



**Yamatji Marlpa**  
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



archae-aus

## 41,000 year-old Pilbara Aboriginal Site to be Protected

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### Media Release: 11 December 2012

Niyaparli Traditional Owners from the Pilbara today announced the oldest occupation dates ever found in the region. Working with archaeologists from the heritage company Archae-aus, the Niyaparli Heritage Sub-Committee and Karlka Niyaparli Aboriginal Corporation have revealed that charcoals found while excavating a rock shelter are more than 41,000 years old, according to carbon-dating analysis.

The occupation site is named after the nearby creek *Kakuthungutanta* in the Chichester Ranges to the north of the Fortescue Marsh on mining leases held by Fortescue Metals Group ("Fortescue").

Lead excavator Adam Dias noted that "The results are extremely exciting coming from an area of the Chichester Ranges known to be rich in Aboriginal archaeological sites. Thousands of sites have been recorded to the north of the marsh which is thought to have been a focal point for Pilbara occupation".

Niyaparli elder and Heritage Sub-Committee member David Stock said, "We feel proud that this evidence of our ancestors has been found and are happy it will be protected. This kind of work shows Australians that our heritage is very important and that it can be protected".

Niyaparli elder and Heritage Sub-Committee member Gordon Yuline said "We have to keep the caves to show the young people how the old people used to live. It is very important we protect these places and we are able to go there and teach the young ones."

Archae-aus Managing Director Fiona Hook noted that the shelter site would be protected by a buffer zone and that Niyaparli Traditional Owners had requested further research be carried out at the important site. Fortescue's Chief Executive Officer Nev Power confirmed the company's commitment to preserve the important site.

CEO of Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation, Simon Hawkins said, "Archaeological findings such as this reinforce the importance of robust, participative cultural heritage management regimes in native title agreements to protect places of high significance."

#### **About Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation**

*Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) is the native title representative body for native title claims in the Pilbara, Murchison and Gascoyne areas of Western Australia. The organisation has a representative area of almost one million square kilometres and represents over 20 native title claims, all with their own language, culture and traditions. YMAC is a not-for-profit organisation, run by an Aboriginal Board and provides a range of services to its members including claim and future-act representation, heritage protection services, community and economic development and natural resource management.*

#### **About Archae-aus**

*Archae-aus is one of Australia's largest cultural resource management companies specialising in archaeology, with a team of more than 40 archaeologists and support staff.*

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