



Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council Newsletter

Vol. 1: Issue 2, July 2020.



Vol. 1: Issue 2: July 2020

DOI: [10.6084/m9.figshare.13031069](https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.13031069)

WELCOME !

The Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council wishes to acknowledge your contribution as a Newsletter subscriber which supports the protection of the Martuwarra, Fitzroy River.

- Please encourage others to visit our main website -
<https://www.martuwarrafitzroyriver.org>

Editors

Dr Anne Poelina, Dr Alexander Hayes

Featured Photography

'Martuwarra Series' by Lachie Carracher - Cover

'Martuwarra Fitzroy River' by Mark Jones

Research & Content Support

Grace John

Content Contributors

Martuwarra Elders, Marlikka Perdrisat

Design & Typesetting

Oethica Group Productions

Community Story Tellers & Community Researchers



Photo: 'Martuwarra' - Mark Jones

Who are you ?

"We are two Elders from the Martuwarra (Names withheld for cultural reasons).

What is your relationship with the Martuwarra, Fitzroy River?

"Our people have been hunting, fishing, having ceremony along the River for many years and know every inch of turns along the River. There are serpents all along that guide that River. When you go swimming— we must put a rock under our armpit (since being a little kid) so the River serpents can smell you. The River has known us for a long time and knows our kids and grandkids and what language group we're from".

Community Story Tellers & Community Researchers

“We all worried about the water and how the next generation is going to look after it. As young people and second generation alike they need to keep up with the demand of new technologies. While it is still important to create cultural activities on Country as this is important for our generation to teach cultural programs based for their clan groups, and also to integrate Ranger activities in those programs too.

Our relationship to the River – there’s a spiritual connection that is watching us, that is talking to us and guiding us, even when we are sleeping, for the wellbeing of ourselves as human beings that belong to a certain part of the River”.



Photo: 'Martuwarra 3' by Lachie Carracher

Community Story Tellers & Community Researchers



Photo: 'Martuwarra 1' by Lachie Carracher

“When we go fishing along the River, we can see spirits watching us and talking to us. The River is a healing place also, where we can sit in silence and become one with nature. When we call out in our language you know for a fact that the spirit of the River is actually listening to us. The howling of the wind let’s us know that our ancestors are very well near and close to us”.

Can you share some of the history of the Martuwarra?

“The River is part of us as much as we are part of the Martuwarra. Long before the Europeans arrived our people were born and raised along the River, not in Hospitals. The people along the River, they are the keepers of the River. This River has a purpose and the purpose is our deep spiritual history that we always refer back to the dreamtime”.

Even during the time of the rival of the Europeans along the River for the establishment of the Kimberley of Western Australia in the early 1800s - this became our history that's been told to us from the River. The River has written these stories down too. Those stories are written in the trees, the birds, the animals, the plants and in the small running streams that run to the River. Nothing is kept secret from the River. The River has so many stories to share.”

What message would you send to the world about the importance of the Martuwarra for current and future generations?

“The Country needs responsible people with caring hearts to look after the River and to keep it clean. Look after the River properly. By telling the stories to the next generation, so they can tell those stories to their next generation”.

From the past our people lived on the land near along the River as Nomads, as naked as you can get. Our ancestors of long ago had being using this country effectively in a eco-friendly way. There was a system that was put in place systematically and scientifically. They were a thriving society at one point in time. Our ancestors' bones still remain along the River in significant places where they walked, hunted, performed ceremonies or have been shot for no apparent reason all because of colonisation. There are burial grounds all along the River for sure.

We are many different tribal groups along the River with many different walks of life that shares the River culturally and respectfully, for the survival of our well beings, without confrontation and bad intention - having that written in our hearts is caring for Country”.

Community Story Tellers & Community Researchers



Photo: Harry Jakamarra

Who are you?

“My name is Marlikka Perdrisat”.

Why do you want to become a Digital Storyteller and how can this help your strengths for example, artist, poet, ranger, performer?

“A few years ago, I left Country to undertake my postgraduate studies in Law and while away I learnt how much I missed the River, Country and people who share the philosophies I grew up with. This taught me how lucky I was to have this foundation in my early years to help me understand myself and my place in the world. I want to use storytelling to share the value of the River, Country and our people to the rest of the world, I hope that by showing the value of the River people will understand how important it is to protect it against looming threats such as mining, agriculture and climate change”.

What is your relationship with the Martuwarra Fitzroy River?

“I grew up next to a billabong that is one of the deposits after the river floods, the River is a combination of the flowing river, billabongs, soaks, wetlands and aquifers. There is a special feeling when you are at the River, its alive you can feel it. It’s part of us, and we came from it, even in the most western view of evolution we all came from water.”



Photo: Magali McDuffie

Who are your traditional owner group/s along the Martuwarra Fitzroy River?

“Along the River there are several tribes who live here in harmony. I am from the Nyikina people”.



Photo: Magali McDuffie

What is their relationship to the Martuwarra Fitzroy River?

“Our people have lived on this River for tens of thousands of years, Woonyoomboo was the original scientist of our people who walked the country cataloging it and everything that lives here. The biodiversity in this region is rich and we must protect it”.

What message would you like to send to the world about the importance of the Martuwarra for current and future generations?

“This River is the foundation of life for the whole bioregion, we are all dependent on it. More and more we are seeing issues around the world regarding water scarcity, in this climate we must protect these communal assets. Other legal systems around the world are listening to First Nations people, integrating legal systems with First Law. In New Zealand the Whanganui River is a legal person, protecting it as ancestral being, along with a nearby forest. This allows for the law of the land to operate, but not undermine the new law and society”.



Photo: Magali McDuffie

What are you interested in learning and experiencing, for example would you like to be a community researcher/storyteller, travel Australia and internationally?

“I would like to create art that communicates feeling and shares knowledge, I want to create content for this generation and future ones to understand how valuable the river is, and the philosophies it gave us to continue sustainability and wellbeing for all”.

Learn more of Marlikka’s story at

<https://martuwarrafitzroyriver.org/change>

Thank you for reading our newsletter.

Please encourage others to visit the Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council website - <https://www.martuwarrafitzroyriver.org>

**This newsletter has been brought to you by the
Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council located in Fitzroy Crossing, 6765,
Western Australia, Australia.**