

YMAC NEWS

News from
Yamatji
Marlpa
Aboriginal
Corporation

ISSUE 52 | November 2025



Yamatji Marlpa
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



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Front Cover Photos: The Yule River Call to Action Working Group with Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Hon Don Punch MLA (image: Ophelie Barbeau).
The Jambinu Dancers at Yamatji On-Country. (image: José Kalpers).

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 52 of YMAC News



Miss Natalie Parker,
Co-Chairperson – Pilbara Region



Mr Peter Windie,
Co-Chairperson – Yamatji Region

In this edition, we:

- Report on our on-Country meetings
- Share an update on the firearms legislation
- Celebrate the successes and achievements of communities in our regions.

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

Country is our mother, our provider and keeper of our cultural belongings. Culture and Country go together. You can't have one without the other.

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners and custodians throughout Western Australia, and on whose Country we work. We acknowledge their deep connection to their lands and waterways.

We honour and pay respect to Elders, and to their ancestors who survived and cared for Country.

Our offices are located on Whadjuk Country, Southern Yamatji Country, Kariyarra Country, and Yawuru Country. We recognise the continuing culture, traditions, stories and living cultures on these lands and commit to building a brighter future together.

News from the CEO

Welcome to issue 52 of YMAC News.
It has been a busy time since our last newsletter,
with many great outcomes to celebrate.

At the time of going to print, YMAC staff have been preparing for our Annual Regional Meetings (ARMs). The Pilbara ARM was held on Friday, 14 November at the Jiblebar Function Room, Wanangkura Stadium in South Hedland, and the Yamatji ARM is scheduled for Saturday, 29 November at the YMAC Geraldton office. Copies of our Annual Report 2025 were available at the meetings, and mailed to our members.

Our 2025 on-Country meetings have been a huge success this year, with announcements at both meetings from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Hon Don Punch MLA for funding support in progressing the calls to action. It's fantastic to see both regions finally receiving support in this way, and I'm looking forward to seeing the call to action work progress over the next two years and beyond.

This success is the result of so much hard work from YMAC staff, the regional committees, the Yule River Call to Action Working Group, and the Midwest Aboriginal Organisations Alliance. Congratulations to everyone involved – this support will allow each region to continue their important advocacy through the call to actions. Each call to action is being updated following the meetings, and will be available on our website, as well as distributed to government, Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs), and community stakeholders. You can read more from the on-Country meetings on pages 4-8.

This year, YMAC has also undertaken extensive consultation for our new *Strategic Plan 2026-2030* – many readers have hopefully taken up the various opportunities to contribute. We are now in the final stages of preparing the plan, and we will be ready to share it early next year. Keep an eye on our website and LinkedIn page for updates.

The National Native Title Tribunal has recently partnered with the State Government in undertaking a review of

native title and Aboriginal cultural heritage processes in WA. YMAC met with the tribunal twice for consultation, discussing concerns around the expedited procedure process, and the burden this can place on PBCs. You can read more about this on page 12, as well as an update on the new firearms legislation on page 11.

This month I, and fellow senior managers from across Australia, participated in the National Indigenous Australian Agency's annual Native Title Representative Bodies/Service Providers CEO/CFO Forum. A key topic discussed was the announcement of \$75 million in PBC funding, made by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in July. Among other things, the agency shared current thinking and sought feedback on models of distribution of this funding, which is scheduled to begin from 1 July 2026.

There is much more to talk about from across both of our regions, I hope you enjoy the edition! If you would like to contribute a story or idea to our next edition, get in contact with our Communications Team at editor@ymac.org.au.



Simon Hawkins,
YMAC Chief Executive Officer

Funding success at Yule River

The 10th annual On-Country Bush Meeting at Yule River was a great success, with the announcement from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Hon Don Punch MLA that the State Government will commit funding to support action on the 2024 Yule River Call to Action and Solutions Roadmap (CTA).



Mrs Doris Eaton, YMAC Deputy Co-Chairperson, Pilbara Region – Board of Directors, opening the On-Country Bush Meeting at Yule River (image: Ophelie Barbeau).



Ms Raylene Button, Co-Chair of the On-Country Bush Meeting at Yule River, sharing key priorities for the region, with independent facilitator Mandy Gadsdon (image: Ophelie Barbeau).

Over 500 people attended the meeting, held on Kariyarra Country, 23-24 July 2025. First Nations people from across the Pilbara gathered to discuss local, community-led priorities to Close the Gap in the region through the CTA. The 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.

Mrs Doris Eaton, YMAC Deputy Co-Chairperson, Pilbara Region – Board of Directors, opened the meeting, reminding everyone of the long and important history of meeting at the site on Kariyarra Country.

