

YMAC NEWS

News from
Yamatji
Marlpa
Aboriginal
Corporation

ISSUE 46 | March 2023



Save the dates!

Yule River On-Country
Bush Meeting
12-13 July

Yamatji On-Country
– Geraldton
20-21 September



Yamatji Marlpa
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



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Cover photo: Christian Wright, left, makes a presentation to Aboriginal Affairs Minister Tony Buti at Yamatji On-Country.
Picture: Sammuel Carr

Please be advised this publication may contain images, voices and names of deceased people. We sincerely apologise for any distress this may cause.

Hello and welcome to issue 46 of YMAC News



Natalie Parker,
Co-Chairperson – Pilbara Region



Mr Peter Windie,
Co-Chairperson – Yamatji Region

In this edition, we:

- Highlight the Voice to Parliament and upcoming referendum – and why it's so important First Nations peoples take the time to register to vote.
- Look at diversification leases, a new form of land tenure, that will allow more flexible use of Crown land – particularly in relation to the renewable energy and carbon farming sector – and why there are concerns over the *Land and Public Works Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 (WA)*.
- Share details about the 2022 Yamatji On-Country, the important role young people played in the meeting, and steps being taken to progress the community's Calls to Action.

YMAC posts regular updates on current news and issues affecting native title and Traditional Owners on our website.

Visit ymac.org.au to stay up-to-date or subscribe to email updates by visiting the website, clicking on 'Media and Publications' and then 'Subscribe' on the pulldown menu.

You can also follow us on LinkedIn via tinyurl.com/ymaclinkedin.

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

News from the CEO

Welcome to Issue 46 of YMAC News.

We have had a busy start to 2023 across all teams and offices.

On the native title claim front, we were very pleased in November when the Middamia native title claim was accepted for registration by the National Native Title Tribunal. This follows on from a claim authorisation meeting that occurred in June and many years of research and engagement with Traditional Owners for the area.

Our readers will be aware of the referendum being held later this year on whether the Australian Constitution should be changed to establish a First Nations Voice. The "Voice to Parliament" was a key recommendation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, a document written and endorsed by First Nations leaders in 2017 to change the Constitution to improve the representation of Indigenous Australians.

YMAC fully supports the Uluru statement and its calls to action, which recommended a body – known as "the Voice" – be established to advise parliament and the Federal Government on First Nations policy matters. By extension, YMAC has thrown its full weight behind the "yes" vote in the referendum. Read more on pages 10-12.

We have made various submissions to government in relation to the Phase 3 consultation for the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021* regulations and guidelines, and the *WA Biodiscovery Bill* and consultation draft of the *Land and Public Works Bill 2022 (WA)*. They can be viewed at tinyurl.com/YMAC-submissions.

Despite almost not happening last year, the re-scheduled Yamatji On-Country in October was a magnificent example of the community coming together and collaborating on solutions to various issues. A highlight of the event was hearing from



Simon Hawkins,
YMAC Chief Executive Officer

the exceptional young people from a range of local high schools – it was wonderful to see both their passion and the solutions they presented on issues affecting them.

They joined with community members to help develop the Call-to-Action statement – a document seeking real commitment and investment from government and community stakeholders. Following the meeting, we received encouraging feedback including responses from the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Federal Minister for Resources and Northern Australia, Department of Education, National Indigenous Australians Agency, Mental Health Commission and City of Greater Geraldton. Read more on pages 8-9.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr Peter Windie – Co-Chairperson – Yamatji Region on his appointment as a director of the National Native Title Council. It's a role he has previously held and his re-appointment is continuing testament to his experience and passion for Country.

Our staff have been busy, too. My congratulations also extend to YMAC Special Counsel Colin McKellar and YMAC Land and Sea Management Project Coordinator Marika Oakley. Colin has been named as one of the top eight leading native title lawyers (for government and Traditional Owner bodies) in Australia. Marika has been appointed as a regional representative on the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's Aboriginal Water and Environment Advisory Group. Read more on page 17.

I look forward to continuing working with all of you as we progress YMAC's important objectives during the year.

Yamatji region news

Yamatji ARM outcomes

The 2022 Yamatji Annual Regional Meeting (ARM) was held in late November on Yinggarda Country in Carnarvon with a Welcome to Country delivered by Ms Kath Ryan.

The ARM was an opportunity for community members to learn more about YMAC's native title and related work in the Yamatji region.

YMAC's Yamatji members were also able to join the YMAC Yamatji Regional Committee via election. Congratulations to those elected, and re-elected, to the committee for a two-year period:

- Re-elected: Peter Windie, Deborah Oakley, Cecily Dowden, Richard Oakley, Albert Winder, Gail Bellotti, Ben Roberts, Wayne Evans, Tracey Tonga.
- Newly elected: Evelyn Ronan, Paul Baron.

They join Sharna Oakley, Revel Oakley, Barry Dodd and June Pearce, whose terms expire this year.

YMAC acknowledges outgoing committee members Merle Dann and Lucy May Bulley for their contribution over the past two years.

