

## **1.2 The presentation and interpretation of cultural heritage linked to wildlife is respectful, sensitive, and benefits those living and working in the WHA.**

There are few better ways to learn and pay respect to Ngaro Culture than by visiting the regions established [Ngaro Sea Trail](#). The trail is a unique blend of seaways and walks across Whitsunday, South Molle and Hook islands. It is maintained by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services (QPWS) and visited frequently by locals and tour groups. The Ngaro Cultural Site in Nara Inlet on Hook Island is one of the most popular sites. This site is home to ancient indigenous cave paintings (pictured), sacred stories old and new, as well as archaeological insights. It has a Traditional welcome (pictured) and interpretive information with audio stories playable via push button, all powered by onsite solar.

The rock art in Nara Inlet on Hook Island of the Whitsundays is some of the oldest on the East Coast of Australia and steeped in valuable cultural history. The Ngaro used yellow and red ochres, most likely quarried from South Molle Island, and heated them over hot coals with white clay. This created natural pigments that were applied to rockface with fingers and stick brushes created by chewing the end of a stick. The paintings, which are described as non-figurative art that does not depict animals or humans, have been protected from weather and erosion by the cave's shelter and remain quite vivid to this day.

For those interested in visiting the cultural site, [The Ngaro Cultural Site track](#) leads to a viewing platform at the mouth of the cave where you can look in and see the art that has been dated over 9000 years old. Ngaro representatives advised that visitors must remain outside the shelter and QPWS put up fencing to keep visitors at a suitable distance and protect the ancient art. Sadly, due to the erasure of Ngaro culture by colonial Australians, visitors and researchers can only speculate on the intent and meaning of the abstract paintings. This loss of knowledge makes the Ngaro Cultural Site a precious piece of history that deserves to be preserved and revered.

Work has recently started on another cultural track, the [Ngaro Track](#) (currently under construction). This new development is a low-impact walking track that acknowledges the enduring connection and responsibility of Land, Sea, and Sky Country as an integral element of Ngaro identity and culture. Ngaro People are involved in the development of the track and assist QPWS in choosing a location, supervising construction of the track, as well as contributing to the interpretation, ensuring that the significance of Country is shown respectfully.

We are lucky in the Whitsundays to have [Yooribaya Cultural Experiences](#). They offer Welcome to Country, Smoking Ceremonies, Traditional Dance, Cultural Awareness training, Cultural Education workshops, Cultural Consultancy services, and more. *Yooribaya*, which means strength in the traditional language of the Ngaro People, provides visitors the chance to experience ancient lands through ancient hands. One example, Yooribaya was partnered with Cruise Whitsundays to provide cultural experiences during the Great Barrier Reef Festival. During the festival they participated in multiple welcome and smoking ceremonies, immersive reef stories, a Master Reef Guide Q&A, and were also involved in the Family Fun Day.