



## A JOURNEY THROUGH COUNTRY

R SERIES AUSTRALIAN PASSPORT EXHIBITION 2023

*The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, waters, and community. It pays its respects to all First Nations peoples, their cultures and to their Elders, past, present, and emerging.*

### **WARNING**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this exhibition contains the names of deceased people.



## AUSTRALIA'S NEXT-GENERATION PASSPORT

Presented by the Australian Passport Office in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), in partnership with Note Printing Australia (NPA), *A Journey Through Country* showcases the design of Australia's new R Series passport.

The passport and the exhibition take you on a visual journey across our vast nation, while paying homage to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Innovative design features throughout the passport are combined with cutting-edge technologies to make it one of the world's most secure and beautiful travel documents.

Each month, more than one million passport holders depart Australia\*. Taking a journey is not just about the road ahead. It's also about reflecting on where you are right now, and where you've come from. This idea is expressed through the R Series passport, which weaves together the past, present, and future.

Both evolutionary and revolutionary, the design of the R Series continues the theme from the N Series (2009–2014) and P Series (2014–2023) passports. It links all Australians and embraces our rich cultural heritage. It does this by incorporating artwork from the oldest continuous cultures on earth.

The inclusion of Indigenous art in Australia's passports began with the N Series. It was continued in the P Series, and now features even more significantly in the R Series. This was seen as a way of ensuring inclusivity and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. Permission was granted for the use of two significant paintings, Michael Nelson Jagamara AM's *Possum and Wallaby Dreaming* (1985) and Uta Uta Tjangala's *Yumari* (1981).



## SHARING TRADITIONS AND CULTURE

The remarkable painting, *Possum and Wallaby Dreaming* (1985), is by Warlpiri artist Michael Nelson Jagamara AM (c. 1945–2020). It is the basis for the stone mosaic in the forecourt of Parliament House in Canberra.

Motifs from the painting have been a continuing cultural reference in our passports since 2009. The mosaic symbolises sites where Aboriginal peoples have been coming together to meet for more than 65,000 years. Today, it is a place for all to meet.

Michael Nelson Jagamara AM was one of the foremost proponents of the Western Desert art movement. He believed in the importance of teaching and sharing traditions and culture through his art. His mosaic is a contemporary interpretation of the sand-painting tradition of the Warlpiri people.

The design depicts the tracks of people from the red kangaroo, rock wallaby, brushtail possum and goanna ancestors. It has complex layers of meaning known only to Warlpiri Elders. The elements flow in concentric circles, representing the gathering of these ancestors to talk and enact ceremonial obligations.



## A TACTILE DESIGN AND SECURITY FEATURE

The *Possum and Wallaby Dreaming* theme has a strong presence on the polycarbonate data page, the security features page, the observations page, and the important information page throughout the R Series passport.

On the data page, the concentric circle pattern from the mosaic is engraved around the passport holder's secondary image in the transparent window. It frames the face within a notional 'meeting place'. It took astounding technical precision to replicate the *Possum and Wallaby Dreaming* motif, which is enhanced by matt and gloss areas in between the design. This gives exceptional protection to the lasered biographic details of the holder.

On the important information page, this highly expressive cultural motif is again present. When the page is placed under UV light, the image fluoresces white and red.

On the observations page, the forecourt flows down from the Parliament House image to the blue tactile core of the data page. Possum and wallaby footprints are engraved on this page to echo the story conveyed in the mosaic.

**1**  
R Series Ordinary Passport

**2**  
R Series Official Passport

**3**  
R Series Diplomatic Passport

**4**  
Mosaic (1988) in the forecourt of Parliament House based on:  
Michael Nelson Jagamara AM,  
Warlpiri people, Northern Territory  
*Possum and Wallaby Dreaming* 1985  
Photographer: John Gollings

**5**  
R Series passport data page  
Under oblique lighting the tactile  
design of *Possum and Wallaby  
Dreaming* highlights the diffractive  
light patterns in the page

\* Australian Bureau of Statistics  
(March 2023) Overseas Arrivals and  
Departures, Australia





1

### AN ANCESTRAL JOURNEY

A major cultural reference throughout the passport is a watermark in the paper, based on this renowned painting, *Yumari* (1981) by the Pintupi artist Uta Uta Tjangala (c. 1926-1990). He was one of the original Papunya group of artists and an inspirational figure in the Western Desert art movement. In the late 1970s he developed a plan with other Pintupi leaders to return to their traditional lands.

*Yumari* combines several Dreamings that pass through the artist's Country. The central figure represents the ancestral being Short Legs – the Dreaming incarnation of the artist. Also depicted are the Dreaming paths of the Old Man, the wavy path of the King Brown Snake and the Two Women seen by King Brown Snake as he passed the salt lake Wilkinkarra. The painting's title refers to the resting place of the Old Man, whose body formed the rock waterhole.

In the painting, story elements and natural features are blended within a beautifully balanced arrangement of concentric circles and connecting lines. These feature in the watermark.