“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,” said Mrs Eaton. “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.”

Day One saw First Nations attendees discuss and decide on several priority issues that they expect the government to address in the next twelve months. These priorities are aligned to the CTA and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and cover six key areas of concern: Systemic Reform, Education, Health, Housing, Wellbeing, and Community Safety.

Community members Raylene Button and Henry Lockyer represented community when presenting the priority items to government on Day Two of the meeting.

On Day Two, Mrs Eaton welcomed Minister Punch to the meeting and encouraged government to work with First Nations people from the Pilbara for positive outcomes.



Ngarluma woman Diane Walker and Nyangumarta woman Wynetta Tinker cooking roo tails (image: Ophelie Barbeau).



Minister Punch responding to this year's CTA updates (image: Ophelie Barbeau).

“You brought the rain and that’s telling me as a cultural person something good is going to turn out, because the river is going to flow,” she said. “We’re going to journey together. The spirits are watching. This rain came for a purpose, so let’s work together as a team.”

The rain was indeed a good sign, as after listening to the community’s priorities for the region, Minister Punch not only announced \$300,000 funding over two years towards progressing the CTA, but also committed to return to the region in six months’ time to provide updates and reporting on what the government has done to address and deliver on the CTA.

This follows previous disappointment and frustration, leading to YMAC calling on the State Government in March this year to urgently address concerns after the Productivity Commission released Closing the Gap data which highlighted ongoing failure to address issues facing First Nations communities.

Attendees at the 2025 On-Country Bush Meeting at Yule River also heard from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Ms Katie Kiss, and had an opportunity to ask questions directly to the Minister, Commissioner, and other heads of government agencies through a panel discussion.

This year’s panel included Director General of the Department of Communities Mr Mike Rowe, CEO of the WA Country Health Service Mr Robert Pulsford, Inspector of the WA Mr Police Matthew Froude, the Mental Health Commissioner Ms Maureen Lewis,

and the Director General at the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage Mr Anthony Kannis.

As well as formal discussions, the meeting provides a fantastic opportunity for the Pilbara First Nations community to network and gather information through a range of stalls. This year’s event hosted a record number of 23 stalls, from community service providers, Aboriginal corporations, and businesses.

Following the meeting, YMAC has been working with the Yule River Call to Action Working Group to produce the *2025 Yule River Community Priorities* document, which is on track to be released soon. The updated document will be available on the YMAC website, and will also be distributed to government, industry, and key community stakeholders, who are invited to work with the Pilbara First Nations community in addressing the key priorities within.

This year’s meeting was co-chaired by Ms Raylene Button and Mr Danny Brown, and independently facilitated by Ms Mandy Gadsdon from Think Culture. YMAC coordinates the On-Country Bush Meeting at Yule River for the Pilbara First Nations community under the direction of its Pilbara Regional Committee and in consultation with the Yule River Call to Action Working Group.

YMAC also extends its appreciation to the Town of Port Hedland and the Pilbara Development Commission for their sponsorship of this year’s event, and the many community and government organisations who hosted stalls.

Yamatji On-Country sees MAOA funding announcement

Now in its fifth year, Yamatji On-Country has gone from strength to strength, with this year's meeting securing funding and support commitments from Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Hon Don Punch MLA.

Over 500 people from across the Mid West, Gascoyne and Murchison regions gathered on Southern Yamatji Country at the Bundiyyarra Aboriginal Community Aboriginal Corporation in Geraldton. The event brought together primary and high school students, parliamentarians from State and Federal government, representatives from government agencies and local government, independent commissioners, and the Yamatji community to celebrate culture and community and discuss progress on the *Yamatji On-Country Call to Action Statement (CTA)*.

On Day One, the First Nations community met to discuss their key priorities for the CTA across the Yamatji region, highlighting urgent items needing action in the areas of: Systemic Change, Racism, Housing and Accommodation, Police and Justice, Education, Employment, Training and Economic Development, and Health and Wellbeing. These discussions were strengthened by information shared from a series of

pre-event workshops YMAC held throughout the region to ensure that the voices from First Nations people in Carnarvon, Meekatharra, Mt Magnet and Mullewa were heard at the meeting.

Co-MCs of the event, CEO of Streeties Ms Chloe Collard, and Deputy CEO of the Bundiyyarra Aboriginal Community Aboriginal Corporation Mr Jamie Strickland, represented the community in presenting the key priorities discussed on Day One to government and decision-makers on Day Two.

