



# murchison georegion

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Murchison community update  
June 2020

*Ancient lands  
Brilliant skies*

## The Murchison GeoRegion is Australia's first major geotourism development

The Murchison GeoRegion harnesses the subregion's incredible **geology, natural landscapes, biodiversity (flora and fauna) as well as culture (Aboriginal and non Aboriginal)** to offer unique experiences to a growing national and international geotourism market worth **millions of dollars**.

The GeoRegion connects **21 key geological sites** across the seven Murchison local government areas to draw people into each community, providing **new markets and opportunities for local people (particularly Aboriginal people), businesses, schools and community groups**.

The concept was first identified at a FACET (tourism) conference in Mount Magnet (2009) and was formalised in 2014 / 15 via the Mid West Regional Blueprint and Mid West Tourism Development Strategy. Through engagement and consultation throughout the Murchison, **geotourism was confirmed by local people as a significant future economic development opportunity**.

The seven Murchison local governments drove this project collaboratively, with support from external agencies and stakeholders. All seven Councils have endorsed the Murchison GeoRegion, that is the Shires of Cue, Meekatharra, Mount Magnet, Murchison, Sandstone, Wiluna and Yalgoo. Organisations and residents across the Murchison region have shared their expertise and materials.

Through 2019 and 2020, stage 1 of the Murchison GeoRegion project was developed. This comprises consistent branding and designs, site research, brochures, an app and a website. These will be released once inter-regional borders are relaxed, following the lift of COVID-19 restrictions.

With regional and intrastate tourism expected to see significant growth in the near future, this presents a wonderful opportunity for Murchison businesses to leverage off something new and unique, which is now ready for launch. Once interstate and international borders are relaxed, Murchison businesses could be well positioned to continue that growth.

An opportunity and challenge now exists for businesses to develop new ideas, attractions and tourist packages (tours etc) based on geotourism. Having a plan for recovery, built on new product offerings and markets, makes a lot of sense for all regional businesses.

Future stages of the project are expected to include the following.

- Signage and visitor infrastructure at each site
- Marketing and promotional activity / materials (advertising, merchandise etc)
- Digital media including virtual / augmented reality, enhanced digital storytelling
- Tourism product development and business development support
- Progress towards hosting Australia's first UNESCO Global Geopark in the Murchison. There are 147 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 41 countries, but none in Australia so a Murchison geopark would be a unique global addition

For more information, please contact your local government or visit [www.murchisongeoregion.com](http://www.murchisongeoregion.com)

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### What is geotourism?

Geotourism is an emerging global economic development opportunity, with tourism based on the geology and landscapes that shape the character of a region. Geotourism demonstrates how geology shaped the natural environment (flora and fauna) and its use by traditional Aboriginal owners and European settlers. This is referred to as the geotourism 'ABC' spectrum.

- A. Abiotic (non living) – geology, landforms, astronomy and climate
- B. Biotic (living) – flora and fauna
- C. Culture (people) – Aboriginal and non Aboriginal – past and present

By drawing connections between geology and landscapes, biodiversity, astronomy and its relevance to Aboriginal culture and European settlement in the Murchison, geotourism can add a completely new dimension to the regional tourism experience. It can add significant new value to existing experiences (wildflowers, Indigenous art) and create new economic opportunities for local communities, notably Aboriginal people.

### How can geotourism help my business?

The Murchison GeoRegion is focused on new economic and social development opportunities for people and businesses in the subregion. As Australia's first geotourism development it will draw national and international interest. It will target increased rates of visitation, spending per visit and duration of stay. It will appeal to specific high-value tourism markets and provide opportunities for attraction of external private investment.

Most importantly, the benefits will be localised within the Murchison, for those businesses, community groups and individuals that are proactive and seek to capitalise.

### Why is the Murchison the perfect place for geotourism?

The Murchison is one of Australia's most diverse mineral provinces, including the oldest minerals on the planet (Jack Hills); the world's oldest working mine site (Wilgie Mia) and WA's longest surviving gold mining settlement (Mount Magnet). It shows features of formation and climates some 50 – 150 million years old (Eocene, Paleocene, Cretaceous and Jurassic ages) and may have landscapes almost 300 million years old, during the period when the region was covered by ice and glacial lakes.

The Murchison has evidence of colliding continents and the formation of mountains, with dinosaur fossils and gigantic ancient scorpions (Eurypterids). Few sites in WA boast such a long-lived history, which also presents significant opportunities for research and learning.

Even the name "Murchison" has a strong geological basis, honouring the 19th century's most influential geologist in the British Empire – Sir Roderick Impey Murchison, who sponsored the expedition by George Grey in 1839 and later urged geologists to seek gold at the Murchison River.

### What do I need to know about geotourism to help it succeed?

Please download the new Murchison GeoRegion app and explore the region from your smartphone. Try and see things from the visitor perspective.

The key for most visitors will be the 'C' – Culture (people). Visitors to the Murchison want to know your stories and those of people who have lived there for generations. Most residents will have strong connections to the land and geology in some form. Learn what you can about the 21 sites and try to add to visitors' experiences by enhancing that human interest and connection.