2

**1**  
Uta Uta Tjangala,  
Pintupi people  
Northern Territory  
*Yumari* 1981  
acrylic on canvas  
Image of *Yumari* 1981 courtesy of  
the National Museum of Australia

**2**  
N Series passport data and  
observations page  
overt lighting (daylight)

**3**  
R Series passport visa page  
with *Yumari* watermark

**4**  
R Series passport visa page  
Uluru, Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park  
overt lighting (daylight)

**5**  
R Series passport visa page  
Uluru, Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park  
covert lighting (under ultraviolet light)



3

### A CULTURAL METAPHOR

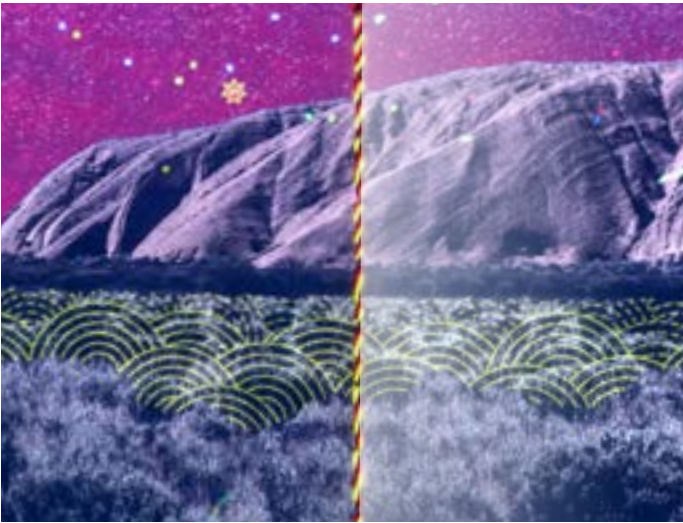
The registered *Yumari* watermark can be seen as a metaphor for the fabric of our country and also as a journey through the various states and territories represented in the passport's visa pages.

The watermark has been integrated as part of the paper in the R Series passport. It is one of the key design and security elements which links it with the N Series and P Series passports.

In the R Series, *Yumari* references are present as a watermark on the observations page and on each visa page. The watermark is one of the many security features built into the design of the passport. These features help protect the passport holder's identity.



4



5

### THE COLOURS THAT BIND

The interlocked stitching that binds each passport together is most apparent in the centre spread. It carries highly important Indigenous cultural references, and so plays a role beyond functionality and security. When viewed under UV light, the threads change to black, red, and yellow – the colours of the Aboriginal flag.

The flag design represents the Aboriginal people of Australia and their ongoing spiritual connection to the land. The black symbolises Aboriginal people. The red is the earth, as well as the colour of ochre, which has ceremonial significance. The circle of yellow in the centre of the flag represents the sun. The flag has become an enduring symbol of Aboriginal unity and strength.

In normal light, the thread colours are charcoal, ochre and white, derived from Uta Uta Tjangala's painting, *Yumari* (1981). Under UV light, the threads change colour. The daytime image on the page also transforms to a nightscape, resplendent with stars and the concentric *Yumari* motif.

The iconic location, Uluru, was a logical selection for the centre spread. It is the red centre of Australia and the middle point in the passport's visual journey around the nation.





1



5



2



6



3



7



4



8



10



14



11



15



12



16



13



17



9

## THE JOURNEY

Featured in the R Series passport are images of 17 iconic locations from around Australia. Significantly, the R Series represents the first time an image from Torres Strait Islands is featured in our passport.

These images highlight our country's extraordinary natural beauty and take you on a journey around the nation.

Of the 17 locations that appear in the R Series' visa pages, five are featured in the exhibition, along with the perspectives of Australia's First Nations Elders and organisations, providing insight into the cultural significance and meaning of these landmarks.

7

BURRUNKUY  
KAKADU NATIONAL PARK

8

BUNGLE BUNGLE RANGE  
PURNULULU NATIONAL PARK

9

ULURU  
ULURU-KATA TJUJA NATIONAL PARK

10

KATI THANDA-LAKE EYRE  
KATI THANDA-LAKE EYRE NATIONAL PARK

11

WILPENA POUND  
FLINDERS RANGES NATIONAL PARK

12

LAKE HILLIER  
GOLDFIELDS-ESPERANCE

13

REDMAN BLUFF  
GRAMPIANS NATIONAL PARK

14

TWELVE APOSTLES  
PORT CAMPBELL NATIONAL PARK

15

DOVE LAKE  
CRADLE MOUNTAIN-  
LAKE ST CLAIR NATIONAL PARK

6

DAUAR ISLAND AND WAIER ISLET  
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDS

