

KIMBERLEY EXPLORER

on board HERITAGE ADVENTURER

23 July - 2 August 2026



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Day 1

Thursday 23rd July

Broome

It was all aboard at Broome in the afternoon as we began our expedition through the Kimberley Coast. We were guests from all around the globe, all united to explore this iconic and remote part of Australia.

We sailed out into the most spectacular blood-red sunset and enjoyed our first night aboard after being introduced to Steve Todd, our Expedition Leader, along with the 18 members of the expedition staff. Our Kimberley Explorer adventure was underway!



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Day 2

Friday 24th July 2026

Buccaneer Archipelago

Today we started with Steve giving an introduction to our Kimberley Explorer expedition, followed by Poot's Zodiac briefing. Chris Todd began our education programme with an introduction to the Indigenous communities of the Kimberley, their traditional lands, and their 60,000 years of history.

After lunch, we enjoyed our first Zodiac ride at the very head of the Buccaneer Archipelago. Named by the British Captain of *Cygnets* in 1688, the archipelago consists of more than 1,000 islands and deeply cut peninsulas. We used the tide to cruise among the vast mangroves at the head of the sound. Here, we spotted our first Saltwater Crocodiles, Brahminy Kites, Eastern Osprey, Oystercatchers, and Kingfishers.

We returned excited for the Captain's Welcome Cocktails and another delicious meal. Tonight's sunset was simply spectacular, with *Heritage Adventurer* sitting on a mirror-like sea bathed in orange and red light. Our Captain turned off all the lights so we could fully appreciate the brilliance of the Milky Way above us. An incredible first full day of adventure!



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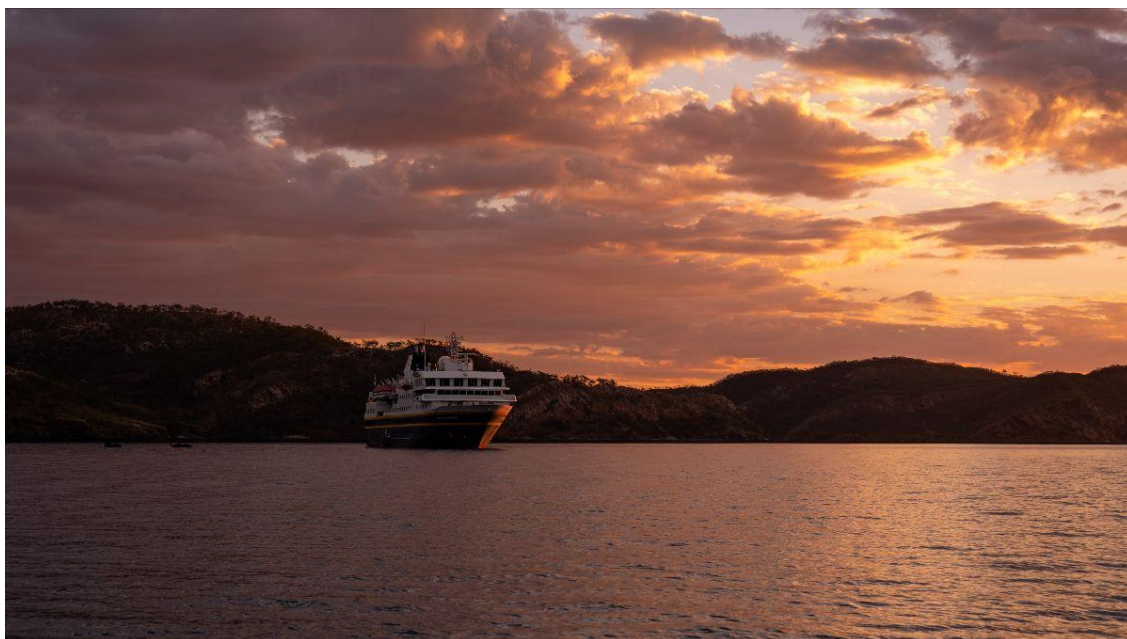
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Day 3

Saturday 25th July 2026

Cyclone Creek & Secure Bay

Today was a real highlight, starting with Zodiac excursions to the famous Horizontal Falls at sunrise. The sandstone cliffs glowed orange in dawn light. Here, huge tidal flows create one of the most spectacular constrained passages anywhere in the world. As it was a neap tide, the flow was subdued, but the sheer scale and beauty of the area were incredible.

This was followed by a fantastic Zodiac cruise up Cyclone Creek, with its spectacular scenery glowing in the early morning light. Some guests were lucky enough to see Rock Wallabies bounding across rocks, while everyone enjoyed sightings of Sea Eagles and Wedge-tailed Eagles. We also enjoyed a geology lecture from Hamish, with his key fact being: "These rocks are 1.8 billion years old!"

After lunch, we experienced a first with a Zodiac cruise into Secure Bay. Highlights included admiring huge numbers of Boab trees, vast flocks of Corellas, and scree slopes of basalt, along with two Ospreys feeding their chicks on top of a rocky islet.

Back on board *Heritage Adventurer*, we gathered for another delicious dinner, accompanied by lively conversation as we shared the day's highlights. The dining room buzzed with stories, laughter, and anticipation for the adventures still to come.





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Day 4

Sunday 26th July 2026

Doubtful Bay

In the morning, we had the unique opportunity to meet individuals from the Worrora Tribe and Arraluli clan at Freshwater Cove/Wijinarra Butt Butt (translated as 'the Quoll wiggling'). Here, a freshwater spring just near the beach has sustained Aboriginal life for thousands of years.

