



# YMAC News

News from Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation

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**Above:** Ronnie Dodd, Charlie Laphorne, Stewart Peck, Bella Randall and Peter Salmon at the Thudgari native title determination.

## Thudgari Celebrate Native Title Recognition

On November 18 2009, the Thudgari People, State Government and pastoralists met on country for a Federal Court hearing to determine native title over 11,280sq km of land.

Thudgari country lies between the Ashburton and Gascoyne rivers and is mainly covered by pastoral leases and the Barlee Range nature reserve.

The on-country Federal Court hearing, at Ullawarra Station, recognised the Thudgari People's native title rights to their country, which stem from their traditional laws and customs. The determination formalises these rights and interests, including the right to access the land, and to hunt, gather, camp and protect significant sites.

Traditional Owner Doris Parker said, "I was born on Thudgari country at an outstation on Maroonah Station, my father was born on Ullawarra. As a child I was sent to Carnarvon mission and only had contact with my parents once a year. It was very hard for us Aboriginal children who weren't allowed to speak our

traditional language or be on country to learn from our elders. Today means that I can go out on my country and camp and hunt with my family. I can show our future generations this land and how it connects to who they are."

Fourteen agreements between the Thudgari People's corporation and pastoralists were signed immediately after the event. The agreements deal with the practical issue of co-existence between Thudgari People and pastoral stations and are intended to be registered as Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs).

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:** Pilbara Chairperson, Doris Eaton, Pilbara Deputy Chairperson Natalie Parker, YMAC Acting Deputy Pilbara Regional Manager Nyaparu Rose, Yamatji Chairperson Roy Bellotti and YMAC CEO, Simon Hawkins on Nyangumarta Country.

## **Hello and welcome to Issue 9 of YMAC News.**

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As we head into what's expected to be a busy 2010, we'd like to take a look back at some of the highlights for the last 12 months. Congratulations to all of our members for their perseverance and hard work to achieve these outcomes for their country.

Also in this issue are some of our most recent announcements, including the Thudgari people's recognition of country and culture. We extend our sincerest congratulations to the Thudgari community on this achievement for their country.

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# Yamatji Marlpa

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

## 2009 Highlights from the CEO

### Native Title

The **Nyangumarta** determination, held on 11 June, gained national attention after more than a decade of hard work by the Nyangumarta people.

The **Thudgari** determination, held on 18th November was the first YMAC determination for the Yamatji region, after more than 12 years in the legal system.

In October, the **Malgana** people also announced a native title agreement over Dirk Hartog Island which gives Traditional Owners greater involvement in the management of the world heritage area.

### Mining Agreements on Country

In April, **Innawonga and Bunjima** signed a land access deed with Iron Ore Holdings, featuring a strong commitment to agreement implementation.

**Kurama Marthudenera** finalised mining and heritage agreements with Citic Pacific Mining. They also successfully proved that Mineralogy did not negotiate with them in good faith over mining tenements on their country.

Also in April, the **Naaguja** people signed an agreement with MGMP Ltd, for financial benefits, employment and contracting opportunities.

In recent weeks we've announced agreements between **Nyaparli** and Brockman resources, and also an agreement between **Ngarla** and Boral to protect the significant Mikurruya dreaming site.

One of the most unique and exciting agreements was signed by the **Wajarri** People last December, with the group finalising its Murchison Radio-Astronomy Observatory ILUA, a truly ground-breaking and long-term deal between Wajarri Yamatji, the State and Federal Governments, CSIRO and YMAC.

### YMAC People Recognised

A major highlight was our Co-Chairperson Doris Eaton's NAIDOC Award for **Elder of the Year**.

Recently we were also asked to co-host the **Royalties for the Region** discussions in the Pilbara, which has lead to ongoing discussions with government regarding opportunities for Yamatji and Pilbara regions.

YMAC also attended the **Federal Community Cabinet Meeting** in Geraldton in October, where Yamatji Regional Manager Russell Simpson, spoke with PM Kevin Rudd.

Pilbara Regional Manager, Peter Jeffries, also was selected as one of 100 Indigenous leaders to participate in discussions about the new **National Indigenous Representative Body**.

### Governance and Staff

In the last financial year, YMAC held **376 working group and community meetings**. **148** of these meetings were to progress native title claims and **228** to negotiate mining agreements.

Financially, we have seen our sixth consecutive clear external audit, and YMAC's recruitment costs have also reduced by 70%.

And late last year we heard news that ORIC have released their list of the top 500 **highest performing Aboriginal Corporations**. Out of the **2,605** Aboriginal Corporations in the country, **YMAC is number 4**, which is an outstanding achievement.

Congratulations to all of our members, committees and staff on a great 12 months and we look forward to working with you over the coming year.

**Simon Hawkins, CEO**  
**Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation**





**Above:** Ngarla community members and YMAC staff at the agreement signing.

## Agreement over Pilbara mythological site

In December, the Ngarla people announced a heritage and mining agreement with the Boral Group of Companies regarding the Tabbatabba rock quarry, approximately 40kms east of Port Hedland.

