



Yamatji Marlpa

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Native title win for Banjma people after 15 year wait

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Perth: The Banjima People of the Central Pilbara are celebrating the end of a 15-year native title claim following a Federal Court decision to recognise their cultural rights to around 10,200 square kms of traditional lands.

Banjima country is the 'engine-room' of BHP's Pilbara iron ore operations along with major project areas for Rio Tinto, Hancock Prospecting, Fortescue Metals Group and numerous other resource companies. It includes areas around Karijini National Park and the asbestos mining town of Wittenoom. Banjima country extends west towards Tom Price, and east towards the town of Newman.

The Banjima People lodged their first native title claim in 1998 and have been in litigation with the WA State Government since 2011 after being unable to progress a negotiated outcome. This win for the Banjima people means their culture, heritage and connection to country will be formally recognised under Australian law.

Alec Tucker, Banjima Elder said, "This is a joyful day for us. We've been looking forward to this for a long time. We've been waiting for so long. We know its Banjima country, it's my grandfather's country, my father's country - I think the old people would be happy about today."

Simon Hawkins, CEO for Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporations said it was disappointing to see one of the strongest cultural groups in the Pilbara forced into trial by their own government. "The strength of the evidence was overwhelming; there was no need to put the Elders and community through this. The WA State Government needs to catch up with the rest of Australia, stop waging expensive legal battles and take a more collaborative approach."

A formal recognition ceremony and celebrations will be held on Banjima Country at a future date.

High res images and background on Banjima people including mining and Wittenoom issues are available on request. For interviews please contact:

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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 23 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.