5

GREAT BARRIER REEF  
GREAT BARRIER REEF MARINE PARK

4

MOUNT BEERWAH  
GLASS HOUSE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

3

THE BREADKNIFE  
WARRUMBUNGLE RANGE

2

THREE SISTERS  
BLUE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

1

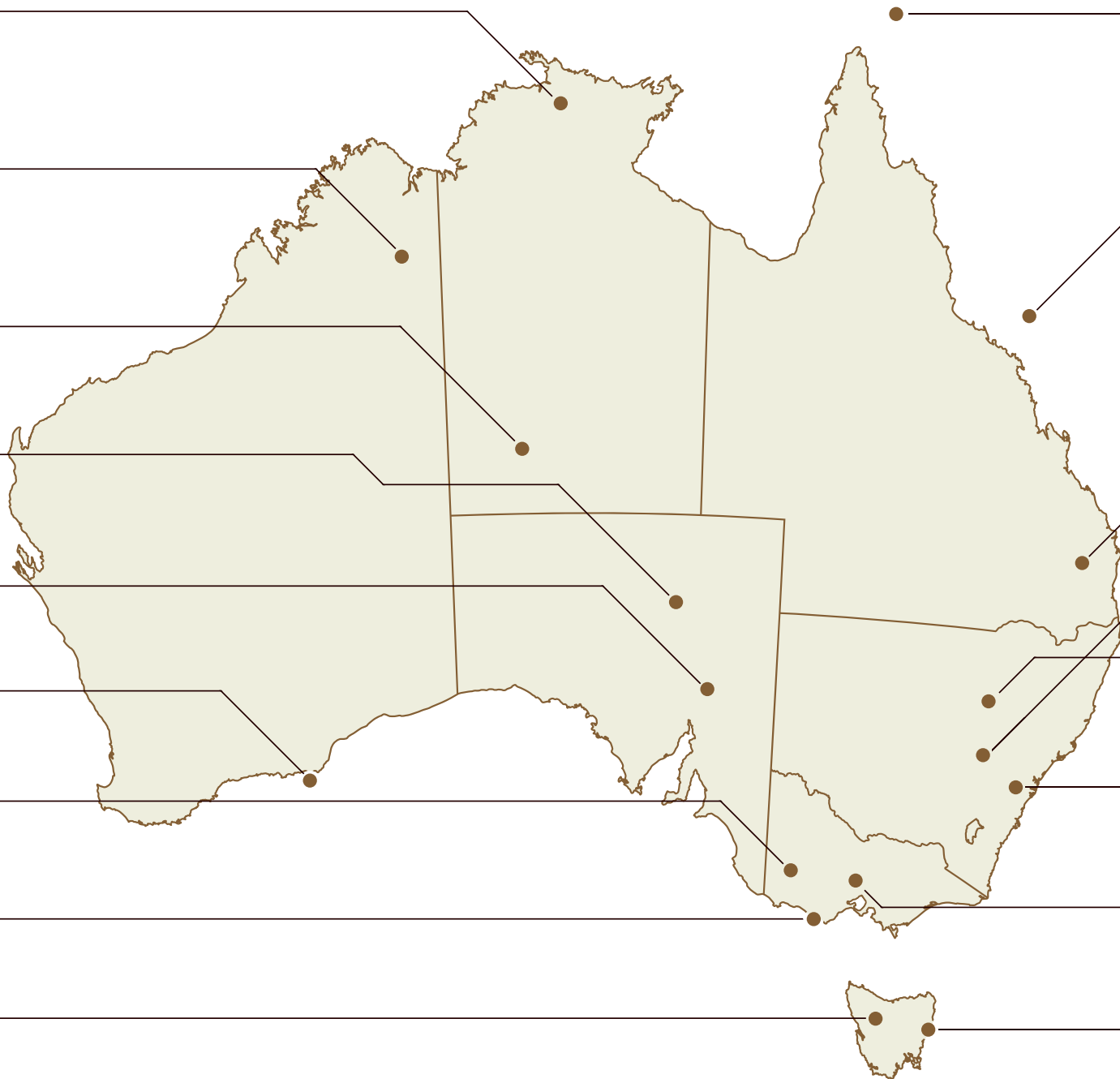
SYDNEY HARBOUR  
PORT JACKSON

17

HANGING ROCK  
MACEDON RANGES

16

WINEGLASS BAY  
FREYCINET NATIONAL PARK



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We acknowledge the great works of Uta Uta Tjangala (c. 1926–1990) and Michael Nelson Jagamara AM (c. 1945–2020).

We thank the National Museum of Australia for their generous support in loaning Uta Uta Tjangala's *Yumari* (1981) for the launch of the exhibition.

We are grateful to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders who very kindly gave their time and shared cultural knowledge and perspectives about their Country featured in the R Series passport.

We also acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and government agencies consulted during the design of the R Series passport, and in developing the exhibition.

We acknowledge the contributions of staff in both DFAT and NPA in designing and developing the R Series passport, which was a significant undertaking seven years in the making. We also thank DFAT's NAIDOC Week Working Group for inclusion of the exhibition in the 2023 NAIDOC Week activities.

The use of *Yumari* (1981) is licensed by Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd © estate of the artist | Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd.

The use of *Possum and Wallaby Dreaming* (1985) is licensed by Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd © estate of the artist | Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd.

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