



# Martuwarra

## RiverOfLife

**PARTNERSHIP PROSPECTUS** |

[www.martuwarrafitzroyriver.org](http://www.martuwarrafitzroyriver.org) |

DOI: 10.6084/m9.figshare.13064213 |

# An Invitation.



Photo: Magali McDuffie

**“Lets walk together into  
a better future”**

**Dr. Anne Poelina**  
**Chair, Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council**  
[chair@martuwarrafitzroyriver.org](mailto:chair@martuwarrafitzroyriver.org)



# The Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council



**Broome, Western Australia, 2020.**

**“We invite government, industry, conservationists, private investors, and philanthropists to join with us to advance the governance of cultural heritage and to ensure the sustainable management of water resources. We call on governments to hear our voices, to dedicate resources and to work with us in governing the region into the future. Together we can ensure protection of natural and cultural heritage and the equitable distribution of wealth creation from diverse ‘new and forever’ industries and economies”**

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# OUR MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMME

## CORPORATES

Investment in the Martuwarra Council through funds, goods or services received from corporations, companies or large enterprise strategically achieves charitable goals in an enduring relationship with tangible benefits for the wider community. New value rewards for our partnership include your publicity inclusions across print, web and social media as well as legacy through film credits, keynote roles, research and project collaborations.



**Membership - \$1,000 AUD** [ Once only fee - one (1) login ]



## ASSOCIATES

Sponsorship from small business, industry groups or community associations who selectively support Martuwarra Council initiatives, such as the Community Storyteller and Researchers program. Your benefits include brand recognition through social media mentioning, invited speakers roles in Council workshops, discounted event ticketing and Associates merchandise.

**Membership - \$250 AUD** [ Once only fee - one (1) login ]

## FRIENDS

Donations and philanthropic underwriting from individuals, family trusts and small groups who action change through reciprocity. These powerful acts of philanthropy are rewarded with access to the latest news from the Council, priority at virtual events and publication inclusions of how their donations have helped protect the Martuwarra.

**Membership - \$20 AUD** [ Once only fee - one (1) login ]





**"The River is very important for us. River got the meaning, River got the story, River got the songs. We want to protect our River. Our River is like our Mother".**



**Annie Milgin  
Nyikina Traditional Custodian**





Photo: Magali McDuffie

**“Australia, and indeed the world,  
has a unique opportunity to  
conserve the sacred and to truly  
recognise the authority of the River  
of Life and the Traditional Owners.”**



**Professor R. Quentin Grafton,  
Australian Laureate Fellow,  
Water Justice Hub, Australian National University.**

Quentin Grafton is Professor of Economics and Chairholder UNESCO Chair in Water Economics and Transboundary Water Governance. He is an Australian Laureate Fellow (2020-25), convenes the Water Justice Hub and is the Executive Editor of the Global Water Forum. His collaborative research, as part of the IWF, is focused on water valuation and water planning in the Northern Murray-Darling Basin.



## **An Open Invitation to Partner with Us**

The Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council (Martuwarra Council) is an alliance of Traditional Owners in the Fitzroy River Catchment in Western Australia's Kimberley region. We have come together to give voice to our ambitions for a just and sustainable future. This future recognises and respects Aboriginal people's connection to Country and the deep knowledge that Aboriginal people have about within the bounds of nature's limits.

Our aspirations, documented in our strategic Plan, are to build partnerships and coalitions with individuals, organisations and nations who aspire to a just and equitable future which is not driven by consumerist values and the quest for ever-increasing monetary wealth concentrated by the few, at the expense of the many. Wealth to us is founded upon kinship, reciprocity and social connections which are intrinsically connected to nature and all that it provides and sustains.

Modern sustainability principles recognise the value of resilience as being the interlinked outcomes of human-nature interactions. With over 60,000 years of living sustainably with the Martuwarra (Fitzroy River), our people have deep knowledge of creating resilient social-ecological systems. We offer our hand in partnership with those who want to learn from, and with us, to meet the challenges of the future.

## **What We Offer**

Our primary offering is one of partnership, collegiality and knowledge. Aboriginal communities in the Martuwarra Fitzroy River represent a microcosm of regional Australia from which to inform and strengthen the capacity of regional futures. Our people as the oldest living cultures cohabit diverse cultural landscapes and ecosystems including arid deserts, tropical savannahs, ranges and coastal and estuarine communities.

This diversity, supported by the Martuwarra (Fitzroy River) as a Living River Ancestral Serpent being presents opportunities to rethink our values and ethics and our relationship with the natural world. We need to have ethics of care in resource use and policy. (cont.)

This ethics of care grounds our love for current and future generations of young people as they are living now. They are the leaders of their future now. From time to time, we may be able to offer project funds and or other services such as accommodation in remote areas and access to social networks.

## Our Motivations

We have strong ties to the Martuwarra which we believe is a Living Entity, a scared ancestral being with its own Right to live and flow. The living waters of the Martuwarra, which sustains all other life, is threatened by large scale developments and by changes to our climate which further threaten sustainable livelihoods. Our visions and aspiration for different social, cultural, environmental economies we are framing as the 'forever industries' including renewable energy, harvested on Indigenous lands through Indigenous hands can help the transitions to new economies that do not degrade the planet's life support systems such as a stable climate. In this regard, our quest for partnerships is global, not just local.

