

YMAC response to National Indigenous Times 16 October 2020 story.

MEDIA RELEASE: 19 October 2020

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) welcomed the Inquiry into the destruction of 46,000-year-old caves at the Juukan Gorge in the Pilbara region of Western Australia by the Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia.

To address the power imbalance and inequity faced by Traditional Owners when negotiating what happens on their Country, YMAC has for close to a decade advocated for legislative reform. YMAC welcomes the Inquiry's scrutiny of Western Australia's *Aboriginal Heritage Act* (1972) and related laws.

YMAC is committed to ensuring Traditional Owners have a greater voice in the management and mining of their land during negotiations and throughout the entire lifecycle of a project, including the right of veto. Success will occur when everyone is focussed on this outcome.

YMAC has participated in the Inquiry through written submission and through a public hearing with the Committee on Tuesday 13 October. CEO Simon Hawkins' opening statement to the Committee from this hearing was published on the YMAC website (www.ymac.org.au) on 13 October.

YMAC's statement and its submission to the Inquiry contain the relevant facts, and is not accurately reflected in the National Indigenous Times (NIT) 16 October story.

YMAC requests the NIT refer to these documents and make corrections.

The corporation will continue to participate in the formal processes of the Inquiry until its conclusion and is happy to respond to further questions from the Committee as they finalise their report.

As YMAC was not a party to the agreement between PKKP AC and Rio Tinto, YMAC is not commenting to media outside of the inquiry process.

No complaints have been made to the YMAC Board on this matter.

All quotes to be attributed to Mrs Natalie Parker Co-Chairperson – Pilbara Region, Board of Directors, Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation.

About Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) is the Native Title Representative Body (NTRB) for what are described as the Pilbara and Geraldton regions of Western Australia. YMAC is run by an Aboriginal Board of Directors, representing several native title groups (each of whom have their own language, culture, traditions and protocols). YMAC provides a range of services, including native title claim and future act representation, heritage services, community and economic development assistance, and natural resource management support.

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