

YMAC NEWS

News from
Yamatji
Marlpa
Aboriginal
Corporation

ISSUE 43 | September 2021



Save the Dates!

Yamatji on Country: 13-14 October
Walk for Heritage: 23 October

Yamatji ARM: 27 November
Pilbara ARM: 19 November



Yamatji Marlpa
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



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Cover: Nyangumarta Elder and cultural advisor Helen Badal making damper at Yule River.

Photo: Jose Kalpers.

Warning: Aboriginal people are warned that this publication may contain images of deceased people.

Welcome to issue 43 of YMAC News



Ms Natalie Parker,
Co-Chairperson - Pilbara Region



Mr Peter Windie,
Co-Chairperson - Yamatji Region

In this edition we:

- Provide updates on current law reform and policy work affecting Aboriginal people
- Celebrate some worthy winners and nominees
- Share images from Pilbara Strike anniversary events

YMAC posts regular updates on current news and issues affecting Native Title and Traditional Owners. Please make sure you are following us on LinkedIn and are subscribed to our emails.

Visit ymac.org.au to stay up to date or sign up.

We are always on the lookout for the most interesting and informative news. If you have stories or photographs you would like to share please reach out to us by emailing editor@ymac.org.au.

News from the Acting CEO

Welcome to issue 43 of YMAC News.

It is a pleasure to introduce this issue while our CEO Simon Hawkins takes a hard-earned break.

We have been busy since our last edition of YMAC News, with many meetings, events and projects finally coming to completion after experiencing delays, or postponement due to COVID-19 restrictions.

In April YMAC Board Directors were invited to a special tour of the WA Museum Boola Bardip. The timing of the visit coincided with the final days of the ground-breaking, internationally renowned special exhibition, *Songlines: Tracking the Seven Sisters*. This wonderful exhibition shares a story close to the hearts of Aboriginal people across the Country. YMAC Directors were warmly welcomed by WA Museum CEO Alec Coles, then guided on a tour of the Ngalang Koort Boodja Wirn Gallery and other areas of the museum by the Anthropology and Archaeology team and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team. Many family and community members from the Pilbara and Yamatji regions feature in exhibits throughout the museum – for example the Pilbara Strike. Our Directors had many questions and great discussions with staff, and even shared additional information that could be added to the museum displays.

The 7th Annual On-Country Bush Meeting at Yule River took place on 25 and 26 August. Many Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders from across the Pilbara came together to discuss the critical issue of heritage protection. This year the focus was specifically on the upcoming *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill*. You can read about the outcomes of the meeting in this newsletter.

As we finalise this edition of YMAC News, we are looking forward to the inaugural Yamatji On Country meeting. The Yamatji Regional Office team has worked hard to secure a new time and venue following postponement of the May 2021 date due to uncertainty around COVID. Find out more in the Yamatji Regional update.



Nick Kimber,
Acting YMAC Chief Executive Officer

In August YMAC recommenced engagement on the important Wadjemup Project. Our Board of Directors were invited to meet with Whadjuk Noongar representatives and key government stakeholders on Wadjemup (Rottnest Island), to learn more on the current status of the project and discuss how Aboriginal people from within our representative regions can get involved in this important truth telling initiative.



Boola Bardip WA Museum Visit

Of course, our Legal and Research teams continue to support several groups with their native title work, including resolving outstanding native title claims and finalising some ground-breaking agreements.

We hope WA continues to maintain its current freedoms and remain relatively virus free as more people are vaccinated. If you have been thinking about getting vaccinated but are still unsure there are some useful resources at healthywa.wa.gov.au to help you decide. Search under Coronavirus-information-for-Aboriginal-people.

And finally, with AGM season upon us YMAC has its two Annual Regional Meetings planned for Pilbara and Yamatji Regions. See pages four and five for details. Enjoy.

Nick Kimber, Acting CEO

Pilbara region news

Pilbara Annual Regional Meeting

Friday 19 November 2021

9.00am for a STRICT 9.30am start.

Walkabout Hotel - 944 Great Northern Hwy,
Port Hedland Lunch included. Look out for
notices which will be sent to Members.

In our last edition of YMAC news, we reported on resolutions made at the 2020 Annual Regional Meeting (ARM) for the Pilbara Region. Attending Members resolved to form a collective to identify ways in which Pilbara Aboriginal people can work together to advocate for stronger protections and rights in the draft *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill*.



Attendees at ACHB meeting on 11 June in Hedland

In June and July YMAC facilitated three meetings involving the collective. In Karratha (10 June) and Port Hedland (11 June and 14 July), Prescribed Bodies Corporate, Members and the broader community were invited to learn more about the Bill and discuss the concerns and ideas for collective-action in relation. YMAC's Projects Director Kirsty Anderson and Legal Counsel Carolyn Tan led discussions on the amendments to the draft Bill since it was released for consultation in 2020. At each meeting attendees shared

strong concerns about making sure their irreplaceable cultural heritage remains protected, and that Aboriginal people are at the forefront of decisions about what happens on Country. They also discussed ways to keep their community informed and raise awareness of concerns with decision-makers and government.

The June and July meetings provided great feedback to YMAC on how to present the Yule River meeting in August, and it was valuable to see everyone there so actively involved in this year's discussions.

Learn more about YMAC's advocacy work on the campaign on page 10

Yamatji region news

Yamatji Annual Regional Meeting

Saturday 27 November 2021

9.00am for a STRICT 9.30am start.

