



Niyaparli people celebrate native title win

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Photo: Justice Barker, Federal Court of Australia congratulates David Stock (left) and Billy Cadigan (right) on Niyaparli's native title determination

In an on-Country Federal Court hearing yesterday at Coondiner Pool (Kuntinha) – 130 kilometres north of Newman – the Niyaparli community have been formally recognised by the Federal Court as native title holders over the land that they have been connected to for thousands of years.

It has been an almost 20-year long journey for the Niyaparli people to achieving native title recognition, with the first initial claim (WAD 6280 of 1998) lodged with the National Native Title Tribunal on 29 September 1998. Yesterday's court hearing saw representatives from the Federal Court, State and Federal government, and Traditional Owners come together to witness this historic occasion.

Yesterday's judgement by Justice Barker saw an agreement reached between the Nyiyaparli community, the State of Western Australia and other respondents in relation to the land and waters covered by their application.

Justice Barker congratulated the Nyiyaparli Applicants on their native title determination.

"The Court also commends the legal and other representatives of all the parties who have worked assiduously to help produce this outcome."

The celebration was facilitated by Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC), the Native Title Representative Body for the Pilbara Region, and Karlka Nyiyaparli Aboriginal Corporation (KNAC), the Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC).

Traditional Owner and Karlka Nyiyaparli Aboriginal Corporation member Bradley Hall said, "It has been almost 20 years leading us to this day and I am proud of this achievement as we have worked together to overcome the challenges faced along the way."

"Unfortunately some of our elders were not here to celebrate this milestone today but it's because of them that we are celebrating our native title recognition here at Coondiner Pool," Mr Hall said.

The Determination Area covers approximately 40,000 square kilometres of Nyiyaparli traditional country and encompasses the town of Newman, the Aboriginal communities of Jigalong and Parnpajinya, several pastoral leases and significant mining operations.

While all Country is important to the Nyiyaparli people, areas of particular cultural and environmental significance within the Determination Area include: the Fortescue Marsh, Weeli Wollie Creek, Coondiner Creek, Caramulla Creek and Savoury Creek. Parts of the Hamersley, Chichester and Ophthalmia Ranges and the Fortescue and Oakover Rivers are also major features of the area.

Within this Determination Area are places of particular significance to the Nyiyaparli people, including ceremonial sites, songlines, permanent pools and natural resources.

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation Chief Executive Officer Simon Hawkins said, "The native title recognition of the Nyiyaparli people at yesterday's Federal Court hearing is also a good time to reflect on this 20 year journey and the great outcome that has been achieved."

“We are proud to have been the Native Title Representative Body working with the Niyiyaparli people, and the Federal and State governments, to achieve a successful determination.”

“Congratulations to everyone involved for their hard work, and Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation looks forward to continuing to work with the Niyiyaparli community,” Mr Hawkins said.

All quotes from Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation must be attributed to Mr Simon Hawkins, CEO Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation.

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.

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