

First Annual Yamatji On-Country Meeting

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Photo: Amangu Country, photo credit J Kalpers

The very first annual Yamatji On-Country Meeting at Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community Aboriginal Corporation is being held on 20 and 21 September. This unique event will bring together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people from across Western Australia to discuss common social issues that affect them and their communities.

Friday, 20 September supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in their cultural decision-making to develop solution-based responses to issues. The day will conclude with a celebration of live music and cultural performances by different groups.

Saturday, 21 September 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 coordinator, Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) is excited to be welcoming politicians to the event including Senator Sue Lines; Hon Terry Redman, Nationals spokesperson for Aboriginal Affairs and Member for Warren-Blackwood; and Hon Laurie Graham, Member for the Agricultural Region.

YMAC Co-Chairperson Yamatji Region, Mr Peter Windie said it was important to focus as a community on social issues and speak as a collective to gain greater traction for government support and understanding.

“Yamatji On-Country is about the community and the people. It gives us a chance to come together to talk about the day to day issues in our communities, and have those concerns heard directly from our own mouths by government,” Mr Windie said

“We are also going to have the future of our communities attending as we welcome high school students to join in, so young people can participate and add to the voice being heard.”

YMAC Chief Executive Officer, Simon Hawkins, said YMAC felt privileged to be in a position to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people to be heard on issues affecting them.

“This is the very first gathering of this nature held in and for the Yamatji Region and YMAC is really proud to be able to offer support and coordination skills to the region, like we do for the Yule River meetings in the Pilbara.

“We want to support a strong regional voice that can advocate to Government on positive change.

“We have seen that there is real benefit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people to have the opportunity to have face to face discussions about the issues around policy reform and to directly negotiate with government about how to make improvements. These meetings have the potential to provide a regular forum to empower Aboriginal people and enable them to connect with politicians and policy makers to discuss key issues,” Mr Hawkins said.

MEDIA ATTENDANCE: All members of the media are asked to RSVP interest to attend by Wednesday 18 September.

Media passes will be issued to attend day two: Saturday, 21 September 2019, 9.00am – 4pm.

All YMAC quotes to be attributed to Mr Simon Hawkins, CEO Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation and Mr Peter Windie Co-Chairperson Yamatji Region.

About Yamatji On-Country Meeting

2019 is the first time that Yamatji On-Country is being coordinated and is an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people from the region to come together to discuss non-native title issues.

Coordinated by YMAC, the regional gathering for Yamatji On-Country has been inspired by the annual On-Country Bush Meeting at Yule River. The 6th annual Bush Meeting for Pilbara Aboriginal people and observers, was held in July 2019, and has grown from around 50 attendees in its first year to more than 400 over two days. It has also established a coordinated group called the Pilbara Aboriginal Voice (PAV) that has been endorsed by State and Federal officials to continue to advocate on issues following the event.

Yamatji On-Country provides an opportunity for relationship building and a Yamatji regional voice to address the issues affecting the community, such as language preservation, housing, health, education and the welfare of children.

All language groups from across the region are invited to attend these meetings, share their concerns and present solutions for change.

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 around 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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