

Quandamooka World Heritage Tentative List Submission

Quandamooka Country in Moreton Bay, south east Queensland, is being proposed for a World Heritage listing in recognition of its unique cultural and natural values.

The Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC) is working in partnership with the Queensland Government and the Australian Government to progress the Quandamooka submission for inclusion on Australia's World Heritage Tentative List.

QYAC represents the Quandamooka People and is leading the submission to ensure it adequately conveys the ancient and living heritage of Quandamooka People, their connection to Country and aspirations for it.

Traditional Owners of Quandamooka

'Quandamooka' is a word from the Jandai dialect of the Yagara language meaning 'land and sea country' and used to describe Moreton Bay, the islands within it and the adjacent mainland.

Quandamooka is the ancestral homeland of the Nunagal, Goenbal and Nyugi peoples, together known as the Quandamooka People.

The Quandamooka People are the traditional owners from Moreton Bay and have been caretakers of the region for many thousands of years, a cultural responsibility that continues to this day.

Why is Quandamooka being proposed for World Heritage listing?

World Heritage listing is the highest global recognition of the significance of a place. It will promote and protect outstanding Quandamooka Country examples of natural habitat and wildlife, rich cultural heritage and continuous land and sea management for current and future generations. The recognition will also bring a range of potential economic and social benefits to the region such as increased tourist visitation, revenue and employment opportunities.

What is the proposed Quandamooka World Heritage area?

The proposed area for listing covers native title areas within Quandamooka Country. This includes:

- Moreton Bay Marine Park
- Minjerribah (including Naree Budjong Djara National Park)
- Mulgumpin (including Moreton Island National Park).

What are the proposed World Heritage values of Quandamooka Country?

The Quandamooka People have chosen to pursue two World Heritage criteria, (v) and (x), in the Tentative List Submission.

- Criterion (v) Quandamooka Country is an outstanding example of a traditional human land and sea-use which is representative of a culture interacting with the environment, despite being vulnerable to irreversible change to be an outstanding, and
- Criterion (x) Quandamooka Country contains some of the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity.

The Quandamooka People, and their ancestors before them, have continuously occupied the lands and seas of Moreton Bay and the sandy bay islands for millennia. The archaeological heritage of the Moreton Bay and islands is an extensive, rich and diverse cultural record, comprising more than 1,000 known sites.

Contemporary cultural knowledge relating to these sites and landscapes remains strong, and is associated with living traditions, ideas and beliefs.

The islands, marine and wetland environments are outstanding natural habitats for the protection of many conservation significant species.

An array of marine and terrestrial wildlife inhabits the area, which is also an important feeding area for migratory wader birds on the East Asia-Australasia Flyway. The marine areas, from shallow lagoon to open sea on the east of the island, are important habitat for a rich diversity of fish, sharks, reptiles and marine mammals of international importance for conservation.

Quandamooka is particularly renowned for its significant and stable population of dugong, and for its three areas of the critically endangered Eastern Australia sub-population of grey nurse shark.

What are the benefits of being added to the World Heritage List?

World Heritage listing would further protect:

- the unique cultural relationship between the Quandamooka People and their country over more than 20,000 years, a total area of 3,200 km² of open and sheltered marine environments
- the southernmost populations of dugong and a number of coral species
- the most stable freshwater lake in the world.

It would also provide an opportunity for integrated management of areas that are already under conservation management, as well as increased tourist visitation, revenue and employment opportunities.

How will a World Heritage listing affect the use of Moreton Bay and the islands?

The Australian Government has an international obligation to protect and conserve World Heritage properties, but there is no impediment to existing land uses unless they threaten the outstanding universal value of the property. The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) is Australia's main instrument for implementing its obligations under the World Heritage Convention.

Once World Heritage Listed, the EPBC Act provides exemptions for certain activities or actions that have been ongoing prior to the commencement of the Act (s43B) or with prior authorisation (s43A). In general, routine maintenance of infrastructure (including access roads, transmission lines etc) falls into this category of exemption.

Next steps

The Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC) and Queensland Government are jointly preparing a Tentative List Submission which will be considered at a meeting of Commonwealth, State and Territory Environment Ministers. Before a site can be nominated for World Heritage listing, it must be included on the Tentative List for at least 12 months.

Learn more

For more information about the Quandamooka World Heritage nomination, visit www.qyac.net.au

For more information about Queensland World Heritage sites, visit parks.des.qld.gov.au/world-heritage-areas

