

# YMAC

news

News from Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation

ISSUE 13 | MARCH 2011

country  
culture  
people  
future



Yamatji Marlpa  
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

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## Hello and Welcome



*Pilbara Chairperson, Doris Eaton*



*Yamatji Chairperson, Peter Windie*

Welcome to our "new look" edition of YMAC News, our first newsletter for 2011.

After a refreshing break over the summer, YMAC is back to business, with a very busy year ahead.

The new, expanded newsletter reflects the fact that YMAC is always growing and moving forward.

But the changes to the outside are nothing compared to the great things that are happening in the communities of the Midwest and Pilbara.

Inside you'll find stories on the

agreement between the Yugunga-Nya people and Sandfire Resources, the National Heritage Listing for the Weld Range, YMAC's uranium community guides, the Premier's Australia Day Award for the Aboriginal Communities Charitable Organisation, and the three YMAC women who were honoured as part of International Women's Day.

We look forward to keeping the community informed of what's happening at YMAC throughout the rest of the year.

# Traditional Owners enter Land Access Agreement

The Yugunga-Nya native title group have announced a claim wide land access agreement over their traditional country with mining company, Sandfire Resources.

Yugunga-Nya country covers approximately 30,335 square kilometres of land in the Midwest region of Western Australia, and includes the mining towns of Meekatharra and Cue.

The land access agreement covers Sandfire Resources DeGrussa copper-gold project, situated 150km north of Meekatharra.

The agreement provides a range of financial and non-financial benefits to the Yugunga-Nya community. These include employment and contracting opportunities, as well as cultural awareness training for Sandfire employees.

Sandfire Resources agreed to include an exclusion zone around Yagahong Hill, which was very important to the Yugunga-Nya people during the negotiations.

The agreement also includes a position for a Yugunga-Nya member to be employed as an Aboriginal Liaison Officer, further developing the good working relationship established between the community and Sandfire.

Ron Shay is a well respected Yugunga-Nya community member and is looking forward to the new opportunities the land access agreement will bring to his people. "We already have four Yugunga-Nya people working with Sandfire, but through this agreement we hope to



*Yugunga-Nya claimants Evelyn Gilla and Bill Shay with Ron Roberts of Sandfire Resources*

see many more benefits flow through to our community, including future employment and training," he said.

Simon Hawkins, Chief Executive Officer of YMAC said, "I would like to congratulate the Yugunga-Nya people on the successful completion of their negotiations with Sandfire Resources and look forward to the opportunities that this agreement will bring to the community. It's a great start to the year for Yugunga-Nya and we look forward to many more positive stories for Traditional Owners of the Midwest region in 2011."

“We hope to see many more benefits flow through to our community”





# Heritage Listing for Wilgie Mia

Last month the Weld Range in WA's Midwest joined other iconic Australian sites like the Great Barrier Reef, Uluru and the Sydney Harbour Bridge on the prestigious National Heritage List.

The Weld Range is situated approximately sixty kilometres north-west of the historic township of Cue in the Murchison district of Western Australia, and is of significant cultural importance to the traditional owners of the area, the Wajarri Yamatji people, as well as neighbouring Indigenous groups.

The 45 hectare area of the National Heritage Listing includes Wilgie Mia,

Little Wilgie Mia and the Marlu Resting Place. These sites contain sacred law grounds, dreamtime places, thousands of examples of rock art, extensive archaeological material, and the Wilgie Mia red ochre mine.

## **Ancient Ochre Mine**

Wilgie Mia is thought to be one of the world's oldest mines, with estimates placing it at about 27,000 years old. The heritage listed area includes the red ochre mine at Wilgie Mia (Thuwarri Thaa), the smaller yet significant ochre mines at Little Wilgie, as well as a yellow

ochre mine further to the west.

Ochre from Wilgie Mia has long been prized by Aboriginal Australians as being of exceptionally high quality, and it formed an important part of the Indigenous economy through trade networks before European settlement. Today, as in the past, ochre is important to Indigenous Australians for its use in ceremonies, art, healing practices and its religious significance.