In response, Minister Punch committed to \$300,000 in funding over two years to support the Midwest Aboriginal Organisations Alliance (MAOA) in their work, which includes strengthening the member organisations so they can address the key priorities outlined in the CTA. This commitment will also enable MAOA to strengthen their position as the peak body for the Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations (ACCO) sector in the region.



Craig Pickett performing at the Yamatji On-Country Cultural Celebration Evening (image: José Kalpers).



Co-MCs Mr Jamie Strickland and Mrs Chloe Collard presenting key priorities in the CTA (image: José Kalpers).



Minister Punch responding to the CTA (image: José Kalpers).

Minister Punch also committed to revisiting the region in six months' time to provide an update from government on their response, and acknowledged the importance of sharing and analysing data when addressing outcomes – a request YMAC called for from the State Government back in March following the release of concerning Closing the Gap data from the Productivity Commission.

"It's about the resourcing, but it's also about sharing the data and how we can look at the information that's coming forward, to see how we can measure the difference between yesterday and tomorrow. And how we can look at each of those actions and see what can be progressed and what fits," Minister Punch said.

"My advisory body, the Aboriginal Advisory Council, is very much looking at the whole of government across the whole of Western Australia around the implementation of Closing the Gap, and it can't just be a centralised process down in Dumas House. It has to be on Country. It has to have the ownership of people locally if we're truly to make a difference."

Ms Collard, who is also the Co-Chair of MAOA, welcomed these commitments from the Minister.

"This support will enable us to work collaboratively with government, be proactive in both mapping out services in the region, but also advocating for system change in areas impacting our community and identifying gaps that need to be addressed," she said.

"We want to ensure that our ACCOs are at the table, informed and ready to deliver the services our community needs, and through this funding we hope to make that a reality."

This year, Yamatji On-Country also included a strong celebration of community and culture with two social events: a community breakfast, and an evening event featuring local First Nations musicians. Both events were a fantastic opportunity for Yamatji people to share some down time with each other while enjoying some bush tucker and great entertainment.

The many community information stalls present throughout the event also provided an opportunity for those present to network with community service providers, government agencies, and ACCOs in the region.

The meeting Co-MCs were supported by independent facilitator Mandy Gadsdon from Think Culture. YMAC also extends its appreciation to Lotterywest for its support. As the only State Government owned and operated lottery in Australia where all the profits are returned to the community, Lotterywest is committed to supporting Western Australian community groups.

YMAC will distribute an updated *2025 Yamatji On-Country Call to Action* and the *5th Annual Yamatji On-Country Event Report* to government, industry and key stakeholders in the coming months.

These documents will also be available online; keep an eye out for updates on the YMAC website at ymac.org.au/events/yamatji-on-country.

Minister Punch (centre) with this year's meeting Co-MCs and other government representatives who took part in a panel discussion on Day Two (image: José Kalpers).





Celebrating Country and culture: local students lead the way at Yamatji On-Country

In a powerful showcase of cultural pride, intergenerational learning, and community collaboration, students from six local schools came together for the Yamatji On-Country event held on 10 and 11 September, with a moving presentation delivered in front of Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Hon Don Punch MLA and the wider Yamatji community.

The lead-up to the event saw students participate in a pre-event workshop delivered by YMAC, which focussed on culture and Country. The students were given a presentation on native title and its connection to culture and Country delivered by YMAC Anthropologists, Ms Renata Cetinich and Mr Johan Sulaiman, while also hearing from YMAC Project Officer, Wajarri Nanda man Mr Ken Capewell and YMAC Corporate Receptionist, Amangu Wajarri Elder Ms Rhodda Capewell.

A highlight of the workshop was the presentation by the Yamatji Southern Regional Corporation (YSRC) Rangers. These presentations and following open discussion provided a foundation for deep conversations around identity, cultural connection, and the responsibilities of young people in carrying culture forward, setting the tone for a collaborative and respectful exploration of culture, history, and future pathways.

Their insights were shared powerfully on the main stage at the event, drawing strong positive feedback from attendees – including potential funding opportunities flagged by Minister Punch's office to support future initiatives.

The Yamatji On-Country youth delegates (image: José Kalpers).



Elders Film Project: culture through the lens of youth

A major highlight of the students' presentation was the unveiling of the concept of an Elders Film Project – a creative initiative designed to bridge generations through the power of storytelling on Country.

Each participating school hopes to create a short film capturing the voices, wisdom, and lived experiences of Elders from across the region. Far more than just a filming exercise, they want the project to be about reconnection, learning, and sharing culture in an authentic and respectful way, with students taking the lead in interviewing Elders, recording cultural practices with permission, and exploring stories.

The students' reception at Yamatji On-Country has sparked strong enthusiasm, with conversations already underway on plans for 2026.

