

Walkatjurra Walkabout - Walking for Country

www.walkingforcountry.com

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Dear friends,

We welcome your interest in the Walkatjurra Walkabout. Let me start with a few words about the spirit of our adventure. This walk will challenge and invigorate our ability to enact the changes that we wish to see in our world and society. It is about fulfilling the realization that we are all custodians of this earth. It is a chance and a process to step outside our comfort zones and distractions to focus on what we are trying to achieve as custodians in our actions on this walk and after this walk. As such, we will be adhering to Non-violent guidelines that are aligned with principles and campaigns that this walk supports.

NON-VIOLENCE GUIDELINES:

- Come with a good attitude
- Be non-violent in tone as well as action
- Show respect for all people
- Behave as a follower of non-violence
- Do not hide anything – tell the truth
- Use respectful language
- Find ways to be helpful
- Be courageous
- Choose to love

This walk is a pilgrimage in the spirit of our ancestors. It is a spiritual walk through Country, with the intended purpose of re-engaging our mind, our body and our spirit in alignment with the land. Each morning we will have a theme or thought that we can focus on and contemplate in our thoughts, our conversations and our steps throughout the course of the day. It is a connection to country. A chance to focus on our breath, our consciousness, an act of mindfulness. This walk is a partnership and a cultural exchange as people of all ages, backgrounds and cultures come together. An important element of this walk will also be listening to our elders, and respecting the knowledge that they share with us. It is a learning experience for everyone, led through the country by the Walkatjurra Rangers.

This is a walk through the land, to live in community sharing responsibilities – an exciting opportunity in which to be involved.

We hope that the following information will answer many of your questions to help you prepare for the upcoming *Walkatjurra Walkabout* from Yeelirrie to Leonora.

Take your time in reading it, and we encourage you to contact us with any questions or suggestions you have.

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COST

There is no registration fee to join this walk. There is a participation cost of \$A5-\$10 sliding scale per person per day. This helps to pay for support vehicles, food, mobile phones and associated daily costs for the walk. No person will be turned away from the walk in relation to money, and we encourage those that can afford more than the suggested amount to please consider making a donation.

Indigenous people across the world suffer most directly from the impacts of the nuclear industry from mining uranium through to dumping of nuclear waste on their territories. The tactics used by uranium mining companies against Aboriginal communities include: ignoring the concerns of Traditional Owners, divide and rule tactics, bribery, exerting continual pressure, providing Traditional Owners with false or misleading information and/or threats.

This walk is lead by Wangkatja people of the Goldfields region of Western Australia and is in solidarity with Aboriginal communities all around Australia. We will use any extra money raised to help cover expenses for Aboriginal people to join this walk.

Everyone is responsible for paying their own cost of travel to and from the event (see below).

REGISTRATION

Each person that would like to participate in the walk is required to fill out a registration form and send this to the Walkatjurra Walkabout organizers. We need numbers to help us plan transport and food preparations so if you are interested in joining the walk, please register today at www.walkingforcountry.com

TRANSPORT TO/FROM THE WALK

People are responsible for their own transport to Kalgoorlie. Please see the bottom of this letter for more information about public transport options to Kalgoorlie.

A bus will take people from Kalgoorlie up to Yeelirrie to begin the walk. There will also be a bus to transport people from Leonora back to Kalgoorlie at the end of the walk. Travel on this bus will incur a fee to help us cover the cost of hiring the bus – more information on this to come. **Please let us know if you are interested in taking this bus option, or if you will be taking your own vehicle on the walk.**

We will be meeting in Kalgoorlie on the 20th August, camping the night in Kalgoorlie at the Wongutha Birni Cultural Centre, and then driving up to Yeelirrie on the morning of the 21st.

Our first walking day will be on the 22nd August.

We encourage everyone to join the walk, and recognize that people may not be able to join us for the entire duration. However, please note that it is 600km from Perth to Kalgoorlie, and approximately 400km from Kalgoorlie to Leonora. **For those who wish to join only for a part of the walk, we ask that you organize your own transport as there are limited public transport options during the walk.**

We will not be running people to/from airports or to Kalgoorlie during the event period as this will be expensive, time consuming, and will mean taking a support vehicle away from the walking group. There may be people from surrounding areas driving in to spend a few days with us, and perhaps lifts may be available with them, but we cannot guarantee this.