Irwin Rec Centre - Ridley Street, Port Denison.

Lunch included. Look out for notices which will be sent to Members.

Our Yamatji Regional Committee is very pleased that Yamatji On Country is finally happening this October.

The meeting will be on 13 and 14 October in Carnarvon, at Gwoonwardu Mia - Gascoyne Aboriginal Heritage and Cultural Centre, 146 Robinson Street Carnarvon.

YMAC's aim in presenting Yamatji on Country is to support critical discussions amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders across the Mid West, Gascoyne and Murchison regions. The meeting intends to provide a platform for people and groups within our Yamatji community to come together as one regional voice, to talk about important issues and come up with

grassroots solutions that can be presented to government to advocate for change.

Key items on this year's agenda include, the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill*, and Aboriginal language preservation.

We look forward to strong participation from the Yamatji region and some good, solid discussions with invited government representatives as they join in on the evening of Day 1 and all of Day 2.

There will be entertainment on the evening of Day 1 of this alcohol and drug free event. Please note YMAC is unable to provide travel and meal allowances for this meeting.

Visit ymac.org.au for more details or contact our Geraldton regional office on 08 9965 6222



FIRST YAMATJI ON-COUNTRY MEETING 13 & 14 OCTOBER 2021

GWOONWARDU MIA

Gascoyne Aboriginal Heritage and Cultural Centre 146 Robinson Street Carnarvon

Wednesday, 13 October 9.30am start

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Day - discuss cultural heritage protection and language preservation

Wednesday night entertainment from 5:30pm

Thursday 14 October 9:30am start

- Invited ministers & government guests join the conversation

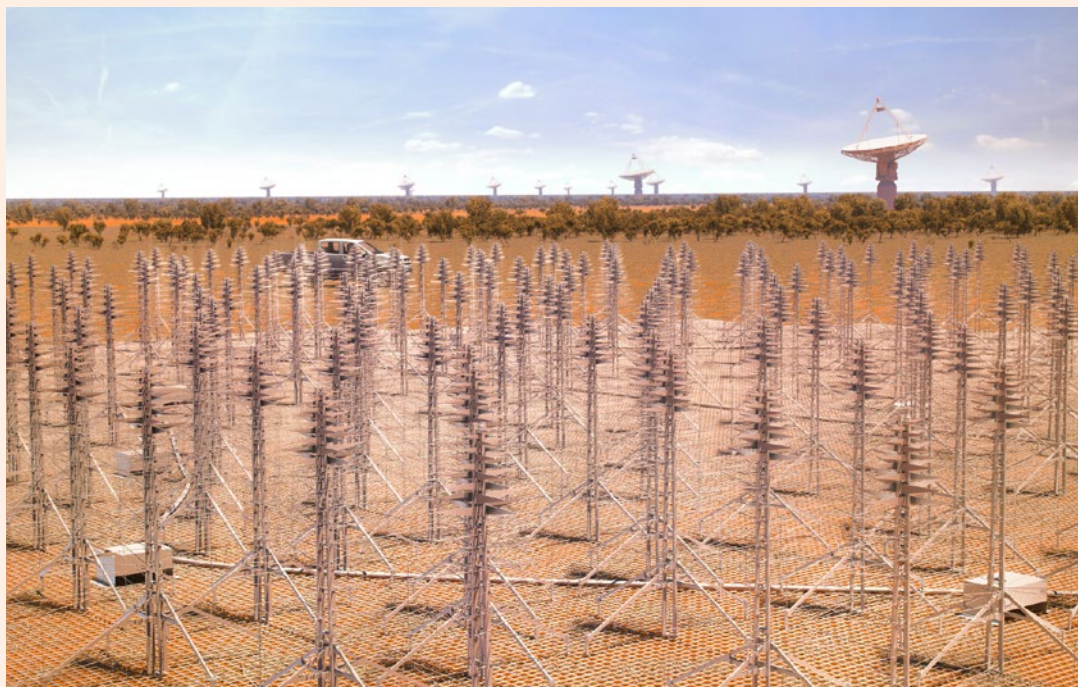
Lunch will be provided both days • Alcohol and drug free event
YMAC is unable to pay Travel Allowance

For more information contact YMAC on: 08 9965 6222

ymac.org.au

Claim News

Engaging with Indigenous communities for better outcomes



Artist's impression of the SKA-Low telescope in Australia. These dipole antennas, which will number 131,072, will survey the radio sky in frequencies as low as 50Mhz. In the background are dishes of the ASKAP radio telescope, an SKA precursor.

The Square Kilometre Array (SKA) project is an international effort to build the world's largest radio telescope, with eventually over a square kilometre (one million square metres) of collecting area. As one of the largest scientific endeavours in history, the SKA will bring together a wealth of the world's finest scientists, engineers and policy makers to bring the project to fruition.

The SKA will eventually use thousands of dishes and up to a million low-frequency antennas that will enable astronomers to monitor the sky in unprecedented detail and survey the entire sky much faster than any system currently in existence.

Both South Africa's Karoo region and Western Australia's Murchison Shire were chosen as co-hosting locations for many scientific and technical reasons. South Africa's Karoo will host the core of the high and mid-frequency dishes, ultimately extending over the African continent and Australia's Murchison Shire will host the low-frequency antennas.