Immediately following the ARM, a Regional Committee Meeting was held. Committee members nominated the following representatives for the YMAC Board of Directors, including the Yamatji Regional Committee Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson:

- Peter Windie: re-elected to dual positions of Chairperson – Yamatji Region and YMAC Co-Chairperson – Yamatji.
- Deborah Oakley: re-elected to dual positions of Deputy Chairperson – Yamatji Region and YMAC Deputy Co-Chairperson – Yamatji.
- Re-elected as Directors: Cecily Dowden, Richard Oakley, Albert Winder.
- Note: Sharna Oakley is an existing Board member; her terms ends 2023.

Resolutions passed included:

1. Confirmation of the 2021 Yamatji ARM minutes.
2. An increase to the payment of YMAC Yamatji Directors' fees.
3. Removal of 13 Yamatji Class Members due to no recorded address for up to two years.

New Carnarvon office

YMAC's new Carnarvon office has celebrated opening its doors! Located at 4 Francis Street, the office supports YMAC members and Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs) in the Gascoyne and Murchison regions.

Yamatji builder Hooky Ryan completed renovations to deliver a functional office to suit YMAC's requirements and the needs of our clients. A large boardroom features video-conferencing equipment; useful for PBCs wanting to hire the room for meetings.

Initially, staff from YMAC's Geraldton and Perth offices are in the Carnarvon office on a rotational basis (Tues-Thurs). Call (08) 9965 6222.



Mr Peter Windie and YMAC Yamatji Regional Manager Chris Dann at the opening. Picture: Catherine Armstrong

Pilbara region news



YMAC CEO Simon Hawkins and Natalie Parker at the new Pilbara office. Picture: Tash Gillespie

New Pilbara office

After leasing premises in the Pilbara for two decades, YMAC has officially opened its own office building at 8 Manganese Street in Wedgefield (Port Hedland) – marked with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in November 2022.

The fit-for-purpose space has a reception area, boardroom, accessible bathroom and visitor car park, plus several offices and meeting spaces for visiting staff to meet clients. Solar panels and a battery provide 80 per cent of power requirements, off the grid. The new location also provides dedicated office space for Pilbara Solar.

All visitors welcome – or call us on 0473 486 421.

Outcomes from Pilbara ARM

With a Welcome to Country from Mr Alfred Barker, the 2022 Pilbara Annual Regional Meeting (ARM) was held in November on Kariyarra Country at the Walkabout Hotel in Port Hedland.

The Pilbara ARM meeting provides YMAC's Pilbara members with a chance to discover more about our work in the region, across a range of service areas.

As no nominations for regional committee representation were received from eligible Pilbara native title groups at this ARM, the Pilbara Regional Committee (and their native title group representation) remains the same: Natalie Parker (Nyiyaparli), Doris Eaton (Nyamal), Ivan Smirke (Jurruru), Diane Stewart (Nyangumarta), Raylene Button (Kariyarra), Selina Stewart (Puutu Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura), Albert Pianta (Ngarlawangga), David Cox (Yinhawangka), Nora Cooke (Ngarla), Terry Jaffrey (Palyku).

As per YMAC's Rule Book, Pilbara Regional Committee elections for two vacant positions on YMAC's Board of Directors took place at a meeting in February.

YMAC's Pilbara Directors in 2023 are as follows:

- Natalie Parker: dual role of Chairperson – Pilbara Regional Committee and YMAC Co-Chairperson – Pilbara.
- Doris Eaton: dual role of Deputy Chairperson – Pilbara Regional Committee and YMAC Deputy Co-Chairperson – Pilbara.
- Directors: Dianne Stewart, Raylene Button, Terry Jaffrey (newly elected as Director at February meeting).

The second Director vacancy is outstanding and scheduled for election at a meeting in May.

Resolutions passed from the ARM included:

1. Confirmation of the 2021 Pilbara ARM minutes.
2. An increase to the payment of YMAC Pilbara Directors' fees.
3. Removal of nine Pilbara Class Members due to no recorded address for up to two years.

Yule River returns in 2023

Wednesday-Thursday, 12-13 July



Following its cancellation in 2022 due to COVID concerns, the On-Country Bush Meeting at Yule River is back for 2023.

The two-day event at the Yule River Meeting Place, 55km south of Port Hedland, supports First Nations community members from throughout the Pilbara with cultural decision-making on solutions to local issues, while also providing opportunities for discussions with parliamentarians and government representatives.

Pre-event community planning for Yule River on 18 April 2023

The Pilbara Regional Committee has discussed the focus of Yule River for 2023 and will host a pre-Yule River meeting in April. Elders and Emerging Leaders from the Pilbara community are invited to attend a facilitated one-day meeting in Port Hedland to undertake initial identification of community issues and possible solutions.

They will also look at emerging work, along with what is currently working well. All will be considered for presentation and further community discussion at the July Yule River meeting.

Contact our Hedland office for further details on the April meeting and July Yule River meeting by calling 0473 486 421 or visit ymac.org.au in coming months.

Keeping your computer and phone safe

Learn how to protect yourself from cyber-attacks and keep your data safe at upcoming clinics presented by IDCARE, Australia's national identity and cyber-support service.

YMAC is finalising dates for three Cyber Resilience Outreach Clinics in Meekatharra, Hedland and Carnarvon this July. IDCARE is also planning additional community clinics (dates and exact locations to be finalised) for Geraldton in April/May and Karratha in July.

