



YMAC News

News from Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation

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Above: YMAC Board of Directors in Cairns; Roy Bellotti, Natalie Parker, Doris Eaton and Allen 'Boyo' Mitchell.

New Name for Native Title Body

Yamatji Marlpa Barna Baba Maaja Aboriginal Corporation is proud to announce that our members have voted to change our Corporation's name to, **Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC)**.

The decision was voted on by Yamatji and Pilbara members at a special general meeting last November at Cardabia Station, Coral Bay.

Our new name reflects the cultural diversity of both regions and the Traditional Owners we represent; those being 'Yamatji', the Aboriginal people of the Murchison, Gascoyne and Midwest; and 'Marlpa', used by Traditional Owners to denote the Aboriginal people of the Pilbara.

Roy Bellotti and Doris Eaton, Co-Chairs

of YMAC said the change clearly reflects the equal standing of both regions and symbolised the way both cultural sides respect each other in their work together.

As the Native Title Representative Body (NTRB) for the Pilbara, Murchison, Gascoyne and Midwest regions of WA, YMAC represents over 25 different native title groups - all with their own culture, language and traditions.

Our work includes:

- Legal representation and research to assist with native title claims;

- Negotiating land use agreements;
- Heritage protection services; and
- Community, economic and environmental projects.

In 2009 and beyond, the YMAC Board of Directors and staff look forward to working with Traditional Owners of both regions to pursue recognition and acceptance of culture in Country; and a strong future for all Yamatji and Marlpa people.

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.

Message from

Yamatji Regional Manager - **Russell Simpson**

Pilbara Regional Manager - **Nyaparu Jeffries**



Above: Pilbara Regional Manager,
Nyaparu Jeffries



Above: Yamatji Regional Manager, Russell Simpson

“

Welcome to the sixth edition of YMAC News!

With our recent name change to Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC), the Board of Directors have decided to combine the two regional newsletters into one - 'YMAC News'. Members will now be able to read about stories from both Yamatji and Pilbara regions and share their successes with each other.

This edition talks about the upcoming uranium education workshops in July; YMAC's submission to the Federal Governments proposed changes to native title agreements; the recent Malgana community meeting; and YMAC being involved in the governments new National Indigenous Representative Body.

Enjoy reading our newsletter and please pass it on to friends and family, or call your local office to get a copy delivered to your door.

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Above: Allen 'Boyo' Mitchell, Rodney Bellotti and Toby Smirke at the Uranium and Native Title Conference.

Talks focus on **uranium**

Last December, Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) hosted its 'Uranium and Native Title Conference', to talk about uranium mining and native title rights.

The Perth conference attracted over 100 people; including representatives from uranium affected native title claim groups, the mining industry, government departments, environmental groups and other representative bodies.

The event was held in response to the WA State Government's recent decision to lift the ban on uranium mining, and aimed to inform Traditional Owners and industry on uranium issues and the native title implications for country.

Roy Bellotti, YMAC Co-Chairperson, said, "The conference was important for us to get information about the pros and cons of uranium mining, but we still need to learn more to make the best decisions for our people."

Mrs Doris Eaton, YMAC Co-Chairperson said, "I want to meet other people who have had uranium mining on their country. I want to know how they have felt, and what they have had to do. What has been the impact on the land, the trees and birds? We need to learn things before we sign things, to make sure we can protect our country for the future."

Simon Hawkins, Chief Executive Officer of YMAC said, "The land council has taken the first step. Now we call upon the State Government and industry to proactively engage with us in what is an important and complex issue."

Presentations were delivered by:

- Mr Phil Narkle, Noongar Traditional Owner;
- Simon Hawkins, Chief Executive Officer, YMAC;
- Peter Watts, Arabanna Traditional Owner from South Australia;
- Michael Angwin, Executive Director, Australian Uranium Association;
- Dave Sweeney, Nuclear Free Campaigner, Australian Conservation Foundation;
- Nick Tsurikov, Calytrix Consulting; *and*
- Michael Meegan, Principal Legal Officer, YMAC.

In July this year, YMAC will be hosting uranium education workshops for Yamatji and Pilbara Traditional Owners. The workshops will be conducted by the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA), and are proposed to be held in Geraldton, Carnarvon and Karratha. Information about these workshops will soon be available.



Above: Nyaparu Jeffries, Pilbara Regional Manager.

Nyaparu Jeffries selected for **National Workshop**

In 2009, the Australian Government is setting up a National Indigenous Representative Body to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a voice in national affairs and policy development.

YMAC's Pilbara Regional Manager, Nyaparu Jeffries, was selected as one of 100 Indigenous leaders to attend a national workshop to talk about how the representative body could work.

The workshop was held in Adelaide from 11-13 March and its purpose was to:

- Hear about the work the government has done so far to create a new representative body;
- Talk about some of the features that a National Indigenous Representative Body needs and how this could work; *and*
- Work out a process for further consultation with Indigenous communities.

