



Public Commemoration Ceremony Program

Saturday 9 November 2024
Wadjemup / Rottnest Island



Aboriginal Flag on Wadjemup

Acknowledgement

Baalabang malayin nakolak-ngat wer wirn kalyakoorl noyinand koort boodja-k wer kep-ak.

Ngalak kaadatj nedingar, birdiya wer boordakan Noongar moort. Ngalak karnadjil kaadatj maaman wer noba wirn ali kalka nginow noyiyang Wadjemap ngardak boodja-k.

Baalabang moort maambart-boort, ngooni-boort, kongk-boort wer Birdiya-boort.

We acknowledge Whadjuk Noongar and other Elders, families of country.
They Wadjemup caring, their culture and spirits always connected Island-to and water-to.

We acknowledge ancestors, Elders and future Noongar families. We truly acknowledge men and boys' spirits who still remain connected Wadjemup under ground-in.

Their family's father-without, brother-without, uncle-without and Elder-without.

Translation courtesy of Sharon Gregory

Welcome and Cultural Care

Language Warning

Aboriginal people are advised that elements in this program may be upsetting and distressing. Our deepest respects and condolences go to all families and kin affected by trauma and injustice.

Cultural Safety

The Wadjemup Wirin Bidi Commemoration Ceremony has dedicated cultural care spaces for Aboriginal men and women.

Please refer to the Wadjemup Wirin Bidi Commemoration Event Map for locations or ask the Support crew for assistance.

These ceremonies are for Sorry Business and events may be a deeply distressing experience for Aboriginal attendees. All visitors are kindly asked to act in a respectful manner.

Image Warning

Aboriginal people should be aware that this program contains images of deceased persons.

*To remember our people who were here
in the past, in what became a bad place,
and what we are going to do to lay their
spirits to rest.*

Wadjemup Project Steering Group, 2024



Ceremony on Wadjemup

Wandjoo Wadjemup Wirin Bidi

We have conducted our private Men's and Women's Ceremonies and now we all come together today to commemorate our Old People and remember. To our Old People and our Young People – to continue to connect and keep the fires burning.

The Wadjemup Project Steering Group invite you all to take part in the Commemoration Ceremony today. To heal our old people and what happened in the past. To lay their spirits to rest.

We welcome all you mobs and supporters to mark the final day of our Sorry Business together.

Farley Garlett, Neville Collard, Herbert Bropho, Glenys Yarran, Sandra Harben, Karen Jacobs
— Wadjemup Project Steering Group

The Ceremony Week happening in this November is so important. All the Aboriginal people will come here from across the State and have an input. A lot of them who were affected by Wadjemup's past to come here with their best boots on without criticism of anyone else. To get this place ready so everyone can visit from then on. Sort the Quod out and remember the ground where our old people are buried.

Whadjuk Elder Neville Collard

In the distance they see us, in the wind they hear us, we are coming to awaken them and bring our men home.

Senior Whadjuk woman Karen Jacobs



Kimberley Point found on Wadjemup

Wadjemup Project

The Wadjemup Project is working to deliver truth-telling, ceremony and commemoration strategies to acknowledge and reconcile the Aboriginal prison history on Wadjemup from 1838 to 1931. The island was used as a place of incarceration, segregation and forced labour for Aboriginal men and boys who were forcibly taken from regions across Western Australia.

State records indicate that 3,700 Aboriginal men and boys from Western Australia were imprisoned on the Island. At least 373 of these prisoners died in custody and were buried in the area currently referred to as the Wadjemup Aboriginal Burial Ground.

The removal of leaders, lore men, warriors, fathers, brothers created turmoil in Aboriginal communities. The impacts of this history, including the loss of knowledge and the destruction of culture, has been felt across generations. The trauma from this is felt by Aboriginal people today.



On 2 June 2020, the Wadjemup Project was initiated by the then Ministers for Aboriginal Affairs and Tourism. Stage One of the Project was completed in 2022 and established the cultural protocols and process for the Project, including the formation of the community elected Whadjuk Cultural Authority and Reference Group to lead the project.

Stage Two of the Wadjemup Project commenced in May 2023 to deliver the following:

- Quod Conservation Works and Future Use Strategy
- Truth-telling and Ceremony Strategy
- Wadjemup Aboriginal Burial Ground Memorialisation

The Wadjemup Project aims to reconcile the history of Aboriginal people’s imprisonment on Wadjemup, one of the first large-scale and genuine acts of recognition of the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal people.