Colin Hamlett, a Wajarri Yamatji man and Traditional Owner of the Weld Range, said, "Ochre from Wilgie Mia and Little Wilgie Mia is still used all the

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*View from inside Wilgie Mia*



# Heritage Listing for Wilgie Mia

*Continued from page 4*

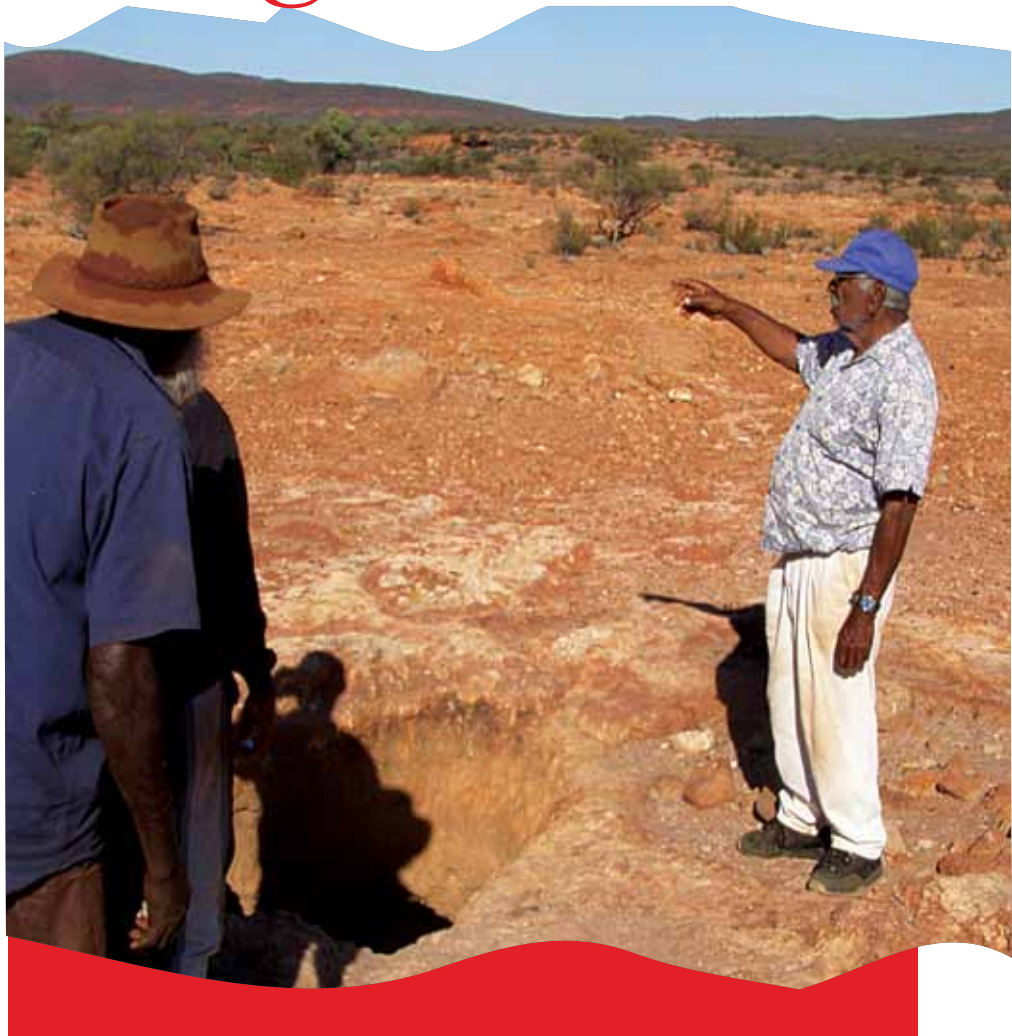
time... all the people would get their ochre from there. People say it's the best ochre in Australia."

## Rock Art and Sacred Sites

The area around Wilgie Mia has the highest known density of pictographic rock art in southern Western Australia. Made from the red ochre, there are huge numbers of paintings and handprints throughout the network of caves and breakaways around the base of the Weld Range. The area contains numerous sacred sites, signifying ceremony, corroboree and law grounds, to living areas, pictographic art sites, artefact scatters and secret sacred areas.

