



## Remote communities call on State and Feds to step up at Yule River

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**MEDIA RELEASE: Monday, 2 July 2018**

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) Co-chairperson, and Nyiyaparli (central Pilbara region) woman, Natalie Parker, has called on the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, to attend the 5th Annual Yule River On-Country Bush Meeting next week.

Last week, YMAC asked the State Government to release details of its plans to manage funding of remote Aboriginal communities into the future, with its 50-year funding agreement with the Federal Government expiring on Saturday (30 June).

The State Government responded on Friday by launching an eleventh hour national public campaign to pressure the Federal Government to “not abandon 165 remote communities in Western Australia”.

The State Government said its 'Don't Walk Away' campaign would feature online and print media advertising, and promote a website with a call to action for people concerned about the plight of the almost 12,000 people living in remote communities across WA.

Ms Parker said the purpose of the Yule River meetings, which were first held during the 1946 Aboriginal stockmen strikes, had always been for Traditional Owners across WA to come together to discuss issues.

“Both the State and the Federal Government need to step up at Yule River on 11 and 12 July and let people from remote Aboriginal communities know what is happening,” Ms Parker said.

“Aboriginal people across WA, including in my community at Youngaleena, are looking over their shoulders, and face the trauma of being forced off their Country again.

“It is 2018, and all Australians, and people around the world know, that forcing Aboriginal people off their Country causes irreparable long-term trauma, social issues, degradation of land and culture, and is totally unacceptable.”

YMAC Chief Executive Simon Hawkins said both governments should demonstrate respect for the health, wellbeing and safety of all Aboriginal people living remotely in WA, by bringing a sustainable plan to fund remote communities to Yule River.

“YMAC understands the deep cultural and spiritual value that living on Country holds for many Traditional Owners; allowing them to practice traditional Law and customs as recognised under their native title determinations,” Mr Hawkins said.

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## About Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) is the native title representative body for the Pilbara, Murchison, Mid-West and Gascoyne regions of Western Australia. YMAC has a representative area of over one-third of WA and represents over 24 native title claims, all with their own language, culture and traditions. YMAC is a not-for-profit organisation run by an Aboriginal Board of Directors 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.

For more information please visit [ymac.org.au](http://ymac.org.au)

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### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ONLY**

- *The first National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH) was signed in 2008 between the Commonwealth Government and all States and the Northern Territory, under the Rudd Government. The Commonwealth allocated \$5.4 billion over ten years.*
- *Funds were provided to build and upgrade remote housing, improve the management of housing stock and create employment opportunities for Indigenous people through the building program.*
- *The NPARIH was due to expire in 2018, however the agreement was concluded on 30 June 2016 and replaced with a new two-year National Partnership on Remote Housing (NPRH).*
- *How does this compare with other States?*
- *Western Australia has received \$1.164b of funding over the ten-year period 2008-2018, which represents 24.8% of all Commonwealth funding.*
- *Between 2014-16, the Commonwealth negotiated buy-out arrangements with Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales, as the majority of remote housing needs were met.*
- *In late April 2018, the Commonwealth entered into a new agreement with the Northern Territory, committing \$550m for five years, matching a commitment made by the Northern Territory Government.*
- *Queensland and Western Australia remain in negotiations, with the Commonwealth arguing that the State Governments have not shown adequate commitment to share funding responsibility. It is unclear exactly what offers have been made by the States.*
- *The Western Australian Government has stated it currently commits around \$86 million annually to support 165 remote communities across the state, through housing, community infrastructure and related services.*
- *It should be noted that not all remote communities fall under the responsibility of the State Government, with some falling under the Aboriginal Lands Trust and other bodies corporate due to underlying tenure arrangements.*
- *According to data from the Western Australian Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, approximately 30 remote Aboriginal communities are located within YMAC's region, with a total population of around 1,500-2,000 people. Ten of these fall within the Yamatji region, with the remaining 20 located in the Pilbara region.*