Visit ymac.org.au for more information.

Deal sealed on Yinggarda ILUA



The ILUA signing ceremony Bunjaga Pool. Picture courtesy DBCA

An Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) and Joint Management Agreement (JMA) with the State Government has been finalised and accepted by the Yinggarda Aboriginal Corporation (YAC), following YMAC's assistance with negotiations over the past two years.

A signing ceremony took place at the end of February on Country at Bunjaga Pool, near Gascoyne Junction, with about 20 members of the Yinggarda Community, Environment Minister Reece Whitby, Lands Minister John Carey, Conservation and Parks Commission Chair Professor Chris Doepel and Deputy Chair Jo Lanagan, plus a range of attendees from the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) including Acting Director General Peter Dans.

The YAC ILUA and JMA started life with DBCA negotiations in 2019, as part of the Plan for our Parks Project announced by the State Government.

Following an initial community information session in Carnarvon in September 2021, the Traditional Owner negotiation team (TONC) was appointed by Yinggarda Common Law Holders and then held 10 days of negotiation meetings over a year. YMAC provided legal

and executive office support throughout the process, including organising negotiation and community meetings.

The ILUA provides for joint vesting and joint management of the existing Kennedy Range National Park, as well as additions to the park – and a new national park over the ex-Pimbee pastoral lease. The State also agreed for two additional existing nature reserves identified by the TONC to be jointly managed and vested. Benefits under the ILUA include on-Country ranger positions for Yinggarda Common Law Holders.

Following the ILUA signing ceremony, the first joint management meeting with YAC and DBCA representatives was held at the start of March. The ILUA will now be lodged with the National Native Title Tribunal for registration.

Call to Action at Yamatji On-Country

The second annual Yamatji On-Country took place at the Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community Aboriginal Corporation in Geraldton on 12 and 13 October last year.

Presented by YMAC, First Nations peoples across the Mid West, Murchison and Gascoyne regions came together to raise issues and identify community-led solutions for the community.

In a first for the event, students from Champion Bay Senior High School, Geraldton Senior High School and Nagle Catholic College workshopped their main areas of concern before speaking at the event.

They joined with Elders and community members to work on six key messages presented to government as Calls to Action (including many of the students' concerns). Calls to Action were created on racism; housing and accommodation; police and justice; education; employment, training and economic development; and health and wellbeing.

The Call-to-Action statement – available at tinyurl.com/YOCcalltoaction – was presented at the event to Aboriginal Affairs Minister Tony Buti, Geraldton MLA Lara Dalton and directors and senior staff from the Departments of Communities, Education and Planning, Lands and Heritage; WA Police and National Indigenous Australians Agency.

“Our Call to Action seeks real commitment and investment from all community stakeholders; and offers an open invitation to work with us, to achieve real and sustainable changes in our communities,” the statement says.

“As First Nations peoples, we also seek to have equal opportunities and privileges that enable us to be self-determining and afford us our rightful place in leading decision-making processes that impact us. Further, we seek commitment from government to report annually against our Call-to-Action statement, so that we can measure our progress and work together to create change.”

National Native Title Council strategic policy adviser Dan Kelly also gave a presentation, looking at Federal heritage law reform from the First Nations Heritage Protection Alliance (FNHPA). This can be viewed at tinyurl.com/heritagelawreform.

The 2023 Yamatji On-Country is scheduled for 20 and 21 September at the Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community Aboriginal Corporation in Geraldton. Visit ymac.org.au for more details closer to the event.



Discussions at the 2022 Yamatji On-Country meeting. Picture: José Kalpers



Shelby Clarke, left, Christian Wright and Trevor Farrell Jnr speaking at Yamatji On-Country.

Youth call for racism action

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The youth presentation on racism – by Champion Bay Senior High School Year 10 student Shelby Clarke, Nagle Catholic College Year 8 student Trevor Farrell Jnr and Geraldton Senior High School Year 11 student Christian Wright – was just one of the highlights of Yamatji On-Country.

"Systemic discrimination and racism remain embedded in our society and can range from discreet gestures and undertones to direct and confrontational acts of segregation and exclusion," Shelby said.

Christian called for an increase in education and cultural immersion programs across all areas of the community, especially in educational institutions and the curriculum, workplaces and government sectors.

"There needs to be an improvement in the ethical, cultural and moral standards and censorship across all forms of media, especially social media," he said.

Trevor Farrell Jnr added: "Opportunities for 'truth-telling' should be provided and promoted to re-educate and deconstruct myths and stereotypes."

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Tony Buti described the students' input as "powerful and moving".

"It was a very reasonable analysis of their lives and what they thought," he said. "If they're the calibre of the next generation, there's a lot to look forward to."

Describing himself as a "facilitator" for the various areas covered, Mr Buti said he would speak to various ministers, who would get advice from their agencies before working on possible ways of moving forward.

What now?

The 2022 Yamatji On-Country received a significant amount of feedback from various government organisations, all congratulating YMAC and the community on the event. Many organisations gave an insight into their current programs that focus on areas of concern raised.

YMAC is now collating responses to move forward with the community's concerns, to assist in finding shared solutions with government for the betterment of the Yamatji peoples.