## Wilgie Mia Creation Story

The creation story of Wilgie Mia and surrounding hills in the Weld Range involves the Red Kangaroo, or Marlu, with the ochre representing the Marlu's blood. "A kangaroo was wounded down near the



*Wajarri Elder Ike Simpson sharing stories. The Weld Range can be seen in the background.*



*Hand stencil using red ochre from Wilgie Mia, breakaway country in the Weld Range*

coast. It hopped back through the country and dropped spots of blood along the way. It dropped quite a bit at Little Wilgie Mia, then it died at Wilgie Mia which left a lot of ochre. Then the spirit of the kangaroo moved from Wilgie Mia to the hill right next-door to it," explains Colin Hamlett.

Simon Hawkins, CEO of Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation said, "YMAC is very proud to have assisted the Wajarri Yamatji people gain this protection for their country.

The Weld Range remains an important place for Wajarri Yamatji families to

camp, hunt and collect traditional bush food and medicine. With the protection afforded by the National Heritage List, the Weld Range can be protected from unsustainable development and enjoyed by future generations."

The inclusion on the National Heritage List will assist Wajarri Yamatji people to manage the area effectively, alongside the growing mining and tourism industries in Western Australia.

# Uranium information for the community

The Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) is aware that uranium mining is an issue that many of our members feel strongly about.

YMAC is not for or against uranium mining. Our role is to make sure Traditional Owners are professionally represented, that their native title rights are protected, and that they have the right information for decision making.

This is why YMAC has produced a publication entitled "Uranium and Native Title", which was sent to all YMAC members last month.

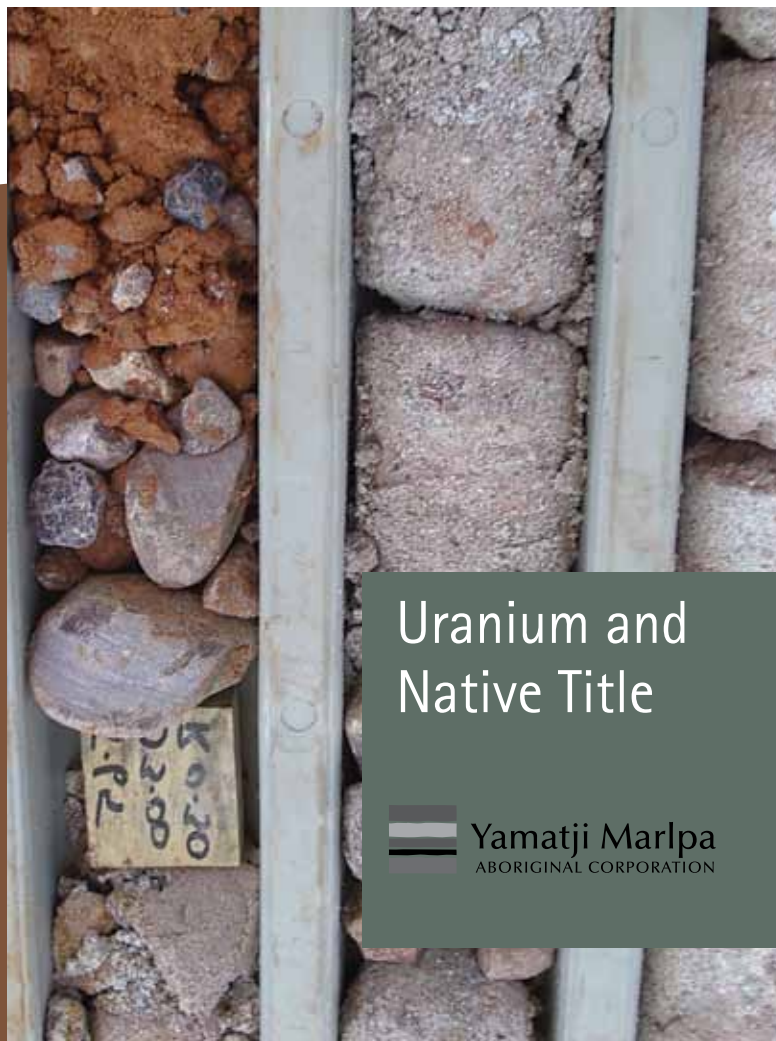
Uranium is a controversial issue and we've had a lot of questions from our members about what uranium mining might mean for their country and community.