Whilst 14 member countries are the cornerstone of the SKA, around 100 organisations across about 20 countries are participating in the design and development of the SKA.

Respectful dialogue and engagement with Indigenous communities has also been a hallmark of the project, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the San Council of South Africa and SARAo and in principle support for the project from the Wajarri Yamatji people, the Traditional Owners of the land on which the SKA-Low telescope will be built.

The project is committed to working with local stakeholders, and in particular Indigenous communities, to ensure that they also benefit economically from the SKA project alongside other stakeholders nationally and internationally.

For more information visit skatelescope.org

Social Surroundings – critical to caring for Country

Environmental approvals are assessed according to a number of key factors, one being 'Social Surroundings'. These include aesthetics, culture, economic, physical and biological factors (that are important to affected people) that can be impacted by a development. So that it can protect the environment from significant harm, the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) considers Social Surroundings as part of the approval process.

YMAC is frequently asked by our Traditional Owner clients to assist with a range of activities covered under the *Environmental Protection Act* (EP Act) such as:

- understanding referrals under the EP Act
- developing responses to public environmental reviews under the EP Act
- co-designing Social Surrounding consultation methods for proponents to support their submissions.

YMAC advocates that Social Surroundings engagement focuses on the priorities of Traditional Owners' needs. This has included On-Country activities such as site visits, Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) fieldtrips, and cultural awareness training.

We work with Traditional Owner clients and provide advice about managing cultural heritage, facilitation and logistics, community engagement, and reporting. As Socials Surroundings are looking to the broader picture of impacts to the landscape, YMAC has also been able to recommend other independent specialists to work with groups, who can provide advice on the more technical aspects of development proposals.

The opportunity for creative, new suggestions and being able to discuss management solutions directly with proponents while on the ground has been valuable and informative for both our clients and YMAC team members and is part of our ongoing approach to working together to care for Country.

To gain mining and development approvals, a project developer is legally required to provide evidence of an environmental assessment under the *EP Act*, as part of their development application.

This process makes sure a proponent completes their investigations and studies while minimising environmental impacts. The EPA oversees the process and reports to the Minister for Environment, who is authorised to approve a proposal made by a proponent.



What is a proponent?

In the native title context, a 'proponent' refers to a person, organisation or company that proposes a particular project on land that is subject to a native title claim or determination, e.g. a mining company wanting to undertake exploration for minerals or a government agency such as Western Power planning to undertake work relating to power on Country.

Depending on the nature of the project, and how it is contemplated in the *Native Title Act*, a proponent may be required by law to consult with the relevant Traditional Owners and to enter into an agreement as part of their project proposal. The agreement may deal with land access, Aboriginal heritage matters and/or potential financial benefits to the native title holders (including potential employment and business opportunities to participate in the project), amongst other matters.

Report from Yule River

At the 7th Annual Yule River Bush Meeting, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people voted to reject support of the soon to be introduced *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill (2021)* (the Bill), essentially as there was no right to say “No” to the destruction of their heritage and the amendments do not improve on current cultural heritage protection laws.

The 2021 meeting held on Wednesday 25 and Thursday 26 August, focused discussions on the Bill and heritage protection. Day one brought together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across the Pilbara to receive the latest information available on the proposed legislation and workshop the key concerns they wanted to present to visitors on day two.

Kariyarra Elder Alfred Barker once again chaired the meeting, with Danny Brown (Nyamal) and Raylene Button (Kariyarra) providing support for the group discussions and recording decisions.

While the first day was unfortunately cut short due to a fire up-river, the meeting regrouped at the start of day two to finalise a list of resolutions to present to visiting government representatives who joined later in the morning.

Guest presentations on day two included:

- Mr Richard Aspinall, Regional Manager from the National Indigenous Australians Agency, representing The Hon Ken Wyatt, Federal Minister for Indigenous Australians; and
- Mr Ben Harvey, Executive Director – Heritage Services from Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage and Mr Cesar Rodriguez, Principal Policy Officer from Department of Premier and Cabinet, presenting on the Bill.

Attendees were disappointed with the absence of WA Aboriginal Affairs Minister Stephen Dawson, MLA - who was unable to attend due to a date clash - and that he did not send a representative in his place.

Photos: Some of the moments captured at Yule River



Photography: Jose Kalpers





After a question-and-answer session with each of the presenters the meeting concluded with Pilbara Aboriginal people presenting their resolutions, and some actions they will be undertaking:

- Aboriginal people of the Pilbara stand with a united voice.
- Support for the draft ACHB is rejected because there is no right to say no to the destruction of their heritage.
- The meeting expressed disappointment that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Stephen Dawson did not attend the Yule River On-Country Bush Meeting but was visiting the Pilbara the next day.
- The delegation undertook a local march, the day following in Port Hedland, and spoke to Minister Dawson.
- People will join the Protect Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Walk in Perth on Saturday 23 October 2021 with others from around the State to demonstrate their lack of support for the proposed Bill. See more on this on page 10.
- Meeting Members will lobby their local members of Parliament to support Aboriginal people's concerns being heard, recognised and considered.
- A united delegation to represent the Pilbara will be formed, with the intention to partner with Yamatji region representatives.



YMAC will continue to support these community conversations and looks forward to helping progress these into actions into 2022.



Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill update

Since the 2021 WA State Election in March, YMAC has continued to advocate for changes needed to address the imbalance of power in the State Government's proposed *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill 2021* (the Bill).

