

# **Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation Annual on Country Yule River Bush Meeting**

## **Community input into Calls to Action**

**Report from workshops undertaken in  
Newman, Karratha, Roebourne and Port Hedland  
in April 2024, ahead of the July 2024 on Country Bush  
Meeting**

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## Introduction

The Annual Yule River on Country Bush Meeting is for Pilbara-based Aboriginal people to come together to discuss and agree upon place-based solutions to key issues affecting Pilbara Aboriginal people and communities. It aims to provide a vital opportunity to discuss shared issues, and to meet directly with government decision-makers and influencers, uniting in calling for action for positive change.

The meetings are a unique opportunity to build strong connections between the community and government, talking about how best to address key issues, through state and federal programs and policy frameworks, together.

The 2024 meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 24 and Thursday 25 July 2024, and in the lead up to the meeting a series of community meetings across the Pilbara were facilitated to enable Aboriginal community members an opportunity to revisit, contribute to, and update the Calls to Action (CTA) presented to government at the 2023 Yule River On-Country Bush meeting.

The approach to present formalised and pre-agreed CTAs was taken for the first time in 2023 and enabled priority issues and possible draft solutions to be formulated by community, and linked to the key strategic levers driving the work of all government agencies, including:

- i. WA State Government Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy (WA government only).
- ii. National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
- iii. Productivity Commission.
- iv. UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

The CTA Working Group, elected by workshop attendees at the April 2023 workshop to work with YMAC in the lead up to and at the July On-Country meeting has worked across the past year to finalise the CTA to ensure it contained community's updates discussed at the July on-Country meeting. The Working Group was the driving force behind the 2024 pre-Yule River community workshops to reconsider and update where required, the 2024 CTA to be presented at the 2024 meeting.

At the time of the April 2024 workshops there had been no formal response from government to the CTA, however at the Port Hedland meeting, some members of the Pilbara District Leadership Group (DLG) were in attendance.

2024 pre-event workshops held included:

- Tuesday 23 April Newman.
- Friday 26 April Karratha and Roebourne.
- Tuesday 30 April Port Hedland.

## Further Considerations

While the workshop's participants confirmed that the Calls to Action reflect Aboriginal peoples' experiences in Pilbara communities beyond Port Hedland, they also allowed for some fine tuning and additional considerations for the community to discuss at the coming July 2024 Yule River meeting.

At each community workshop participants were asked to reflect on the current CTA statements and provide input and feedback on the 2023 CTA and identify any local issues and/or solution gaps (as a consequence of not being able to attend 2023 meetings).

Discussion at these workshops included:

- are there any gaps in the current CTA?
- what support is needed to ensure the Aboriginal community can effectively engage in local solutions?
- a way forward for community regarding a Pilbara "Leadership Group" to guide delivery on the CTA e.g. leadership criteria, role, representation, etc.

- what role could Aboriginal community organisations play in delivering and / or taking leadership on the CTA.

There was a strong message that these CTA demonstrate the importance of the Pilbara Aboriginal community coming together and wearing ‘one hat’ (Mrs Eaton). It also demonstrates the Working Group’s commitment to working with government and sharing the importance of understanding the two worlds that many Aboriginal people walk in; one based on *Lore* (cultural ways) and the other based on *Law* (Western ways and paperwork).

## Reframing

Based on feedback obtained across all Pilbara meeting locations, an alternate way of presenting the CTA is suggested and has been drafted for consideration by the Yule River Working Group. This reframing provides a format that is accessible to a broader audience base and outlines very clearly the Pilbara Aboriginal community’s expectations of the CTA across a short, medium, and long term trajectory. It also synthesises the CTA into a higher-level summary overview. The re-structure is:

- Call To Action Summary and infographic
- Call To Action
- Call To Action Solutions Roadmap – short | medium | long term
  - The CTA solutions to be mapped to:
    - Closing the Gap Action areas.
    - WA State Government Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy.
  - Responsibility to be identified by government agency, with an interim Working Group member also nominated as a key contact.

The reframing of the CTAs appears on the following pages.

# Systemic Reform: *Your System – Done Our Way*

## Summary – suggested re-write following April 2024 workshops

The Call to Action for Systemic Change is telling government that we need them to:

- Work with Pilbara Aboriginal people and communities to find solutions that work for us.
- Fund Aboriginal Organisations to start running services that are currently being run by other organisations.
- Make sure they are not funding organisations who are black cladding.
- Include local people in service design and decision making for contracts across the region (local and place-based decision making).
- Work with the Aboriginal community so that we understand government systems.
- Make sure they have funding to support the participation of Aboriginal people to advise them through a local and/or regional reference group or voice.