The following Aboriginal Corporations and Regions have been consulted with for Wadjemup Project Stage Two:

Whadjuk Aboriginal Corporation, Ballardong Aboriginal Corporation, Gnaala Karla Booja Aboriginal Corporation, Karri Karrak Aboriginal Corporation, Wagyl Kaip Southern Aboriginal Corporation, Yued Aboriginal Corporation, Yamatji Southern Regional Corporation, Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation, Goldfields Native Title Services, Jamukurnu Yapalikurnu Aboriginal Corporation, Central Desert Native Title Services and Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre.



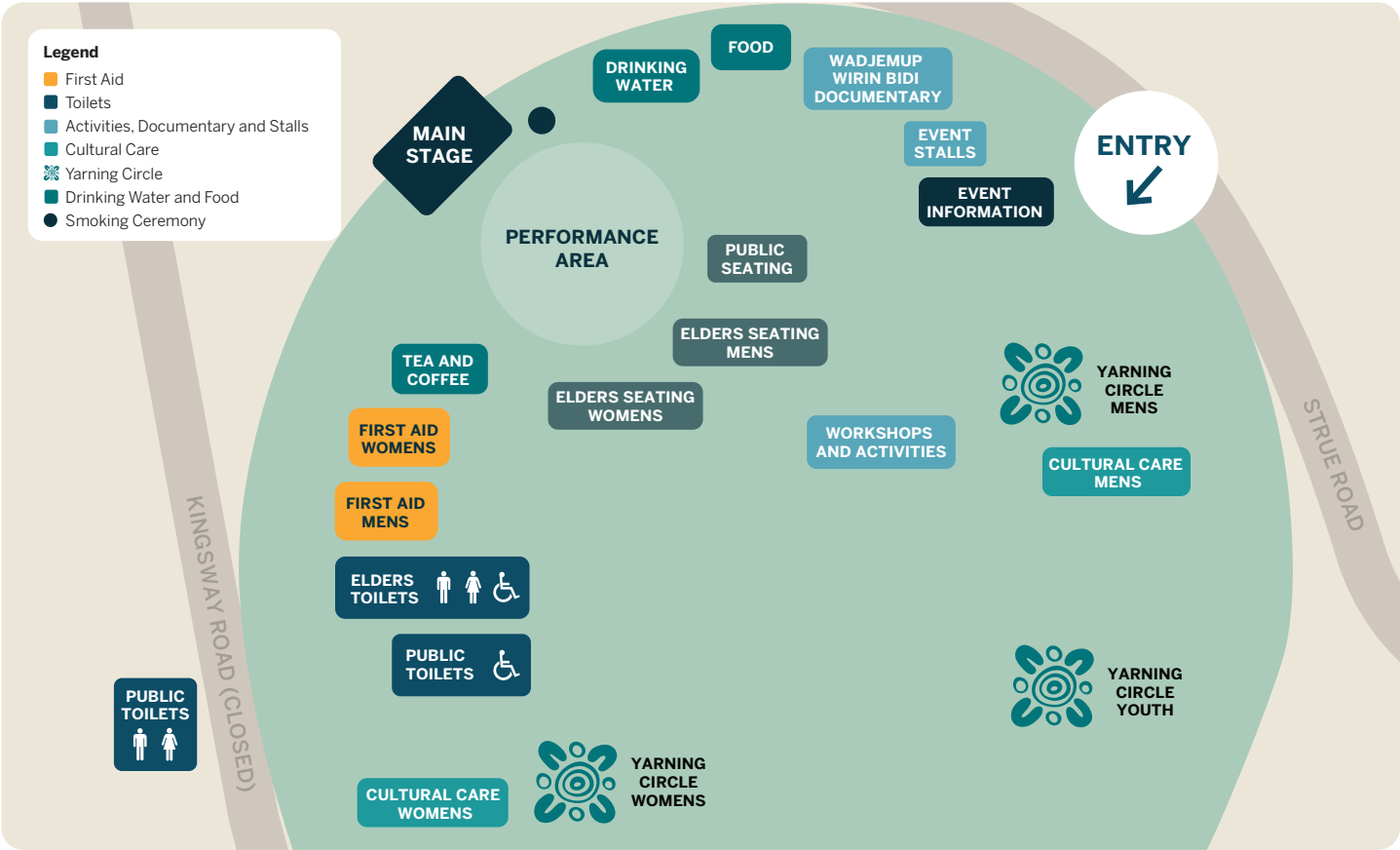
Representatives from all regions in Walyalup / Fremantle (September 2024)