Our activity has included working with partner organisations from the WA Alliance of Native Title Representative Bodies and Service Providers (the Alliance) and the National Native Title Council to advocate for Aboriginal people to be fully engaged in conversations about amendments to the Bill before it is presented to Parliament.

YMAC has advocated that Aboriginal people hold the authority and have a strong cultural responsibility to protect and care for Country and significant sites. The Bill will not stop harm and destruction of significant heritage sites and it should not be introduced to Parliament in its current form. Key concerns on the Bill remain:

- The final say over what happens to Aboriginal sites rests with the Minister – ultimately this is the same as a Section 18 in the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972.
- The Bill requires a giant leap of faith that miners, pastoralists and others will be prepared to reach agreements with Traditional Owners that avoid damaging Australia's cultural heritage.
- Among other legal and cultural concerns, the draft Bill fails to meet the standards set out by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and does not represent 'best practice' in the field of cultural heritage management or protection.

Walk for Heritage - Sat 23 October

Aboriginal people from across WA and their allies will come together in Perth to walk for the protection of the globally significant Aboriginal cultural heritage in WA.

Sign up at
ProtectAboriginalHeritageWA.org.au

YMAC actions on the Bill include:

- Writing to and meeting with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs re concerns about consultation.
- Conducting consultation meetings with PBCs, members and community members to attend meetings in Carnarvon (14 June) and Geraldton (29 July), as well as in Karratha (10 June) and Port Hedland (11 June and 14 July). Discussions covered:
 - outstanding concerns about the draft Bill that may negatively impact Traditional Owners if the draft Bill in the form distributed in 2020 goes through.
 - actions to achieve equity for Traditional Owners in the new laws.
 - alternate solutions being presented to Government for consideration.
- Writing to the Minister in July 2021 to advise on concerns within our regions about the Bill.
- Releasing media statements about Aboriginal people's concerns, see YMAC's website for more.
- Inviting the Minister to attend and speak at the On Country Bush Meeting at Yule River and Yamatji On Country in Carnarvon.
- Launching a new website dedicated the heritage protection with Alliance partners and NNTC - ProtectAboriginalHeritageWA.org.au.
- On 18 August YMAC attended the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) stakeholder briefing in Perth on latest amendments to the Bill. DPC staff outlined the approximately 100 amendments to the Bill. In a media statement in response to the Bill issued that day, YMAC Co-Chair Yamatji Region, Mr Peter Windie (who attended the presentation) said it was disappointing to see how little information was made available to show how - in practice - heritage will be able to be protected by the owners of Australia's Cultural Heritage in Western Australia.



Discussion on the Bill at YMAC's Geraldton consultation

If you or your friends cannot attend the walk, there are other ways you can make an impact. **The Alliance has launched an online Hub – ProtectAboriginalHeritageWA.org.au**

It has all the information and tools you need to find out what has happened, is still happening, what will be happening, and how you can participate from wherever you are. To take action now, scan this QR Code with your smartphone camera and go straight to the Hub.



Native Title Act update

2021 Native Title Act Changes

Last February the *Native Title Legislation Amendment Act 2021* was passed by Commonwealth government. The changes focus on streamlining and making things easier for PBC's to carry out their functions.

Some of the changes include

- PBCs no longer have to consult with NTRB/SPs when making a native title decision
- PBCs must follow membership rules under the CATSI Act, (eg. directors no longer have the discretion to refuse or cancel membership – if the criteria for membership is satisfied),
- PBCs will have to amend their Rule Book to allow for a dispute resolution process between common law holders and PBCs (directors and/or members).

Refer to nativetitle.org.au/tags/native-title-act for further detail and niaa.gov.au/resource-centre/indigenous-affairs for information on 'Changes to Native Title legislation affecting Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs)'.

NAIDOC awareness

This year's national NAIDOC theme, 'Heal Country!' called for everyone to continue to recognise the uniqueness of our lands, our waters, our sacred sites and seek greater protections for Aboriginal cultural heritage.

At Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC), 'Heal Country' perfectly describes the goal that our work aims to achieve. During NAIDOC Week we shared what 'Heal Country' meant to some of our members and important advocates.



"To me it means that we have a place in history but also a place in our future that we need to make sure we carry on. To preserve our cultural history and our traditions we need to recognise them, respect them, teach them and carry on our traditions with the assistance from people from outside. We need that assistance as we are minority in our Country and we need help be able to continue our practices and protect our cultural heritage from our own perspective together. In collaboration with Western society, we can do this. We say if you look after Country, Country will look after you."

Sean McNeair - Malgana man from Gutharraguda

"Heal Country, to me, means it is time to give the land rest. Ngayin kuta ngarnarna - our life span is short; our breath and time is running out. For how can we heal when we have unrest, how can we heal when we don't allow for resting time in the land for revival of plants, animals, water, seasons and people."

Raylene Button - Kariyarra - Palyku Traditional Owner



Raylene Button speaking about the need for change at this year's Yule On-Country Bush meeting

YMAC receives NAIDOC award

On Saturday, 10 July, YMAC was delighted to be announced as a winner of a 'Hedland 2021 NAIDOC Award', under the category 'Heal Country'.

It was an honour for YMAC to be recognised for its support of Traditional Owners in caring for Country, as well as the advocacy work we have progressed over several years to strengthen Western Australia's heritage protection laws.