## Call to Action

1. Enable frameworks to support community-led, place-based decision making in relation to ALL Aboriginal services including:
  - a) Co-design being at the forefront of all planning and decision making.
  - b) Implementing plans for mainstream services to be transitioned to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs).
  - c) Undertaking service accountability audits.
2. Provide tangible support to assist ACCOs to develop businesses, and to meet identified shortcomings in tendering processes. We seek more control of funding targeted to Aboriginal peoples.
3. Introduce a policy to deal with and stamp out 'Black-Cladding.'
4. Government funding/tendering and selection processes for the Pilbara MUST include representatives from the Pilbara, who have connection to and an understanding of local realities.
5. There are no effective government 'wrap-around' and holistic programs for youth - this is an area in crisis. Government department's need to come together, work with local communities to find community-led solutions.
6. Plan for Aboriginal people to inform and advise on structural change, ensuring they are adequately remunerated, and that consultation is undertaken in a culturally appropriate way.
  - a) establish and maintain regional and local guidance through community reference groups - that include service-users - in addition to Elders groups, to inform service delivery and help drive local solutions.
  - b) governments to adequately fund a coordinated approach to enable grassroots community members to contribute advice on systemic change.
7. Create shared data sets for the Pilbara, to improve information sharing across agencies and with family members when multiple agencies are involved in supporting Aboriginal people.
8. Improve community relationships and understanding of Police operations in the Pilbara, through actions such as increased community-engagement, improved cultural and community education for Police officers, and local reference groups for place-based responses.
9. Provide more opportunities to our community members to learn and access training on good governance.
10. Work with us to identify to help us understand and work effectively with the different systems of law we are required to deal with – State and Federal Law, native title, Prescribed Bodies Corporate – through actions such as community education programs.
11. We seek funding for a Pilbara Hub (physical building) and the establishment of a leadership group, designed by our people and well-resourced so that we can work with community and government to make this Call to Action a reality.

## Additional considerations arising from April 2024 workshops

1. The Pilbara DLG (see note below Actionable Items) should be a good vehicle to progress the Calls to Action, and need to:
  - a) Return to their Purpose as per their Terms of Reference (ToR).
  - b) Have a strong Secretariat function in order to engage with, and respond to the CTA, as well as discrete resourcing to support place-based initiatives.
  - c) Ensure that systemic reform is driven and does not rely on the will of a Senior Regional government worker alone as it may lead to 'Policy Positions' being taken and being used as a reason to not do things.
  - d) Take a whole of government approach in the identification and scheduling of regionally based cultural awareness training across multiple levels from awareness through to immersion. This approach will ensure a set standard and coordinated approach across the Pilbara.
2. Capacity building for ACCOs needs to be invested in properly:
  - a) At present services are being transitioned with reduced resources, and this can set ACCOs up to fail.
  - b) Examples provided where transitions from non-ACCOs to ACCOs and lack of support around what it costs to run a service when the ACCO applying has never run the service before.
3. Structural issues often prevent community empowerment, for example:
  - a) Community members having the opportunity to have support/training around how to do home maintenance tasks like changing washers, etc, rather than rely on expensive and often untimely contractors.
4. Regional commissioning is critical:
  - a) So much interrelated work is done but each Agency is only funded to do 'their bit of it'.
  - b) Pilbara services and resources need to be accountable to the Pilbara (need to ensure resources stay in the Region).
  - c) Government procurement needs to be reviewed, as well as longer term funding opportunities.
5. Need to look at maximising opportunities related to employment, looking at how the 'new CDP' can be utilised: The 'Remote Jobs and Economic Development Program'.
6. Departmental Aboriginal Advisory bodies need to come together more often and discuss overarching Policy matters and provide a more coordinated approach to systems change and improvement.
7. There is a need for local and regional advisory bodies in addition to departmental bodies. This should also include identifying the right and proper representatives from the community and introducing young leaders.
8. If the DLG commits to place-based community consultation they will need to introduce a paid participation policy.
9. There is interest from some community members in the formation of a Pilbara-wide women's leadership group.