Neil Maru and Naomi Peters welcomed us with a smoking cleansing ceremony and ochre cheek painting as part of their 'Welcome to Country'. Neil then took us on a walk to explore the incredible rock art at Cyclone Cave. This rock art depicts their traditional foods, including Barramundi, Stingrays, Nightjars, and Dugongs, as well as their wet and dry seasons, represented through cyclones, rain, and sun. Neil also recounted the devastating impact of the 2024 floods, which brought Cane Toads into the area, leading to the decline of the Northern Quoll and several local snake species.

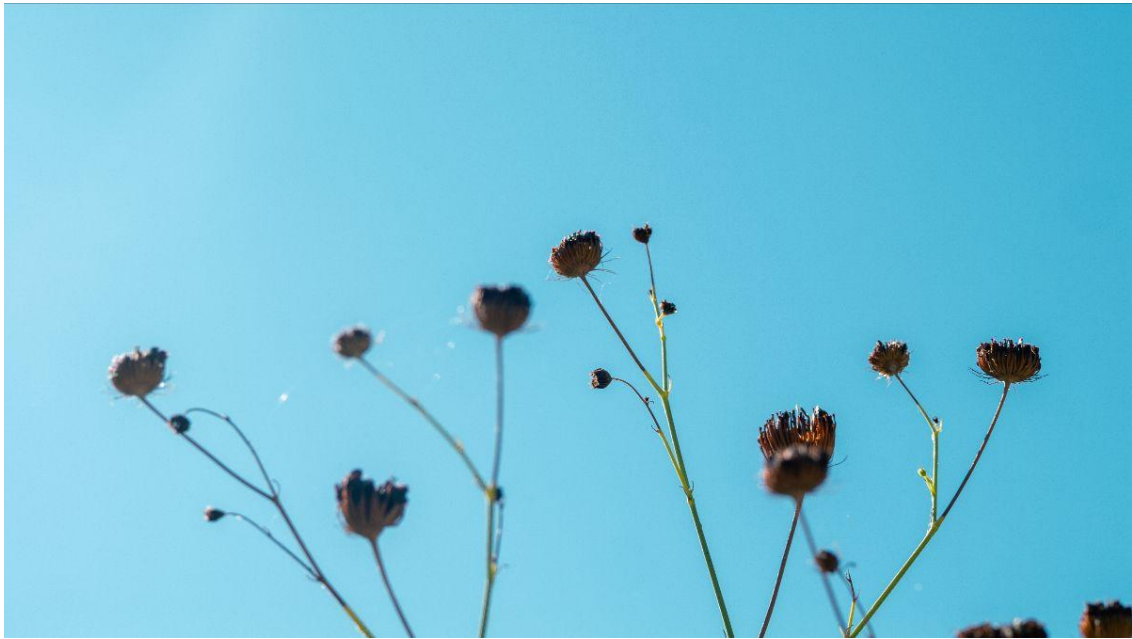
He explained how his people are the people of the Wandjina and have lived on this land for thousands of years. However, they were forcibly removed by the Government to Derby in the 1950s for education and assimilation into Australian society. Today, it is an eight-hour boat journey from Derby to reconnect with their traditional lands, or a \$2,500 helicopter flight.

In the afternoon, we visited Montgomery Reef/Yowjab to witness the remarkable emergence of the reef in the Willyjaru Channel as the tide drained away. It was a stunning natural phenomenon. Green turtles made the most of fast-moving currents churning the waters of a navigable Zodiac channel alive with tasty seafood morsels, and Egrets were spotted fishing across the exposed reef.

The reef covers 400 square kilometres and was named after Andrew Montgomery, the ship's surgeon aboard Captain Phillip Parker King's vessel *Bathurst*, who was speared in the back on a nearby island in 1822.

Aboriginal people traditionally accessed the reef for food using mangrove rafts known as 'tide runners', allowing the tides to carry them out to the reef and back again.

Soon it was time to return to *Heritage Adventurer*, where recap, dinner and the promise of our next adventure awaited.



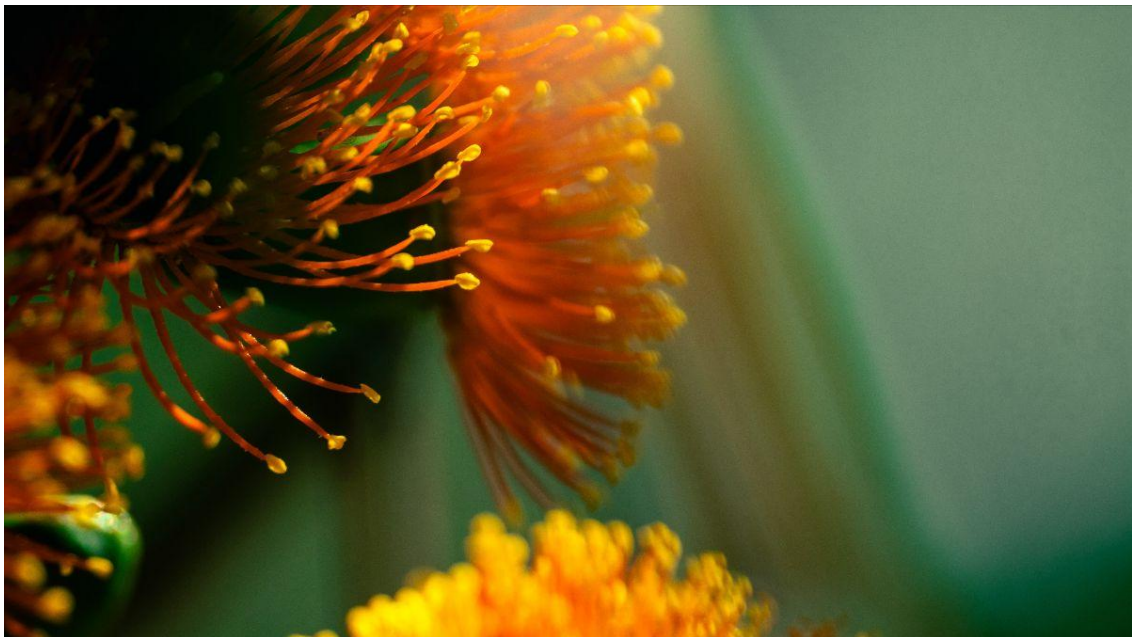
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Day 5

Monday 27th July 2026

Prince Frederick Harbour

In the morning, we experienced the incredible concentration of crocodiles in Porosus Creek, a tributary of the Hunter River. An optional sunrise adventure into Porosus Creek departed at 0500 hours. The torchlight picked out the Crocodiles' eyes glowing orange and red in the darkness – an unforgettable sight. As the sun rose, the dawn chorus of birds was magnificent, while the towering rock walls became bathed in early morning orange light, creating mirror-like reflections among the mangrove creeks.