Projects like this do more than preserve culture, they empower the next generation to learn, share, and carry forward their heritage as its future guardians and storytellers.

To continue this important work, YMAC is consulting with schools and community so we can apply for funding and create partnerships, to support and grow the Elders Film Project.

If you would like to know more, contact the YMAC Geraldton office on (08) 9965 6222 or free call 1800 270 709.



Lessons from Victoria in exploring treaty

In July this year, YMAC’s Board of Directors travelled east to undertake a research and study trip to learn more about the treaty process in Victoria.

Australia does not yet have a national Treaty between the government and First Nations people, unlike other Commonwealth countries such as Canada and New Zealand. Some states and territories are now working towards agreements that recognise First Nations sovereignty, self-determination, and land rights. Victoria is the most advanced state in Australia on the journey towards Treaty with First Nations people, with the announcement that a Victorian Treaty will commence before the end of 2025.

While there is a long way to go, many people are watching the process unfold in Victoria for guidance.

Importantly, the Victorian model means that whilst there is a Treaty being negotiated between the Victorian Government and all First Nations Victorians, it also allows for local treaties to be negotiated between Victoria and individual groups of Traditional Owners in addition to the statewide Treaty.

YMAC Directors met with a range of organisations, including the Treaty Authority, Djaara Corporation, First Nations Legal and Research Services (FNLRS) and the Taungurung Land and Waters Council (TLaWC). Members

of each organisation were very welcoming and shared details with YMAC about the good and bad experiences they have had so far on their journeys, their own plans going forward to ensure their self-determination, and other lessons we might learn from in WA.

As of 2025, WA is the only state in Australia that has not committed to ‘talking treaty’ with First Nations Peoples.

One element of the Victorian process that was highlighted by each organisation was the success of the Yoorook Commission – the Victorian approach to truth-telling that set the foundation for treaty negotiations to begin.

Yoorook was designed and driven by First Nations people and was given the power of a Royal Commission, ensuring that stories and evidence were gathered, recorded and preserved for future generations.

YMAC Directors also heard about the way native title rights can intersect with treaty negotiations and even give Traditional Owners a stronger platform to build their negotiations from – with certain rights being settled, Traditional Owners are able to negotiate for the services and needs of their communities without having to discuss the issues that are already settled.



YMAC Directors and staff with staff members of Djaara Corporation in Bendigo, Victoria (image: Henry Sims).

Encouraging meeting with the Minister



Mrs Doris Eaton, YMAC Co-Chairperson – Pilbara Region – Board of Directors, Mr Peter Windie, YMAC Co-Chairperson – Yamatji Region – Board of Directors, and YMAC CEO Simon Hawkins had a productive meeting with Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Hon Don Punch MLA in June this year.

It was encouraging to hear Minister Punch emphasise in this meeting the importance of relationships, and of working together to progress the place-based responses to local issues identified by community in the Calls to Action arising from the annual On-Country Bush Meeting at Yule River and Yamatji On-Country. Also discussed was the important need for government to share reports and updates with community on how it is responding to these calls to action, as a positive way forward to Closing the Gap.

It was great to see this play out at the 2025 on-Country meetings in July and September, with the funding support Minister Punch committed to at both meetings this year, as well as his commitment to provide reporting from State Government (see pages 4-5 and 6-8).

Given Minister Punch's additional portfolios of Water and Climate Resilience, YMAC also took this opportunity to discuss the critical issue of water rights, which will be the focus of our Native Title Forums early next year.

Native Title and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Processes Review

In May this year, the WA Government engaged the National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT) to conduct the Native Title and Cultural Heritage Processes Review.

NNTT Member Mr Glen Kelly is leading the review, which will consider WA Government policies around native title future act and Aboriginal heritage processes in relation to mining and mineral exploration. The review is not intended to create change in legislation, but instead aims to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and equity of Aboriginal heritage processes for both Native Title Holders and industry.

In June and August, YMAC Legal, Research, and Heritage team members met with Mr Kelly for this review. YMAC highlighted the large burden WA Government's expedited procedure policy places on and Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs), and YMAC encouraged earlier and better engagement with PBCs in the process, to reduce the burden on PBCs and provide better outcomes for Native Title Holders. YMAC also talked about the need for education in the sector so that proponents and government understand the value of cultural heritage, and can better plan for the time and resources needed throughout the negotiation process.

During the review, Mr Kelly also met with Traditional Owners, PBCs, other Native Title Representative Bodies, regional corporations, industry stakeholders, and relevant government agencies across the state. A final report will be submitted to the State Government with findings of the review and recommendations for possible actions not requiring legislative change.

Find out more about the review at wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/native-title-and-cultural-heritage-processes-review.