There are no uranium mines planned for the Murchison, Gascoyne or Pilbara regions right now, but exploration is occurring.

The "Uranium and Native Title" booklet and DVD gives some basic information about uranium, and lets you know where to go to learn more.

The DVD includes information from YMAC's visit to the Northern Territory to meet with Traditional Owners who have had uranium mining on their country.

It also features footage from YMAC's Uranium Workshops in 2009 with Traditional Owners in Geraldton, Karratha and Carnarvon, where a Federal Government scientist talked about uranium and types of mining.



**YMAC's Uranium and Native Title booklet and DVD**

"Uranium and Native Title" is available from YMAC's website [www.ymac.org.au](http://www.ymac.org.au), or you can contact YMAC at (08) 9268 7000 to request a copy.

YMAC members have already received

their copy in the mail. If you would like to become a member please call us or visit our website for more information.



# Women of YMAC honoured for International Women's Day

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) is extremely proud that two of its staff members and one of its Board members have been honoured at an event in Adelaide marking 'International Women's Day.'

Mrs. Donna Murdock, Yamatji Regional Manager, Ms. Nyparu Rose, Senior Community Liaison Officer and Mrs.

Doris Eaton, Co-Chair of YMAC's Board of Directors and 2009 NAIDOC elder of the year, have been recognised by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (NATSIWA) for achieving change for their people and communities.

To celebrate the one hundredth International Women's Day, NATSIWA

recognised one hundred Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who have shown leadership and achieved change over the past one hundred years.

"It's a great pleasure to be recognised and to be honoured among other women who have been working hard for their communities. It is really rewarding for us Indigenous women



*Nominees Nyaparur Rose and Doris Eaton*



to come together from all parts of Australia and have it be recognised that yes, we are making a difference," said Nyaparu Rose.

In addition to a rally in Adelaide on 10 March 2011, there is also a poster featuring photos of the nominated women that will be widely distributed to schools, non-government organisations and government departments.

A blog has also been created where the women can contribute to forums on issues facing Indigenous women.

Mrs. Murdock, Ms. Rose and Mrs. Eaton were all chosen because of their activism, leadership and commitment to their regional communities.

They have contributed to their communities in the areas of health, education, business development, native title and traditional culture.

"It's an honor and a privilege to be included on this list of one hundred women. It is a testament to the inspirational women around me who have helped shape the person I am today," said Donna Murdock.

Simon Hawkins, YMAC's Chief Executive Officer, said of the news, "It's wonderful to see some of the hard-working, community-minded Aboriginal women of the Midwest and Pilbara regions being celebrated nationally for their achievements. YMAC congratulates Mrs. Eaton, Ms. Rose and Mrs. Murdock on their nominations, and I can say personally that it has been a huge honour to work with them over the years."

For more information or to follow the blog, visit [www.natsiwa.org.au](http://www.natsiwa.org.au).



*Nominee Donna Murdock*

“ They have contributed to their communities in the areas of health, education, business development, native title and traditional culture ”

# ACCO wins Premier's award

On Australia Day, Cris Olegario, YMAC's Business Development Coordinator, accepted the Premier's Active Citizenship Community Group Award on behalf of the Aboriginal Communities Charitable Organisation (ACCO).

As well as receiving public recognition from the Premier, the ACCO has also been approved for a Lotterywest grant for large commercial refrigerators for their food distribution outlet at TAFE's Pundulmurra campus in South Hedland.

The grant also includes a custom fitted 'Commercial Kitchen Caravan' to fully equip ACCO in their pursuit to deliver services to regional and remote communities in the Pilbara.

The ACCO is an excellent example of a regional organisation making a difference to the lives of Aboriginal people.

ACCO is supported by YMAC, in partnership with Newcrest Mining and Foodbank.

The ACCO was formed in late 2008 as a non-profit charitable organisation to help 'close the gap' in local Indigenous communities.