## Solutions Roadmap

### Short term (6 months)

| Action item   | Responsibility | Reportable by |
|---|----------------|---------------|
| Immediate resourcing for a Pilbara Aboriginal leadership group and associated work that will arise at Yule River. | DLG            | 30/06/2024    |
| Regional place-based participation policy<br>*All Agencies to use the same policy/rate                            | DLG            | 31/12/2024    |
| Response to Call to Action  | DLG            | 31/12/2024    |
| List of Pilbara ACCOs (and their function)  | DLG            | 31/12/2024    |

### Medium term (18 months)

| Action item  | Responsibility | Reportable by |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| Pilbara Commissioning Strategy   |                | 30/6/2025     |
| Plan for recommissioning services in the Pilbara   |                | 31/12/2025    |
| Each DLG Agency to have a Pilbara Aboriginal Workforce Strategy outlining employment targets, and having clear reporting with data, etc. |                | 31/12/2024    |
| Audit tool/process to map funding allocated across systems and functions to identify duplications, overlap, piecemeal approaches, etc.   |                | 31/12/2024    |
| Schools are able to access information from relevant agencies to enrol children when they present regardless of circumstance.            |                | 31/12/2024    |

### Long term (18 months +)

| Action item  | Responsibility | Reportable by |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| Recommissioning of current services from mainstream to ACCO providers  |                | 2027          |
| Service/system Cultural Navigators to be engaged by the DLG collectively to provide localised, culturally responsive services. |                | 2027          |

### A note on the Pilbara District Leadership Group (DLG):

According to the State Government's website, the primary role of DLGs across the State is to:

- Identify shared local priorities.
- Develop collective strategies to address local priorities.
- Deliver collaborative initiatives to address local priorities.
- Provide a consultation and feedback forum for State Government and other place-based initiatives, including the provision of timely and accurate local information to government and other stakeholders.
- Consult with local communities, coordinate services, measure impact and share expertise and resources in their region.

The Department of Communities is acting as the driver and facilitator for DLG development in WA by providing a program of support to each DLG, including in relation to governance, capacity development and strategic priority-setting.

Because YMAC had been advised by the Department of Premier and Cabinet that they were working with the Pilbara DLG on a response to the call to Action, YMAC invited representatives from that Group to also attend the April 2024 workshops.

Note that while the DLG has been involved in the first instance, it is noted there are other key State and Federal government agencies, local governments and industry may also be invited to deliver on the Call to Action.



## Education: *Not Just Schooling – Teaching Our Way*

### Summary – suggested re-write following April 2024 workshops

The Call to Action asks for Education related matters to be acted on and tells government we need them to:

- Work with Pilbara Aboriginal people and communities to find solutions that work for us.
- Fund Aboriginal Organisations to start running programs that involve parents and Elders to engage students, like, for example what used to be known as the Aboriginal Supporting Students Parents Association (ASSPA).
- Talk to us about what putting the Department of Education's Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework into practice looks like in the Pilbara.
- Share with us who your Aboriginal Advisory Body is, what they are working on and arrange for us to meet with them to talk about the Call to Action.

### Call to Action

1. Review and properly resource individual support for students to enable more young people to complete Year 12:
  - a) Engage other essential services with schools such as child psychologists or children with special needs.
  - b) Employ dedicated staff to proactively support students to stay at school and engage in learning (for example young mums supported to bring baby to school).
  - c) Increase the focus on the development of person-centred plans for students at educational risk (SAER).
2. Better involve parents, family, community, and Elders in teaching and learning and embed culture in the curriculum. For example, deliver more cultural programs in schools, including the ability to have community members and Elders teaching culture.
3. Review and improve programs to better help young people get ready for employment, and general preparation for navigating life and responsibilities following school.
4. Improve or create new services so that parents can better prepare their children for school, including lunch support and breakfast clubs.
5. Commit to providing local education hostels and on-Country boarding
6. Introduce screening for learning difficulties in Kindergarten or at least before Year 1 for all Aboriginal students.
7. Fund the return and support of Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) Committees.
8. Increase / expand the footprint of the Target 120 program.
9. Provide existing Aboriginal Islander Education Officers (AIEOs) with additional training to enable them to holistically support families and link them with other services if it is warranted. Train the AIEOs to go on to become teachers.
10. Work with parents and students together to introduce and/or support more school-based drug awareness programs; across all areas and in all Pilbara locations but targeting antenatal impact. The assessments for these programs should be independent from the schools with a specialist, working with the parent and child to assess the level of need.
11. Recognising that some students are not even making it to school, work with parents and children together on drug awareness programs outside of the school setting.
12. The Education Department needs to play a role in addressing the issue of parental responsibility. Support parents to become more responsible through collaborating with other government departments and community to help them reach a position of strength to do so.
13. Undertake a review of the cultural safety of our schools, and ensure all education staff attend cultural awareness training, delivered by Pilbara people. Engage with



local Aboriginal community members to undertake cultural audits of schools to ensure programs are appropriate.