The rest of the guests enjoyed the early morning light (at a slightly more civilised hour) on Zodiac excursions up Porosus Creek. The high tide provided ideal conditions for tranquil 'treetop' cruising among the mangroves in search of wildlife. It was a morning to remember for a very long time.

In the afternoon, we headed towards Ashmore Reef, 250 kilometres off the Kimberley Coast. We enjoyed a fascinating lecture on Crocodiles from Robyn, a snorkelling briefing, and a fantastic high tea of cakes and sandwiches. The day finished with two excellent lectures – Toby sharing insights into Ashmore Reef and Hannah providing tips on photography.



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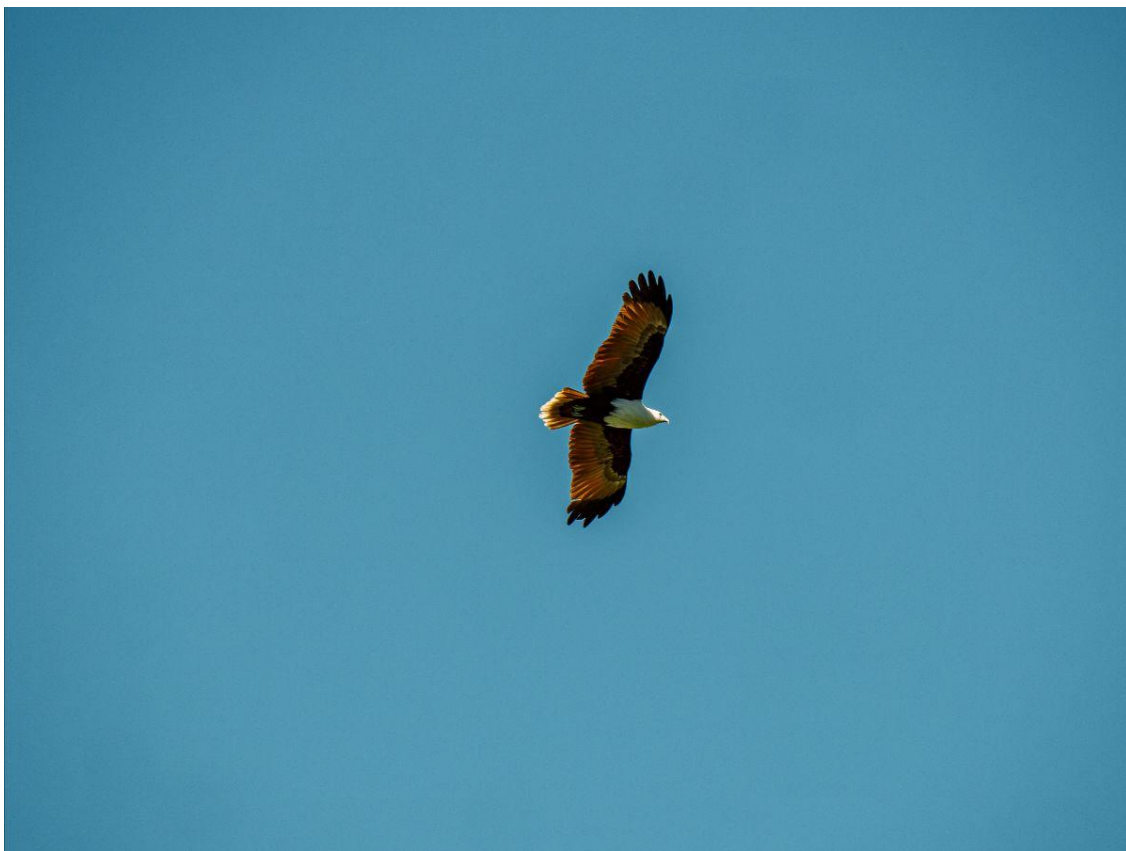
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Day 6

Tuesday 28th July 2026

Ashmore Reef

After travelling 250 kilometres overnight, we reached Ashmore Reef at 0700 hours in calm seas. Closer to Indonesia than Australia (it is 840 kilometres from Darwin), Ashmore is truly a tropical marine wonderland, with many guests experiencing the beauty of the lagoon through snorkelling on the reef. Stingrays were easily spotted gliding through the clear waters.

Australia's most remote Marine Protected Area, Ashmore Reef also sits at the centre of the 'boat people' story from Southeast Asia.

The reef became associated with asylum seekers fleeing human rights abuse in Asia and later became a focal point of the Australian Government's efforts to stop the mass arrival of refugee boats. We saw the Australian Border Force vessel, along with the boats used to store water and supplies for refugees.

Ashmore Reef was discovered by Samuel Ashmore, an American Whaler, in 1811 and was regularly visited by American Whalers and guano diggers during the late 19th Century. In 1886, Britain annexed the islands to prevent further United States guano extraction. Indonesian fishermen have used the reef for hundreds of years and are still permitted traditional access using sailboats for trepang (sea cucumbers), sponges and abalone harvesting.