Update on changes to the Firearms Act 2024 (WA)

Since our last update in Issue 51, YMAC has continued to advocate for Traditional Owners, Native Title Holders, and Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs) in our regions trying to navigate the State Government's new gun laws that came into effect on Monday, 31 March 2025.

Of key concern to YMAC – and many other people and organisations who have reached out to us – is how the *Firearms Act 2024 (WA)* and *Firearms Regulations 2024 (WA)* impacts certain rights protected by the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)*, as well as the potential increased administrative burdens these reforms appear to force upon both individuals and PBCs.

On Wednesday, 28 May 2025, the *Firearms Act 2024 (WA)* and *Firearms Regulations 2024* were referred to the Western Australian Standing Committee on Legislation for inquiry. The committee was tasked to explore (amongst other things) problems that have emerged from the implementation and operation of the legislation, and recommend amendments that will ensure the legislation's workability and effectiveness.

YMAC made a written submission, following which Mr Peter Windie, YMAC Co-Chairperson, Yamatji Region – Board of Directors, and Mr Colin McKellar, YMAC Special Counsel, were invited to appear before the committee on Friday, 12 September 2025.

Findings and Recommendations

A final report on the inquiry's findings was released on Thursday, 16 October 2025. Of the total 47 findings and 11 recommendations, those of most relevance to First Nations people include:

- **Finding 26:**
The *Firearms Act 2024* and the *Firearms Regulations 2024* have sufficient regard to Aboriginal tradition and Island custom in terms of allowing for traditional hunting rights and practices.
- **Recommendation 4:**
That the Western Australia Police Force makes a referral to the State Government's Aboriginal Advisory Group, in order to consider how best to assist Registered Native Title Body Corporates with the administrative duties that have come as a result of the *Firearms Act 2024* and the *Firearms Regulations 2024*.
- **Recommendation 8:**
That the Western Australia Police Force develops and publishes on its website information sheets and other materials to be used as the primary source of advice shared in writing by members of the Licensing Services (Firearms) team.
- **Recommendation 9:**
That a hardcopy handbook(s) of guidance on the provisions of the *Firearms Act 2024* and the *Firearms Regulations 2024* be produced by the Western Australia Police Force and sent to all registered firearms owners and potential firearms owners. That handbook should be written in clear and plain language.
- **Finding 47:**
A community education program would assist firearms users to understand the new requirements and dispel misinformation.
- **Recommendation 10:**
That the Western Australia Police Force Licensing Services (Firearms) undertakes a community education campaign, including proactive and outreach strategies to regional communities. That campaign should be taken in particular to communities whose digital literacy or internet access may be problematic, such as remote Aboriginal communities and older pastoralists.
- **Recommendation 11:**
That the Western Australia Police Force makes a referral to the State Government's Aboriginal Advisory Group, in order to consider how best to protect Traditional Owner's right to hunt, before undertaking the recommended community education campaign.

The report is available to read on the WA Parliament website at tinyurl.com/bd7zpnvz.

For more information about YMAC's advocacy work on this matter as well as future updates, please visit our website at ymac.org.au/firearms-act-2024-wa.

Pilbara Solar nominated for Community Achievement Award

Pilbara Solar was recently announced as a finalist in the 7 News Community Achievement Awards, for the Rhinehart Development of Northern Regional WA Award.

The award highlights economic achievements in the region and pays tribute to the businesses and people who positively promote the economic development of Northern Regional WA.

As a profit-for-purpose renewable energy development consultancy, and half owned by YMAC, Pilbara Solar's mission is to empower First Nations people to develop and own large scale renewable energy projects. Pilbara Solar were nominated in recognition of its sustained leadership and commitment to ensuring meaningful First Nations participation in renewable energy projects in the Pilbara.

Pilbara Solar Managing Director Mr Will Davis said the team were very honoured to be a finalist. "It's great to be recognised for the work we have done over the years in ensuring and advocating for First Nations ownership in renewable energy projects. We want to see it become mainstream," said Mr Davis.

The awards were announced during a Gala Presentation on Saturday, 25 October 2025.

Congratulations to the Pilbara Kimberley Universities Centre for receiving the award, and to the other finalists: the Kununurra Visitor Centre, Mallard Contracting, and Ngaarda Media.



Hancock Prospecting Sponsorship Assistant Lauren Melville (left) presenting Pilbara Solar as a finalist in the Rhinehart Development of Northern Regional WA Award, with Pilbara Solar Directors Mrs Doris Eaton and Mr Peter Windie, and Managing Director Will Davis (image: supplied from 7News WA Community Achievement Awards).