Commemoration Ceremony Program

Saturday 9 November 2024

Time	Main Stage	Wadjemup Oval				Wadjemup Museum	Museum Deck
10:00 am	Welcome, Opening Presentations and Official Proceedings						
11:20 am	Noongar and Regional Guest Presentations	Wadjemup Wirin Bidi Documentary Screening	Stalls and Activities	10:45 am to 11:45 am Cultural Walking Tour Session 1	10:30 am to 12:00 pm Cultural Yarns Session 1	Wadjemup Museum Exhibition Viewing Wadjemup Wirin Bidi Documentary BlackRussian Productions	Noongar and Regional Presentations
				12:45 pm to 1:45 pm Cultural Walking Tour Session 2	12:30 pm to 2:00 pm Cultural Yarns Session 2		
2:00 pm	Closing Remarks						
2:15 pm	Event Concludes						

Masters of Ceremony
Pam Thorley, Chair of the Wadjemup Aboriginal Reference Group
Walter McGuire, Wadjemup Aboriginal Reference Group



Public Commemoration Ceremony

Wadjemup Wirin Bidi will take place at Wadjemup Oval, North Thomson Beach and the Wadjemup Museum.

The Commemoration Ceremony will be held at Wadjemup Oval, which is a 10-minute walk or 750 metres from the Main Jetty, along flat pathways. Access is via Strue Road.

A Welcome Smoking from 7:30 am to 9:30 am, and a Cleansing Smoking from 2 pm to 4 pm, will be held at North Thomson Beach for all visitors to the island.

The Wadjemup Museum is located close to the Main Jetty, and access is via Digby Drive.



Wadjemup Wirin Bidi Exhibition

The Wadjemup Wirin Bidi Exhibition (Spiritual Journey) is on display at the Wadjemup Museum and invites you to develop a deeper understanding of the Wadjemup Project as a journey of truth and remembrance.

Through a series of moving exhibits, the Wadjemup Wirin Bidi (Wadjemup Spiritual Journey) shares the stories of the island's Aboriginal prisoners, the families who were left behind and the work being delivered through the Wadjemup Project.

Wander past poignant displays to gain a deeper understanding of the island's history, including a historical prison cell door, prisoner shackles, an audio-visual display in the theatrette, artwork displays by Julie Dowling, audio recordings played on the museum deck and more.

The exhibition is curated by guest Aboriginal Curator Yindjibarndi woman Michelle Broun.



Wadjemup Wirin Bidi Exhibition at the Wadjemup Museum

Wadjemup Project Steering Group

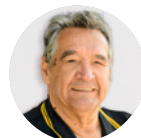
The Wadjemup Whadjuk Cultural Authority, elected by the Whadjuk Community in Stage One of the Wadjemup Project, was appointed by the Minister for Tourism as the Wadjemup Project Steering Group (WPSG) to lead Stage Two of the Wadjemup Project. The WPSG includes:

Farley Garlett



Farley is a Whadjuk Noongar Elder who was raised on Ballardong country. He has extensive experience in Native Title and Aboriginal heritage, working positively with Aboriginal people to achieve meaningful community outcomes. He was the WA Chair and National Commissioner of the former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and has a deep understanding of past and current issues affecting Noongar individuals, families and the wider communities. His cultural leadership skills are showcased through achievements such as NAIDOC Elder of the Year.

Neville Collard



Neville Collard is a Whadjuk Elder with strong Ballardong connections. As a Senior Elder and Noongar community leader, he has worked in partnership with RIA on cultural matters. A former police officer, he was responsible for developing Noongar Outreach Service (Noongar Patrol). In 1991, he received a world scholarship to travel to the USA, New Zealand and the UK to study with specialist law agencies including the FBI and Scotland Yard. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 2022, and regularly consults to state and local governments, and private businesses on Noongar cultural and heritage issues.