We were fascinated by the incredible marine life – around 650 species - the azure blue waters, and the thousands of seabirds that have made Ashmore their home. More than 100,000 Black Noddies, Brown Boobies, Terns and Frigatebirds nest on the islands, with a total of 93 bird species recorded across the reef.

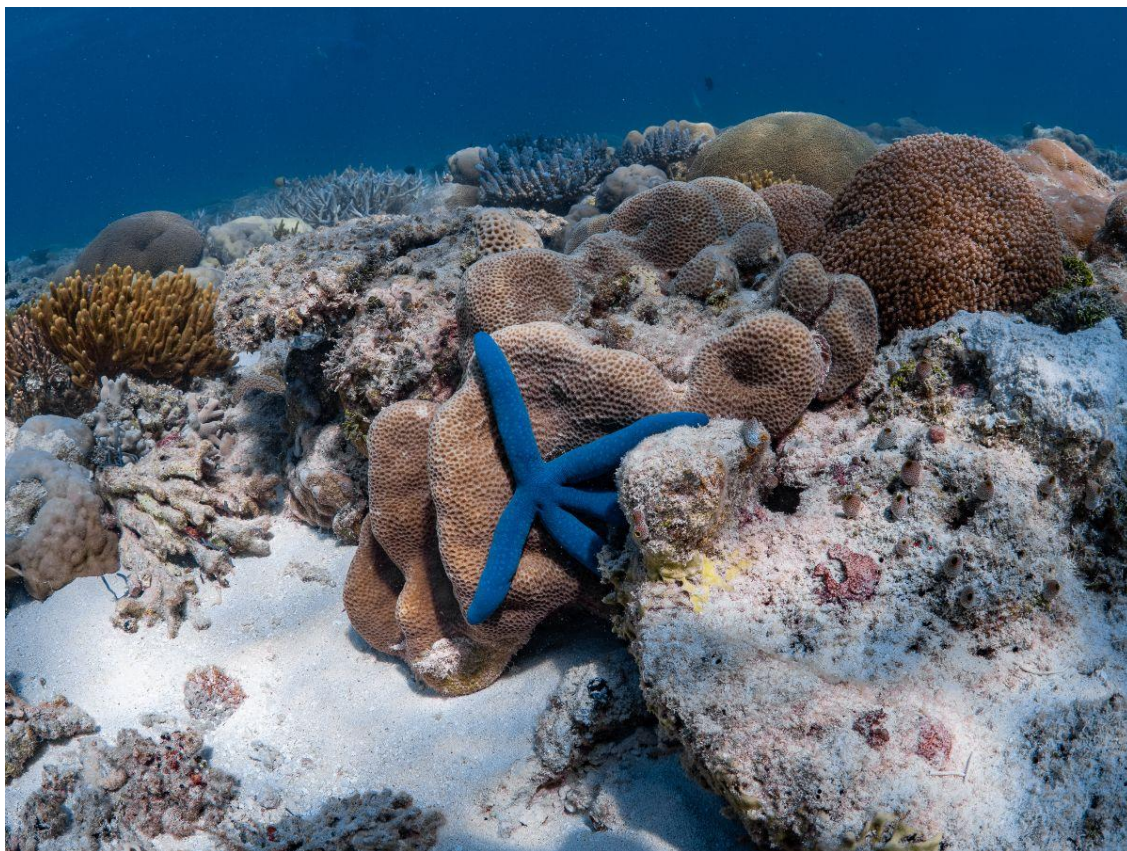
Back on board *Heritage Adventurer*, we enjoyed dinner while reflecting on today's adventures. With spirits high, we settled in to head again to the Kimberley Coast.



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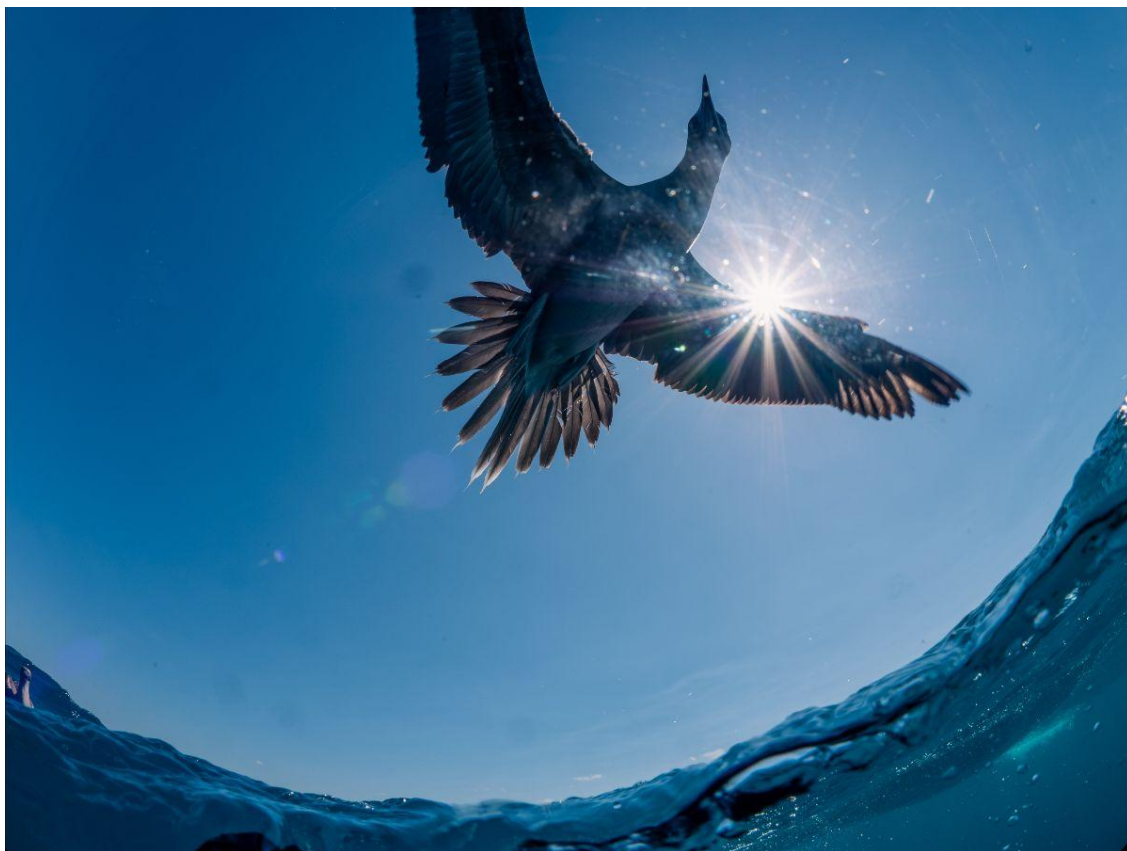
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Day 7

