



Yamatji Marlpa
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) invites Pilbara Aboriginal people to review this DRAFT Call to Action Statement prepared for the 2023 Annual On-Country Bush Meeting at the Yule River Meeting Place on 12 and 13 July, and to join with others to finalise the statement to unite and call for change.

This draft Call to Action reflects the voice of 35 participants who came together at a workshop on 18 April 2023 in South Hedland. This workshop, coordinated by YMAC at the request of the Pilbara Regional Committee, was advertised through invitations being sent to Prescribed Body Corporates (PBCs), and Aboriginal groups across the Pilbara, inviting them to nominate Elders and Emerging Leaders to attend. YMAC also advertised this workshop through Issue 46 of YMAC News, March edition of the Mulga Mail and on the YMAC website.

The workshop participants represented a range of Elders and Emerging Leaders voices, viewpoints, lived experiences and industry insights. To enable full participation by attendees, it was facilitated by an experienced independent Aboriginal consultant, who also assisted in the preparation of this draft call to action, and in connecting the commitments sought by the community members present to Western Australian (WA) State, and Federal strategic policy, including:

- [The National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#) (CtG)
- [WA State Government Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy](#) (AES)
- [The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP)

Eleven people were nominated as a working group at the 18 April workshop to further refine the Draft Call to Action statement prior to the On-Country Yule River meeting.

YMAC recognises that most of the workshop participants primarily came from the Hedland area, and the Pilbara Regional Committee and the Working Group would like the statement to represent the broader Pilbara Aboriginal Community and therefore welcome further discussion on Day 1 of the Yule River meeting on Wednesday 12 July.

A final Call to Action will be presented to the Government and industry representatives attending on Day 2, Thursday 13 July.



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2023 Annual On-Country Bush Meeting at the Yule River Meeting Place

DRAFT Call to Action Statements

Systemic Reform

Education

Health

Housing

Wellbeing

Community Safety

Government has a responsibility to fulfill commitments to meet the requirements set out in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the WA State Government Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

*If we work genuinely together to support Aboriginal peoples of the Pilbara to address each of these individual areas
- and with a place-based approach –
this will result in a more empowered and sustainable future for all.*

Prepared by

Mandy Gadsdon

Director, Think Culture

Facilitator of 18 April Yule River pre-event workshop



Introduction

In presenting this **Call to Action** to government, we want to be clear that we, the Aboriginal people of the Pilbara have the ability, the commitment and the answers to the many issues that are impacting our people and our communities.

We call on government to genuinely work with us, listen to us, and not just commit to systemic and structural reform, but to make it happen.

We present to you our call to action to put this into practice in a real, community driven and self-determining way that can be measured, and if committed to **will make a difference and improve outcomes.**

Our Calls to Action have been linked to the following government policy frameworks (see appendices for detail)

- The National Agreement on Closing the Gap (CtG)
- WA State Government Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy (AES)
- The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

We invite to government agencies, community organisations, and the Pilbara business community to work with us to improve systemic barriers impacting on the system being able to achieve the outcomes we need to make things better.

When considering our Calls to Action, we implore you to consider:

- We may not know about it; or can't properly access it.
- Are you asking US if it is working?
- Are Pilbara Aboriginal people co-developing or contributing to development of the services or programs?
- Is it properly funded or supported to ensure genuine impact?
- Are your staff fully empowered to make the changes needed on-the-ground, so they can be truly responsive to our community's needs?
- Are they culturally appropriate?
- What the outcomes from Government funded Aboriginal organisations are?
- Forming community based advisory or reference groups.

Call to Action - Systemic Issues

To be presented by: Danny Brown and Terry Jaffrey

- **If we** partner with government to invest back into the Pilbara in the critical areas of education, health, housing, community safety and wellbeing...
- **By:**
 - Taking a place-based approach to each of these areas
 - Developing strategies that address each of these areas based on what Aboriginal people say they need.
 - By empowering community and
 - Building service systems that are culturally informed and responsive.
- **This will result in** a vibrant, proactive Aboriginal voice, increasingly improved access in these critical areas...
- **And will** eventually lead to a sustainable, flourishing, empowered Aboriginal community in the Pilbara.

