



Yamatji Marlpa ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Traditional Owners say no to proposed AHA changes

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Over 200 Traditional Owners met on Country last Friday to voice their outrage over the proposed State Government amendments to the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* (AHA).

Hosted by the YMAC Pilbara Regional Committee, the on Country meeting was a much needed opportunity for Traditional Owners to add their voice to the discussion surrounding the protection of Aboriginal Heritage in WA.

The discussion was lead by YMAC Co-Chairperson and respected Njamal Elder Doris Eaton and respected Banjima Elder Maitland Parker. Aboriginal representative bodies from the Pilbara, members of Parliament including Robin Chapple MLC, Member for the Mining and Pastoral Region, and Hon Brendon Grylls MLA Member for Pilbara, were given the opportunity to address those in attendance. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Hon Peter Collier MLC, declined an invitation to attend.

Doris Eaton, YMAC Co-Chair, and Njamal Elder, urged those in attendance to unite with one voice.

“These proposed amendments to the Aboriginal Heritage Act do not respect Aboriginal heritage and culture. Traditional Owners must be at the centre of decisions that affect their country. We will stand united, and speak with one voice until our heritage is given the same respect as a built heritage,” says Mrs Eaton.

Simon Hawkins, YMAC CEO says the State Government must strengthen the AHA and engage in a more meaningful way with Traditional Owners.

“The WA legislation, in its current form, is not at a standard expected in the 21st century when it comes to the conservation and management of heritage sites. We want to see this legislation reflect a modern view and must be consistent with other similar legislation in Australia,” says Mr Hawkins.

All attendees voted to reject the AHA amendments. A delegation will be sent to Parliament for talks with Premier Colin Barnett. The delegation will call on the Legislative Assembly to form a Select Committee, with the intention to develop a new framework to reform the AHA, this time including a meaningful discussion with Traditional Owners.

For further information visit www.aboriginalheritage.net.au

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 20 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.

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