Wednesday 29th July 2026

Bigge Island

After a delicious breakfast we eagerly arrived at the Kimberley's second-largest island, Bigge Island. Bigge is renowned for its remarkable Wandjina Aboriginal rock art, depicting the ancestral Wandjina beings.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the artwork is the inclusion of figures that appear to show sailors with corn pipes and a two-masted sailing boat. Many believe this may represent Abel Janszoon Tasman's barque, which was used to help guide his ship around the coral reefs as he mapped the Kimberley Coast.

We enjoyed a scenic walk to discover some of the ancient rock features and Aboriginal sacred ceremonial rock structures. In the afternoon, we visited Winyalkan Island, where we had the opportunity to explore a spectacular rock cave as the late afternoon light poured through the entrance.

Being a full moon, we were treated to the rare sight of a blood-red sunset and a stunning full moon rise over the Kimberley - all within 10 minutes of each other. As it was barbecue night, we enjoyed dinner under the stars on the back deck, bathed in the glow of the full moon.



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Day 8
Thursday 30th July 2026
Vansittart Bay / Jar Island

Today we visited the incredible wreck of the crashed Douglas C-53 Skytrooper aircraft, hidden amongst the trees at Vansittart Bay, after crossing a vast salt pan. In February 1942, Japan had largely taken control of Indonesia, and on 25 February the evacuation of Java began. The closest safe destination was Broome, which was under American control at the time. The C-53 was the military version of the DC-3, and the aircraft had already completed one flight to Perth before returning north. However, the crew had no navigator, and the Pilot, Ray Van Diver, set the wrong heading, causing them to overshoot Broome by 640 kilometres.

By 1900 hours, the airplane had run out of fuel, and the pilot located a large salt flat at Vansittart Bay to attempt an emergency landing. The aircraft came down wheels-up, tearing off a wing, but remarkably everyone survived. With no food available, the crew relied on a still to desalinate water, which helped keep them alive.

They were rescued on 1 March by a Qantas flying boat, whose pilot knew the area extremely well, and were taken to Darwin. Just three days later, on 3 March, Broome itself was attacked. The plane still looked in great condition 84 years later!

After lunch, we visited Jar Island to see the ancient Gwion Gwion rock art. This is among the oldest rock art in the Kimberley and may date back more than 20,000 years. We also had the opportunity to walk across the island to a giant Boab tree on a stunning white-sand beach.

Philip Parker King named Jar Island after discovering pottery fragments there, most likely left by Makassan trepang fishermen who visited the region in the 1700s.

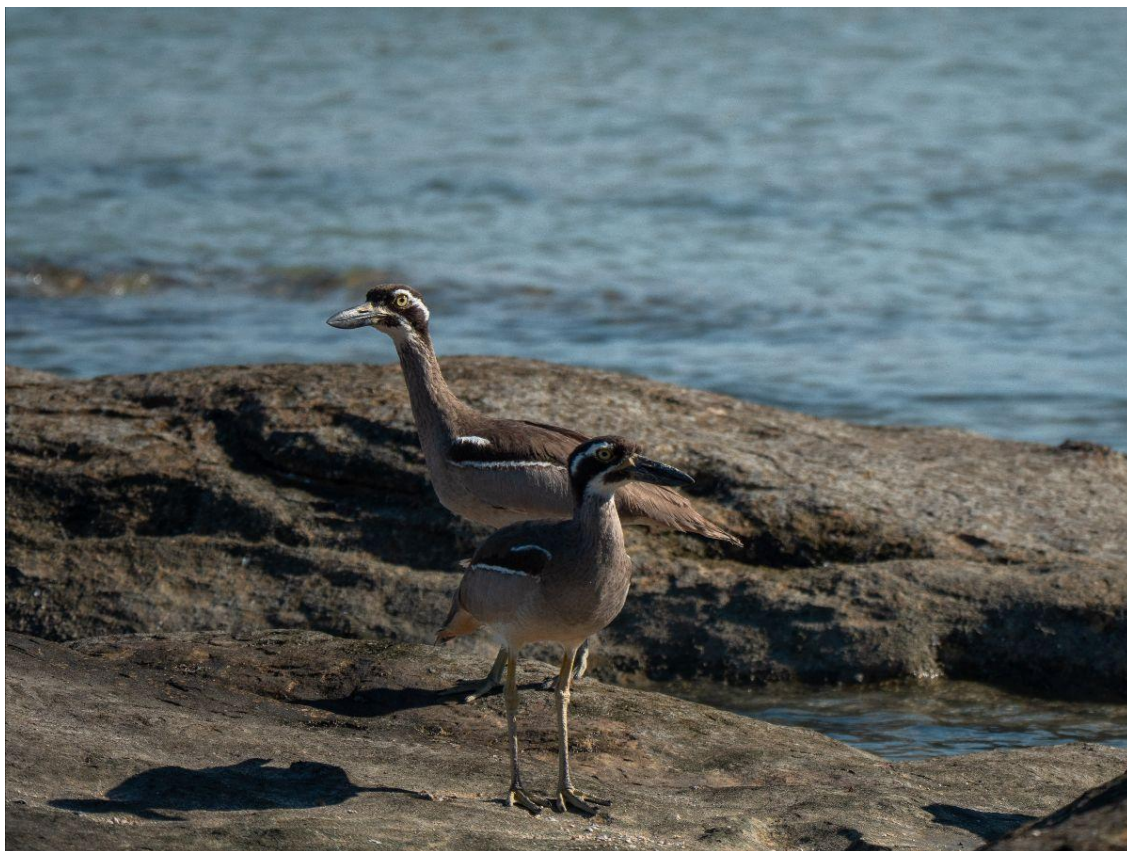
Back on board we enjoyed another tasty dinner as conversation turned to the day's remarkable experiences and we looked forward with eager anticipation to the adventures and discoveries that awaited us tomorrow.



