

MRO Transport Guidelines and Requirements

Site Delivery Times

The Murchison Radio-astronomy Observatory (MRO) is a secured remote site in the Australian outback. CSIRO personnel, who manage the site, are only present in daylight hours which are typically as follows:

Monday	– 1200 - 1600
Tuesday-Thursday	– 0800 - 1600
Friday	– 0800 - 1200

The site is locked and inaccessible outside these hours unless otherwise pre-arranged with CSIRO or Curtin University staff.

Travelling to the MRO

The MRO is accessed via the Pindar-Berringarra road. It is approximately 250km of graded dirt/gravel road and includes ~20 cattle grids and (mostly dry) creek crossings. The nearest bitumen highway is at the beginning of this road, in Pindar. The nearest service (fuel, food, water) is available at Mullewa, approximately 30km West of Pindar.

During the summer months from late October through to March temperatures can reach as high as 50 degrees Celsius, please take this into account for both vehicles and operators when preparing to travel to the MRO. Conversely, there can be periods of up to two or three weeks when heavy summer rain has closed the roads, preventing all access to the site. Road closures of shorter duration (down to half or one day) are more frequent during this time. In the winter months, the weather is reasonably mild, rain tends not to be sufficient to close the roads and temperatures do not reach such extremes.

It is required that all drivers check the Murchison Shire Road Condition Report web page before commencing travel on the unsealed roads of the Murchison shire. This can be found at; <http://www.murchison.wa.gov.au/road-condition-report.aspx> (Link active as of Feb 2016). Additionally Information can be obtained by phoning the Shire office on (08) 9963 7999 or after hours CEO on (08) 9963 7977, Works Supervisor on (08) 9963 7216.

Driving from Geraldton can be accomplished in four or five hours in a light vehicle. Heavy vehicles will take longer to traverse the dirt roads, depending on conditions. Driving from the Perth metro area becomes a whole-day exercise, or longer, and is often accomplished with an overnight stay somewhere in between.

Site Information

Entry to the site is via 4km of graded access driveway. Concrete dips and raised bunds for water and speed control must be navigated to arrive at the gate, where transport operators MUST be met by authorised personnel and further escorted around the site. There is a hard-line telephone located at the gate that can be used to contact staff within the site, mobile phones will not work in this area.

Please note there are no turn around points between the main road and the entrance gate. If you wish to wait for your escort there is a large cleared area just opposite the turnoff from the main road.

Heavy lifting equipment is not available on the site, therefore a side-lifter trailer or similar is strongly recommended for handling containerised shipments to the MRO. Machinery such as forklifts or tele-handlers, if used, must be capable of operating on loose and sometimes soft dirt surfaces that are not necessarily perfectly level or flat, as no hardstand is available.

Mobile phones are not effective for the entire drive on the dirt roads, and depending on carrier may cease to operate much earlier in the journey. Transport operators are strongly advised to carry a satellite telephone, as well as other emergency-alert type devices (EPIRB/PLB, or "Spot" messenger device). Drivers must also carry sufficient drinking water (recommend 10L per person minimum) such that they can survive

in the event of vehicle breakdown and the associated delay until help arrives. There can be periods of a day or more during which no other traffic will use this road, particularly on weekends.

The following table is a set of checkpoints to assist transport operators travelling to the MRO.

Location	Distance (km)	Total Distance (km)	Latitude	Longitude
Pindar	0	0	28.4792 S	115.7889 E
Greenough River Crossing (Yuin Station)	63	63	28.4792 S	116.0381 E
Sanford River Crossing	86	19	27.3368 S	116.3963 E
Boolarady Station	44.7	193.7	26.9877 S	116.5160 E
MRO Driveway Entry	33	226.7	26.7544 S	116.6833 E
MRO Gate	4.5	231.2	26.7200 S	116.6646 E