

## YMAC Pilbara Solar Partnership

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Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) is the Native Title Representative Body for the Traditional Owners of the Pilbara, Midwest, Murchison, and Gascoyne regions of Western Australia (WA).

YMAC celebrates today's announcement by Minister for Regional Development Hon. Alannah MacTiernan that it is technically feasible to export solar energy from the Pilbara to Indonesia. YMAC acknowledges that a competent and experienced solar industry is needed for the Pilbara to achieve a competitive business case and export scale. YMAC's remit represents over one million square kilometres, one-third of WA's total land mass, and is ideally placed for land access negotiations. A solar industry in the Pilbara presents an exciting opportunity for real partnership with the Traditional Owners of the Pilbara; who have for a long time expressed commercial interest in owning solar farms for sustainable income generation.

YMAC partnered with authors of a Pre-Feasibility Study undertaken to investigate Pilbara solar development and export potential. The Pre-Feasibility Study was funded by the Pilbara Development Commission. YMAC supports the diversification of investment in the Pilbara to add projects that present low-impact use of Country and produce energy for local use and potentially export. The diversification offers enormous benefits to the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities of Western Australia. Solar energy can deliver low-cost reliable power to remote communities and mining operations in the Pilbara. It offers environmental, logistical and financial benefits to governments.

YMAC recognises that business partnership is a pathway to self-determination for Aboriginal communities. Solar energy offers a new paradigm for Aboriginal engagement in industry. Aboriginal business ownership empowers culturally sensitive decision making around employment, skills development and funding for community programs.

YMAC has today launched Pilbara Solar Pty Ltd, a company that puts Traditional Owners at the centre of business and project development, based on the opportunities presented in the findings of the Pre-Feasibility Study. Pilbara Solar will develop several commercial pilot projects with the aim of selling low-cost, secure solar energy to mining companies, supported by long-term fixed price-agreements. The pilot projects will be used to bed down the operating model, build the solar supply chain and shore-up capacity for the potential solar energy export from the Pilbara.

YMAC CEO Simon Hawkins states “The report presents exciting opportunities for government and industry to work alongside Traditional Owners of the Pilbara to implement win-win-win solutions to the problems of energy supply, employment and long-term sustainability. The Pilbara Solar pilot project is one example of the innovative, collaborative and community development approach that YMAC advocates to achieve sustainable outcomes for our Traditional Owners and the wider Australian community.”

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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. It 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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