Working on the MRO
Respecting objects, places, plants and animals on Wajarri Yamatji lands.

Purpose
This document supplements face to face indigenous cultural heritage inductions conducted by CSIRO staff, our Aboriginal Liaison Officer or nominated Wajarri Yamatji (WY) people. It is not a replacement for a heritage induction. Heritage inductions are mandatory for all CSIRO staff, contractors and affiliates working on the Murchison Radio-astronomy Observatory (MRO) and any visitors to the site.

Background
CSIRO’s activity on the MRO is covered by an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) and by leases between CSIRO and the WA Government. Before work commenced on the MRO, the site was surveyed by WY elders, professional anthropologists and environmental and conservation staff. The MRO contains places of significance to the traditional owners and cultural artefacts of social and historical value, and it is home to several rare plant and animal species.

CSIRO, as the manager of the MRO, has a responsibility to ensure that obligations defined in the ILUA and various environmental and land clearing approvals are adhered to. Knowledge of these obligations is essential for all staff working at the MRO. The following dos and don’ts are offered as a guide.

Do Stay in designated these work areas:
- 25 metre radius around each ASKAP antenna
- 100 metre corridor from the middle of roads or tracks
- control building compound
- geothermal cooling field
- MRO airstrip and surrounds
- The core of the Murchison Widefield Array (MWA), the outermost tiles, plus a plus a two metre wide corridor to each of the outer tiles.
- The EDGES site.

Do not Take short-cuts between the tracks, go bushwalking, or climb any rock outcrops. There are known and unknown sites of significance to the WY people and known and unknown populations of protected species dotted all over the MRO and these must be avoided.

Western spiny-tailed skink (Egernia stokesii badia), a protected species found at the MRO.
**Do** Report anything you think might be human remains. Stop work, secure the area and inform the MRO Site Manager immediately. The MRO has been occupied by humans for thousands of years. The wind and rain may expose human remains even within designated work areas.

**Do not** Cover, move, or ignore bones. It is a criminal offence to interfere with human remains and it is deeply disrespectful to the WY people.

**Do** Report anything you think might be important. Significant artefacts have been located and identified, but if you think you’ve spotted something, tell the MRO Site Manager.

**Do not** Disturb any artefact. There are concentrated ‘scatters’ of rocks that have been shaped by WY ancestors into handheld tools, but more can be uncovered by wind and rain and are sometimes distributed over a wide area. You don’t have to report these rock tools, just leave them alone. There are also piles of rocks which hold special meaning to the WY people. It is an offence under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act* to knowingly disturb Aboriginal sites.

**Do** Take your rubbish with you and dispose of it at the control building or accommodation facility.

**Do not** Remove anything that is not yours. Not a rock, a rusty tin, a broken toy, or a flower. What you think is rubbish might be an object of significance to the WY people and it is an offence under the wildlife and biodiversity Acts to pick wildflowers.

**Do** Consider cultural heritage, environmental and land use issues, as well as engineering matters such as underground cables, before you commence any work on the MRO. Even in designated work areas or on previously disturbed land, you may be breaking the law by ignoring these issues.

**Do Ask for permission** before taking photographs or video. CSIRO recommends individuals do not record WY cultural stories. Even if the WY person with whom you are speaking says it is OK, broader WY permissions may be required.

**Do Enjoy the experience.** Travelling to and working at the MRO can be rewarding, but it also demands particular thought and planning to ensure respect for cultural heritage and environmental issues. The MRO is special and deserves special treatment from all of us who have the privilege of working there.

**More information**

If you have any questions about anything you find at the MRO, or about where you can go or what you can do, please contact the MRO Site Manager, Shaun Amy: shaun.amy@csiro.au.