Keep your mob safe online

The 'Keep your mob safe online' campaign encourages online safety amongst the First Nations community.

The top three tips for staying safe online are:

1. Always set up multifactor authentication.
2. Use a unique and strong passphrase, instead of a password, on every account.
3. Install software updates to keep your devices secure.

The Australian Government has released a range of shareable resources to promote online safety, including videos, social media tiles, a poster and a fact sheet. Issues covered include the above three tips, as well as watching out for scams, knowing the dangers of public Wi-Fi, speaking up about cyber-attacks and hacks, and checking privacy and location settings.

Use the resources to keep informed on personal online safety, and share them among your communities. Download the resources on the Act Now, Stay Secure website at actnowstaysecure.gov.au/first-nations.



Men's On Country Health and Reconnection Exchange

In late August 2025, the Pilbara Aboriginal Health Alliance (PAHA) held the Men's On Country Health and Reconnection Exchange (Men's OCHRE), a two-day workshop for First Nations men from across the Pilbara to come together, connect with Country, and share stories and knowledge.

PAHA Health Project Manager and Secretary of the Pilbara Aboriginal Health Planning Forum Men's Health Subcommittee Henry Lockyer said, "Becoming empowered, self-determined men of the Pilbara requires space – space to speak, to be heard, and to define our own priorities."

The event was grounded in culture and connection, and provided a place for men to share openly, learn from one another and begin shaping their own pathways to health, healing, and strength. The gathering provided a chance for service providers to sit alongside men and listen deeply to their lived experiences.

Men's OCHRE also gave young men the opportunity to learn more about walking in culture and offered guidance, and for Elders it gave them the platform to share wisdom and inspiration for the next generation. Attendees talked about the importance of leadership,

healing and empowerment growing through culture, Country and community.

Discussions focused on looking forward. Strength-based and solution-focused, attendees had the chance to define their own needs and priorities while giving service providers the opportunity to listen, learn and better understand how services can support the community.

PAHA are committed to ensuring the event and discussions are the first step for a men's health movement in the Pilbara led by First Nations people. They want to ensure that Men's OCHRE continues beyond this year, ensuring there is an ongoing space for men to come together to lead, heal and strengthen their communities.

To find out more about Men's OCHRE and the work PAHA are undertaking, visit their website at paha.org.au.



PAHA CEO Ashley Councillor speaking at the Men's OCHRE event



Day Two participants of Men's OCHRE

New truth-telling research project in WA mining underway

Project leaders researching a new, multi-year truth-telling social and cultural history project – Mining Mobs (working title) – have been talking with Aboriginal people across Western Australia as part of their research into their lived experiences in mining landscapes and are keen to connect with more Traditional Owners in YMAC’s Yamatji and Pilbara regions.

Currently early in its ‘discovery phase’ (February 2025 to September 2026), Mining Mobs aims to document these important stories – often absent from the ‘mainstream’ – to move beyond the dominant Western framing of conflict and marginalisation and instead highlight stories of collaboration, innovation, enterprise, and shared transformation.



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Native Title Forums – Postponed to 2026

Let’s talk about WATER!

Culturally significant • environmentally essential • a critical asset

Due to timing complexities, our Native Title Forums have been postponed to 2026. Keep an eye on our website, PBC eNews, or LinkedIn page for updates!

In Western Australia, the recognition of First Nations peoples’ rights and interests in water is highly complex and challenging.

While the State Government acknowledges the importance of a partnership approach with First Nations peoples in managing water resources, the current legal framework does not fully

address nor specifically allocate rights to water for Traditional Owners or their representative organisations.

Join YMAC and staff from a range of Government agencies to discuss this important issue and how it affects Native Title Holders in both the Yamatji and Pilbara regions.

To register interest and for more information visit ymac.org.au/native-title-forums

YMAC’s annual Native Title Forums are for Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs) and Traditional Owners to network, share and learn more about native title, its related processes, the different roles and functions of various stakeholders (like YMAC and PBCs), current reforms and opportunities, sector updates, and more.

Want to learn more or get involved in Mining Mobs?

Led by the Nomads Charitable and Educational Foundation (Nomads) in partnership with the University of Western Australia (UWA), Mining Mobs hopes in the longer-term to secure funding that could result in the discovery and return of historical materials to knowledge holders; sharing of new stories; and public outcomes – to be guided by the preferences of participating communities – such as exhibitions, film, and publications. UWA's involvement is intended to ensure Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property within the project is managed ethically and sensitively, and that all project outcomes are co-designed in collaboration with Traditional Owners and knowledge holders.

