



Yamatji Marlpa ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

70 years on, Aboriginal people are still fighting the same battle

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Today marks the 70th anniversary of Australia's longest strike – it was on this day in 1946 when Aboriginal pastoral workers walked off the job in protest against a lack of wages and abysmal working conditions.

These workers had the reputation of being some of the best stockmen in the world, but they were excluded from industrial awards, and lived and worked in appalling circumstances. For those who joined the strike, they faced arrests, intimidation and violence – but it didn't stop people from joining.

Doris Eaton, YMAC co-Chair, says it's shameful that 70 years later Aboriginal people are still fighting this same battle.

"It's hard to get real change when we're not part of our own future – until the rights of Aboriginal people across the country are honoured, I will continue my father's work," she said.

Simon Hawkins, YMAC CEO, says even though Australia has modernised in many ways, it has yet to meaningfully address the systemic disenfranchisement of Aboriginal people.

"In terms of treating Aboriginal people as equals, Australia has more work to do – until efforts like WA's Aboriginal Heritage Act Amendment Bill address the fundamental inequities of heritage protection by ensuring Aboriginal people are afforded basic appeal rights, the struggles addressed by those who lead the strike 70 years ago will continue," he said.

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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