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Day 9

Friday 31st July 2026

Swift Bay - Montague Sound

Today, a number of guests enjoyed the optional helicopter excursion to Mitchell Falls. Some took advantage of the opportunity to swim in the freshwater pools below the cascading falls in this iconic Kimberley landmark.

The rest of us visited the rock art of Swift Bay, where we explored two separate sites – one featuring Wandjina art and the other showcasing Gwion Gwion art. It was remarkable to see these two distinct art traditions so close together, with one dating back around 6,000 years and the other possibly around 20,000 years old. The scenery was equally spectacular, with towering red sandstone cliffs rising above the azure blue waters of the bay.

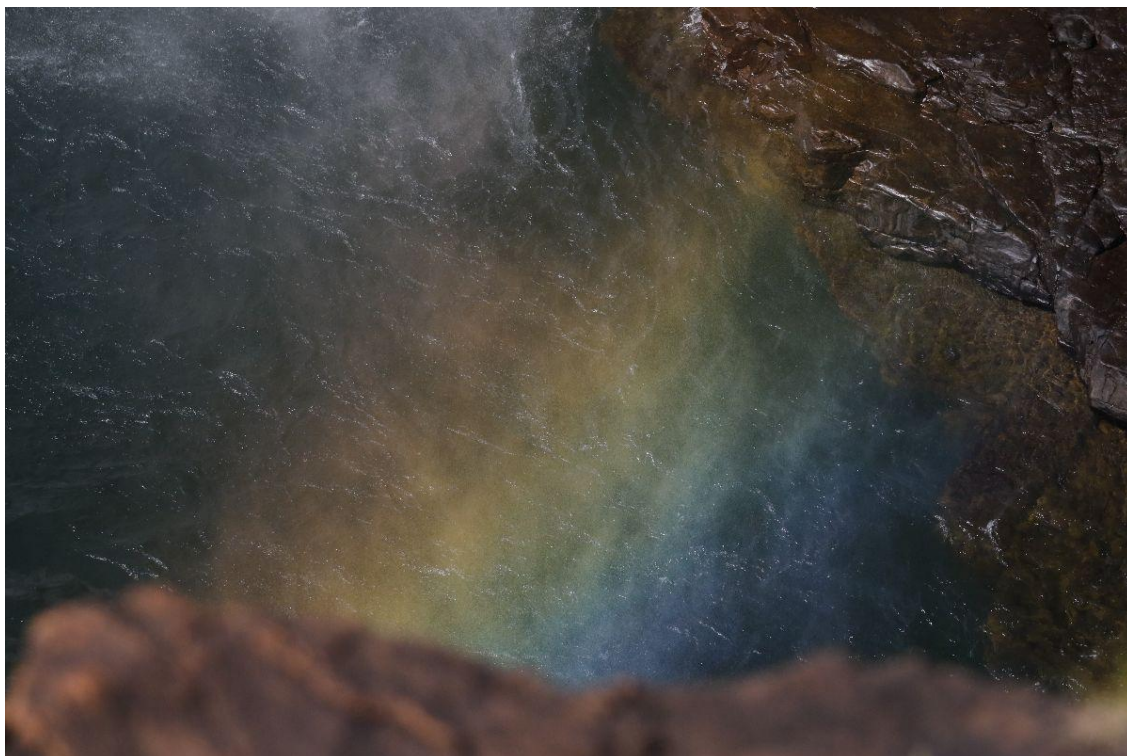
In the afternoon, we visited another rock art site near Wollaston Island. It was a spectacular beach landing with a large Noni tree towering above the beach and its famously 'very smelly fruit' providing an interesting talking point back at dinner.



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Day 10

Saturday 1st August 2026

Koolama Bay - King George River

Our final full day of exploration finished on an absolute highlight – a 15 kilometre journey up the King George River, followed by a three-hour Zodiac expedition to the magnificent 100 metre high King George Falls. Some eager guests departed at 0530 hours to witness the dramatic sunrise illuminating the red rock walls of the King George canyon.

The twin falls are among Australia's most famous waterfalls, and their sheer scale and beauty made for a spectacular finale. Along the way, we encountered Dugong, Crocodiles, Ospreys, Rock Wallabies and Monitor Lizards. Mangroves clung to sheer rock walls, creating a landscape unlike anywhere else. At the end of the tidal section of the river, the falls were still flowing strongly, and we had the incredible opportunity to cruise beneath them on a beautifully warm day. We also gained an appreciation of the incredible challenge faced by George Grey in 1850 as he searched for a river route that would provide access to the Australian interior.