Glenys Yarran



Glenys Yarran is a proud Whadjuk Elder with Ballardong and Yued connections whose lifelong aspiration is to bring communities together through culture and the arts. Glenys' work as an active member of the Perth community has had a positive impact on the conservation of Noongar culture. From 2003 to 2009, Glenys sat on the board of Directors for Southwest Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC) and has worked as the Director of the Ballardong Working Party, as a cultural advisor for the Fremantle Biennale, and as Director of the Yunga Foundation which offers cultural awareness and safety training, employment for heritage monitoring and surveillance on Country.

Sandra Harben



Sandra Harben is a Senior Whadjuk and Ballardong woman. She graduated from the University of Western Australia in 1994 as a Public Service Commission Aboriginal Employment Career Strategy scholar. Sandra went on to study overseas at the University of Illinois as a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Overseas Study Award recipient. In 2000 and 2001, Sandra was one of six Commissioners appointed by Prime Minister and Cabinet to undertake the National Indigenous Funding Inquiry. Her working life spans health, housing, education and training, business management and consulting. Sandra jointly received a National Architecture Award for her significant contribution to Gathering Place, a major architectural component of the 2021 Fremantle Biennale.

Karen Jacobs



Karen Jacobs is a Senior Whadjuk woman, a bloodline descendant and a Traditional Owner of Whadjuk Country. Karen has an extensive background in business, governance and compliance, Aboriginal cultural heritage and practices, cultural integration into place-making, environmental planning and management, cultural tourism, and education. She was also a former lecturer at the University of Western Australia, School of Social Science in the Foundations to Heritage Management. Karen's primary focus is on developing opportunities and encouraging Aboriginal people's involvement in enterprise and business activity.

Herbert Bropho



Herbert 'Herbie' Bropho is a respected Senior Whadjuk Noongar and Ballardong man. He is a prominent Aboriginal activist advocating for the rights of his people and progress in Aboriginal affairs. Herbie is a direct descendant of ancestors incarcerated and lost on Wadjemup. His experience includes advising organisations, educational institutions and students, and speaking to the media and other stakeholders about issues affecting his people.



Quod on Wadjemup

Wadjemup Whadjuk Cultural Authority Reference Group

In Stage One of the Wadjemup Project, the Whadjuk Community elected an Elders Reference Group and Cultural Authority to lead and advise on the Project. The Wadjemup Whadjuk Cultural Authority Reference Group includes the following members:

Jenny Garlett



Jenny Garlett is a Whadjuk woman with Ballardong and Yued connections. Jenny is a member of the Cultural Advice Committee for the Whadjuk Aboriginal Corporation, and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officer at Gilmore College.

Cheryl Phillips



Cheryl Phillips is a Whadjuk Noongar Elder. Cheryl is the Deputy Chairperson on the Board of Sister Kate's Home Kids Aboriginal Corporation, a not-for-profit that delivers a wide range of cultural programs to heal, empower and develop leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families affected by the intergenerational trauma caused by the Stolen Generations.

Elizabeth Hayden



Elizabeth Hayden is a widely respected Senior Whadjuk Elder. She is a patron of the Yorga Djenna Bidi Aboriginal Women's Leadership Program with the Western Australian Aboriginal Leadership Institute. The program connects Aboriginal women across different cultures, ages, occupations, leadership experiences and education levels to build skills, gain confidence and build networks. She is an advocate for Aboriginal mental health and suicide prevention, having featured in a video series for the Centre of Best Practice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention titled 'Elders and Leaders Voices: Messages of Hope'.

Ezra Jacobs-Smith



Ezra Jacobs-Smith is a Whadjuk, Ballardong, Yued man from the Noongar nation. Ezra holds a Bachelor of Environmental Engineering from the University of Western Australia and has a passion for bringing Aboriginal culture to the forefront of land and infrastructure development. He has significant experience developing partnership projects between the State Government and Aboriginal people, having worked as Aboriginal Heritage Officer for the Rottnest Island Authority and served on the Board for Reconciliation WA. Ezra is involved with Aboriginal consultancy, Kaala Barna, with a focus on cultural protocols, stakeholder engagement and strategy and project design.