The idea came about from a common desire to make a difference to the lives of Aboriginal families living in Pilbara's mining economy, where food and housing prices can be artificially high.

The ACCO's work aims to create a sustainable food supply for families, teach the community to grow food,

provide nutrition education, and facilitate training and job placement.

With the support and partnership of Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation, Newcrest Mining and Foodbank the ACCO's first primary project was the South Hedland Food Distribution Centre.

YMAC CEO Simon Hawkins has said, "The ACCO members live locally and understand their community's needs. They are in the best position to identify local issues and solutions. With support and donations we hope that ACCO can keep on providing healthy groceries to people who need it most."



*Cris Olegario and Peter Jeffries*

“The ACCO is an excellent example of a regional organisation making a difference”



# Meet a YMAC director



*Yamatji Board Member, Susan Oakley*

## Susan Oakley

Susan is a Malgana woman who is very active in Carnarvon community life. She is the acting Chair of the Carnarvon Aboriginal Congress, a body set up to address the needs of the community, and is part of the Carnarvon Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation. She also gets involved as an umpire for local sports teams.

Country means everything to Susan. She wants Aboriginal people to be able to be free on country, to hunt and fish and look after the land and the environment. This and her desire for justice for Aboriginal people motivate her native title work with YMAC.



*Pilbara Board Member, Darren Injie*

## Darren Injie

Darren is an Innawonga man from the central Pilbara and Hamersley Ranges region.

Through the years he has been actively involved in the homeland movement to the Hamersley Ranges, and the establishment of the Bellary, Wakathuni and Youngaleena communities, as well as the development and joint management of Karijini National Park.

Darren works to ensure Traditional Owners benefit from wealth generated through mining on traditional country. His vision is to see his people gain economic prosperity through participation in the mainstream economy.

# country culture people future

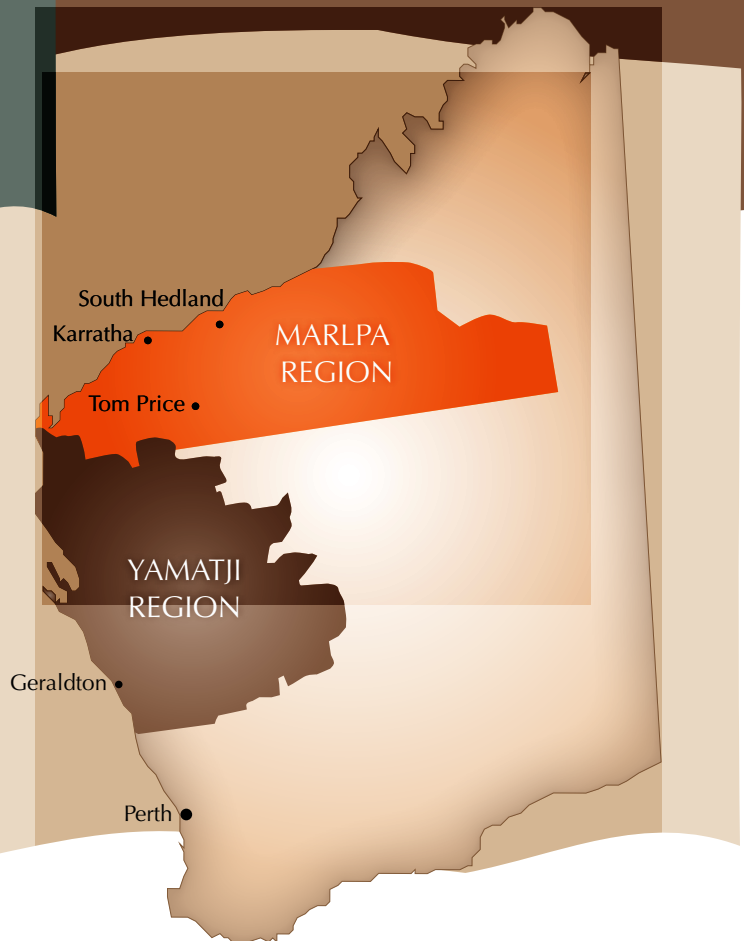
## ABOUT US

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.

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## 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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