YMAC staff saying “YES” to the proposed Voice to Parliament. Picture: José Kalpers

Here's to future days

YMAC employees from across all our teams and office locations came together in early March for the annual all-staff conference to look at the year ahead, hear from First Nations guest speakers and learn more about our programs and strategic projects.

Held in Perth, Noongar Elder Uncle Ben Taylor gave a Welcome to Country – followed by a didgeridoo and dance performance by Daniel Garlett and his son Jonathon.

Academic, human rights advocate and lawyer Dr Hannah McGlade, a Kurin Minang Noongar woman of the Bibulman nation, delivered clear and factual information about the proposed Voice to Parliament.

Dr McGlade is a member of the Federal Government's First Nations Referendum Engagement Group which, along with the First Nations Referendum Working Group, are striving to make the referendum a success. She made it clear that no First Nations peoples have yet been selected or nominated to be Voice representatives – the referendum first needs to take place and succeed with a yes vote.



Dr Hannah McGlade speaking at the conference. Picture: José Kalpers

Following her presentation, Dr McGlade answered several questions from staff wanting to learn more and better understand the coming referendum, along with what will be gained from an Indigenous Voice to Parliament.

"Recognition of indigenous peoples in national constitutions is considered best practice in international indigenous rights," she said.

"Some people say constitutional recognition isn't relevant to Aboriginal people's daily lives but nothing could be further from the truth – the Voice would be there with our leadership speaking about issues relevant to everyday Aboriginal people from all parts of Australia."

Following Dr McGlade's presentation, YMAC staff came together to show their support (see picture). Read more about the Yes campaign at yes23.com.au and referendum on page 12.

Bindi Bindi Dreaming Managing Director Marissa Verma, a Noongar woman, gave an insight into bush foods and wellbeing – and her quest to pass on cultural knowledge to younger generations.

When Marissa first started, she noted: "It was rare to get Elders to talk about it, but we've had to the opportunity work with Aboriginal people who have been willing to share that knowledge."

Noongar educator Trish Hill Wall workshopped staff on the importance of assertive communication. "People are afraid of being assertive but you can learn how to be assertive without being passive-aggressive," she said. "Assertiveness is confident but courteous self-assurance."

Pilbara Solar Managing Director Kylie Chalmers shared an update on current work from the renewable energy company (of which YMAC is a 50 per cent shareholder), while YMAC's PBC/Executive Office team highlighted shared learnings and outcomes from a workshop hosted in Sydney (see page 16).

Nyangumarta Rangers (who operate with support from YMAC's Land and Sea Management team) wrapped the conference by showcasing their efforts with feral cat management, assisting threatened species and the 10-year Nyangumarta Warrarn IPA Plan (page 19).

Let *your* voice be heard

Later this year, a referendum proposing an update to the Australian Constitution to include a First Nations "Voice to Parliament" will be put to a vote. The referendum will provide an opportunity for the public to let their voice be heard on this important issue.



If you are eligible to vote, YMAC encourages you to check with the Electoral Commission that you are enrolled and your details are up to date. There will be many opportunities in coming months to learn more about the referendum and what a Voice to Parliament might involve, so you can make an informed decision.

Why will there be a referendum?

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese made the commitment to hold the upcoming referendum as part of his election night speech in May 2022, when he said the Federal Government would implement the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full.

The final wording of the referendum question will be informed by work from the First Nations Referendum Working Group (visit tinyurl.com/NIAAvoice for details, as well as other advisory bodies contributing to the referendum process).

Where can you learn more?

To help inform your decision about changes to the Australian Constitution and how to vote, you can review information online:

Uluru Statement from the Heart:

ulurustatement.org and fromtheheart.com.au

First Nations Voice to Parliament:

voice.niaa.gov.au

What is a referendum?:

tinyurl.com/referendums-explained

What is the Australian Constitution?:

tinyurl.com/AustConstitution

For questions about the referendum, email referendum@niaa.gov.au .

Boost to First Nations enrolment numbers

An initiative to increase the enrolment rates of First Nations peoples so they can vote in elections and referendums – trialled in Geraldton, Perth, Broome, Cable Beach, Dampier Peninsula, Derby and Northampton – has proven a success.

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) tested the effectiveness of new forms of notification such as community mailbags and email.

In the second half of 2022, the estimated number of enrolled First Nations peoples in WA increased by 3,100, rising proportionally to 74.1 per cent – up from 70.5 per cent in June last year and 62.8 per cent in 2017.

While the increase is significant, there are an estimated 18,500 First Nations peoples in WA not enrolled.

The AEC is now looking at how to use its new ways of notifying people more broadly.

In the lead-up to the Voice referendum, the AEC is also encouraging First Nations peoples to enrol or update their details at aec.gov.au .

Sharing First Nations women's voices

Everything from women's health and wellbeing through to education, employment, training and economic development were topics of concern at the inaugural Mid West Aboriginal Women's Conference in September.

Hosted by the Mid West Aboriginal Women's Group at Gunnado Farm in Walkaway, more than 170 women came together for the two-day event to share their voices on current community initiatives impacting First Nations women and their families.

YMAC assisted with sponsorship for the Elders' Dinner through its Community Partnerships program, acknowledging the voices of matriarchs and women in the community.

