

Yamatji regional gathering to discuss heritage protection, language preservation and more

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Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation is proud to present the inaugural Yamatji On Country meeting on Wednesday 13 and Thursday 14 October in Carnarvon.

The two-day meeting intends to bring together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people from across the Mid West, Murchison, and Gascoyne regions to discuss issues affecting them and their communities, then discuss these issues and shared solutions with decision makers from government.

This year the focus will be on the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill* (ACHB) - which the State Government plans to push through Parliament this year - and language preservation.

The State Government has made amendments to the ACHB released in September 2020 for consultation. Yamatji On Country presents opportunity for the community to learn more about what these latest changes to the Bill mean. Importantly, it provides opportunity to then discuss concerns, and any community action needed to ensure the new laws can protect and preserve Australia's unique and globally-recognised cultural heritage.

YMAC Co-Chairperson - Yamatji Region, Mr Peter Windie said the event is about people coming together and gaining insight into the proposed Bill.

"We want Yamatji on Country to offer everyone the opportunity to gain a clear understanding of what is happening with the new heritage Bill, and what it means for protecting cultural heritage in the Yamatji region.

"In recent years many new PBCs have been established following native title determination. The new Bill proposes they will have a key role in protecting heritage and so it is important our people know and understand what is being proposed by Government.

"We also want to ensure people have a chance to get involved and be more informed about other important community issues, such as language preservation. We are very happy that Rosie Sitorus from Irrawangga Language Centre will be joining us to present and participate in the forum."

Day one supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to discuss and identify solutions for cultural heritage protection and language preservation. On the evening of day one invited parliamentarians and other guests will join everyone for a meal and a celebration of live music and cultural performances.

Day two welcomes invited ministers and government representatives to witness the resolutions passed by the community and join the conversation with the community.

Among the special guests attending will be Western Australia's first female Aboriginal Senator Dorinda Cox and Senator Sue Lines of the Australian Labor Party. Pat Dodson, Senator for Western Australia, and Shadow Assistant Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders has sent his apologies that he is unable to attend due to urgent and unforeseen Parliamentary commitments and said he is disappointed and was very much looking forward to the event.

At the time of this release, YMAC had not received a response to its invitation to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon Stephen Dawson to attend the meeting.

Yamatji On-Country Meeting will be held in Carnarvon at Gwoonwardu Mia – Gascoyne Aboriginal Heritage and Cultural Centre.

YMAC is also proud to be supporting the ‘Walk for Cultural Heritage,’ set to be staged in Perth on 23 October. The Walk is intended to show Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s opposition to the proposed *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill 2021* that will be pushed through Parliament this year.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make sure we get this new law right for the benefit of all Australians, and we need your help now.

To register for the Walk and for more information please visit www.protectaboriginalheritagewa.org.au

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All quotes to be attributed to Mr Peter Windie, Co-Chairperson – Yamatji, Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation.

Pronunciation Guide:

Yamatji – Yam-aht-gee

Marlpa – Marl-pah

Irrawangga – I-rah-wong-gah

Gwoonwardu – Gwoon-wah-doo

Mia – My-ah

About Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation

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

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