



# YMAC News

News from Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation

**CONTENTS** | 02 HELLO AND WELCOME | 03 KARIYARRA AGREEMENT WITH HANCOCK PROSPECTING | 04 PKKP SIGN LAND ACCESS AGREEMENT WITH FMG | 05 YMAC CELEBRATES AND COMMEMORATES | 06 MEET A YMAC DIRECTOR | 07 KM ANNOUNCE PIPELINE AGREEMENT WITH CHEVRON | 08 LEARNING ABOUT COUNTRY AND CULTURE



Above: YMAC's Yamatji Regional Manager, Donna Murdock.

## Yamatji Team Leads the Way Forward

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation's Geraldton office has two well-known and respected Aboriginal women leading the Yamatji team, Donna Murdock and Chris Dann.

Donna Murdock has recently been appointed YMAC's Yamatji Regional Manager, and Chris Dann has been appointed as Deputy Regional Manager. Donna and Chris have worked for YMAC in previous positions for 11 and 6 years respectively. The ladies bring a wealth of community knowledge to their positions and between them have Yamatji, Marlpa (Pilbara), Noongar and Kimberley cultural connections.

As Regional Manager, Donna is looking forward to leading the Yamatji team to further success in the future.

"I'm really looking forward to leading the team in this dynamic time of growth and development throughout the Murchison and Gascoyne regions. It's a very exciting time for the area.

In particular, I look forward to working with the Aboriginal community we represent to ensure the rightful recognition of their country and culture. I will be also be furthering our relationships with stakeholders to create a strong future for Yamatji people."

Russell Simpson, who was the previous Yamatji Regional Manager, is now working from the Perth office as Corporate Services Manager.

While we have made every effort to ensure this publication does not contain any culturally sensitive material, there may be references to, and images of, people who have since passed away. If you have any concerns please contact us.



Above L-R: Pilbara Chairperson, Doris Eaton; Yamatji Chairperson, Roy Bellotti.



## **Hello and Welcome to Issue 11 of YMAC News**

YMAC's Board of Directors looks forward to seeing as many of our members as possible at this year's Yamatji and Pilbara Annual Regional Meetings.

The Yamatji meeting will take place on Saturday, 20 November from 9am at Carnarvon's Woolshed Hall in Camel Lane. The Pilbara meeting will take place on Friday, 26 November from 9am at Wangka Maya Language Centre, on the corner of Throssell and Hamilton Streets, South Hedland.

In this issue we cover recent native title mining agreements between Kariyarra and Hancock Prospecting; Puutu Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura (PKKP) and Fortescue Metals Group (FMG); and Kuruma Marthudunera (KM) and Chevron Australia. We also share with you the opening of the Perth office's 'Boyo Mitchell Board Room' in commemoration of our late Director, Mr Allen 'Boyo' Mitchell.





**Above:** Hancock Prospecting's Tad Watroba with Kariyarra elders Lena Alone and Elsie Williams.

## Kariyarra Agreement with Hancock Prospecting

Last month, the Kariyarra native title group announced a native title agreement with Hancock Prospecting. The agreement covers the company's proposed heavy haulage railway corridor to carry iron ore from its Roy Hill Project to Port Hedland.

The agreement provides a range of financial and non-financial benefits to the Kariyarra people, aimed at protecting the Kariyarra people's cultural heritage and promoting their economic development. The Kariyarra people will continue to have a say in protecting their heritage sites throughout the planning and development of the project. Hancock has committed to working with the Kariyarra people to try to avoid damaging any cultural heritage sites.

"As Kariyarra people we do everything we can to protect and look after our country," said Donny Wilson, a Kariyarra

elder. "We're glad to have entered into an agreement with Hancock to try to make sure that their railway doesn't go through any of our important places."

Under the agreement, Hancock will ensure that its employees go through cultural awareness training and will develop an Aboriginal employment policy which takes into account the needs of the Kariyarra community. They will also build an Aboriginal art centre in the Port Hedland area, in consultation with the Kariyarra community.

Simon Hawkins, Chief Executive Officer of Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation said, "This native title agreement, like many others, gives Aboriginal people the chance to participate in the real economy in the Pilbara by providing training and business development opportunities.

The partnership between Hancock Prospecting and the Kariyarra native title claimants will ensure that both parties have an interest in the economic success of the Roy Hill project, while providing for the respectful protection of Kariyarra culture."



