



## Yamatji Marlpa Barna Baba Maaja

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

# Uranium Education Essential for Traditional Owners

**Media Release: 27 August 2008**

WA's largest native title body has called for support to educate native title groups on uranium issues and encouraged both State and Opposition policy-makers to focus on engagement with Traditional Owners of uranium-rich land.

Simon Hawkins, Chief Executive Officer of Yamatji Marlpa Barna Baba Maaja Aboriginal Corporation (YMBBMAC), said that regardless of which policies are implemented following the State election, there is an urgent need for Traditional Owners to receive unbiased information about uranium exploration and mining.

"As a land council we are not for or against uranium; it is our job to ensure that native title groups are in a position to make fully informed decisions and have their rights protected under the Native Title and Aboriginal Heritage Acts," he said.

Mr Hawkins said YMBBMAC had been proactive on uranium education but needed more support from government bodies to ensure Traditional Owners receive the information they need.

"We are regularly speaking with groups about uranium and have worked with experts to develop a uranium schedule for inclusion in our heritage agreements. However we are not funded to do this and urgently need support to ensure Traditional Owners receive transparent and unbiased information. Our uranium schedule is also the subject of current discussions with the State Government and mining industry."

He said that cultural practices such as hunting, collecting bush tucker, conducting traditional ceremonies and protecting sacred lands, waters and burial grounds mean that Aboriginal people needed to understand the full effects of uranium activity on their lands.

"It is up to each Traditional Owner group to make the decision that's right for their people and their country. It's government's responsibility to make sure that they have the best information available to make these decisions," Mr Hawkins said.

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### Notes for Editors

Yamatji Marlpa Barna Baba Maaja Aboriginal Corporation is the native title representative body for native title claims in the resource-rich Pilbara, Murchison and Gascoyne representative areas of Western Australia. The organisation has two divisions: the **Pilbara Native Title Service (PNTS)** and the **Yamatji Land and Sea Council (YLSC)**. YMBBMAC has a representative area of almost one million square kilometres and represents 24 native title claims.

YMBBMAC 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.

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