



# SHARK BAY WORLD HERITAGE

## CRITERIA AND VALUES

### **(vii) Superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance**

– which includes: Stromatolites, Hamelin Pool environment, Faure Sill and Wooramel Seagrass bank, exceptional coastal scenery e.g Zuytdorp cliffs, Dirk Hartog Island National Park, Peron Peninsula, Heirisson and Bellefin Prongs.

- Wide sweeping beaches of shells, e.g Shell Beach and L'haridon Bight.
- Clay pans (birridas) and lagoons, such as Big and Little Lagoons.
- Strongly contrasting colours of dunes/cliffs, beaches and ocean of Peron Peninsula.
- Abundance of marine fauna (e.g dugongs, dolphins, sharks, rays, turtles and fish).
- Extensive annual wildflower displays.

### **(viii) Outstanding examples representing major stages of the earth's history, including record of life, significant ongoing geological process in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features** - such as:

- Stromatolites and microbial mats of Hamelin Pool Marine Nature Reserve.

### **(ix) Outstanding examples of on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals** including:

#### **Marine Environment**

- Unique structure of bays, seagrass banks and sills that cause a range of salinity levels including the hypersaline Hamelin Pool.
- Largest seagrass meadows in the world with a high diversity of 12 seagrass species.
- Overlap of temperate and tropical marine environments meeting, resulting in high biodiversity of species including 323 fish, 218 bivalve shells and 80 coral species.

#### **Terrestrial Environment**

- Overlap of northern/southern botanical zones in southern parts of Nanga and Tamala areas resulting in high plant diversity, including 184 plants at the edge of their range and 39 species that are only found in this area (endemic).
- Islands and peninsulas providing refuge for wildlife and enabling threatened species to survive and evolve e.g rufous and banded hare-wallabies.
- High biodiversity of many species of birds, frogs, geckos, skinks and monitor lizards at the extreme edge of their range, including 100 species reptiles and amphibians and 230 species of birds representing 35% of Australia's total species.

### **(x) The most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.**

- Five of Australia's 26 endangered mammals (Shark Bay mouse, banded and rufous hare-wallabies, Shark Bay bandicoot, and burrowing bettong) survive in Shark Bay. There are also 12 threatened reptiles (e.g. Baudin Island skink and woma python) and the
- endemic sandhill frog.
- Birds include; 35 migratory species, western grasswren and endemic Dirk Hartog Island subspecies of the southern emu-wren.
- More than 12% of the world's dugong, large numbers of migrating humpback whales plus significant numbers of green turtles and one of Australia's largest loggerhead turtle rookeries.
- Threatened flora species.