IDENTIFYING CULTURALLY MODIFIED TREES IN THE PILBARA

INTRODUCTION
Culturally Modified Trees (CMT) help inform the narrative of human occupation in the Pilbara, but a standardised method of identification and recording has not been established. A review of the available literature shows a gap in North-Western Australian studies. A desktop study was undertaken with plans to conduct fieldwork to test a Pilbara specific identification checklist in the coming year.

OBJECTIVES
- Identify CMTs/non-cultural with more certainty
- Create consistency in recording

METHODS
- Literature review of published work
- Desktop research of CMTs

DESKTOP RESULTS
- No published work for the Pilbara on CMTs, overuse of Eastern States literature and criteria.
- Limited understanding what trees are used for
- Consultants record varying attributes
- CMTs found more often on lower slope degree

FUTURE DIRECTIONS
- Standardised attributes & checklist for Pilbara CMTs (Field guide to CMTs)
- Potential to compare objects (e.g. yandi dishes) held in museum with scars from trees
- Consultants to start using consistent attributes when recording CMTs

REFERENCES

Thank you to the Banjima and Nyiyaparli people for use of tree photos.

Hollowing out a wooden dish with a stone adze (c.1940s)
Separation of minerals using a yandy
Use of coolamon dish
Sleeping in a wooden dish
Stripping bark for a shield (c.1905)

Are these culturally modified?

CULTURALLY MODIFIED TREE IDENTIFICATION CHECKLIST

MORE LIKELY
- Scar dimension - Height, width, thickness (inside scar)
- Orientation
- Height above ground level
- Shape of scar
- Amount of regrowth - Thickness and width
- Any evidence of implements used
- Proposed use
- Estimated age of tree
- Evidence of disease or other factors
- Evidence of insects
- Evidence of fire

LESS LIKELY
- Land slope in degrees
- Attributes to record
- Environmental context

Further Information
Contact Rachel Bulloch – Rachel.Bulloch@bhpbilliton.com

Thank you to the Banjima and Nyiyaparli people for use of tree photos.

Hollowing out a wooden dish with a stone adze (c.1940s)
Separation of minerals using a yandy
Use of coolamon dish
Sleeping in a wooden dish
Stripping bark for a shield (c.1905)

INTRODUCTION
Culturally Modified Trees (CMT) help inform the narrative of human occupation in the Pilbara, but a standardised method of identification and recording has not been established. A review of the available literature shows a gap in North-Western Australian studies. A desktop study was undertaken with plans to conduct fieldwork to test a Pilbara specific identification checklist in the coming year.

OBJECTIVES
- Identify CMTs/non-cultural with more certainty
- Create consistency in recording

METHODS
- Literature review of published work
- Desktop research of CMTs

DESKTOP RESULTS
- No published work for the Pilbara on CMTs, overuse of Eastern States literature and criteria.
- Limited understanding what trees are used for
- Consultants record varying attributes
- CMTs found more often on lower slope degree

FUTURE DIRECTIONS
- Standardised attributes & checklist for Pilbara CMTs (Field guide to CMTs)
- Potential to compare objects (e.g. yandi dishes) held in museum with scars from trees
- Consultants to start using consistent attributes when recording CMTs

REFERENCES

Thank you to the Banjima and Nyiyaparli people for use of tree photos.