Mining Mobs also hopes to build on the legacy of two existing projects – Strelley Mob and Trust – by offering a platform for co-designed storytelling, cultural reclamation, and public education. Each showed a strong demand for truth-telling in relation to mining that respectfully centres First Nation voices, histories, and perspectives.

The Strelley Mob exhibition showed at John Curtin Gallery in Perth in 2024 and at Courthouse Gallery + Studio in Port Hedland to Thursday, 11 December 2025. The consultation around and exhibiting of Strelley Mob revealed a strong desire among many Pilbara First Nations people for their mining histories to be told.

The Trust project, developed by the Warburton community in 2003, documented the extensive involvement of Ngaanyatjarra people in mining-related work on their lands – from assisting survey teams to negotiating prospective developments like the proposed nickel mine at Wingellina.

Trust resulted in an exhibition, catalogue and documentary.

In this current phase (to September 2026), Nomads, in partnership with UWA, are:

- Requesting interviews and wanting to start building relationships with knowledge holders, Traditional Owners, and organisations such as Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs), languages centres and art centres across WA. Funding is available to pay participants, and meetings can happen in person, on-Country or online.
- Establishing Aboriginal governance and determining what public facing outcomes (e.g. exhibitions) are desired, to inform next steps and future funding applications.
- Unearthing archives relevant to the history, including photographs and films of Aboriginal mining camps dating back to the 1920s.

Contact Darren Jorgensen at darren.jorgensen@uwa.edu.au or Faraday Boydell at faraday.boydell@uwa.edu.au to arrange a discussion or to learn more about the project.



Solomon Cocky's artwork 'Walking to Work 1982' from the Strelley Mob exhibition (image: supplied by University of Western Australia).

Award-winning film calls for justice on Banjima Country



Banjima Elder Mr Parker at Wittenoom
(image: supplied by Yurlu Country Illuminate Films).

Senior Banjima Elder, the late Mr Parker, wrote and executive produced this powerful documentary exploring the devastating impact of the Wittenoom asbestos mines on both Banjima Country and its people. The film highlights an important Pilbara story, where millions of tonnes of toxic waste have poisoned Country and caused thousands of cases of mesothelioma, an aggressive cancer caused only by exposure to asbestos.

A well-respected and long-term community activist, Mr Parker fought for justice for Banjima Country and its future generations while battling his own case of mesothelioma almost 60 years on from the closure of mining activity in Wittenoom.

After premiering at the Sydney Film Festival back in June 2025, *Yurlu/Country* has screened at various other film festivals, winning the Best Festival Category Award: The Edge of Impact, at the Doc Edge Festival Awards in New Zealand, and the Best International Feature Documentary Award at Buffalo International Film Festival, as well as being announced as a finalist for the Walkley Documentary Award, and selected for the United Nations' Human Rights Tour.

YMAC encourages everyone to get along to a screening near you, and to support Banjima Native Title Aboriginal Corporation's Clean Up Wittenoom campaign that aims to engage and empower First Nations communities

in the Pilbara, share knowledge and strategies for intergenerational health equity and wellbeing, and drive system reforms in mining practices and environmental stability.

Find out more about the film, where it is screening, and how you can support the campaign at yurlucountry.com.



Wittenoom is the largest contaminated site in the Southern Hemisphere (image: supplied by Yurlu Country Illuminate Films).

YMAC joins WA Better by Nature campaign to help champion First Nations-led conservation of Country

YMAC is proud to be a part of a powerful new alliance alongside the Pew Charitable Trusts and a host of other organisations for the WA Better by Nature campaign – a movement focused on protecting what makes Western Australia truly special.

This exciting partnership is committed to safeguarding the state’s unique landscapes, rich biodiversity, and vibrant communities. Together, we are working to conserve it’s natural and cultural heritage for future generations.

“Western Australia has the opportunity to lead the way in demonstrating how we can all do better by nature; because once it’s gone, how do we get it back?”

Mr Peter Windie, YMAC Co-Chairperson
– Yamatji Region – Board of Directors

As part of this alliance, YMAC continues to advocate strongly for the Traditional Owners we represent across the Mid West, Gascoyne, Murchison, and Pilbara regions – ensuring that their voices, rights, and aspirations are central to all conservation efforts.

The campaign is championing practical, proven solutions, such as expanding jointly-managed national parks and strengthening First Nations-led conservation and land management. These efforts are not only vital for Country, but also support jobs, cultural tourism, and economic growth in regional WA.

“When you look after Country, Country looks after you. And that’s why we all have a role to play in looking after this land and all the life it sustains.”

Miss Natalie Parker, YMAC Co-Chairperson
– Pilbara Region – Board of Directors

YMAC is excited to see the impact of the WA Better by Nature campaign and the positive change it will bring – not only for Traditional Owners in our representative regions, but also for everyone who calls WA home, and those who visit and experience its incredible natural beauty.