## Additional considerations arising from April 2024 workshops

1. **CTA #7:** Consider approaches to other funded programs in schools to run this- like Stars | Clontarf | Polly Farmer Foundation, etc.
2. **CTG #12:** There was discussion around school hostels, however it was discussed that these shouldn't disempower parental responsibility.
3. **CTA #13:** There should be localised mandatory Cultural training for teachers to embed the Department of Education's Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework; often teachers, through their actions are setting in motion unintended consequences for Aboriginal students in their classrooms.

## Solutions Roadmap

### Short term (6 months)

| Action item  | Responsibility | Reportable by |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| School bus, breakfast and lunch program at all Pilbara schools   |                | 31/12/2024    |
| Student wellbeing to be monitored and students supported where they need it, which could include for example being sent home with dinner, etc. |                |               |

### Medium term (18 months)

| Action item  | Responsibility | Reportable by |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| Establish an ASSPA Committee   |                | 31/12/2025    |
| Mandatory Cultural Awareness training for all teachers   |                | 31/12/2025    |
| An audit of school programs across all Pilbara schools, and confirming that they are operational, as well as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A list of all Pilbara schools.</li> <li>- What programs are being provided.</li> <li>- Who funds what school programs.</li> </ul> |                | 31/12/2025    |

### Long term (18 months +)

| Action item  | Responsibility | Reportable by |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| Local Education hostels  |                |               |
| That all Pilbara schools have strong support/connections that offer student wellbeing and welfare, for example, a School Welfare Officer |                |               |

## Health: *Looking After Our Body and Mind*

### Summary – suggested re-write following April 2024 workshops

The Call to Action asks for Health-related matters to be acted on and tells government that we need them to:

- Work with Pilbara Aboriginal people and communities to find solutions that work for us.
- Urgently work with us to put Dialysis chairs into all our communities, as well as places for families to stay when dialysis is needed.
- Work with us to develop health education programs that our people understand because this can stop them getting sick in the first place.
- Talk to us about PATS because we want to fix this system which currently isn't working for many Pilbara people.
- Put some Mental Health services in the Pilbara, step up and step down, and locally based residential.
- Co-design lifestyle Mental Health programs with Pilbara people that can be delivered here in our own communities by our own agencies.
- Put more dental services in the Pilbara.
- Employ more Aboriginal Health Workers trained in the community.

### Call to Action

1. Review and improve local health services and health education to better meet our needs.
  - a) Increase investment in preventative health to create culturally appropriate health education and programs the community can easily understand.
  - b) Provide more support for early assessment and diagnoses, and consideration of on Country health services.
  - c) Investing in these kinds of activities NOW will save lives and reduce the need for expensive treatment in the future.
2. We desperately need to address the issue of dialysis an increase in the number of dialysis chairs in the Pilbara. This includes an audit on existing dialysis facilities, community access to these services (including waitlisting), and for State planning to include consideration of future needs to meet local demand.
3. Government to commit to increased medical support for our old people, such as Geriatricians.
4. Increase the focus and funding for programs to work with young mums and bubs.
5. Invest in a recruitment program for health personnel to work in the Pilbara – across sectors.
6. The PATS system and patient journey needs to be urgently reviewed so that it meets the needs of people who need to travel for medical treatment, and their support / carers. It currently doesn't. Government should not expect corporations and trusts to pay for this support.
7. Increase town-based and visiting dental services.
8. Review and audit the dedicated housing/hostel to support out-of-town patients within the Pilbara (not send them to Perth). This audit should include a review of government's delivery on previous commitments for local hostel-housing support.
9. Improve Mental Health Services provision in the Pilbara.
  - a) available 24/7
  - b) increase mental health services for our children and youth so that they don't have to go to Broome for services.
  - c) We need dedicated Aboriginal-specific beds in the Pilbara for Mental Health patients.
10. We need support for our people to access more in-person mental health assessments and appointments, in addition to Tele-Health.
11. We seek more accountability of health funding and if it doesn't go to an Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) or ACCO, then the non-Aboriginal organisation has to be accountable to community and transparent in their service provision and reporting.