Much like what was described in the award category description, YMAC is proud to be seen as "looking for significant and lasting change".

The awards were coordinated and presented by Hedland Aboriginal Strong Leaders and Julyardi Aboriginal Corporation, with the presentation held during the NAIDOC Week Closing Ceremony at South Hedland Town Square.

Spending time learning on Country with the various Traditional Owners we work with and support is so important for YMAC staff, in a professional capacity and as ordinary people sharing this world.

YMAC Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff spent time on Baiyungu Country in May, with the Traditional Owners of Nyinggulu (Ningaloo). They learned just some of the wealth of knowledge the Baiyungu people hold about this ancient landscape that is Western Australia.

The experience began at the Ningaloo Discovery Centre with a Welcome to Country by Baiyungu Traditional Owners, Hazel Walgar and Paul Barron. It was followed by a yarning circle and Q & A also with YMAC Aboriginal staff.

Over the next two days YMAC staff spent time with their Baiyungu guides to share knowledge of significant areas and plants.

The journey began with a visit to a lookout at Warnangura, the Baiyungu name for Cape Range which has been culturally significant to Traditional Owners for more than 30,000 years.



Photo captured by YMAC staff member while on Country

Staff then got to see some of the work that has begun by Nganhurra Thanardi Garrbu Aboriginal Corporation (NTGAC) as the Joint Managers of the Ningaloo Coastal Reserve. Some of their projects focus on creating awareness for visitors of their surroundings that will help to support and protect the significant environmental and cultural areas in the reserve.

At Yardie Creek the group again got to spend time yarning and learning through this about the similarities and differences between adjacent land groups. For example, how they work together to care for Country to keep the balance in food sources; the different groupings of languages and names.

Staff Cultural Awareness Training – the importance of learning on Country



Staff spending time on Country with Baiyungu Traditional Owners

Highlights from YMAC staff feedback

"It is always an extremely special and moving experience to listen to Traditional Owners talk about their Country and Culture"

"It was a wonderful and humbling experience."

"Aunty Hazel calling out to Country at Charles Knife Gorge and swimming in Turquoise Bay were the absolute highlight"

"The Welcome to Country by Hazel was very spiritual and humbling"

"Arriving at the lookout in Cape Range National Park, with Hazel talking to her ancestors and explaining the story of the place. It was a stunning location and view, made more important with the stories from Hazel"

"I believe it [opportunities to engage with Aboriginal People] enhances the individual to gain and learn more about the Traditional Owners of this country we all live and work in"

"It is vital when working for an Aboriginal Corporation that you have a good understanding of the culture and also social issues and other matters that impact and affect their life and culture."

Sounds of the Mid West



Carrum Maroumbine

***Sounds of The Mid West*, launched in May 2020. It is the fourth of nine new regional recording projects supported through the State Government's Contemporary Music Fund, and fourteenth of West Australia Music's (WAM) 'Demos from / Sounds of' series. The project aims to showcase the musical talent, stories, and provide opportunities to artists and sound engineers in the region.**

The *Sounds of The Mid West* recording project provided 10 Mid West artists the opportunity to record their original song with some of WA's best award-winning music producers.

The region-wide talent callout received 57 applications demonstrating the impressive depth of the local music community and demand for recording opportunities. WAM announced the selected artists/acts in September 2020 and the following month undertook recording and producing the final compilation at Geraldton's Queens Park Theatre.

The final compilation was released in April 2021 on digital streaming platforms, limited-edition CD package, and distributed by WAM to local and national radio, industry and the public. It was officially launched in April at Queens Park Theatre, Geraldton with live performances from the featured artists.

YMAC's own Carrum Maroumbine of Nanda and Wajarri Yamatji Country was featured on the compilation after seeing the call-out for submissions on social media in 2020. Carrum has been singing since he could talk, but is a self-taught guitarist having picked up the talent rather late in life at the age of 17.

"My song *"Today I thought of You"* is really about me losing my Dad and realising that I didn't get enough information and knowledge from him before he passed. It wasn't until he was gone and when I was standing on my own that I realised how much important information he had that I could have gained from knowing from a general point of view and culturally." Carrum said.

The *Sounds of The Mid West* was a great community initiative that Carrum believes he has benefited from. He was able to connect with other local artists from around where he lives which has created life-long friendships.

Other local Aboriginal artists were also featured on the compilation including Peter Salmon who wrote and recorded two songs in his native language. Mr Salmon is currently working with former YMAC worker linguist Rosie Sitorus who now works at the Irra Wangga Language Centre and is focussed on Aboriginal language preservation. She also took part in the *Sounds of The Mid West* project and performed at the launch night along with Carrum.

It is clear to see that the project has many connections that have brought local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people together.

Great Northern Football League

Due to COVID-19, YMAC was unable to support the 2020 Great Northern Football League (GNFL) 'Indigenous Round'. However, YMAC honoured its sponsorship pledge to the GNFL for its 2021 Indigenous Round, which took place on the weekend of 17-18 July. YMAC would also like to acknowledge that April 2021 marked the 60th anniversary of the GNFL.

We congratulate all of those involved with the league – from administrators and volunteers, to coaches trainers and players - on this remarkable milestone, and celebrate the significant and invaluable contributions they make to the local community.