Nyaparu Jeffries said he was proud to be selected for the workshop and be a voice for native title in the Yamatji and Pilbara regions.

"I think it's important that as an organisation representing thousands of Traditional Owners in WA, YMAC is involved in discussions about how a National Indigenous Representative Body could work. I'm looking forward to what this representative body could mean for Aboriginal people."

Jenny Macklin, Minister for Indigenous Affairs said, "I am determined to give Indigenous Australians every opportunity to contribute to the debate on the nature of the new body. It's role, structure, functions and operations are matters for Indigenous people to discuss and provide recommendations to Government."

A report from the workshop will be produced by the government in July, with the National Indigenous Representative Body planned to be in place by the end of 2009.



Above: Malgana community members meet in Denham to discuss native title matters.

Traditional Owners **meet in Denham**

Last month, Traditional Owners from the Malgana native title claim met in Denham to hold a community meeting.

The Malgana native title claim covers approximately 36,072 square kilometres of land and sea in the Gascoyne and Murchison regions. The claim covers the areas of Shark Bay, Monkey Mia and Dirk Hartog Island.

The community meeting, held on Tuesday 10 February 2009, was attended by approximately 65 Malgana claimants. At the meeting community members elected their working group.

Each native title claim represented by Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation has an elected representative body called a working group.

A working group is composed of Aboriginal people with the cultural knowledge, understanding and recognised status to have authority in matters affecting country. They are not groups of elders, but commonly consist of a dynamic mix of young people and elders as well as both men and women.

Sometimes a working group will also need to consult with the

broader community before the right decision can be reached.

Working groups are a powerful voice for Traditional Owners to participate in decisions that affect their country and communities. They have proven their success through achievements in native title negotiations; they have also gained the trust and backing of Aboriginal communities who acknowledge their genuine representation.

Mr Roy Bellotti, Co-Chairperson said the YMAC Board, believes working groups give Traditional Owners the ability to make a difference for their country and in their communities.

“To be part of a group that can directly affect the way decisions are made is really rewarding. Aboriginal people need to be consulted about what happens on their country, and working groups are an effective way of consulting with the right people for the right area of country”.



Above: Njamal country.

My Country, **My Language**

Njamal is a language of the north Pilbara region. There are less than 10 speakers of the language, but many people have a understanding of the language, or identify as being a Njamal Traditional Owner.

Njamal country is east of the coastal Kariyarra native title claim area and inland from Port Hedland. It includes the towns of Marble Bar and Nullagine and runs north past the Oakover River and south past the Shaw River.

Preserving language is important for Traditional Owners as it keeps traditional culture strong and ensures that the next generation have a sense of identity.

Njamal Talking:

Njamal word or phrase	English
Paparunya	De Grey River (Njamal side)
Ngardi	Mother
Mama	Father
Mugarinya	Warralong River
Parturra	Turkey
Janguna	Emu
Yeeranganya	Perch (fish)
Mangoorla	Wife
Nyuba	Husband

To find out more about Pilbara languages contact: Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre on: 9172 2344



Above: Gnulli Country.

Government looks at **native title agreements**

In February, YMAC made a submission to the Federal Government about their proposed changes to native title agreements.

The government have proposed changes to the way native title agreements are prepared and implemented, including; for compensation payments to benefit the broader Indigenous community and agreement details being made public.

Key points made in the YMAC submission include:

- Native title was designed to acknowledge the legal rights of Traditional Owners. Alternative strategies must be made to improve the economic outlook for the broader Indigenous community.
- Financial flexibility in agreements is required to look after long and short-term needs. Government-funded financial advice would allow Traditional Owners to benefit more from agreements.
- Native Title Bodies must be funded to identify concerns in agreements, and make sure companies follow through with their promises.
- Business and employment opportunities are not substitutes for financial compensation, particularly because of the unstable economies created by mining in regional towns.
- YMAC supports the creation of the 'Aboriginal Community Foundations' as an alternative to the charitable trust model.
- YMAC does not support a public register for agreements as they are private contracts.
- YMAC supports minimum standards of financial compensation.

YMAC will keep Yamatji and Pilbara members fully informed of any changes the Federal Government makes to the native title agreement system during 2009.



YMAC News

News from Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation

New Tom Price Office

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) is proud to announce that we have moved into our new Tom Price office at Shop 2, 973 Central Road, Tom Price.

The office is centrally located in the blue roofed building next to Coles supermarket.

As staff are often on Country or at meetings with members, the office will have varied opening hours. Members in the Tom Price area can freecall 1300 7 12345 or contact your Community Liaison Officer.

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Above: Community Liaison Officer, John Parker.

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, Mid-West 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 Yamatji and Pilbara people. Our membership also includes people who live in other areas but who have a traditional connection to Yamatji or Marlpa (Pilbara) 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

SUBSCRIBE

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To join our mailing list, visit:

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Please note that the information contained in this newsletter does not constitute legal advice.