This is our Call to Action for Systemic Change

Item	Alignment with strategic policy drivers		
	CtG outcomes	AES strategic elements	UNDRIP
1. Work with us to develop a framework to support community-led, place-based decision making in relation to ALL Aboriginal services including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Co-design being at the forefront of all planning and decision making. b. Implementing transitional plans for mainstream services to be transitioned to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs). c. Undertaking service accountability audits. 	Priority Reform 1, 2, 3, 4. Outcomes 8 and 17	Building Aboriginal empowerment into how we work	Article 3
2. Provide tangible support to assist ACCOs to develop businesses, and to meet any identified shortcomings in tendering processes.	Outcome 8	Investing in foundations and future	Article 20
3. Introduce a policy to deal with and stamp out Black-Cladding.	Outcome 8	Walking together	
4. Make sure that government tendering processes for the Pilbara MUST include representatives from the Pilbara – not just faceless bureaucrats who have no connection to, or idea about the realities of the Pilbara.	Outcome 8	Culture at the Heart	Article 19
5. There are no effective government ‘wrap-around’ and holistic programs for youth - this is an area in crisis. Government department’s need to come together, work with communities and find solutions to make it better.	Outcomes 7 and 10	Building Aboriginal Empowerment into the way we work Investing in Foundations and Future	Article 22

6. Plan for Aboriginal people to inform and advise on structural change, ensuring they are adequately remunerated, and that consultation is undertaken in a culturally appropriate way (e.g. form community-based advisory groups across ALL outcome areas, that include service users).	Outcome 8	Investing in Foundations and Future Walking together Culture at the Heart	Article 18
7. Government to adequately fund a coordinated approach to enable community to contribute advice on systemic change from a grassroots level	Outcome 17	Culture at the Heart	Article 34 Article 35

- CtG (National Agreement on Closing the Gap)
- AES (Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy)
- UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)

Whilst there may be a number of programs running in the Pilbara that are achieving strong outcomes, none were identified at planning workshops that address or meet the needs identified in this draft **Call to Action** in the area of systemic change.

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Call to Action - Education

To be presented by: Henry Lockyer

- **If we** make sure that young people and children learn to read, write, and solve problems at school...
- **By** giving them individual support at school; involving parents, family, community, and Elders in teaching and learning and culture; helping young people get ready for employment; helping parents prepare children for school; engaging other essential services with schools; having local education hostels and on-country boarding...
- **This will result in** children and young people who want to go to school and are learning and being successful; families who are empowered and encouraged to support children's education at home and at school; communities that benefit from children who are engaged in learning through reduced anti-social behaviours...
- **And will** eventually lead to young Aboriginal people who are proud of their culture and successful in their chosen fields and have more life choices.

This is our Call to Action to improve Education outcomes.

Item	Alignment with strategic policy drivers		
	CtG outcomes	AES strategic elements	UNDRIP
1. Review and improve individual support at school to enable young people to complete year 12	Outcomes 5 and 7	Investing in foundations and future (primary and preventative)	Article 11 Article 12 Article 13
2. Better involve parents, family, community, and Elders in teaching and learning and embed culture in the curriculum.	Outcome 5		
3. Review and improve programs to better help young people get ready for employment	Outcomes 6 and 7		
4. Improve or create new services so that parents can better prepare their children for school	Outcomes 3 and 4		
5. Engage other essential services with schools	Outcomes 3 and 4		
6. Commit to providing <u>local</u> education hostels and on-Country boarding	Outcomes 3 and 4		
7. Employ dedicated staff to proactively support students to stay at school and engage in learning (for example young mums supported to bring baby to school).	Outcome 5		
8. Introduce screening for learning difficulties in Kindergarten or at least before Year 1 for all Aboriginal students.	Outcomes 3 and 4		
9. Fund the return and support of Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) Committees.	Outcome 5	Investing in Foundations and Futures and Walking together – Truth Telling and Investing in Prevention and Earlier Intervention	Article 22 and 24
10. Increase the focus on the development of person-centred plans for students at educational risk (SAER).	Outcomes 5 and 6		
11. Increase / Expand the footprint of the Target 120 program.	Outcome 10		
12. Provide existing Aboriginal Islander Education Officers (AIEOs) with additional training to enable them to holistically support families and link them with other services if it is warranted.	Outcomes 5 and 6		