2021 Pilbara Community Services Excellence Awards



YMAC's congratulations go to the joint Community Spirit (Volunteer) award winners: Val Walker and Kathy Brooker (pictured with Mrs Parker (far right) and YMAC's Deputy Co-Chairperson, Pilbara Region – Board of Directors, Mrs Doris Eaton (far left).

Photo by Ngaarda Media; Courtesy of Pilbara for Purpose Inc

On Saturday, 19 June, at the Red Earth Arts Precinct in Karratha, the 2021 Pilbara Community Services Excellence Awards' Gala Dinner was held. The awards celebrated the resilience, creativity, collaboration and leadership of both individuals and organisations working in the community services sector across the Pilbara.

YMAC was proud to sponsor the award category "Community Spirit (Volunteer)". When presenting this award on the night, YMAC's Co-Chairperson, Pilbara Region – Board of Directors, Mrs Natalie Parker, acknowledged:

"YMAC chose to sponsor this award in particular, as we feel it is so important to recognise individuals in our community who go above and beyond to help others. These are people who choose to generously and selflessly give their time and energy to support and uplift other people, and whose work positively

impacts the wellbeing of our community overall.

We all share a responsibility in pursuing a bright future for our region and its people, and this is achieved by us working together, supporting one another, and combining our strength, resilience and empowerment to overcome challenges and create opportunities.

The finalists in this category are all excellent examples of people in our community who demonstrate such impressive dedication and commitment, and who each make outstanding contributions to the betterment of the Pilbara region."

Red Country Music Festival



PHOTOS: Pilbara Site Pics

Following the cancellation of the 2020 Red Country Music Festival (RCMF) due to COVID-19, which YMAC had agreed to support, we honoured our original commitment by sponsoring the 2021 RCMF, which was held on Saturday, 5 June.

The sold-out event was organised by Nyiyaparli man, Bradley Hall, and his team, and held at the Red Earth Arts Precinct in Karratha. Along with showcasing talented Pilbara musicians, the line-up also comprised big name acts, such as Adam Brand and Kasey Chambers. Feedback from people who attended the festival has included how well-organised it was, as well as what a great day out it was for music-lovers and families alike.



Footprints for the Future

In 2021, for the first time ever, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) National Native Title Conference and National Indigenous Research Conference were held together on Kurna Country in Adelaide, South Australia (31 May – 4 June). The summit theme – **Footprints for the Future: Tracking our journey together** – set the tone for what was a highly collegial and collaborative event, which provided a valuable forum for attendees to discuss critical and emerging challenges within both the native title and Indigenous research sectors.

As part of the event, YMAC was proud to have our Research Manager, Amy Usher, invited to co-present on the organisation's work in partnership with Robe River Kuruma Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC (RRKAC) in relation to their 'Return of Materials' (RoM) process.

The presentation provided an in-depth account of what is involved when delivering a successful return of what is often highly sensitive cultural information to the appropriate parties, including the many challenges that can be encountered by both Native Title Representative Bodies (NTRBs) and Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs) working in this space. It highlighted the importance of balancing different interests and expectations with statutory functions and ethical obligations; all of which has culminated in YMAC developing a best practice RoM model and related policies.

Reception of the presentation at the conference was positive, with several members of the audience conveying how they found it especially useful and appreciated the honest insights and experiences that were shared throughout.

In response to this feedback, Amy reflected, "It was important to us that we did not gloss over the complexities involved in undertaking projects like this. While they are a critical part of the broader native title process and can be extremely rewarding, it is also a very sensitive space to be working in and the resources required are intensive."

The YMAC/RRKAC summit presentation (as well as the RRKAC case study) can be found on AIATSIS's website: www.aiatsis.gov.au/.

YMAC is proud to report it has also recently been a project partner with AIATSIS for their own 'Returning Native Title Materials' project.

YMAC was approached to work with AIATSIS, as the corporation has been recognised as a sector leader in this emerging field.

To date, YMAC has completed three RoM projects; one of which (RRKAC) became a case study for AIATSIS.

At present, the organisation is partnering with an additional three different RNTBCs – assisting each with a tailored RoM process – and looks forward to working with many other groups on similar projects in the future.

Danjoo Koorliny West Pilbara Tour

With support from YMAC the Pilbara Aboriginal Voice (Kakurrka Muri) (PAV) Danjoo Koorliny West Pilbara Tour was held in May. This initiative involved the Danjoo Koorliny leadership team, in partnership with and hosted by PAV, travelling from Perth to visit the West Pilbara region.

While there, they were shown Country, and helped to facilitate two community workshops – one in Roebourne, and one in Hedland – that provided opportunities for people to learn more about the Danjoo Koorliny movement, and to share their thoughts and aspirations for how people and organisations in the Pilbara can become more involved.

Comments shared following this trip – from Pilbara community members, PAV members, and the Danjoo Koorliny leadership team – have been highly positive; in particular, participants advised how valuable they found the workshops.



Participants on the Danjoo Koorliny West Pilbara Tour



Participants on the Danjoo Koorliny West Pilbara Tour

Photos: Ngaarda Media; Courtesy of Danjoo Koorliny

Western Australian of the Year Awards 2021

YMAC congratulates Mrs Doris Eaton, our Deputy Co-Chairperson, Pilbara Region – Board of Directors, for being named as a finalist for the 2021 Western Australian of the Year Awards. Mrs Eaton was nominated for the 'Aboriginal Award' category, which was "presented in celebration of excellence in professional and/or personal achievements at a state, national or international level, contributing to the Western Australian community and recognition as an inspirational role model in the Aboriginal community".