Please see the section below with links to the limited public transport options.

ACCOMODATION AND CAMPING FACILITIES

Yeelirrie to Leonora is a remote area. For this 26 day walk all of our accommodation will be in basic camps that we assemble and pack up each night.

Please be prepared to camp outdoors every night. You will be expected to bring all your own sleeping gear (sleeping bag & mat, tent, swag etc). Being in the desert, it is hot during the day but gets very cold at night so please bring warm gear.

At our camps, we will be digging drop trenches for toilets (or "shit pits" as we fondly call them). We will also have a kitchen truck that is equipped with all our kitchen needs such as our water tank, food, food preparation tables, tarps etc. We will have limited solar electricity (for charging media phones/communications). There will be no access to the internet however there may be patchy reception for those with Telstra mobile phone servers.

The "Camp Photos" section on the webpage might give you a bit of an idea about what camp may look like for this walk. The photos there are of the 2011 "Walk Away from Uranium Mining" that walked through the same area.

WATER

The walk will be in a desert environment so there will be a limited supply of water. We will be transporting all the water we need with us. This includes all water for drinking, cooking, washing plates/pots etc. There will be no access to showers during the walk. We will have small solar shower bags with us, but please note that water is very limited.

Careful use and management of water is an important aspect of this walk. (But don't panic, in the event of an emergency; we will have means to access water.)

MEALS

There will be a communal kitchen truck on the walk that will carry and store all our food (breakfast, lunch, snacks, dinner) whilst we are camping.

Each morning we will be making our lunch to carry with us whilst walking, so **please bring a container to store your lunch.**

We aim to have time in the evening for collecting bush foods and hunting, and we will have meat at times. Meals will always include a vegetarian option as well.

If you have a special diet it will be your own responsibility to take care of those needs.

We will be living as a community so please be prepared to help with all cooking and cleaning responsibilities. We will be setting up a roster system for these tasks.

SUPPORT VEHICLES

There will be organized support vehicles for the walk that will travel along with us. At least one vehicle will have solar panels to provide energy to the camp and act as an exhibition of renewable energy.

- 1.) Mobile Camp Kitchen: the group will be responsible for the co-ordination of the camp kitchen. We are looking to develop a team from participants to take on this responsibility for the duration of the walk.
- 2.) Luggage / Multi-purpose Vehicle: to carry walker's luggage from camp-site to camp-site each day, and to run errands i.e.) collecting water, picking up food
- 3.) Support Vehicle: this vehicle will stay with the walkers each day to carry food & water, first aid, media packs etc. for the safety and health of each walker. For those that cannot make the entire distance each day this van will be available to take rest and recover.

LUGGAGE

We request that all luggage and equipment is kept to a minimum & light as possible.

Basic List: tent, sleeping bag & mat, torch, raincoat, sunhat & sunscreen, toiletries, warm and cool clothing (good idea to have a long-sleeve collared shirt for sun protection), personal spending money, camera, journal, blister care, waterbottle, daypack. Please ensure you bring your own eating utensils including a bowl or plate, container to pack your lunch, mug & cutlery. You are responsible for your own luggage.

CHILDREN

We encourage people to bring their children as this walk will be a family friendly event.

SAFETY

We will try to walk as one group. For the safety of all participants and the public we will have people that will carry safety flags and wear visible vests. Be prepared to follow the direction of these safety people especially when the crossing roads. Most of the roads we will be travelling are back roads, however some of the roads we will be walking are used by road trains and other service vehicles, and we ask that people be vigilant and observe road safety.

Safety people occasionally have to communicate verbally across the whole walking group, so we ask that people do not obstruct their hearing with Ipods, radios and other musical devices in respect of safety and group communication.

IN THE SPIRIT OF THE WALK

Throughout the walk there will be regular circles, in which we ask everyone to participate, to share information and attempt to exercise non hierarchy system to make decisions. However we are being led by the Walkatjurra Rangers, and ask that their knowledge of the country and particular cultural protocols are observed and respected.

Be prepared to rise early. The walk will begin between 8.00 am & 9.00 am, however before we begin we eat breakfast, clean up and pack down the whole camp. Depending on the terrain, the weather, and what we encounter along the route, we come into camp at around 3.00pm.

