



## Palyku people celebrate native title win

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*Photo: The Federal Court's Justice Reeves with Palyku Applicants at the Native Title determination, Wild Dog Creek, Newman WA.*

It was a long time coming to achieving native title recognition for the Palyku people and yesterday was an emotional occasion for many as the Federal Court formally recognised the Applicants as native title holders over a determination area of 9,308 square kilometres.

The on-Country court hearing was held at Wild Dog Creek – approximately 155 kilometres north of Newman, WA. Representatives from the Federal Court, State and Federal governments, and Traditional Owners came together to witness this historic occasion.

Yesterday's judgement by Justice John Reeves reflects the agreement of the Palyku people, the State of Western Australia and other respondents in relation to the land and waters covered by their Application.



Justice John Reeves congratulated the Palyku people on their native title consent determination.

“I would like to congratulate everyone who has worked so hard to achieve this determination of native title claim, and to make it the significant occasion that it is.

“This determination of native title does not create native title in this determination area, instead it marks the recognition by the Australian legal system of the Palyku people’s long held pre-existing native title in this land, according to the traditions and customs of the Palyku people since long before this determination by the court,” Justice Reeves said.

Traditional Owner David Milroy said, “This Determination means a lot to the Palyku people. It’s been a long journey to get to here. Today’s native title recognition is a historic event, and we acknowledge and celebrate this important milestone.”

It has been a 20-year long journey for the Palyku people to achieving native title recognition, with the first initial claim (WAD 6287 of 1998), lodged with the National Native Title Tribunal on 15 June 1998.

The determination area encompasses several pastoral leases, mining tenements, roads and reserves as well as portions of the important Woodstock and Yandeyarra reserves.

While all Country is important to the Palyku people, areas of particular cultural and environmental significance within the Determination Area include: Woodstock, Gallery Hill, Cadjeput Creek, Bonney Downs, Noreena Downs, Hillside and Redmont Spring.

Following the hearing, the traditional owners celebrated the recognition. The celebration was facilitated by Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC), the Native Title Representative Body for the Pilbara Region.

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation Chief Executive Officer Simon Hawkins said, “It’s been a long journey to achieving recognition for the Palyku people. I congratulate the Applicants on successfully securing this recognition of their traditional rights and interests after two decades of perseverance and commitment. This would not be possible without the dedicated support of the YMAC team, the Federal Court and State representatives,” Mr Hawkins said.



**Yamatji Marlpa**  
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



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

“Congratulations to everyone involved for their hard work,” he said.

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

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#### **About Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation**

Proudly celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2019, 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 20 Traditional Owner groups - 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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