Above: PKKP country.

## PKKP sign Land Access Agreement with **FMG**

After more than two years of legal proceedings and ongoing negotiations, the Puutu Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura (PKKP) people have signed a land access agreement with Fortescue Metals Group (FMG) covering the entirety of their native title claim in the Pilbara.

PKKP country covers approximately 6,567 square kilometres of land south of Karratha, stretching east towards Paraburdoo. There are numerous significant cultural sites in the area of the proposed mining operations, including registered Aboriginal sites recorded by the Department of Indigenous Affairs.

The PKKP people actively exercise their native title rights in the area and believe that mining in the area will have a detrimental impact on their way of life, culture and

traditions.

Despite losing a High Court appeal in 2009 relating to negotiations with FMG, the PKKP people signed a native title agreement for FMG's mining and railway projects on their country, in return for financial and non-financial benefits.

Sandra Hayes, spokesperson for the PKKP people said, "We are happy to have come to an agreement. It has been a long and sometimes difficult process, but we now move forward and look to create a partnership between our people and FMG."

Simon Hawkins, Chief Executive Officer, Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation said, "In this case, the company's approach to interpreting the Native Title Act meant that Traditional Owners were unable to protect their country the way they wanted. Nevertheless, the PKKP people have done their best to come to this agreement. The legal process, and its outcome, has been extremely distressing for PKKP, for that reason we are glad to see a resolution."



Above: Rhonda and Edward Mitchell with YMAC chairperson, Doris Eaton, and Aileen Mitchell.

## YMAC Celebrates and Commemorates

On August 19, Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) officially celebrated the opening of its new Perth office at 16 St Georges Terrace.

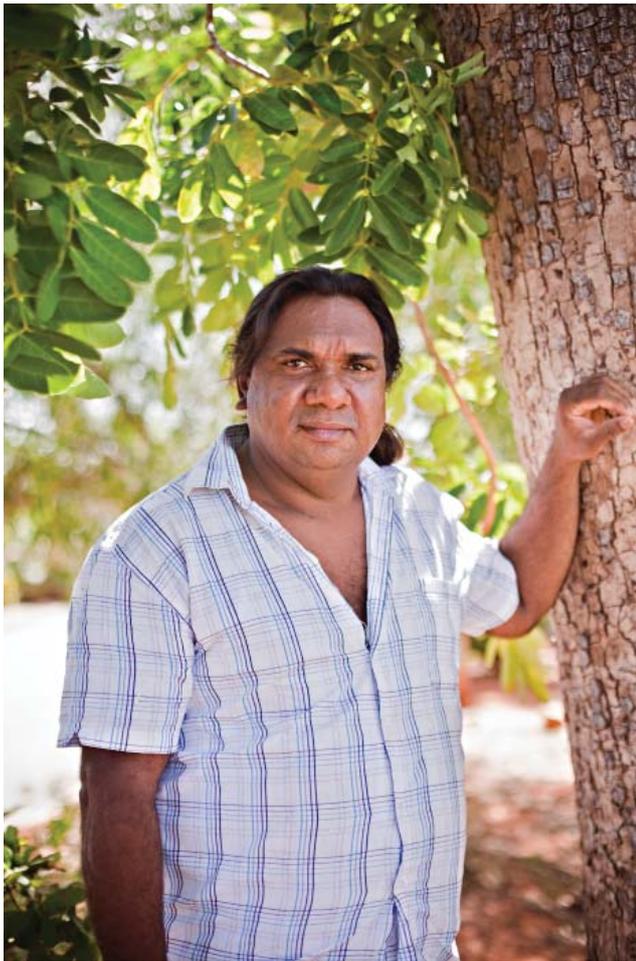
The event was commemorated with an afternoon function and included the opening of the 'Boyo Mitchell' memorial board room. The function was attended by YMAC's Aboriginal Board of Directors, staff and family members of the late Mr Mitchell. Dr Noel Nannup opened proceedings with a welcome to country, while the Mitchell family made an emotional tribute to their father while placing a plaque in his honour.

The 'Boyo Mitchell' board room was named after the organisation's late Director, a well known and respected Malgana man from Carnarvon who lived and worked throughout the state's north. Mr Mitchell was legendary for his ability to unite Aboriginal people towards the common goal of rightful recognition of traditional country through

the native title process. Mr Mitchell was a Board and Committee member for 8 years and during this time saw the organisation flourish into one of the state's leading Aboriginal corporations.