12. Review and increase provision of services for health within the education system - school nurses, NDIS support for children, dental and ear buses to remote communities.
13. Review and increase the provision of cancer support services available to Pilbara Aboriginal people.
14. Consult with Aboriginal community to create Sorry Rooms and culturally appropriate family rooms at Pilbara hospitals.
15. Address language barriers for health patients by employing / contracting health workers who can speak Pilbara languages.
16. To support improved health outcomes, within cultural education framework standards, government must have localised relationships with Cultural groups – both Elders' and community reference groups – at community and regional levels.

### Additional considerations arising from April 2024 workshops

1. **CTA #1 a):** Long term health promotion is critical and requires further investment/support involving the local community.
2. **CTA #10:** Tele-Health has been embraced where people are supported to attend with Community Connectors and/or Aboriginal Health Workers and others:

#### General:

1. Activity based funding is a disincentive as hospitals get paid on the people who walk through the door:
  - a) There needs to be an increased focus on people looking after themselves in their own Communities – to keep away from the Doctor.
  - b) This longer-term sustainable approach would save the need to recruit from outside the Regions and reduce the demand for health care services generally as it would enable place-based and community led health care.
2. There is no Renal Service in the West Pilbara, and it is urgently needed:
  - a) With any new Renal Service there needs to be accommodation for dialysis patients and their families otherwise it leads to overcrowding.
3. Need to see an increase in funding to train Health Workers in a community setting:
  - a) Training in remote communities as well as health care settings.
  - b) Link to new CDP – 'Remote Jobs and Economic Development Program'.
4. An increased focus on lifestyle programs can have an incredibly positive impact on health outcomes:
  - a) See Wellbeing CTA for further detail...
5. A focus on health literacy is vital:
  - a) Having an Aboriginal Health Worker can help ensure patients fully understand what a Dr is saying.
  - b) Education and awareness are critical and needs to be a focus to improve health literacy.

### Solutions Roadmap

#### Short term (6 months)

| Action item   | Responsibility | Reportable by |
|---|----------------|---------------|
| Commence planning for Renal services throughout the Pilbara                             |                | 31/12/2024    |
| Commence planning for mental health services – step up and step down                    |                | 31/12/2024    |
| Funding increased to appropriate services to bolster upstream health promotion activity |                | 31/12/2024    |

**Medium term (18 months)**

| <b>Action item</b>   | <b>Responsibility</b> | <b>Reportable by</b> |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Mental Health programs to be co-designed (human-centred design processes) in community and with community across the Pilbara and then funded |                       | 30/06/25             |
| Dental services (including prevention programs) be planned for the Pilbara   |                       |                      |

**Long term (18 months +)**

| <b>Action item</b>                                 | <b>Responsibility</b> | <b>Reportable by</b> |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------|
| New Renal services start being established         |                       | 31/12/2025           |
| New mental health services start being established |                       | 31/12/2025           |

## Housing: *Maya That We Need – Our Way*

### Summary– suggested re-write following April 2024 workshops

The Call to Action asks for Housing related matters to be acted on and tells government that we need them to:

- Understand that urgently addressing housing is CRITICAL to ensuring ALL the Calls to Action contained within this plan can truly have an impact. Without adequate housing, our people will continue to face disadvantage.
- Work with Pilbara Aboriginal people and communities to find solutions that work for us.
- Develop a Pilbara Housing Strategy that includes:
  - Audit of what housing (social, GROW and other forms within the government's remit) is available.
  - What is needed based on proper population numbers.
  - What is needed for town and what is needed for remote communities.
  - How to have maintenance done better, and by local people.
- Build an aged care home in Port Hedland and other Pilbara locations to care for our old people.
- Work with us on bringing Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation (ASSA) to the Pilbara.
- Develop and refine policies around how you charge for rent in Social Housing.
- Show how the North-West Aboriginal Housing Fund is helping in the Pilbara.
- Build more crisis accommodation, including increasing capacity of women's refuges.

