



6th Annual On-Country Bush Meeting at Yule River

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Photo: 2018 Annual On-Country Bush Meeting at Yule River

The 6th Annual On-Country Bush Meeting at Yule River on 24 and 25 July will once again bring together Traditional Owners from across Western Australia to discuss common issues that affect them and their communities.

Wednesday, 24 July supports Traditional Owners in their cultural decision-making to develop solution-based responses to issues. The day will conclude with a celebration of custom and culture including traditional corroboree performed by different Traditional Owner groups.

Thursday, 25 July welcomes external delegates from State and Federal Government, and other development agencies, to witness the resolutions passed by the community and address the concerns raised.

As the event organiser, Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) is excited to be welcoming politicians to the event including Hon Ben Wyatt, Treasurer; Minister for Finance, Aboriginal Affairs, Lands; Senator Sue Lines; and Hon Terry Redman, Nationals spokesperson for Aboriginal Affairs and Member for Warren-Blackwood.

YMAC Chief Executive Officer, Simon Hawkins, said “The event has become an important platform for ensuring Traditional Owners remain at the centre of decisions affecting them and their communities. It is one of YMAC’s proudest activities to be able to facilitate, and we are really looking forward to also providing the same support at the first Yamatji on-Country meeting in September this year.”

“These meetings provide a forum that empower Traditional Owners and enable them to connect with politicians and bureaucrats to discuss key issues,” Mr Hawkins said.



Since last year's Annual On-Country Bush Meeting at Yule River, the community-appointed leadership group, Pilbara Aboriginal Voice (*Kakurrka Muri*) (PAV), has been steadfastly progressing its agenda. PAV Co-Chairs, Danny Brown and Linda Dridi, are looking forward to updating the broader community at the event, informing all in attendance of the groups' outcomes delivered to-date.

"The meetings at Yule River allow us to showcase what can be achieved when Traditional Owners are given a meaningful platform to voice the needs of their people and communities; and offer an opportunity for government representatives to genuinely listen. By changing the way Pilbara Aboriginal people and government – at all levels – engage and work together, there is real potential for significant differences to be made. It is so important for us to improve how we communicate, collaborate and implement such change, and I am excited to see what can be accomplished as we continue to do just that," Mr Brown said.

MEDIA ATTENDANCE: All members of the media are invited to attend the Yule River meeting on day two: Thursday, 25 July 2019, 9.00am – 4pm.

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

All PAV quotes to be attributed to Mr Danny Brown, Co-Chair, Pilbara Aboriginal Voice.

About Yule River Bush Meetings

Meetings held at Yule River are historic, having been organised by Aboriginal people in the vast Pilbara region for decades.

The dry river bed off the North West Coastal Highway, just south of Port Hedland, is seen as a place where people from different language groups can come together to discuss common issues affecting Aboriginal communities across the region.

The meetings stemmed from the actions taken in the lead up to the 1946 Pilbara Strike, when Aboriginal people held secret meetings in remote bush locations to plan an ambitious three-year walk off by Aboriginal pastoral workers who were living on cattle stations in conditions of virtual slavery. Pilbara Aboriginal people continued in their efforts to advocate for improved conditions and outcomes by organising bush meetings.

During the land rights era, from the late-1970s, Yule River became the focal point for such gatherings which were often attended by up to 2,000 Aboriginal people from all over the Pilbara. At this time, "Old Man Parker" (born Herbert), was the Pilbara representative for the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee, the first national body elected by Aboriginal people, and introduced by the Whitlam Government.

Mr Parker presided over these meetings on the river's sandy banks as Aboriginal people from all over the Pilbara region gathered to talk about lands trust business, housing complaints, and land rights.

Many important initiatives have been borne from Yule River meetings, with both concerns and solutions coming directly from Pilbara Aboriginal people; and with government expected to attend to hear and address their concerns.

Through the efforts of then YMAC Co-Chairperson, Mrs Doris Eaton (whose father was a key player in the 1946 Pilbara Strike), and the YMAC Pilbara Regional Committee, the Yule River meetings recommenced in 2014.

All language groups from across the region are invited to attend these meetings and share their concerns.

Much like they were decades ago, gatherings at Yule River are an important opportunity for a diverse range of Aboriginal voices to be heard.

About Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation

Proudly celebrating its 25th 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.

For interviews please contact:

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