Barry Winmar



Barry Winmar is a Senior Whadjuk Noongar man with connections to the Ballardong region. He is the Managing Director of Winmar Enterprises, Director of the Auspire Australia Day Council WA and CEO of the Institute of Indigenous Wellbeing and Sport. He serves on the WA State Government's Aboriginal Cultural Centre Cultural Authority and the City of Kwinana Council as Deputy Mayor. Barry has held senior policy roles within the WA State Government in emergency services, corrective services, Aboriginal advisory services, child protection and Aboriginal justice. He was a Director of the Ballardong Aboriginal Corporation and part of the Southwest Aboriginal Land and Sea Council. Barry holds a Master of Business Administration, an Advanced Diploma of Business Management, and is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Nick Abraham



Nick Abraham has a direct connection to the Whadjuk, Yued, Ballardong, Wilmen, Wardandi and Binjerup Peoples. He is the owner and lead guide at Aboriginal Cultural Tours and Consultancy company, Warrang-Bridil. Nick was born in Perth and spent his teenage years in and around the native reserves of the Great Southern, before completing a Bachelor of Business Administration at the University of Technology in Sydney. He is a co-host of the radio program 'Moorditj Mag' on RTRFM 92.1 FM, and the Regional Development Coordinator for the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council. Nick volunteers with numerous Aboriginal community organisations which strive to improve education, housing, justice, sports and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal Peoples.

Steven Jacobs



Steven Jacobs is a Whadjuk man with a passion for his people and love for his Country. Steven encourages reconciliation and promotes Aboriginal Culture through Aboriginal tourism business, In Culture Tours. Steven previously worked for Nyungar Tours and took over In Culture Tours in 2023 with the goal to increase youth engagement and work towards making impactful and meaningful change. Steven also provides cultural consultancy services and private educational experiences for corporate and school groups.

Vivienne Hansen



Vivienne Hansen is a Senior Whadjuk and Ballardong Elder from the Bibbulman Nation. After a childhood of learning about traditional medicine, Vivienne undertook formal training at the Marr Mooditj Foundation and completed Certificate IV in Bush and Western Herbal Medicine. Vivienne has co-authored two books on the medicinal and bushfood plants and fungi of the South West of Western Australia. She was also the first Indigenous member of the National Herbalist Association of Australia and presented at the 7th International Conference on Herbal Medicine in 2010.

John McGuire



John McGuire is a Senior Whadjuk and Ballardong man and holds a wealth of knowledge across community relations, the public service and is an accomplished presenter. He is currently a Director with the Children's Charity Network and Noongar Land Enterprise Group, and a coordinator with Sandfire Resources. John has previously held Board roles as Chairperson of the Western Australian Cricket Association's Aboriginal Advisory Committee and was a Council Member of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. John also had a distinguished local sporting career, playing Grade cricket with the Mount Lawley District Cricket Club, and for East Perth Football Club in the West Australian Football League, including the 1978 premiership-winning team.

Norm Pickett



Norm Pickett is a Senior Whadjuk Noongar male, with family connections to Yuet in the north, Ballardong in the east, Wagul Kaip in the south and Whadjuk in the west. Norm also has family connections outside of Noongar country which he connects regularly, with the utmost respect to all the Traditional, Lore and Cultural practices. Norm also acknowledges the past, present and future.

Patrick Egan



Patrick Egan is a Senior Noongar man. Patrick grew up on the Northam Aboriginal Reservation with family and relatives and has lived in Midland since. After working 35 years with Aboriginal Affairs, he is now Manager of Community Engagement with Noongar people and the wider community for Wungening Aboriginal Corporation, delivering Cultural Awareness and Cultural advice to them.

Tania Jacobs



Tania Jacobs is a Whadjuk Noongar woman. Tania Jacobs has an extensive background in Health, Safety, Education and Quality (HSEQ) management and development across multiple major corporations including Woodside Energy, BHP, Oceaneering Australia and Odyssey Marine. She previously worked with Murdoch University as a Special Education Officer, and is involved in Aboriginal cleaning and body care business, Djilba Fresh. Tania holds a Bachelor of Science, Anthropology, Geography and Botany, and a Masters in Industrial Relations, Health Promotion, WHS and Strategic Workplace Relations from the University of Western Australia.



Group of 13 Aboriginal Australian men wearing body painting and with body scarring on Wadjemup / Rottnest Island
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Wadjemup Aboriginal Reference Group

Pamela Thorley (Chair)



Pamela Thorley is a Senior Noongar Menang woman with connections to the Southwest and Great Southern regions of WA. She is a qualified primary school teacher and currently is the Manager of Aboriginal Pathway Strategies at MercyCare. She has previously worked at the Goldfields Aboriginal Language Centre and was formerly a Registrar of Aboriginal Sites. Pamela holds over 20 years of experience in senior management roles with government and community-controlled Aboriginal organisations.