The agreement addresses mining practices over the 'Mikurrnya' Aboriginal site, near the quarry, which is of mythological importance to the Ngarla People. In order to preserve and protect the Mikurrnya site to the greatest practical extent, the parties agreed to a final footprint for the mining operations, along with Exclusion Zones to protect the rest of the site.

The agreement also includes compensation to the Ngarla People for impact on their country and formal recognition that past operations had disturbed the Mikurrnya site, causing distress to the Ngarla People.

Ngarla Elder, Charlie Coppin said, "Mikurrnya is one of our most important places. It's always been there – since the beginning of time. We need to look after it. We were very upset that the quarry was put there. Now we've got an agreement to try and protect it.

Simon Hawkins, CEO of YMAC said, "We're pleased Boral Companies acknowledge the Ngarla Peoples' custodianship and the importance of the Mikurrnya site. These agreements show that despite past actions, working relationships can be resolved and developed."



Above: Wajarri Yamatji representatives with Ministers Grylls, Porter and Buswell at Parliament House.

## Telescope plans for **Wajarri Country**

In November, the Wajarri People celebrated the conclusion of the Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) for the construction of the Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder telescope (ASKAP).

The agreement was officially announced at Parliament House today by the Wajarri People, the State Government and the Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).

Wajarri country includes the area chosen for the ASKAP telescope. The agreement area covers approximately 130 square kilometres of land, located 175 kilometres west of Meekatharra.

The agreement gives financial and non-financial benefits to Wajarri People and makes sure the cultural heritage of the Wajarri People is protected.

Also, with a focus on Pia Aboriginal Community (just 30kms

from the proposed SKA site), the agreement also included education opportunities, internet access and cadetships and mentoring for Wajarri kids.

Anthony Dann, Wajarri Traditional Owner said, "The myth that native title holds up development is false; this agreement was completed in record time and the future is looking bright.

I look forward to the prospects that education, employment and training opportunities can bring to our community. It's an exciting time for Wajarri People, the Mid-West and Australia that such a major development will be happening in our country."





Above: Kariyarra Country

## Woodstock/Abydos **heritage project**

Woodstock/Abydos is located in the East Pilbara region in the traditional country of the Kariyarra and Palyku peoples.

YMAC's Woodstock/Abydos heritage project relates to the Woodstock/Abydos Reserves which are protected rock art and occupation sites.

Woodstock/Abydos is of particular significance to the Palyku and Kariyarra People because it lies within their traditional country. It is also of significance to other Traditional Owners of the Pilbara because of the high amounts of sites and engravings.

The area contains numerous sites of cultural and historical importance including mythological and ceremonial artefacts, engravings and paintings.

Woodstock/Abydos is important to the well-being and cultural continuity of Aboriginal people throughout Western

Australia and Australia as a whole as it is one of the few large scale collections of sites and rock art that has survived relatively intact.

YMAC's Woodstock/Abydos heritage project aims to develop a heritage management plan for the area. This will provide a structure for looking after and managing the heritage of the area, while the information collected will also be used to develop an application for National Heritage Listing.

The project engages Traditional Owner's knowledge and other professional expertise to make a plan to look after the Indigenous heritage values of Woodstock/Abydos.

For further information please contact Teri O'Neill, Projects Coordinator, at YMAC. For contact details, please see [www.ymac.org.au](http://www.ymac.org.au)





**Above:** Darren Capewell and the Hon. Donna Faragher at the agreement signing.

## Agreement over Wirruwana (Dirk Hartog Island)

The Malgana people, YMAC, WA State Government and pastoralists have announced a native title agreement over Dirk Hartog Island, giving Traditional Owners greater involvement in the management of the world heritage area.

In exchange for consenting to a national park project, the Malgana native title claim group have negotiated co-operative management of the terrestrial reserves in the Shark Bay World Heritage area. The group will receive a 5 hectare reserve on the island to teach Malgana culture.

The Malgana group have also reached an agreement with the former pastoral lease holders, the Wardle family. This agreement provides for employment opportunities and the recognition of traditional ownership in relation to the expansion of tourism operations on the island.

The island, known as Wirruwana in Malgana language,

is of high conservation value and is also the site of the first European landing in Australia. Malgana Traditional Owner, Kelly Oakley, believes preserving the island's high conservation and heritage values are important to all West Australians.

"Wirruwana has always been a place of special significance to our people. By conserving the island's Aboriginal heritage, biodiversity and historical values we ensure all West Australians can enjoy it's extraordinary beauty," she said.



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## Active Citizenship Award

Congratulations to YMAC's Business Development Officer, Cris Olegario, who on Tuesday 26 January, was presented with two awards in the Premier's Australia Day Active Citizenship Award.

Cris was recognised for his tireless work towards the Aboriginal Communities Charitable Organisation.

The award categories were;

- 1) For an individual that is doing excellent services to the Indigenous community; and
- 2) For an organisation that is providing excellent services to the community.

YMAC's Board of Directors, Management and staff congratulate Cris and thank him for his contribution to the Pilbara community.



Above: YMAC's Cris Olegario Accepts his award.

### 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

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