There are many motivating factors that have brought Native Title holders in the Fitzroy catchment together. We are particularly concerned with the resource development pressures that will see industrial scale developments occur in the region. Cashed-up corporate investors are looking to develop irrigation ventures and extract gas and mineral reserves. Aboriginal people are custodians of these resources based on their connection to Country and their unceded ties to land and water, yet they have no say in the exploitation of these resources. Large scale developments also result in social disadvantage to Aboriginal communities who may lack the technical skills required to 'benefit' from resource exploitation and are also further alienated from accessing Country and sites that are culturally significant to them.

There has also been well over a century of dispossession and enslavement of Aboriginal people which has been ignored in calls for reconciliation and treaty. Past injustices can not continue to be brushed aside, nor can they continue to be perpetrated under the guise of economic prosperity which exaggerate the gains and underplay the costs to Aboriginal people.



## Co-designing Sustainable Futures

We recognise and appreciate that social-ecological systems are complex. What we offer is an opportunity to understand how our knowledge systems can inform new and alternative futures to meet the challenges which modern societies face.

Traditional knowledge is increasingly being called upon to better manage our 'global' commons as cultural landscapes such as through traditional burning techniques; there is an increasing interest in bush and super foods, pharmaceuticals which provide healthier diets and natural medicines; and there has been an ever increasing appetite for Aboriginal art and stories which communicate connection and becoming one with Country. These examples serve to indicate where Aboriginal people and traditional knowledge as Indigenous science can inform alternative Earth-centred societies, bio-regional planning and sustainable economies.

Our economic model is based on micro-industries in remote communities. Examples include cultural tourism, on-Country education, publishing of art, language and literature. These "life projects" strengthen relationships within the community and promote increased engagement with training and workforce development in new economies and industries, employment, education, and research services to build the wellbeing and economies of cohesive regional communities.

Some indicative topics to explore with the Martuwarra Council include, but are not limited to;

- Revisioning human relationships with living land and waters as connected systems;
- Understanding ecosystem services through a deeper understanding of environmental cycles, functions and processes;
- Establishing deliberative models of governance.



Australian  
**Charities** and  
Not-for-profits  
Commission



THIS CERTIFIES THAT

**Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council**

ABN: 94806492396

HAS BEEN REGISTERED BY THE

**Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission**

ON THE DATE OF

**18/08/2020**

CERTIFIED BY

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Johns", positioned over a light blue grid background.

**Hon. Dr Gary Johns**

**Commissioner**

Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission







Government of Western Australia  
Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety  
Consumer Protection

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA**  
*Associations Incorporation Act 2015*  
(Section 10)

IARN: A1036522R

## Certificate of Incorporation

This is to certify that

**MARTUWARRA FITZROY RIVER COUNCIL INCORPORATED**

is an association incorporated under the  
*Associations Incorporation Act 2015*

The date of incorporation is the  
sixth day of August 2020

Lanie Chopping  
Commissioner for Consumer Protection

CERTIFICATE

# PROTECT COUNTRY



Photo: Lachie Carracher

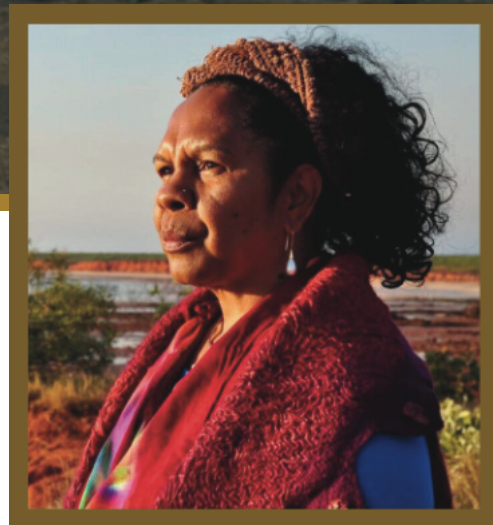
## Be the difference.



# CONTACT



Photo: 'Martuwarra Fitzroy River'  
by Mark Jones



## **Dr Anne Poelina**

**Chair, Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council**

Dr Anne Poelina is a Nyikina Warrwa (Indigenous Australian) woman who belongs to the Mardoowarra, the lower Fitzroy River in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. Poelina is an active Indigenous community leader, human and earth rights advocate, filmmaker and a respected academic researcher, with a Master of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, Master of Education, Master of

Arts (Indigenous Social Policy) and currently Doctor of Philosophy (Health Science) with thesis title, 'Martuwarra First Law Justice: Land, Living Waters and Indigenous Peoples Wellbeing'. She is currently an Adjunct Senior Research Fellow with Notre Dame University and a Research Fellow with Northern Australia Institute, Charles Darwin University.

**[chair@martuwarrafitzroyriver.org](mailto:chair@martuwarrafitzroyriver.org)**





Photo: Lachie Carracher