Walter McGuire



Walter McGuire is a Senior Whadjuk man and serves as Chair of the Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operates Council Board. Walter is a leading Aboriginal tour guide in WA and currently runs cultural tours across the Perth metropolitan region with his business, Go Cultural Aboriginal Tours and Experiences. Walter holds a Bachelor of Applied Science from Curtin University and formerly worked as a lecturer and mentor before he joined the tourism industry. He is an advocate for the promotion and conservation of Aboriginal culture through eco-tourism.

Brendan Moore



Brendan Moore is a Whadjuk man and is currently the Senior Aboriginal Engagement Officer for the City of Fremantle and former Chair of the South-West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council. He holds a Masters in International Relations and Affairs and a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Management. Brendan serves on the Noongar Boodja Trust Investment Committee and is Co-Chair of the First Nations Reference Group for the Australian Sustainable Finance Institute.

Lindsay Dean



Lindsay Dean has direct connections to the Minang, Koreng, Bardi, and Karajarri peoples and lives in Albany. He is the Community Liaison Officer for the Great Southern Region, Chairperson of the Karajarri Traditional Lands Association and sits on the Aboriginal Cultural Material Committee. In 2022, he was appointed to the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Reference Group by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to provide advice and guidance on new Aboriginal Cultural Heritage regulations. Lindsay holds a degree in electronic engineering and has previously worked in information technology.

Casey Kickett



Casey Kickett is a Noongar woman from the Whadjuk, Yued, Ballardong, and Wardandi countries. In 2022, she joined not-for-profit environmental protection agency, Environmental Defenders Office, as Director of the First Nations Program and has experience in conservation, cultural heritage, native title agreement compliance, and advocating for customary access to public drinking water sources in WA. She also holds a Graduate Certificate in Adult and Tertiary Education and has formerly worked as Associate Lecturer with the University of Western Australia's School of Indigenous Studies.

Kathleen Musulin



Kathleen Musulin is a Malgana, Yawuru woman born and raised in Carnarvon in the Gascoyne Region. Kathleen was a key driver in the Lock Hospital project, which lobbied the State Government for formal recognition of the dark history of the Bernier and Dorre Islands. The project won four awards at the WA Heritage Awards, including a Voluntary Individual Contribution Award for Kathleen's role in the project. Kathleen has also worked tirelessly in Native Title Affairs and continues to advocate for truth-telling and acknowledgement of Aboriginal histories. She has since worked in the health field as a drug and alcohol counsellor and in prisons as a mental health worker, helping Aboriginal women with mental health, alcohol, and other drug issues.

Wadjemup Project Lead Consultants

Dr Richard Walley (OAM)