After a Welcome to Country by Donna Ronan, day one featured various speakers, including Senator for WA Sue Lines and community-based social advocate Jackie Oakley, as well as Leanne Taylor performing *A Song from the Heart for our Women*

and an Aboriginal healing session from Rayleen Councillor.

Discussions on day two focused on real-life experiences in relation to numerous topics including children and youth, parents and families, community and language, culture, and Aboriginality.

A panel including Ms Oakley, former Kimberley MLA Carol Martin, community and cultural consultant Jenny Kniveton, Geraldton MLA Lara Dalton and Streeties CEO Chloe Collard facilitated feedback to develop recommendations.

Yamatji Art was also on hand to develop a collaborative piece of artwork, representing participants from 11 language groups across the Yamatji region.

The inaugural Mid West Aboriginal Women's Conference. Picture: Tash Gillespie



Diversification leases: why you should be concerned

Diversification leases – a new form of land tenure – are the current buzzwords in the renewable energy and carbon farming sector.

They form part of the State Government's *Land and Public Works Legislation Amendment Bill 2022*, introduced to Parliament on 23 November last year (tinyurl.com/progressofbill) and passed by the Legislative Council on 14 March. The bill has amended the *Land Administration Act 1997* (LAA) to allow more flexible use of Crown land.

The diversification leases outlined in the bill will be a new form of land tenure that, among other activities, will be applicable to the renewable energy and carbon farming sector. While YMAC acknowledges the need for alternative tenure under the LAA and generally accepts the purpose of diversification leases, the amendments will have a large impact on First Nations entities (including native title parties) and Traditional Owners.



While some consultation did occur, YMAC does not believe it:

- allowed any opportunities for partnership or shared decision-making with First Nations peoples or entities.
- featured genuine engagement with First Nations entities where feedback was reflected on and adopted.
- included discussions on amendments to the *Public Works Act* or amendments to the pastoral lease provisions in the LAA.

YMAC had previously advocated that any amendments to the LAA needed to establish a policy position where, when an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) was sought by a diversification lease proponent, it should be matched with the principle of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) to ensure the rights and interests of native title holders were adequately protected.

It is foreseeable that, in the rush to meet net zero emissions targets, the State Government will be under pressure from proponents and its own goals, in relation to renewable energy.

While well-intentioned, it is critical the rights of native title holders are not compromised.

With renewable energy projects having potential impacts to Country of up to 70 years, it is vital this is done right from the outset so Traditional Owners can also benefit from this process.

Read more at tinyurl.com/submissionoct2022 and tinyurl.com/submissionsep2022.

AIATSIS SUMMIT

05-09
JUNE
2023

NOONGAR BOODJA PERTH

AIATSIS Summit comes to Boorloo / Perth

This year's AIATSIS Summit is being held at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre from 5 to 9 June, co-convened with the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council in Boorloo / Perth on Whadjuk Noongar Boodja (Country).

Navigating the spaces in-between is the overall theme, continuing the conversation from last year's summit to expand on the wisdom and value of First Nations' ways of knowing, seeing and being in the world.

AIATSIS CEO Craig Ritchie said the theme *Navigating the spaces in-between* had been a proven stimulus for ideas and engagement.

"We have not exhausted its potential," he said.

"The program for 2023 provides the opportunity to bring things from the periphery into focus, identifying among those spaces in-between the potential for innovation, risk and complexity. It opens the way to explore radical creativity and how First Nations peoples can re-imagine our future."

For more details, visit tinyurl.com/AIATSIS2023.

YMAC native title forums: Carnarvon: 27 June; Hedland: 29 June

As part of its Strategic Plan 2021–2025, YMAC is planning to host two native title forums in June 2023; one in each of our representative regions. They will be free to attend and open to Traditional Owners, as well as Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs) staff from the respective regions.

The forums will provide an opportunity to discuss and learn more about the native title system and its related processes, including the different roles and functions of YMAC, PBCs and the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC).

Other topics likely to be covered will focus on non-claim specific matters, recent sector developments, and related work YMAC is currently undertaking.

The design and delivery of the forums will be informed by outcomes from YMAC's recent regional roundtable discussions and needs identified during the National Native Title Council and National Indigenous Australian Agency's PBC Regional Forum and Compensation Workshop, co-hosted by YMAC in 2022.

To register your interest, email communications@ymac.org.au.

Support workshop tackles PBC challenges

Seven Native Title Representative Bodies/Service Providers (NTRBs/SPs) across Australia – including YMAC – came together in December to focus on challenges faced by Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs).

The PBC support workshop was convened by the Central Land Council and hosted in Sydney on Eora Country, bringing together 16 support staff from the Carpentaria Land Council, Central Desert Native Title Services, First Nations Legal and Research Services, Kimberley Land Council, North Queensland Land Council, Queensland South Native Title Services, South Australian Native Title Services and YMAC.



Support staff from around Australia came together for the workshop. Picture: Jodie Hummerston

Discussions centred on day-to-day operational challenges, funding barriers, needs and resources, future aspirations and planning, compliance and reporting difficulties, and economic participation. The workshop's aim was to identify how NTRBs/SPs could work together, share knowledge and experiences, and assist each other in supporting PBC clients across Australia on their individual journeys to becoming sustainable.

