

Ngalia Heritage Recording Project

KADO MUIR | NGALIA FOUNDATION CHAIR

The Ngalia people are one of the desert peoples, who made “first contact” a generation ago, now mostly living in Leonora, Western Australia. Although relatively few in number, the Ngalia community retains many aspects from its tribal traditions, laws and customs. The community continues to participate in tribal law ceremonies, observe, maintain and practice spiritual and cultural responsibilities and harvest bush foods and medicines from the land. The Ngalia retain considerable and in-depth traditional knowledge, tribal history and tribal wisdom.

In the 1980s, Ngalia elders became concerned the younger generation were losing their cultural knowledge and that mining and development activities were destroying aspects of the Ngalia culture. In response, the Ngalia elders formed an organisation called the Ngalia Heritage Research Council Aboriginal Corporation (NHRC) to work on recording and preserving Ngalia oral history, heritage and culture. Recent work of the NHRC has involved recording Aboriginal sites, encouraging community arts development, researching and compiling a dictionary of Ngalia language, recording traditional songs and documenting Ngalia Traditional Knowledge of plants and natural resources.

The National Trust is working in partnership with the NHRC to conserve and interpret the cultural heritage of the Ngalia people. A conservation appeal has been established to support the work of the Ngalia Foundation and, last year, \$56 800 was received through the Australian Government’s Indigenous Heritage Programme to implement the Ngalia heritage recording project.

The project will research and record the cultural heritage of the Ngalia people and develop a new paradigm in cultural heritage management for Aboriginal communities. The National Trust will provide administrative support to the project, which will be coordinated by the NHRC. The project will be developed and implemented by existing Ngalia staff, with advice and heritage management training from consultants with experience in cultural heritage identification, recording and management. Non-confidential information and guidelines for Aboriginal cultural heritage recording and management will be made available online, so that lessons learnt from this project may benefit other communities across Australia.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE NGALIA FOUNDATION

Or make a donation to the appeal, please contact the National Trust on 08 9321 6088 or visit the website at www.naturalheritage.org.au/Ngalia_Foundation_Appeal.html.



ABOVE left to right | Lawut or Pitjirpiti Claypan (a natural resource and mythological site) J Corbett.
Lake Mason Fieldtrip 074, Nintiranyi (Aboriginal Signpost) - K Muir. Lake Mason Fieldtrip 103, Palpati (Grinding Stone base) K Muir.