



YMAC welcomes resourcing commitment at 10th Annual on-Country Bush Meeting at Yule River

MEDIA RELEASE: Thursday, 24 July 2025



(Image: Yule River Call to Action Working Group members with Minister Don Punch and other key government agency staff at the On-Country Bush Meeting at Yule River)

YMAC welcomes the announcement from the Hon. Don Punch MLA, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs that the State Government will commit funding to support action on the *2024 Yule River Call to Action and Solutions Roadmap* (CTA) at the 10th Annual on-Country Bush Meeting at Yule River, held over 23 and 24 July 2025.

Coordinated by Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC), over 500 people attended the bush meeting to discuss local, community-led priorities to Close the Gap for First Nations people across the Pilbara.

Opening the meeting, YMAC Co-Chairperson Mrs Eaton said: “I stand here proudly to acknowledge the old people who met here at the Yule River Meeting Place decades ago to organise the 1946 Pilbara Strike. They fought for us. From Onslow to Marble Bar, from Roebourne, from the desert to Hedland – they stood as one. We’re here to challenge the government. We’re here as one voice.”

In her speech, Mrs Eaton also acknowledged that past Yule River meetings have seen commitment from government with no action.

Day One saw First Nations attendees discuss and decide on several priority issues that they expect the government to address in the next 12 months. These priorities are aligned to the



CTA and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, and are across six key areas of concern: Systemic Reform, Education, Health, Housing, Wellbeing, and Community Safety, and decided on community presenters for Day Two.

Day Two saw Ministers, Commissioners and heads of government agencies join the meeting, with community members Raylene Button and Henry Lockyer presenting the Day One priority items to government, before speeches from Minister Punch, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Katie Kiss and a Q&A panel for community to ask questions of government directly.

Attendees at Yule River have been calling for many years for the government to act on the place-based solutions that have been developed by the community, and Minister Punch was clear that he will implement a place-based approach. Minister Punch also committed to attend a meeting with community members in the next six months to provide updates and reporting on what work is being undertaken to address and deliver on the CTA.

YMAC CEO Simon Hawkins acknowledges that the proposed funding from Minister Punch is a refreshing outcome to resource the CTA in partnership with the community – which has been a longstanding invitation to government at previous Bush Meetings.

The 2024 CTA is an open invitation to local, State and Federal governments and industry to work together with First Nations peoples from across the Pilbara to achieve real and sustainable change.

It contains practical strategies and place-based solutions, identified by community members for: Systemic Reform, Education, Health, Housing, Wellbeing, and Community Safety.

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) coordinates the Yule River Bush Meeting under the direction of its Pilbara Regional Committee and in consultation with the Yule River Call to Action Working Group. In March this year, YMAC called on the State Government to urgently address the concerns laid out in the Call to Action after the Productivity Commission released its data on Closing the Gap which highlighted ongoing failure to address the issues facing Aboriginal communities.

YMAC also extends its appreciation to the Town of Port Hedland and the Pilbara Development Commission for their sponsorship of this year's event.

Find out more on the YMAC website at ymac.org.au/events/yule-river.

About Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation

Established in 1994, Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) is the Native Title Representative Body (NTRB), delivering native title and other services across the Pilbara, Mid West, Murchison and Gascoyne regions of Western Australia. As an Aboriginal corporation, YMAC is run by a First Nations board of directors, representing several native title groups, each of whom have their own language, culture, traditions, and protocols. YMAC services include native title claim, compensation and future act representation; heritage services; executive office, community, and economic development assistance; land administration, and natural resource management support.

Media contact: **Jane Mitchell**, Communications Manager, email editor@ymac.org.au and jmitchell@ymac.org.au or, mobile **0427 463 796**.