Representatives gave 10-minute presentations on their NTRB/SP, with YMAC detailing its comprehensive expertise and resources available for PBCs, such as legal, research, anthropological, archaeological, environmental, executive office and information technology services.

The workshop concluded with future planning discussions on the importance of information-sharing between PBCs, the need for an industry action plan and communicating details of successful funding/grant applications. These conversations led to the idea of a collaborative online library to enable timely access to shared knowledge between NTRBs/SPs.

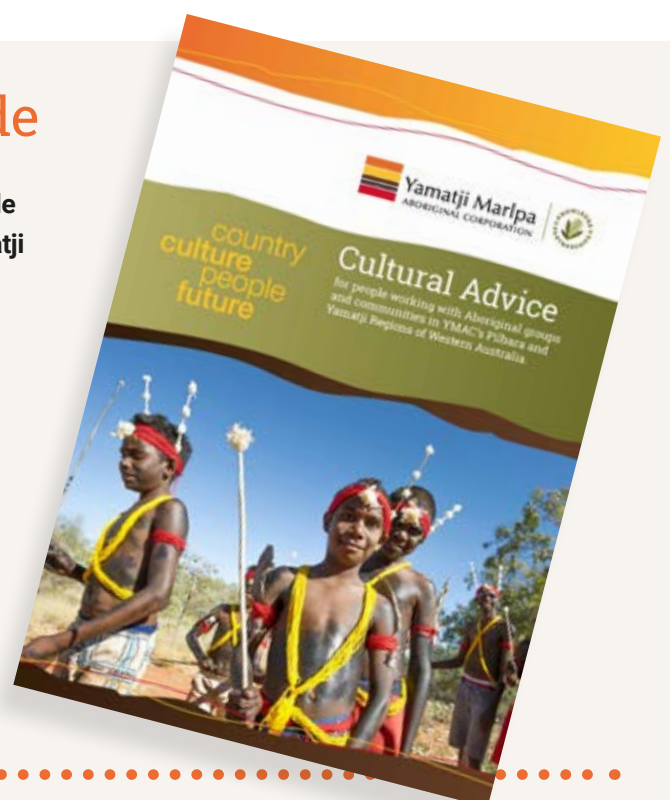
A working group, formed to ensure the ideas are actioned, will meet to collaborate further at the AIATSIS summit this June (see previous page).

Revised Cultural Advice Guide

YMAC has updated its *Cultural Advice Guide*, designed for people working with First Nations groups and communities in our Yamatji and Marlpa regions.

Produced with guidance and advice from Traditional Owners and our two Regional Managers, it provides an introduction to cultural protocols in our regions and some key aspects of First Nations cultures.

The guide notes that cultural protocols and rules vary greatly between regions and individual communities, while also providing advice on how to approach and prepare for meetings with Traditional Owners – as well as working alongside them. It can be downloaded from tinyurl.com/culturaladviceguide.



DWER advisory group appoints YMAC employee

YMAC Land and Sea Management Project Coordinator Marika Oakley has been appointed as a regional representative on the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's (DWER) Aboriginal Water and Environment Advisory Group.

Established in 2018, the group was designed to ensure First Nations knowledge, values and needs are considered and addressed across DWER strategies, programs and planning when managing WA's environment and water resources.

The group comprises 14 First Nations members covering the Kimberley, Pilbara, Great Sandy Desert, Goldfields-Esperance, South West and Perth with Marika – based in YMAC's Geraldton office – representing the Gascoyne-Mid West region.

Marika previously worked as a Malgana ranger for two years and has a certificate III in conservation and land management and certificate IV in bush and western herbal medicine. She was also the inaugural chair of Malgana Aboriginal Corporation, following their native title determination in 2018.

"I have always been interested in conservation and looking after Country and my people," Marika said.

YMAC's Land and Sea Management unit works on research and development for new ranger projects and Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs); Healthy Country Planning (strategic planning for cultural and natural heritage); advice on environmental matters; funding applications; and sustainable financing.

The unit also provides project management for ranger and IPA projects; advice and support for joint management, training and capacity-building for senior staff and rangers; advice on Indigenous Land Use

Agreement (ILUA) negotiations that cover ranger; fee-for-service and governance structures; and support for groups in creating new jointly vested and managed reserves with the State Government.

The flagship Nyangumarta rangers program operates with support from YMAC's Land and Sea Management unit, in collaboration with the Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation.



YMAC Land and Sea Management Project Coordinator
Marika Oakley. Picture: Tash Gillespie



Nyangumarta rangers Ayesha Moss, left, Lisa Toby, Roberta Hunter, Kiarna Badal, Eddina Badal, Kerri Hunter, Lynnette Wilridge, Vernon Badal and Keithan Toby with the new cameras. Picture: Jake Muller

Cameras bolster dog and dingo data collection

Nyangumarta Rangers have received a major boost to their resources for monitoring animals on Country, after a successful grant application to the Federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, worth about \$20,000.

They now have 30 new Reconyx remote cameras for a data collection project on wild dogs and dingoes in the Nyangumarta native title determination area, working in partnership with the University of New South Wales, Central Queensland University and Taronga Conservation Society.

