



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Energy



Pastoral activity in the west Kimberley and national heritage listing

The following information aims to help pastoralists and others in the agricultural industry understand the impact of national heritage listing of the west Kimberley.

West Kimberley national heritage listed place

The federal environment minister announced the inclusion of the west Kimberley on the National Heritage List on Wednesday 31 August 2011. This listing recognises the outstanding heritage values of 19 million hectares of the west Kimberley, including Aboriginal, historic, aesthetic, cultural and natural heritage values. It also recognises and celebrates the pastoral history of the region. The west Kimberley national heritage values are now protected by national environment law.

Does national heritage listing affect how a place is used?

It is the listed national heritage values of the place that are protected under national environment law.

National heritage listing seeks to ensure that the place's outstanding heritage values are appropriately considered when making decisions about development.

Ownership and management of the national heritage place remains with the current land owner or manager.

National heritage listing for the west Kimberley has no impact on day to day pastoral activity. Pastoralists in the west Kimberley are able to continue with their existing farming activities—cattle can continue to graze and crops can continue to be harvested.

Be mindful of the listing before undertaking new projects

Under national environment law it is new or expanded activities, like a new irrigation project, that might need to be considered for approval.

When embarking on a new or intensified land use activity, pastoralists in the west Kimberley should consider if their action could significantly impact on the listed national heritage values of the west Kimberley.

The Department has published guidelines to assist proponents determine if their activity might require referral. '[Significant Impact Guidelines](#)' provide advice about National heritage places and an indication of levels of impact that are likely to be significant.



For consultation with Indigenous people about listed values, the Department has published [‘Engage Early’ Guidelines](#) for proponents on best practice for Indigenous engagement when determining whether to make a referral and for environmental assessments.

Making a referral

Under national environment law, it is pastoralists’ responsibility to determine if new farm activity requires referral. There is information online about the [assessment and approval process](#), how to set up a meeting to speak to officers from the Department (meetings are usually held by phone) about your proposal.

If you are sure that you need to refer your proposed action, you must submit a referral describing what activity you intend to carry out, where it is to occur and its likely environmental impacts. You may still make a referral if you believe your action is not going to have a significant impact, or if you are unsure.

Referrals can be submitted using [Online Services](#).

If you are unable to access Online services, please send an enquiry through [Ask Us Anything](#) or contact the Referrals Gateway on 02 6274 2496 or the Department of the Environment and Energy’s Community Information Unit on **1800 803 772**.

Once your referral is accepted as complete, the Department will consider your referral and may contact you if there are any questions about your referral. The statutory timeframe for the decision is 20 business days. The Department uses best endeavours to provide decisions to proponents in this timeframe.

If the decision is that it is a ‘controlled action’, then it will need further assessment. Please refer to the [assessment and approval process](#) webpage, under the heading ‘**What happens next?**’, which explains the types of assessment and the process for each. The Department is available to help you navigate the referral, assessment and approval process.

More information

For more information on national environment law and national heritage listing go to www.environment.gov.au or contact the Department on **1800 803 772**.

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