Doris Eaton, YMAC's Chairperson, welcomed everyone to the new Perth office and paid an emotional tribute to the late Mr Mitchell.

"Boyo was an inspiration to Aboriginal people throughout Western Australia and we are honoured to have known and worked with him, he is missed by everyone that knew him and is still in our hearts today."



Above L-R: David Wright and Merle Dann.

## Meet a **YMAC Director**

### **David Wright**

David is a Nyangumarta man who resides in Broome and was instrumental in assisting his community have their native title recognised in June 2009.

David has been on the Pilbara Regional Committee since 2008 and was elected onto YMAC's Board of Directors in May 2010.

Nyangumarta people have now established an Aboriginal Corporation called, 'Niyamarri Pukurl' to administer their business, of which David is currently a board member.

David's aspirations for the future include going back to country - home, and continuing to enjoy fishing and hunting on his traditional lands with his family.

### **Merle Dann**

Merle is a Thudgari woman who sits on the board of the Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation, Carnarvon Aboriginal Medical Service and Wyamba Aboriginal Corporation.

For many years Merle has worked as a nurse in the Gascoyne, Kimberley and Pilbara regions of WA and currently participates in health promotions, aged care and supporting disability.

Merle also played an important role in her people's native title determination in 2009, and was extremely proud of this achievement after 12 years of hard work and perseverance.



Above: Neil Finlay, KM community member; Colin Beckett, General Manager Greater Gorgon; and Cyril Lockyer, KM community member.

## KM announce **Pipeline Agreement with Chevron**

The Kuruma Marthudunera (KM) people are celebrating the conclusion of negotiations with Chevron Australia for the future construction of a domestic gas pipeline from Barrow Island through the KM's native title claim area.

KM country covers approximately 15,759 square kilometres of land in the west Pilbara region and comprises part of the Fortescue River and the complete river system of the Robe River, in the most westerly part of the Hamersley Range.

The project involves the construction of a single gas pipeline to connect a processing plant on Barrow Island with the Dampier to Bunbury natural gas pipeline. The purpose of the pipeline is to supply a portion of the output from the gas project to domestic gas users in Perth and elsewhere.

KM spokesperson, Cyril Lockyer, praised the good working relationship between his people and Chevron and highlighted the need for other companies to follow suit in regards to respecting Aboriginal country and culture.

“When we were surveying our country with the company we came across several important sites in the designated construction area. After talking with Chevron the result is that the company will build the pipeline around these areas and not destroy these sites. This type of good working relationship between ourselves and the company will help us to continue to preserve our heritage for future generations.”

Simon Hawkins, Chief Executive Officer, Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation said, “This agreement is a perfect example of a resources company negotiating in good faith with Traditional Owners and reflects the good-will of all involved. We hope this agreement creates enduring relationships and a strong future for KM people.”



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## Learning about Country and Culture

In August, YMAC staff and Directors participated in cultural awareness training on Nyangumarta country.

Staff were taken out by the Nyangumarta people to visit sites of significance and to fish and hunt traditional foods. Nights around the camp fire were spent listening to dreamtime stories, learning traditional dances and hearing about the Aboriginal kinship system. Damper making and hunting turkey were particular favourites for everyone involved and resulted in tasty camp cook-ups.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Nyangumarta people for sharing their country and culture with our staff.



Above: YMAC staff and Nyangumarta people enjoying country together.

### ABOUT US

YMAC News is produced by the Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC).

We are the native title representative body for native title claims in the Murchison, Gascoyne and Pilbara regions of Western Australia.

We work with Yamatji and Marlpa (Pilbara) Aboriginal people to pursue:

- Recognition and acceptance of Yamatji and Marlpa culture in country
- A strong future for Yamatji and Marlpa people and country

### MEMBERSHIP

YMAC membership is open to all adult (18+ years) Yamatji and Marlpa people.

Our membership also includes people who live in other areas but who have a traditional connection to Yamatji or Marlpa country.

### SERVICES

Our work includes:

- Providing legal representation and research to assist with native title claims
- Negotiating land use agreements
- Heritage protection services
- Community, economic and environmental projects

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