The rangers will deploy a set of 30 camera traps in a grid pattern to assess the spatial distribution of wild dogs/dingoes and their impact on the landscape, both in coastal areas and inland. Rangers are trained in using the camera traps and a small group are also experienced in analysing sensor camera data.

Along with improving the scientific knowledge about wild dogs, dingoes and feral cats in the region, the project will also help to develop the capability of Nyangumarta rangers in delivering fee-for-service work in areas such as biosecurity surveillance and wildlife monitoring.

Nyangumarta Rangers is a program operating with support from YMAC's Land and Sea Management unit.

Celebration of Baiyungu culture

The inaugural Jamba Nyinayi Festival comes to Cardabia Station near Coral Bay on 19 April. Hosted by Traditional Owner Hazel Walgar, the Baiyungu Aboriginal Corporation event is a celebration of Baiyungu people and culture.

Jamba Nyinayi means "sit for a little" with the festival designed to bring the community together for a drone light show, music, dance, food, fire and stars in the sky.

It has also been designed to leave a lasting legacy, providing employment and training opportunities, infrastructure improvements and establishing the festival as must-do on the region's annual event calendar.

More details at ningalooeclipse.com and jnfestival.com.au.



Traditional Owner Hazel Walgar.

Nyangumarta Warrarn IPA Plan 2022–2032

The Nyangumarta Warrarn Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) Plan 2022–2032 has been released, created through a process of consultation across Nyangumarta Country in WA's north-west Pilbara and south-west Kimberley region in 2020 and 2021.

It builds on the previous IPA Plan of Management 2015–2020, which involved extensive consultations with the Nyangumarta community between 2010 and 2015.

Through four field trips over an 18-month period, the latest IPA plan drew on consultation and research with Elders, rangers, cultural advisers and Nyangumarta community members to ensure as much information as possible was gained to best encapsulate Nyangumarta values, practices and beliefs regarding Culture and looking after Country.

The IPA plan is split into six values/categories:

1. Marrngumili – Nyangumarta Law and Culture
2. Yinta – important sites
3. Governance and partnerships
4. Nyangumarta people and pathways
5. Pirra Country (Great Sandy Desert)
6. Jurrar Country (Eighty Mile Beach).

"Nyangumarta Country is healthy, and we are managing it sustainably using traditional knowledge combined with walypala (scientific) knowledge. Our Yinta (special places) are protected, and Rangers are working to care for the Country and keep it healthy. Our Mirtanya and Mirtawari (Elder men and women) are passing on knowledge to young people. In this way we too will stay ngarlu nyalpa (healthy)."

– the vision outlined in the plan.

Diane Stewart, a Nyangumarta woman and NWAC Board member, added: "All our values are on that land be it medicine, bush tucker, making boomerangs with the young fellas. The main thing is by going back there with the project; it is to do with our wellbeing. There is a program where they take the young fellas out on Country".

Regarded as a living document, the management plan will be reviewed and updated when required. The review process is through the MeRI framework (Monitoring, evaluation, Reporting and Improvement), allowing a way to make any change on the management plan transparent, so progress can be tracked and adapted when necessary.

To view the Nyangumarta Warrarn Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) Plan 2022–2032, visit tinyurl.com/NW-IPA.



Ranger documentary in FRAIM as finalist



The Nyangumarta rangers featured in the documentary. Picture: Ben Puglisi

A seven-minute documentary about the Nyangumarta ranger team was shortlisted for an Indigenous Community Television (ICTV) Video Award at the biennial Festival of Remote Australian Indigenous Moving Image (FRAIM) in October last year.

Recognised in the Best Our Way Video category, *Nyangumarta – From Desert to the Sea* documented the skills of a First Nations ranger group and highlighted fire management, feral animal control, fauna and flora monitoring, weed management, water monitoring, cultural heritage protection, collecting and transferring Traditional Ecological Knowledge and tourism development.

It was screened at FRAIM Film Festival in Alice Springs with other ICTV Video Award finalists and streamed on ICTV Play.

FRAIM is a gathering of First Nations video-makers from around remote Australia for three days of workshops, peer-to-peer sharing, showcasing of work and discussions about issues specific to the Indigenous screen sector in remote areas of Australia.

The Nyangumarta rangers program operates with support from YMAC's Land and Sea Management unit and was previously featured in *Marrngumili Warrarn Muwarr Pirraja – Sharing Desert Stories*, a documentary finalist in the Earth Futures Festival, covered in the last edition of YMAC News.

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Watch *Nyangumarta – From Desert to the Sea* at tinyurl.com/FRAIMfinalist

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Feedback guides new Aboriginal Cultural Centre

Feedback has been gathered from more than 900 First Nations peoples and communities to guide the development of the State Government's Aboriginal Cultural Centre near Derbarl Yerrigan / Swan River.



Community scribing at Yamatji On-Country as part of the Aboriginal Cultural Centre consultations.

This included 32 meetings with more than 530 participants across the Pilbara, Kimberley, Goldfields and Mid West – including one at the 2022 Yamatji On-Country. Various thoughts on what the centre should include were given, including:

- galleries/exhibitions, performances, education/research and community and commercial opportunities
- a strong connection back to Country
- First Nations-led truth-telling, including stories of the missions, Stolen Generations and wages, and massacres
- private spaces for Elders and community to connect to Culture
- places for reflection and healing
- technology to provide opportunities for language, performance, stories and night-time activation
- outdoor spaces to have performance, bush foods and a strong connection to the river
- places for events, such as the NAIDOC Ball, community events, meeting rooms and selling authentic First Nations goods.