13. Work with parents and students together to introduce and/or support more school-based drug awareness programs; across all areas and in all Pilbara locations but targeting antenatal impact. The assessments for these programs should be independent from the schools with a specialist, working with the parent and child to assess the level of need.	Outcome 1, 5, 6 and 14	Investing in Foundations and Futures and Walking together – Truth Telling and Investing in Prevention and Earlier Intervention	Article 22 and 24
14. Recognising that some students are not even making it to school, work with parents and children together on drug awareness programs <u>outside</u> of the school setting.	Outcome 5,6,13 and 14		
15. The Education Department needs to address the issue of parental responsibility. Make parents responsible. Collaborate with other departments and community to help them reach a position of strength to do so.	Outcome 14		

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There are a number of programs running in the Pilbara that are achieving strong outcomes or could do more with improved support.

Extending, broadening, or increasing support to these programs is a very tangible and common-sense way to address most of the issues identified by community. Other issues will need to have solutions co-designed and supported by all stakeholders, including community members.

Forming community based advisory or reference groups would also be useful to assist with achieving these outcomes.

Programs identified by the Pilbara community that are getting good outcomes but need additional support include:

- Alternate teacher settings; including home school, Julyardi offices, the beach, or in community.
- Polly Farmer Learning Club - primary (STEM Program).
- Polly Farmer Follow the Dream - secondary.
- Clontarf Academy - primary secondary.
- Shooting Stars- secondary.
- Mirnukaru Bus - Hedland Attendance Strategy, and other community home to school transport solutions.
- Gumala 3A Program (0-5) -Family as the first educators.
- Roebourne has specialised program – Big Hart – Hedland should look at every opportunity to expand this program.
- Big HART

Call to Action – Health

To be presented by: Raylene Button

- **If we** make the improved health of our people a priority...
- **By** advocating for local health services being able to meet our needs; helping our people work out healthy ways of being and living; making sure people understand their own health; navigating the health system...
- **This will result in** improved health in identified areas such as diabetes management and early intervention; Aboriginal people taking control of the own health journey; Aboriginal people getting access to good health care when and how they need it...
- **And will eventually lead to** significant advances in Closing the Gap health outcomes.

This is our ***Call to Action to improve our Health outcomes.***

Item	Alignment with strategic policy drivers		
	CtG	AES	UNDRIP
1. Review and improve local health services so that they better meet our needs, including through increased investment in preventative health to create culturally appropriate health education and programs the community can easily understand. This also includes more support for early assessment and diagnoses.	Outcomes 1 and 14	Investing in foundations and futures	Article 7
2. We desperately need to address the issue of dialysis an increase in the number of dialysis chairs <i>in the Pilbara</i> . This includes an audit on existing dialysis facilities, community access to these services (including waitlisting), and for State planning to include consideration of future needs to meet local demand.	Outcome 14		
3. Government to commit to increased medical support for our old people, such as geriatricians.	Outcome 1		
4. Increase the focus and funding for programs to work with young mums and bubs.	Outcomes 2 and 4		
5. Invest in a recruitment program for health personnel to work in the Pilbara – across sectors.	Outcome 1		
6. The PATS system and patient journey needs to be urgently reviewed so that it more equitably and adequately meets the needs of people who need to travel for medical support. It currently doesn't. Government should not expect Aboriginal language groups and trusts to be a substitute for Government support for this service.	Outcome 13 and 14		
7. Increase town-based and visiting dental services.	Outcome 14	Investing in Foundations and Futures	Article 7
8. Review and audit the dedicated housing/hostel to support out-of-town patients within the Pilbara (not send them to Perth). This audit should include a review of government's delivery on previous commitments for local hostel-housing support.	Outcomes 9 and 14		
9. Provide Mental Health Services that are available 24/7.	Outcome 14		
10. We need dedicated Aboriginal-specific beds in the Pilbara for Mental Health patients.	Outcome 14		