### Call to Action

1. Conduct an urgent independent housing audit to determine empty Social Housing stock in the Pilbara. To include a review of departmental policies and procedures with respect to:
  - Minimum standards of housing
  - Maintaining housing
  - Addressing health concerns
2. Work with us to develop a new housing strategy specific to the Pilbara, addressing this call to action.
3. Urgently address the exceedingly long wait lists and reduced housing stock experienced by Pilbara Aboriginal peoples.
4. Reduce overcrowding and waitlisting for housing by:
  - Fixing up empty houses and making them available.
  - Building new houses that meet our needs. e.g., bigger houses for bigger families.
  - Supporting collaboration between the Housing and Health Departments, so as to not send patients home to overcrowded houses.
5. Invite Pilbara Aboriginal people to contribute to the design of social housing to ensure houses are 'fit for purpose'.
6. Develop programs that work with whole families that help people get and keep their tenancy, including specialist programs to train Aboriginal people to do minor repairs on their houses.
7. Review and revisit the income thresholds to support people transitioning from low incomes and welfare dependency into employment so that they don't need to choose between giving up their job and losing their house.
8. Support families travelling in from remote areas to get affordable accommodation in town by ensuring short-stay options are available and affordable.
9. Review and increase support for our people to transition from renting to owning their own property. Explore rent to buy schemes or shared equity models for home ownership and provide education to enable people to understand how to buy their own home.
10. Develop programs or collaborate with other agencies to train up local Aboriginal people in trades associated with building and maintaining housing.

11. Department of Communities to provide assistance to families involved with Child Protection, to support safe and appropriate housing.
12. No more closing Aboriginal communities. Allow people to live on Country, and bring back CDEP or similar programs so they can work on their Country.
13. Work with community to establish an aged care home in South Hedland, to replace Steven Street accommodation in Port Hedland.
14. Introduce culturally appropriate processes following the vacating of a house after the death of a family member.
15. Introduce regional and local guidance through community reference groups that can speak regularly with housing department staff to discuss programs and policies.
  - Ensure Aboriginal staff within departments are also consulted in policy / program development.

### Additional considerations arising from April 2024 workshops

1. **CTA #1:** Add Aged Care Housing to the Audit.
  - a) Map issues and be able to respond to them and report on them.
  - b) Needs to also consider demographics are being accurately referenced and needs to be more fully investigated at a regional level as well as in reference to the ABS Census data to ensure it is accurate - currently (and anecdotally) populations seem to be under-recorded, and this can be impacting assessment of required housing levels.
2. **CTA #2:** Combine this with CTA #1.
3. **CTA #3:** Add this CTA as a dot point under CTA #1.
4. **CTA #4:** Reiterated that housing and overcrowding is impacting significantly.
  - a) There is a lack of adequate housing.
  - b) Housing is not keeping up with population growth:
    - i. It is damaging culture | kinship | connection to Country as people cannot get housing where they live and are being forced to move to get housing...
5. **CTA #10:** The system/mechanism around housing maintenance needs to be fixed:
  - a) It is believed that currently only Jigalong has a Housing Maintenance Agreement, and it is inadequately funded (circa \$300k).

### General:

6. When talking about Housing it needs to clearly differentiate need for / approaches to:
  - a) Social Housing (town-based).
  - b) Remote Housing in remote Communities.
7. There is an urgent need for both additional short-term and acute crisis care (for youth, women, and men cohorts).
  - f) One or more Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation (ASSA) in the Pilbara would assist a lot, especially when combined with the need to relocate for medical reasons, etc.
  - g) Safe housing in ALL communities.
8. Crisis support for victims of Family and Domestic Violence (FDV), as well as increased community education and temporary accommodation for perpetrators is also needed (FDV victims should not be the ones to have to leave their home).
9. Calculation of rent in social housing (? based on # people living in house) may hide real overcrowding.
  - f) Houses should be rented at a set amount like they are on the private rental market (Policy change required).
10. Look at Wilya Janta Strategy in the NT

11. Social housing policies are also appearing to impact employment decisions by Pilbara Aboriginal people. e.g. they are declining employment opportunities if the income level means they will lose their current house (because they can't access / afford other housing), or they are ineligible to access Government employee housing due to being a Pilbara resident.