Over the past few months, experienced First Nations leaders living in regional Western Australia have also been sought to join as members of the Aboriginal Cultural Centre Steering Committee. Appointments are expected to be confirmed by the end of March.

To stay up to date on Aboriginal Cultural Centre developments, visit tinyurl.com/aboriginalcentre or email ACC@dlgsc.wa.gov.au.

Wadjemup truth-telling

The State Government's Wadjemup Project – designed to deliver truth-telling strategies to acknowledge the history of First Nations incarceration on Rottnest Island (Wadjemup) – is continuing to move forward.

Many First Nations people sent to Rottnest came from YMAC's representative regions including the Mid West, Gascoyne and Pilbara. The State Government and project stakeholders met with YMAC in August 2022 and February 2023 to discuss the Wadjemup Project and seek further input.

In late 2022, the Whadjuk-Noongar Cultural Authorities endorsed the Wadjemup Project Progress Report (tinyurl.com/wadjemupreport) to support and inform community consultation on memorialising the Wadjemup Aboriginal Burial Ground and future use of the Quod (the island prison), while keeping culture at its heart.

Additional resources are available at tinyurl.com/wadjemuptruth. For more details and to get involved, email wadjemupproject@dpc.wa.gov.au.



The Wadjemup Project is working to deliver truth-telling, ceremony and commemoration strategies on Rottnest Island.

All in a day's work for anthropologists

Ever wondered what YMAC anthropologists get up to in their day-to-day life? We provide a snapshot of a workday to provide an insight...

A day in the life of an anthropologist in YMAC's Research team is multifaceted, stimulating and evolving. The foundation of their research is fieldwork and consultation among Traditional Owners, whether it be over the phone in Perth or out in the Pilbara and Yamatji (Geraldton) regions.

A typical day could include researching genealogies of a particular native title claim or language group, mapping out songlines and sacred sites, studying heritage survey reports and researching custodial relationships held by Traditional Owners.

It's no secret YMAC's Research team is rarely all in one place at one time. They are often out on Country, meeting with communities, interviewing people and flying in helicopters to identify potential claim boundaries – even changing flat tyres – and doing many other things to help them learn about Country, support Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs) and claim native title for Traditional Owners.

Although being out on Country is a great opportunity and prized perk of being an anthropologist, the deskbound work can often be just as interesting. With access to documents, stories, letters and more (from as early as 1870), they can sensitively explore history through a valuable lens and greatly rely on this when creating reports.

There is also the embedded and collegial aspect of their work, which involves working alongside legal, heritage and spatial teams, as well as the collective mix of people and organisations involved with YMAC.

Although the Yamatji and Pilbara regions are predominantly determined under native title, this is only really the beginning with new claims in

unclaimed areas, compensation and claims over national parks on the horizon.

Anthropologists offer a unique skill set and support for PBCs in future act advice, social surroundings and ranger programs. All of these are vastly important to Traditional Owners and can impact determined native title areas.

While the role can be exciting and rewarding, it can be equally challenging and emotional given the nature of the information anthropologists engage with on a daily basis. As a team, they rely on each other to debrief and connect while working towards the best outcome.



Anthropologists trying to move a bogged vehicle

Country, Culture, People, Future

About us

YMAC News is produced by Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation.

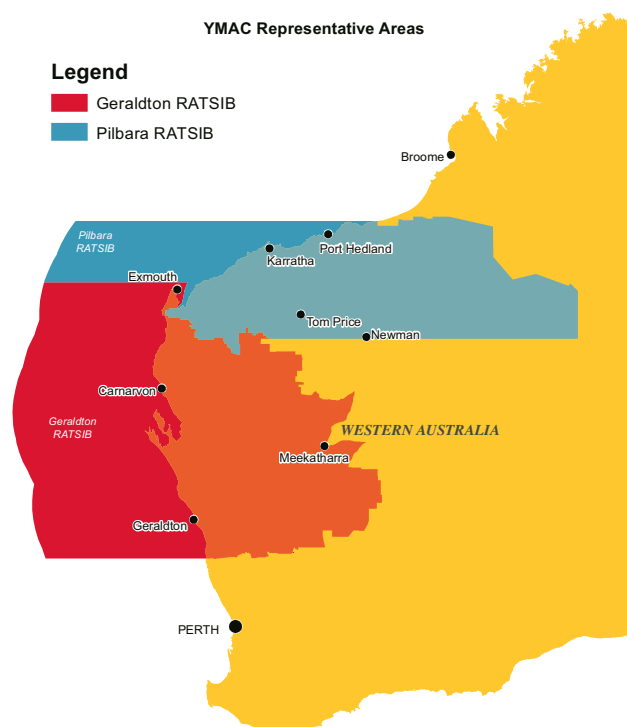
We are an Aboriginal Corporation and the Native Title Representative Body for the Mid West, Murchison, Gascoyne and Pilbara regions of Western Australia.

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

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