11. We need support for our people to access more in-person health appointments, and less Tele-Health.	Outcome 1 and 14		
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Extending, broadening, or increasing support to these programs is a very tangible and common-sense way to address most of the issues identified by community. Other issues will need to have solutions co-designed and supported by all stakeholders, including community members.

Forming community based advisory or reference groups would also be useful to assist with achieving these outcomes.

Programs identified by the Pilbara community that are getting good outcomes but need additional support include:

- Increased service access in remote areas to provide equitable health care across the Pilbara - such as Aboriginal Medical Services (AMS).
- Health service delivery in remote communities.
- Specific Aboriginal men’s and women’s programs operating are working well as they are targeted and culturally appropriate.
- Communicare’s Breathing Space program.
- One Good Turn (NDIS provider).
- Head Space.
- Access to medication through AMS’s.

DRAFT

Call to Action - Housing

To be presented by: Pat Mason

- **If we** focus on Aboriginal people in the Pilbara having and keeping a good house to live in...
- **By** government fixing up empty houses and making them available; helping people get and keep their tenancy; making sure there are enough houses so that people are not living in overcrowded situations; building bigger houses for big families; advocating for Aboriginal people to design housing; and supporting families travelling in from remote areas to get affordable accommodation; ...
- **This will result in** people feeling secure in their housing; reducing evictions and unpayable debt; more space to have family to stay; fewer health problems from overcrowding...
- **And will eventually lead to** secure, empowered communities of people living in culturally appropriate and inclusive housing in ways that support family life and cultural connectedness.

This is Our **Call to Action to improve our Housing outcomes.**

Item	Alignment with strategic policy drivers		
	CtG	AES	UNDRIP
1. Conduct an urgent independent housing audit to determine empty Social Housing stock in the Pilbara.	Outcomes 9, 13 and 14	Investing in Foundations and Futures and Building Aboriginal empowerment into how we work	Article 21 Article 23
2. Work with us to develop a new public housing strategy specific to the Pilbara, addressing this call to action – meeting our needs and prioritises the Pilbara Community.			
3. Urgently addresses the exceedingly long wait lists and reduced housing stock being faced by our communities.			
4. Reduce overcrowding and waitlisting for housing by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Fixing up empty houses and making them available. Building new houses that meet our needs. e.g., bigger houses for bigger families. Supporting collaboration between the Housing and Health Departments, so as to not send patients home to overcrowded houses 			
5. Invite Pilbara Aboriginal people to contribute to the design of social housing to ensure houses are 'fit for purpose.			
6. Provide more intensive programs that work with whole families that help people get and keep their tenancy, including specialist programs to train Aboriginal people to do minor repairs on their houses.			
7. Review and revisit the income thresholds to support people transitioning from low incomes and welfare dependency into employment so that they don't need to choose between giving up their job and losing their house.	Outcomes 8, 9 and 14		Article 21

8. Support families travelling in from remote areas to get affordable accommodation in town by ensuring short-stay options are available <u>and</u> affordable.			
9. Review and increase support for our people to transition from renting to owning their own property.			
10. Develop and/or support programs training up local Aboriginal people in trades associated with building and maintaining housing.			