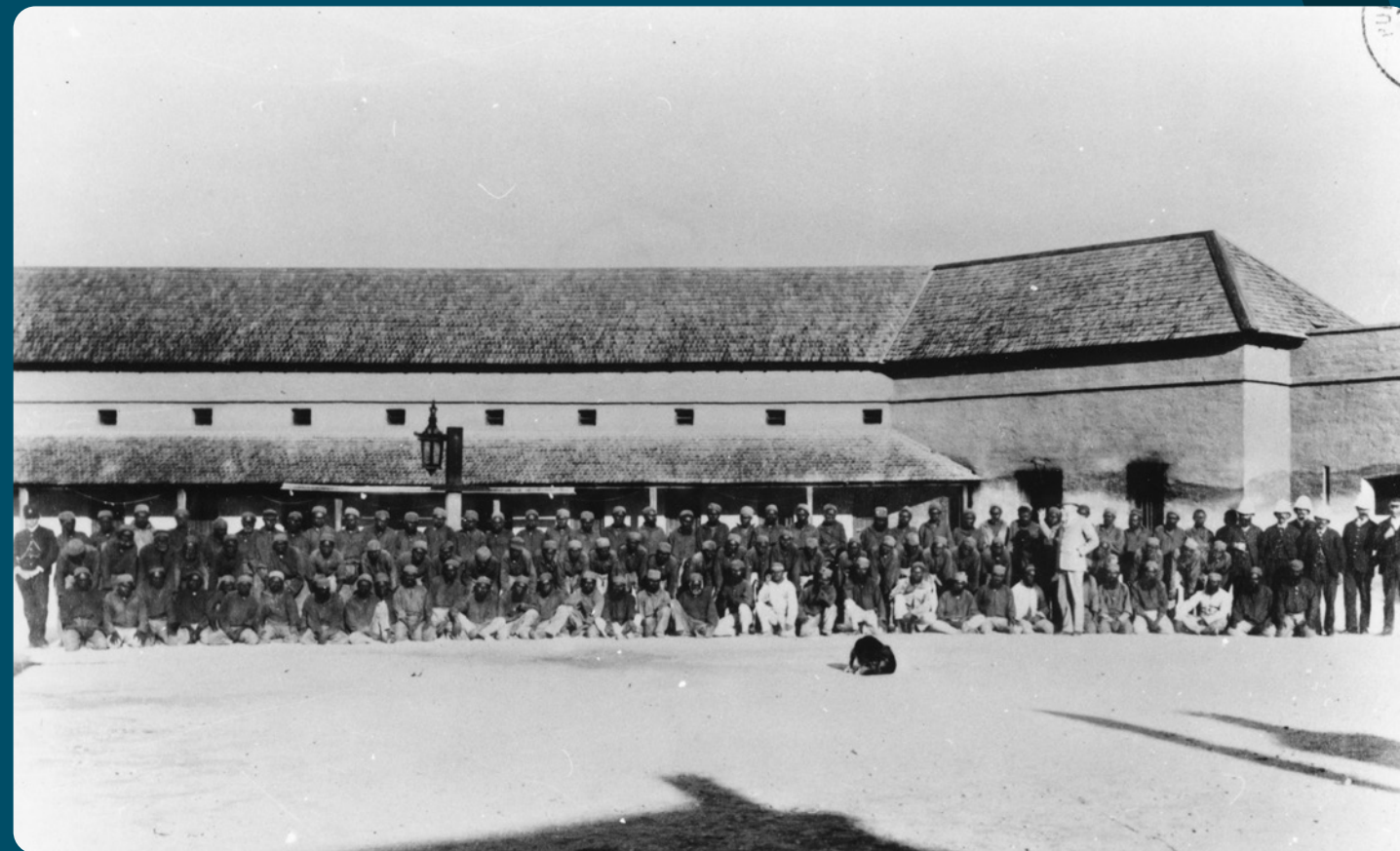


Richard Walley is a Senior Whadjuk Noongar Elder with strong connections to Whadjuk, Ballardong, Yued Wardan, Binjarreb and Yamatji countries. Over his career spanning 50 years, Richard has been involved in the formation and operation of pioneering organisations such as the New Era Aboriginal Fellowship, the Aboriginal Housing Board, the Aboriginal Medical Service and the Aboriginal Legal Service which are crucial in providing important services to Perth's Aboriginal community. Richard is currently a co-director of Aboriginal Productions and Promotions which delivers cultural awareness learning and education through programs, performance, music, art and language. Richard is a committed leader in the promotion of Noongar culture and his ultimate aim is that all Australians respect and embrace Indigenous knowledge.

Robyn Smith-Walley (OAM)



Robyn Smith-Walley is a Senior Wilmen, Kaneang Minang Noongar woman. Robyn has worked in her community over the past 35 years to highlight and promote the culture and recognition of the Noongar people. In 2023 Robyn embarked on a Churchill Fellowship to understand lessons in Truth-telling and to gain an understanding of trauma recovery models to support communities to heal. Robyn has been a co-director of the family-owned business Aboriginal Productions and Promotion for the past 30 years and operates from a position of respect for her community, its traditions, and cultural practices.



Aboriginal prisoners on Wadjemup / Rottnest Island
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Photo credits:
State Library of Western Australia
and Rottnest Island Authority.

The Wadjemup Project Steering Group would like to thank the following:

Aboriginal corporations, groups, communities and peoples across the State; Aboriginal Productions and Promotions; Aboriginal Cultural Centre of Western Australia; BlackRussian Productions; City of Fremantle; Noongar Radio; Reconciliation WA; the State Government of Western Australia; Wadjemup Wirin Bidi staff and volunteers, and supporters of reconciliation.

We remember all those who have contributed truth-telling and the unfinished business on Wadjemup. For those who are no longer with us, our deepest respect to all their families. We have taken many steps in many countries for one goal in one country: unfinished business on Wadjemup.

Wadjemup Project Steering Group, 2024