We will have a front banner that is carried each day, and the walkers follow behind. We encourage people to bring their own banners, flags & colorful creative art to carry but we will have some already made with anti-nuclear & peace symbols and messages.

We walk as a group and will be stopping for rest breaks every hour for approximately 10 - 15 minutes, or we may stop for shorter but more frequent periods to talk about what we come across on the land. We will take an hour for lunch at a designated place.

We will generally be walking 15km a day, with a rest day every 5 days.

The Rangers will be leading the walks everyday. For all other walkers, we will have a set-up crew that rotates (unless there is a group of people that would like to do this rather than walk) to set up camp. Setting up camp involves digging a fire pit, collecting and cutting firewood, assembling the kitchen (putting up tables/tarps), making sure the elders at camp are comfortable, digging the toilet pit and getting started on dinner.

All people will be expected to help with cooking and cleaning duties.

In the afternoons, upon arriving into camp, we plan to spend time having creative art spaces, painting and spending time talking with the elders.

We encourage people to offer and share their skills to create a diverse exciting moving community. If you have experience in webpage updates, writing, massage, photography, organizing, yoga, singing, music, drama, painting, role playing, group facilitation, banner making, conflict resolution etc etc share this with the community so we can all learn new skills and learn from each other.

Some training beforehand, a good pair of shoes & socks and a prepared strong spirit is recommended.

We wish to thank you for welcoming the vision of the Walkatjurra Walkabout and becoming a part of it. The enthusiasm and interest of the community we are building from Yeelirrie to Leonora, and beyond, gives us strength and re-empowers us in every new step and challenge to make the changes we wish to see in this world.

You have been a witness that this walk is important, and that we will make a difference.

We look forward to walking with you.

Thank you,

Walkatjurra Walkabout – Walking for Country Organising Committee

PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION for the YEELIRRIE to LEONORA Walk

Transport to & from PERTH

By Air: Perth International Airport, Western Australia.

It may be cheaper to fly into Sydney or Melbourne and then get domestic flight / bus or train.

By Domestic Flights: QANTAS: www.qantas.com.au **VIRGIN:** www.virginblue.com.au **TIGER AIR:** www.tigerairways.com.au

By Train: Great Southern Rail <http://www.gsr.com.au>

Indian Pacific: East to West 2 ½ days

By Bus: Greyhound www.greyhound.com.au

Transport to KALGOORLIE

We ask that people make their own way to Kalgoorlie. Below is a brief summary of some available public transport options.

TRAIN OPTIONS:

Peth to Kalgoorlie:

TransWA: <http://www.transwa.wa.gov.au>

The Prospector train service. These services run daily.

East Coast to Kalgoorlie:

The Great Southern Rail/Indian Pacific leaves Sydney on the 15th August, and arrives in Kalgoorlie on the 17th August. If you are arriving at this time, you can camp at the Wongutha Birni Cultural Centre in Kalgoorlie for the night of the 17th, 18th and 19th August until all the other participants the main bus comes through Kalgoorlie to take people to Leonora to begin the walk. The address is 2 Forest Street Kalgoorlie (about 200m from the train station towards the bridge). Please Let Laura (www.walk4country@gmail.com) know if you intend taking this option.

BUS OPTIONS:

Perth to Kalgoorlie: TransWA: <http://www.transwa.wa.gov.au>

TransWA operates coach services from Perth to Kalgoorlie.

TO / FROM KALGOORLIE TO LEONORA

There is a public bus run by Goldrush Tours from Kalgoorlie to / from Leonora

This service leaves once a week, running from Kalgoorlie to Leonora every Thursday, and from Leonora to Kalgoorlie every Friday. The cost is \$58 one way.

Please see the link below

<http://www.railmaps.com.au/routedetails.php?RouteSelect=1132>

TEMPERATURE (mean averages only):

Mid August: minimum: 4C
Maximum: 22C

September: minimum: 10C
maximum: 26

Please be prepared for strong winds and rain during the walk (just in case) ☺

Wildflowers at this time of year are diverse and quite amazing. Some that you can expect to see include: a range of spectacular trees & shrubs such as Mulgas & other Acacia species, Grevilleas, Hop Bush, Cassia and annuals such as Everlastings all coming into flower at end of August / early September from Yeelirrie to Leonora.
