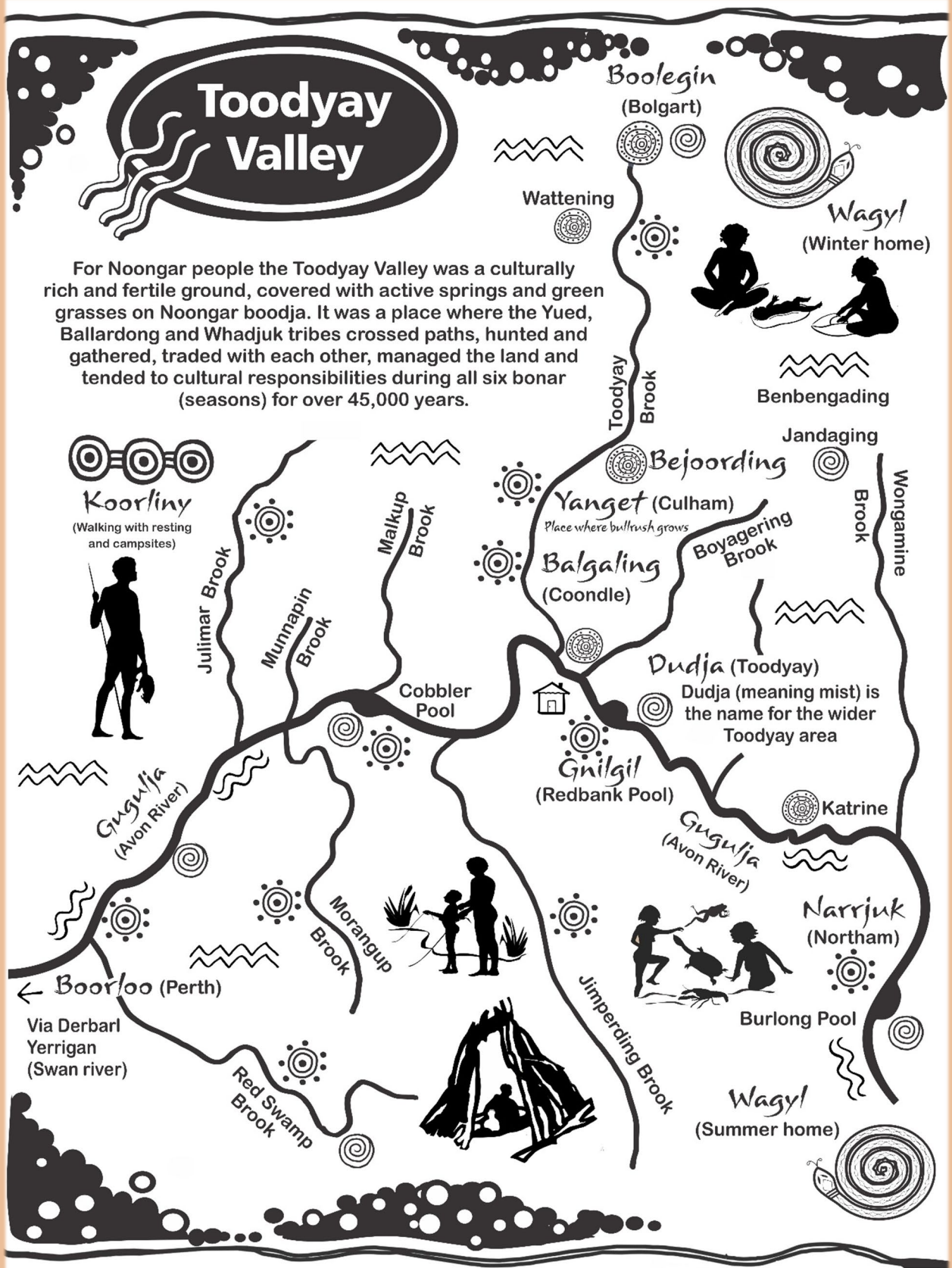
Email: records@toodyay.wa.gov.au

Website: www.toodyay.wa.gov.au



Toodyay Valley

For Noongar people the Toodyay Valley was a culturally rich and fertile ground, covered with active springs and green grasses on Noongar boodja. It was a place where the Yued, Ballardong and Whadjuk tribes crossed paths, hunted and gathered, traded with each other, managed the land and tended to cultural responsibilities during all six bonar (seasons) for over 45,000 years.





Noongar TRADITIONAL PRACTICE & PROTOCOL



Noongar people have complex lore and customs. Lore for Noongar people is unwritten and refers to Kaartdijin (knowledge), beliefs, rules or customs. Noongar lore works with nature to protect animals and our environment. Noongar lore is linked to kinship and mutual obligation. It also relates to marriage, trade and custodianship of Boodja (land). Noongar cultural protocol establishes who can and cannot 'speak for country'. Traditionally, it has governed use of fire, hunting and gathering, and our behaviour regarding Moort (family). Noongar lore has been handed down from Elders through generations.



Welcome to Country

A Welcome to Country ceremony is acknowledgement and recognition of the rights of Noongar people. This acknowledgement pays respect to the traditional custodians, ancestors and continuing cultural practices of Noongar people. The land, waterways and culturally significant sites are very important to Noongar people. It is an acknowledgement of the past, is a mark of respect and provides a safe passage for visitors.



Throwing of Sand

A Bilya (river) is a spirit home. When Noongar people visit a river or water body, they throw a handful of sand into the water, and use language to let the Wagyl (spirit snake) know of their presence. The condition and health of the waterways relate to the wellbeing of the Wagyl and Moort (family). It is part of caring for country. When Noongar people practice this custom the water can be safely used for swimming, drinking and catching fish or turtle.



Smoking Ceremony

A smoking ceremony is a traditional Noongar ritual used to not only cleanse and purify a specific area, but to also cleanse the spirit, body and soul while you are on Noongar Boodja. It helps to ward off Warra Weirn (bad spirits) and bring in blessings of Kwop Weirn (good spirits). The leaves and shavings from the Balga (grass tree) are used. This ritual of purification and unity helps to keep you safe while on country.

Acknowledgement: www.noongarculture.org.au