Mrs Doris Eaton's photo that was featured in the Western Australian of the Year Awards program

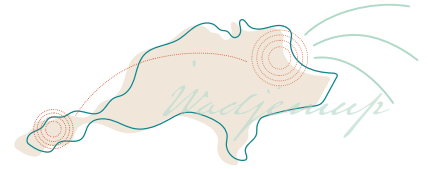
Mrs Eaton's nomination was largely based on her ongoing and outstanding contribution to the protection, preservation and promotion of Aboriginal culture and heritage; in particular, her dedication and actions as a driving force challenging planned changes to the state's *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*.

In response to the announcement that she was a finalist, Mrs Eaton shared that it is the inspiration and encouragement she has received from her family and cultural Law Elders – including her father who was involved in the 1946 Pilbara Strike – that continues to motivate her. In 2021, Mrs Eaton has continued to

advocate for stronger protections in the current State Government's *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill*.

The 2021 Western Australian of the Year Awards were celebrated at a gala dinner held in Perth on Friday, 4 June, which Mrs Eaton attended along with family members and YMAC staff there to support her. The event was an important occasion to recognise and commend all the finalists, including Mrs Eaton, for their contributions to making our state the vibrant, inclusive place we all enjoy every day. Congratulations also go to the winner of the Aboriginal Award Category for 2021 - Karla Hart.

Important truth-telling initiative



The WA Government has come together with First Nations leaders to recognise the impacts of the history of Aboriginal imprisonment and the segregation that occurred on Wadjemup (Rottnest Island). It is working in partnership with the Whadjuk, Noongar and greater Aboriginal communities to formally acknowledge and reconcile this history.



Wadjuk Elder Herbie Bropho talking in the Quod.

Many YMAC News readers will know the island was used as a place of incarceration, segregation and forced labour for Aboriginal men and boys from across Western Australia from 1838 to 1931. More than 4,000 Aboriginal people from all over WA were forcibly taken there and almost 400 men and boys, who died while imprisoned, were buried in unmarked graves on the Island. Many came from within YMAC's representative regions including the Mid West, Gascoyne, and Pilbara regions of Western Australia.

To begin working towards healing, consultation is underway to explore what needs to happen to ensure the events that occurred are properly recognised, through truth-telling, ceremony, and commemoration through memorials.

Whadjuk Elders and Leaders have developed a decision-making structure to support Aboriginal governance within the project, known as a Cultural Authority Framework. Implemented with the support of the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Rottnest Island Authority the structure will guide statewide consultation and intends to make sure cultural protocols are observed and all Aboriginal people and communities with connection to Wadjemup and the Quod can be involved.

As host Nation, Whadjuk Noongar Traditional Owners and custodians will be responsible for authorising, coordinating and enabling cultural protocols and processes through to completion of the project. This process aims to ensure Aboriginal people decide how best their ancestors will be honoured, and how their cultural groups, communities or countries are to be represented in the final memorial.

Now that the Cultural Authority has been established, the next important phase of engagement with the wider Noongar and Statewide Aboriginal community has begun. On 19 August YMAC's Board of Directors met on Wadjemup with Cultural Authority members. They learned about recent actions on the project and discussed ways in which people from within YMAC's representative regions can learn more about the project.

Your voices are vital to ensuring the State Government can work with Aboriginal communities to heal the impacts of the trauma that occurred on the island.

To find out more about the Wadjemup Project and how to get involved contact Aboriginal Productions and Promotions at office@aboriginalproductions.com.au or Robyn@aboriginalproductions.com.au

From Aurora intern to YMAC employee

Since 2003 YMAC has been working with the Aurora Education Foundation's Internship Program and helped inspire Indigenous students and graduates in their education and career journey.

Since then, more than 140 interns have come through the doors at YMAC, with 21 interns going on to be employed by the Corporation.

The overall aim of the Aurora Internship Program is to build career experiences and opportunities and help strengthen Indigenous sector organisations across Australia by attracting and retaining talented Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Since its inception, the program has arranged internships for over 3,100 alumni including over 370 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants, creating routes to valuable work experience and career pathways to enable them to flourish.

There are currently several staff working in YMAC's Research unit that were on boarded as a result of taking part in the program.

One such former intern is Anthropologist Johan Sulaiman who recently secured full time employment at YMAC through the program.

He said the internship exposed him to the workplace while also allowing for personal development.

"I was studying anthropology at UWA and while doing my internship I did lots of filing and indexing and also participated in some training seminars, which I wasn't expecting at the time."



Intern Johan Sulaiman hard at work

"There were insights that people had that you could get informally just through conversation."

"Being near the workspace, being near those conversations and being near people was beneficial. It is something that is hard to get without being inside that work environment."

As for the program, he couldn't speak more highly of it.

"I would absolutely recommend it - now I'm working at YMAC in my chosen field."

Another Aurora placement that is going from strength to strength at YMAC is legal intern Christie-Rochelle Annice. Currently placed in YMAC's Legal Unit, Christie began her 10-week placement in August. She said there's plenty to like about the program.

"(The internship) has allowed me learn about community and follow my passions, which are community and law."

"Currently I report to Deputy Principal Legal Officer Julia Horsley and other lawyers and team members as required."