## Solutions Roadmap

### Short term (6 months)

| Action item  | Responsibility | Reportable by |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| Commission development of a Housing Strategy for the Pilbara |                | 31/12/2024    |
| Election commitment for ASSA                                 |                | 28/02/2025    |
| Commitment to re-open Hostel                                 |                | 31/12/2024    |

### Medium term (18 months)

| Action item   | Responsibility | Reportable by |
|---|----------------|---------------|
| Commence reviewing social housing rental policy   |                | 30/06/2025    |
| GROH housing policy to be reviewed and updated to allow Pilbara people who are employed locally to access GROH housing. |                | 30/06/2025    |

### Long term (18 months +)

| Action item                      | Responsibility | Reportable by |
|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Planning for ASSA in the Pilbara |                | 31/12/2025    |



## Wellbeing: *Strong Spirit, Strong Mind, Strong Mob*

### Summary – suggested re-write following April 2024 workshops

The Call to Action asks for Wellbeing related matters to be acted on and tells government that we need them to:

- Work with Pilbara Aboriginal people and communities to find solutions that work for us.
- Have all services actively engage with and have as a standard part of how they work, the inclusion of Aboriginal Traditional Healers.
- Change the way contracts are written so that service providers can do what they need to – let them support families or individuals in the best way for healing.
- We need children in out of home care to have proper cultural planning and to make sure they are connected with family and culture.
- Work with us to develop and then fund mental health and other lifestyle programs that are working – we can tell you which ones and how, through a co-design process.

### Call to Action

1. Actively listen to what people of all ages in our community need for their wellbeing. Talk to us.
2. Make sure Aboriginal healers are there if people need or want them.
3. Understand and better support the challenges of drug and alcohol addiction, especially for young people. For example:
  - a) Restrict the access of volatile substances. Elders have already written letters to several suppliers in the Pilbara.
  - b) Introduce new services/programs to address volatile substance abuse.
4. Review and increase the number of local, place-based mental health support services run by Aboriginal organisations.
5. Fund counselling services that support improved access to for either for 1:1 a family, or a mix of both. At the moment service contracts seem to be prescriptive and it can only be one or the other – not both. We need contracts to be less prescriptive.
6. Provide funding for preferred service providers to have dedicated positions within their organisations to manage the wellbeing of Aboriginal staff independently.
7. Department of Communities to adopt a culturally appropriate way of working, including involving Elders to assist with cultural plans to support the wellbeing and safety of children in care. This should include adhering to departmental policy and legislative requirements, including to establish Aboriginal Representative Organisations in the Pilbara.

### Additional considerations arising from April 2024 workshops

1. **CTA #2:** Promote and support the ability to engage with and call on Traditional Aboriginal Healers.
2. Aboriginal/Traditional Healers to be engaged as is possible under the *Mental Health Act* (Division 4, Section 189).

#### General:

1. An increased focus on lifestyle and on-Country programs can have an incredibly positive impact on wellbeing outcomes; examples include:
  - a) Onslow: Community and school garden.
  - b) They provide the 'tools' for Community members to look after themselves and be self-sustaining.
  - c) Leaping Lizards in Onslow given as an example – fund some of these programs to operate elsewhere.
  - d) Programs where kids are taken back on Country with older siblings and Elders.
    - i. Young people transformed in 1-2 days.

- ii. When taken back to the same environment though, behaviours and other issues returned as there was not a continuation of support.
2. There are big gaps in mental health services across the board in the Pilbara:
    - a) Especially supporting families and young people.
    - b) There are no Aboriginal focussed and successful mental health programs in the Pilbara.
    - c) There needs to be a focus on outreach.
  3. There is no funded Primary Mental Health provider in the Pilbara:
    - a) No 'step up' care.
    - b) Nothing to come back to for support after an acute episode - 'step down' care.
  4. The need for a Protocol to be developed to support carers | parents | concerned companions to be able to speak for Mental Health patients when presenting at a health care setting – examples shared where people sent home despite concerns expressed with terrible outcomes (suicide).
  5. Community understands there are no Mental Health beds in Pilbara Hospitals.
  6. '2 Mile' could be developed into a short-term 'dry' culturally safe space for people coming from out of town- it's where people go anyway.

## Solutions Roadmap

### Short term (6 months)

| Action item                                     | Responsibility | Reportable by |
|---|----------------|---------------|
| Revisit Policy around use of Aboriginal Healers |                | 31/12/2024    |

### Medium term (18 months)

| Action item   | Responsibility | Reportable by |
|---|----------------|---------------|
| Aboriginal Representative Organisation planning for the Pilbara |                | 31/12/2024    |
| ACCO Commissioning Strategy to look at all Pilbara funding.     |                | 31/12/2024    |

### Long term (18 months +)

| Action item   | Responsibility | Reportable by |
|---|----------------|---------------|
| Planning for Pilbara based step up / step down mental health facility |                | 31/12/2025    |

## Community Safety: *Looking After Our People*

### Summary – suggested re-write following April 2024 workshops

The Call to Action asks for Community Safety related matters to be acted on and tells government that we need them to:

- Work with Pilbara Aboriginal people and communities to find solutions that work for us.
- Work with Community to establish on-Country alternatives to Prison for our young people.
- Work with community to look at the best way to support young mums and bubs, and people with disabilities.
- Fund local Aboriginal organisations who are doing the work with our young people.
- Fund the establishment of a safe place for young people.
- Review eligibility and other participation criteria for Target 120 to better support our young people at risk.