Koolama Bay was named after the ship *Koolama*, which was attacked by a Japanese aircraft on 20 February 1942, the day after the bombing of Darwin. The damaged ship limped ashore and was beached in a small bay. There were 180 people on board, and the Captain was determined to repair the vessel and continue to Wyndham. The repairs took seven days in extreme heat and humidity.

During this time, the Chief Officer, who was ashore with most of the passengers, convinced them to turn against the Captain and abandon the ship. He led 98 people on a 100-kilometre journey overland to Drysdale Mission, assisted by Indigenous people from the mission. Meanwhile, the Captain successfully repaired *Koolama* and sailed to Wyndham without steering gear, using only the propellers to navigate. Remarkably, just 10 days after arriving in Wyndham, the ship was sunk during an air raid on the town.

At 1330 hours, we crossed into the Northern Territory and moved our clocks forward to 1500 hours. We enjoyed final lectures from Robyn on the 'Flight to Hell' and Lou on 'The Last 100 Years in The Kimberley'.

The expedition concluded with a memorable Captain's Farewell Dinner and an incredible trip slideshow prepared by Hannah, our expedition photographer.

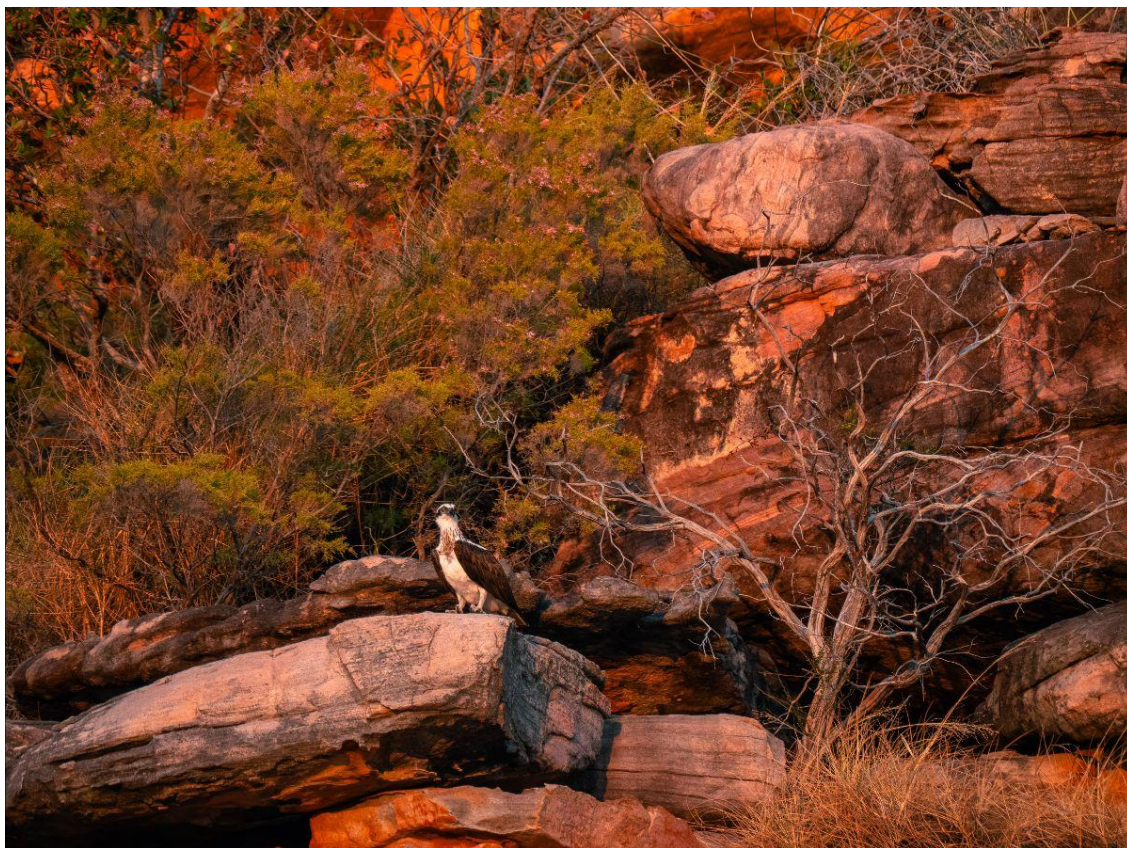
Our Kimberley Explorer adventure had been a journey filled with incredible scenery, ancient Aboriginal rock art, stories of 'Country', remarkable wildlife, and wonderful new friendships. It was easy to understand why the Kimberley remains at the top of so many Australians' bucket lists - a place to experience at least once in a lifetime!