"I support team members with their PBC clients on changes to the *Native Title Act*, PBC regulations and heritage laws, while also researching unclaimed areas with a view to commencing new Native Title Claims."

She says she would absolutely recommend the program.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 has forced Aurora to run a condensed Summer 2021/22 round and will only be offering placements to confirmed candidates who deferred from this year's Winter round.

It is expected the program will be relaunched in full in Winter 2022.

internships.aurorafoundation.com.au/internship-program



Heartbeat of the Pilbara remembers the Pilbara Strike

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Renaming of Strike Park event



Photos: Town of Port Hedland

To many, the Pilbara Strike is the defining event of the Pilbara. It marked the beginning of formal resistance to colonisation and the efforts of the squatters to undermine the will of the Aboriginal leadership for self-determination.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the landmark Pilbara pastoral strike, recognised as Australia's longest strike preceding the Wave Hill strike and the 1967 Referendum by over 20 years.



Members of the community gather in Fremantle to participate in the "Stories in the Park" and watch as Jilalga Murray added the location of Skull Springs 1943 meeting.



Concert attendees enjoyed a great performance by the band of local musicians and artists as part of Pilbara Strike event festivities in Perth.

In Perth several events were planned and organised by a small, enthusiastic committee to commemorate the milestone. All events were well attended, drawing attention to the legacy of the actions of the Pilbara people in standing up for their rights, the continuing struggle to be heard and true reconciliation.

The committee continue to work on more events for this year with a second concert planned for October this year and a digital reading of the play “Yandy”, art and culture exhibitions, academic symposiums and more to follow. Pilbara Strike events are an ongoing effort and planning has already commenced for more next year.

In Port Hedland on the 75th anniversary a full day event was held called Heartbeat of the Pilbara. It centred on commemorating the Pilbara Strike. This included Town of Port Hedland hosting an event to mark the renaming of Leap Park to Strike Park. Many people attended this celebration and YMAC Deputy Co-Chairperson Pilbara Region and proud daughter of one the Strikers Mrs Doris Eaton was one of many invited to speak.

If you would like to know more about Australia’s longest strike, join the ‘Remembering the 1946 Pilbara Strike’ Facebook page or visit pilbarastrike.org.au



Port Hedland community members

Country, Culture, People, Future

About us

YMAC News is produced by Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation

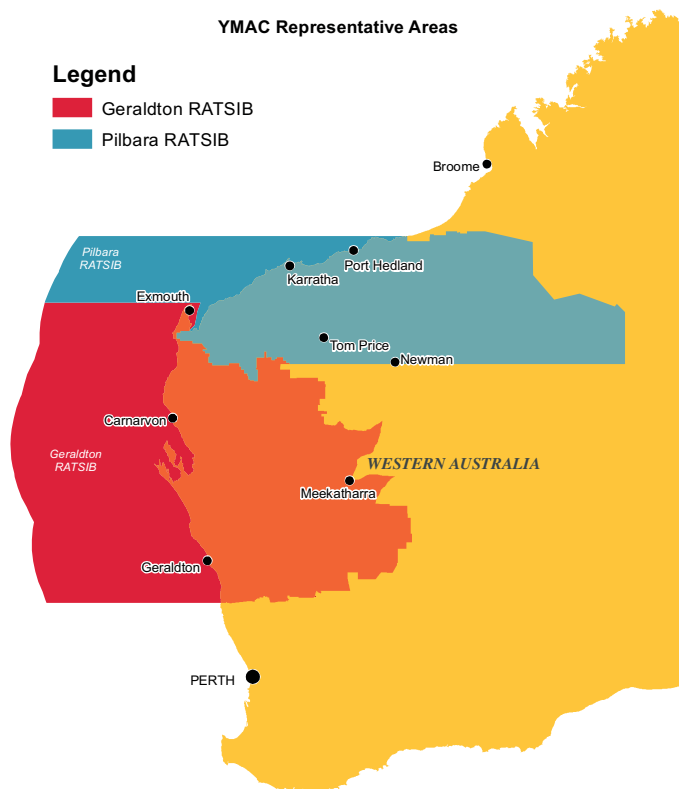
We are an Aboriginal Corporation and the Native Title Representative Body for the Mid West, Murchison, Gascoyne and Pilbara regions of Western Australia.

YMAC Vision 2021 – 2025:

Through connection to Country, Aboriginal people pursue and achieve economic, social and cultural goals and aspirations with strength and confidence.

Our Mission:

For current and future generations, we work with and for Australian Aboriginal people to protect rights and manage Country and opportunities.



Contact us: Send your questions, ideas, letters and photos to editor@ymac.org.au

Freecall: 1800 270 709

Geraldton

171 Marine Tce,
Geraldton WA 6530
PO Box 2119,
Geraldton WA 6531
T (08) 9965 6222
F (08) 9964 5646

Perth

Level 8, 12 The Esplanade,
Perth WA 6000
PO Box 3072, 249 Hay St,
Perth WA 6892
T (08) 9268 7000
F (08) 9225 4633

Hedland

2/29 Steel Loop,
Wedgefield WA 6721
PO Box 2252,
South Hedland WA 6722
T (08) 9160 3800
F (08) 9140 1277

Broome

Shop 2/24 Clementson St
Broome WA 62725
PO Box 2050
Broome WA 62725

Denham

61-63 Knight Terrace
Denham WA 6537
1800 270 709

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