

Bush Heritage renames reserve to celebrate Wangkamadla connection to country

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National conservation not-for-profit Bush Heritage Australia has renamed one of its largest nature reserves to recognise the enduring connection to country held by the Wangkamadla Traditional Owners of the land.

Bush Heritage today announced the 233,000-hectare Cravens Peak Reserve near Boulia in far western Queensland has been renamed to Pilungah after a culturally significant spring on the property.

The spring had been destroyed by a previous owner, but its significance will now be honoured forever through the newly named reserve.

The renaming comes just three months after Wangkamadla people were awarded native title over more than 2.9 million hectares of land stretching from Bedourie across to the Northern Territory border.

Wangkamadla woman and Bush Heritage board member Avelina Tarrago encouraged everyone to incorporate traditional names into their vocabulary as a way of recognising connection to culture.

"Pilungah has been known by that name long before anyone else came onto our country and it's important that it is recognised as such," she said.

"Using the traditional names of places means that even if language fades away, the name will always be there, and our connection to country acknowledged."

Bush Heritage CEO Heather Campbell said Bush Heritage had worked closely with Wangkamadla people to find a more culturally appropriate name for the reserve.

"Wangkamadla people have a deep and enduring connection to Pilungah and Bush Heritage is proud to be able to promote and celebrate this ongoing connection through this name change."

Pilungah is located off the Donohue Highway, the last stretch of road before Alice Springs, and has been owned and managed by Bush Heritage since 2005. Wangkamadla people and Bush Heritage have been working closely since 2009, entering into a cultural heritage management agreement in 2014.

The reserve protects many culturally significant sites and once lay on a trade route stretching from Queensland's Gulf of Carpentaria all the way to South Australia. The local narcotic plant *Pituri* was traded for stone knives, seashells and even dugong-tusk daggers.

It is characterised by rolling red sand dunes and is home to one of the world's richest groupings of reptile species.

Wangkamadla Traditional Owners including kids and elders celebrated the renaming recently during a culture camp held at Pilungah.

[Hi res images of the Wangkamadla culture camp available here.](#)

[Footage including interviews and B Roll available here.](#)