

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Protection Co-Design Workshop  
'Outcomes Report' Released

MEDIA RELEASE: 13 May 2022



Photo (clockwise from top left): Event Co-Facilitators, Mandy Gadsdon and Bill Bennell,  
and WA Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Dr Tony Buti MLA

**The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Protection Co-Design Workshop 'Outcomes Report' has now been finalised and shared with WA Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Dr Tony Buti MLA, in an effort to help inform the State Government's co-design process relating to the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021 (WA)*<sup>1</sup> (ACH Act).**

On Thursday, 7 and Friday, 8 April 2022, Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC), along with event partners South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council, Native Title Services Goldfields, and the National Native Title Council, co-hosted the online 'Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Protection Co-Design Workshop'. The workshop was organised at the request of Traditional Owners from across Western Australia who were insistent on having their voices heard and collaborating with other stakeholders in regards to the introduction of the ACH Act and its imminent implementation.

Across the two days, attendees heard from various presenters on the topics of co-design and what is happening with Aboriginal cultural heritage reforms at the national level; they then discussed and identified key elements for what they see as critical to a genuine co-design approach relating to the ACH Act.

<sup>1</sup> See, [www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/aboriginal-cultural-heritage-act-2021-co-design-process](http://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/aboriginal-cultural-heritage-act-2021-co-design-process)

Kariyarra Traditional Owner and Director of YMAC, Raylene Button, who was in attendance stated, “The workshop provided a valuable opportunity for not only Traditional Owners, but also other representatives from different sectors to talk about how they see us all working together to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage in Western Australia. It was great to have such a diverse range of people and organisations involved in this important dialogue providing input.

The challenge remains, however, to see if these conversations will actually translate into meaningful outcomes. We want the State Government to listen to what we have had to say here, just as we were open to listening to others, when it comes to undertaking its co-design approach in relation to the new Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act.

The bottom line is, it is *our* cultural heritage, and we need our voices to be heard. We can’t keep being ignored on matters that directly and significantly impact us and our culture like we have in the past.”

Outcomes of the workshop have now been captured in a [final report](#), which has since been shared with Minister Buti, as well as members of the newly appointed ‘[Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Reference Group](#)’ via the Department of Planning, Lands, and Heritage. It is YMAC’s hope this will help guide the State Government’s co-design process going forward.

**For more information, visit YMAC’s [website](#) and/or [www.ProtectAboriginalHeritageWA.org.au](http://www.ProtectAboriginalHeritageWA.org.au).**

*Please attribute any quotes you may use to the individuals as they are cited herein.*

*All other statements contained in this media release can be attributed to YMAC CEO, Simon Hawkins.*

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#### **About Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation**

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) is the Native Title Representative Body (NTRB) for what are described as the Pilbara (Marlpa) and Geraldton (Yamatji) regions of Western Australia. YMAC is run by an Aboriginal Board of Directors, representing several native title groups, each of whom has their own language, culture, traditions and protocols. YMAC provides a range of services, including native title claim and future act representation, heritage services, executive office, community, economic development assistance, and natural resource management support.

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