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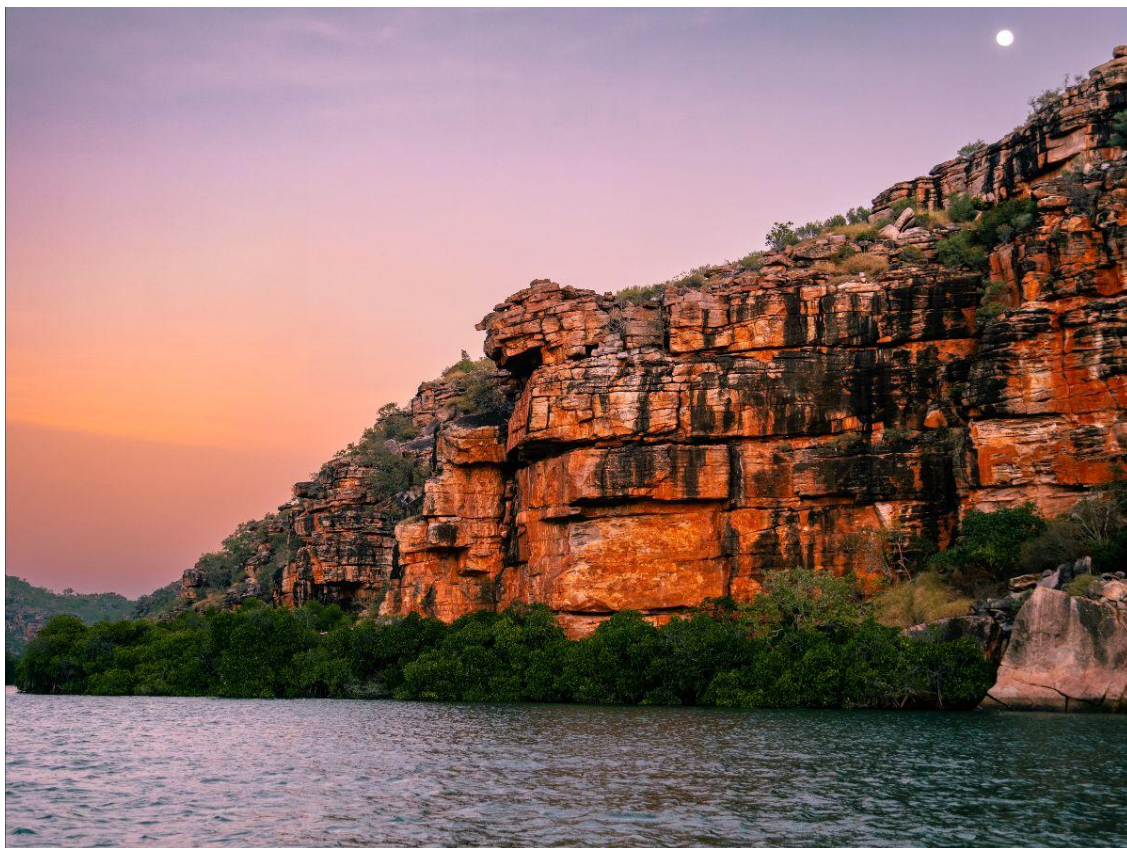
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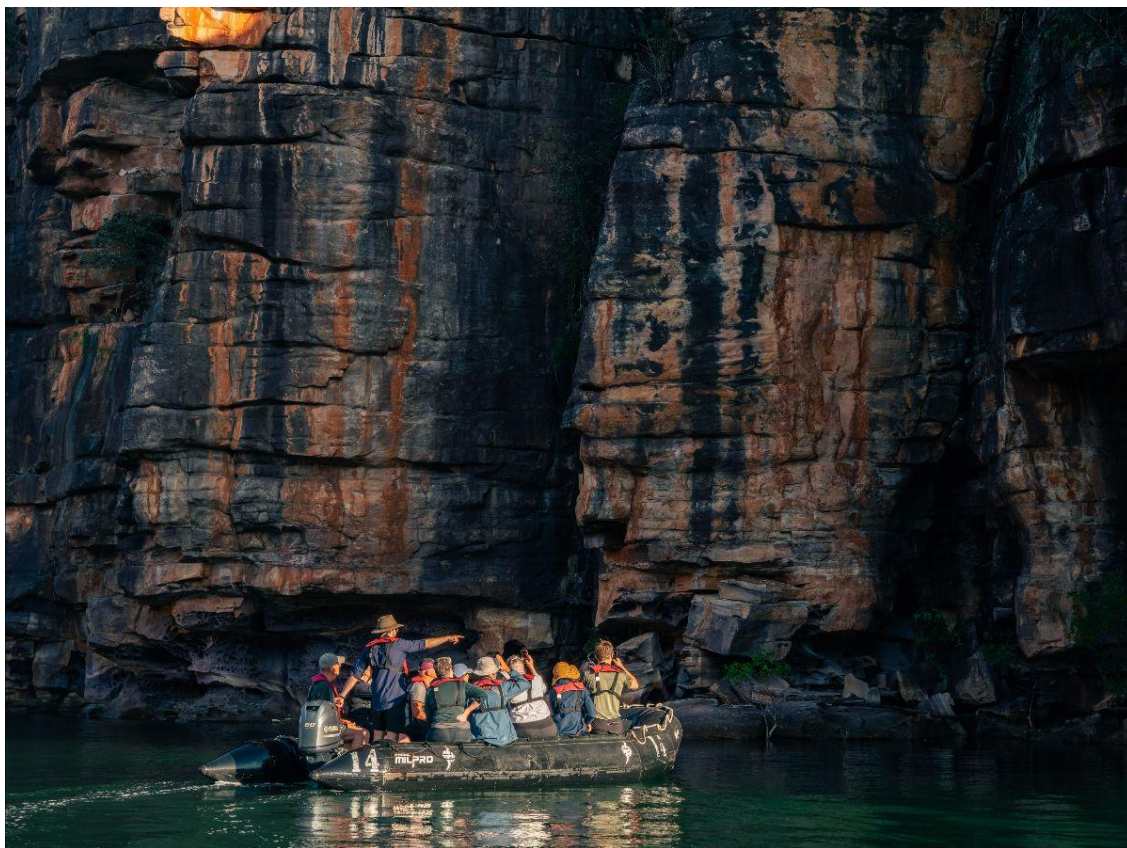
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Day 11

Sunday 2nd August 2026

Darwin

Our Kimberley Explorer adventure drew to a close as *Heritage Adventurer* arrived in the tropical city of Darwin. Once a remote frontier outpost, Darwin now serves as the gateway to Australia's spectacular 'Top End'. As we disembarked, it was time to bid a fond farewell to our exceptional expedition team, the dedicated crew of *Heritage Adventurer*, and the wonderful friends we had made along the way. We departed with cameras full of photographs, hearts and minds filled with unforgettable stories, and treasured memories of an extraordinary voyage through the breathtaking and remote Kimberley Coast. Until next time!



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