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DRAFT

Call to Action - Wellbeing

To be presented by: Linda Dridi and Mrs Eaton

- **If we provide** Aboriginal people with support, compassion and understanding of what they have experienced and what they are experiencing...
- **By** listening to what people of all ages need for their wellbeing and making sure that Aboriginal healers are there if people need or want them; supporting and understanding the challenges of drug and alcohol addiction, especially young people; having local place-based mental health supports run by Aboriginal organisations; having access to family system counselling; having appropriate services when they are needed...
- **This will result in** Aboriginal people healing from past trauma and a reduction in intergenerational challenges and problems...
- **And will eventually lead to** strong, resilient, empowered Aboriginal people in the Pilbara.

This is Our ***Call to Action to improve our Wellbeing outcomes.***

Item	Alignment with strategic policy drivers		
	CtG	AES	UNDRIP
1. To actively listen to what people of all ages in our community need for their wellbeing. <i>Talk to us.</i>	Outcomes 1 and 14	Walking together and Investing in Foundations and Futures	Article 22 Article 24 (2)
2. Making sure that Aboriginal healers are there if people need or want them.			
3. Understand and better support the challenges of drug and alcohol addiction, especially for young people, including restricting access to volatile substances. Introduce new services/programs to address volatile substance abuse.			
4. Restrict the access of volatile substances. Elders have already written letters to several suppliers in the Pilbara.			
5. Increase the number of local, place-based mental health support services run by Aboriginal organisations.			
6. Provide funding to support improved access to counselling that can be either for 1:1 or a family, or a mix of both. At the moment service contracts seem to be prescriptive and it can only be one or the other – not both. We need contracts to be less prescriptive in this way.			
7. Provide funding for preferred service providers to have dedicated positions within their organisations to manage the wellbeing of Aboriginal staff independently.			

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Extending, broadening, or increasing support to these programs is a very tangible and common-sense way to address most of the issues identified by community. Other issues will need to have solutions co-designed and supported by all stakeholders, including community members.

Forming community based advisory or reference groups would also be useful to assist with achieving these outcomes.

Programs identified by the Pilbara community that are getting good outcomes but need additional support include:

- Communicare's Breathing Space program.
- Head Space.

DRAFT

Call to Action - Community Safety

To be presented by: Maureen Kelly and Ethan Tittums

- **If we** make community safety a priority...
- **By** community led solutions; creating safe places in the community for children and young people, especially after school and at night; encourage everyone to take responsibility for safety in the community; supporting vulnerable populations like young mums with babies and people with disabilities and their families; reducing anti-social behaviour by providing holistic tailored support to young people and having at risk youth services; holding parents and carers accountable for children's behaviour...
- **This will result in** communities that are cohesive and work together, where Elders take responsibility for young people and their safety, and where effective alliances with Police and other essential agencies operate together and in partnership...
- **And will eventually lead to** strong empowered and safe communities in the Pilbara.

This is our Call to Action to improve our Community Safety outcomes.

Item	Alignment with strategic policy drivers		
	CtG	AES	UNDRIP
1. Engage with us to better support community-led solutions.	Outcome 17	Building Aboriginal Empowerment into how we work and Investing in Foundations and Futures with Culture at the Heart	Article 3 Article 23
2. Work with us to create consistent, safe places in the community for children and young people, especially after school and at night. (1-2 nights a week is just not enough.)	Outcomes 4 and 13		
3. Better support vulnerable populations like young mums with babies and people with disabilities and their families.			
4. Reduce anti-social behaviour by providing holistic tailored support to young people and having more at-risk youth services and programs so they have options.			
5. Hold parents and carers accountable for children's behaviour. Better support for them to do this by providing holistic, wrap-around supports.			
6. Government department's need to come together to work with communities to co-design place-based, wrap-around, holistic solutions and programs to better support our youth in crisis.			

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