### Call to Action

1. Government department's need to come together to work with communities to co-design place-based, wrap-around, holistic solutions and programs to improve community safety, and to support youth in crisis.
  - a) Engage with us to better support community-led and co-designed solutions.
2. Work with us to create consistent, safe places in the community for children and young people, especially after school and at night. (1-2 nights a week is just not enough.)
3. Better support vulnerable populations like young mums with babies and people with disabilities and their families.
4. Reduce anti-social behaviour by providing holistic tailored support to young people and having more at-risk youth services and programs so they have options.
5. Hold parents and carers accountable for children's behaviour. Better support for them to do this by providing holistic, wrap-around supports.
6. Young People should be on Country, not in prisons. We need to look at alternative ways our children and youth can heal without going to prison.

### Additional considerations arising from April 2024 workshops

1. **CTA #1:** PAHA and Pilbara for Purpose actively support raising the age of criminal responsibility from 10 years:
  - a) Need a healing centre for kids on Country.
  - b) Kids are sent to Perth where they have no, or limited, family support.
  - c) In the Justice system there is no holistic health assessments undertaken:
    - i. FASD
    - ii. Intergenerational Trauma
2. **CTA #6:** A solution to this would be the co-design of on-Country detention alternatives.
  - a) Also need greater reintegration support for young people returning home after being away in detention.

#### General:

3. In relation to Target 120 there appear to be some Policy positions that are negatively impacting access to the program for those who could really benefit, including:
  - a) Children in Care (CIC) or working with Intensive Family Support (IFS) are not eligible to be referred.
  - b) Rules that limit engagement (for example an assessment made that young person is 'too far gone', or alternately at risk of offending but unable to participate because they had not yet offended).

- c) Cannot be referred unless residing in location – doesn't allow for movement of young people across towns with families, etc. Also doesn't consider the ability to transfer between locations (for example, Karratha to Port Hedland, or Broome, etc.). This is culturally inappropriate.
4. There needs to be a Night Patrol everywhere; one where Elders can get involved and assist in a cultural way if possible.
  5. The role of cultural learning needs to be recognised and supported more broadly, including programs that are/could be delivered by PBCs.
  6. The development of a 'Safe Space Strategy' is needed – this could be done as a form of Social Investment.
  7. The overcrowding of women's shelters, the lack of men's healing programs, etc. are impacting safety and these aspects need to be looked at in terms of expansion as well as new initiatives, etc.
  8. That WA Police review the current criteria for Missing Persons. There are many Aboriginal people in the Pilbara who are missing and are not being prioritised by the WA Police in terms of efforts to locate them.

## Solutions Roadmap

### Short term (6 months)

| Action item   | Responsibility | Reportable by |
|---|----------------|---------------|
| Review capacity of emergency accommodation and plan to expand it where needed.  |                | 31/12/2024    |
| Revise Target 120 criteria in consultation with Pilbara ACCOs currently delivering the service                                  |                | 31/12/2024    |
| That WA Police commence reviewing their Missing Person's criteria and review current Missing Person's cases across the Pilbara. |                | 31/12/2024    |

### Medium term (18 months)

| Action item   | Responsibility | Reportable by |
|---|----------------|---------------|
| Work with community to develop Men's Healing Programs and plan for funding them |                | 31/12/2025    |

### Long term (18 months +)

| Action item                  | Responsibility | Reportable by |
|------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Fund hostel for young people |                | 30/06/2026    |

## Conclusion

This report reflects findings from a series of workshops across the Pilbara to reflect on, update where required, and strengthen the community resolve around the Calls to Action to be discussed, ratified, and where possible, responded to and/or actioned by Government at the July 2024 Yule River on Country Bush Meeting.

The Working Group, who have been the driving force behind the 2024 pre-Yule River community workshops, are now able to reconsider and update the Calls to Action where required, in order to present them at the 2024 meeting across Wednesday 24 and Thursday 25 July 2024.