To learn more and/or to find out how to get involved in the campaign, visit the website at betterbynature.org.au/get-involved.



New smartphone game keeping Nyiyaparli language and culture strong

Karlka Nyiyaparli Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC (KNAC) has launched a new educational smartphone game as part of its ongoing Nyiyaparli Living Language Project (NLLP).

Commencing in July 2022, KNAC's NLLP was established to help ensure the Nyiyaparli language is recorded and safeguarded for future generations. This important work has involved documenting and digitising the language, so it can be preserved, promoted and shared via a range of planned initiatives.

With only eight fluent Nyiyaparli speakers remaining from their 41,000-year-old culture – down from eleven speakers just 18 months ago – this grassroots initiative harnesses technology as a force for cultural preservation. This is a story of cultural revival, driven not by textbooks or classrooms, but by community, kids and clever technology.

“We keep telling kids to get off their phones – but here’s a story where staying on the phone might just help save a language and the cultural knowledge it unlocks,” said Leonard Michael Stream, a member of the NLLP Cultural Working Group.

Nyiyaparli Widi encourages players to travel through beautiful Nyiyaparli Yurlu (Country), while learning language and earning Paathupaathu (respect) points along the way. Starting at Ngawanykurrana (14 Mile stockyards camp) on Palkarra (Fortescue Marsh), the

game explores Marnta (Chichester Ranges), Kurtuwa (Ethel Creek Station), Panpatina (Newman), and many other cultural locations. On the journey, you can also collect cultural items, such as artwork and skin governance rules, as well as plants, animals and essential camp tools.

In creating the game, KNAC transformed a meeting space in Newman into a makeshift recording studio and invited their Senior Language Speakers and members of the community to record over 90 Nyiyaparli words and phrases, which have been incorporated into the game. The result is a fun, interactive game, sure to keep kids and adults alike entertained. The game has also been awarded four silver and one bronze award at the Anthem Awards, which recognise purpose and mission-driven work from across the globe.

Nyiyaparli Widi is available now as a free download in the Apple iOS Store or Google Play. Every time someone plays the game, they’re helping to keep Nyiyaparli language alive forever.

Find out more about KNAC's NLLP by visiting www.nyiyaparli.live/widi.

YMAC thanks KNAC for contributing this story.



Download from the
Apple iOS Store



Download from
Google Play



Water monitoring underway thanks to Preserve, Promote and Protect grant

The preservation of on-Country water sources is vital for our natural environment, as well as respecting the cultural significance of these sites. Thanks to a grant through the WA Department of Planning, Lands, and Heritage's Preserve, Promote and Protect our Aboriginal Sites Program, YMAC worked with the Ngarlawangga Aboriginal Corporation (NAC) in a water monitoring program at Djadabunna Trapyard, aiming to restore and protect this significant site.

Djadabunna Trapyard is an Aboriginal heritage listed site along Limestone Creek which feeds into the Ashburton River on Ngarlawangga Country. The site is an historic water source traditionally used to trap animals, as well as a campground. In recent years, Traditional Owners noticed considerable damage to the site from livestock trampling the area. The water had turned green and was no longer drinkable – a concern for the many animals using the site as a drinking source. As part of the Ngarlawangga people's commitment to caring for Country, NAC began a water monitoring program with the aim of returning the site to a healthy drinking water hole.

With the site located on Bulloo Downs Station, grant money was also used to explore the need for fencing around the site to protect it from livestock. The project strengthened the already positive ties between the Ngarlawangga people and the station, while promoting the importance of heritage sites in the area to employees of the station.

As part of this project, training was provided to Ngarlawangga Traditional Owners so that ongoing water monitoring could occur. Three Ngarlawangga Traditional Owners took part in the program, learning how to use

equipment to take water samples, how to store the samples correctly, and where to send them for testing. This training will support the ongoing monitoring of the water source, ensuring protection of the site for generations to come.

Since testing began back in October 2024, ideal rains in the area has meant the site has now returned to a healthy waterhole with safe drinking water. It was also found that fencing wasn't needed at this time, however, ongoing monitoring is required to keep an eye on the site and whether it will need maintenance in the future.

Applications for the WA Department of Planning, Lands, and Heritage's Preserve, Promote and Protect our Aboriginal Sites Program are now closed. To find out more about possible future grant opportunities, visit wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/grants-preserve-and-protect-aboriginal-sites



Water samples ready for testing (image: Tiane Pederson).



Ngarlawangga Traditional Owner Damien Hubert collecting water samples at the Djadabunna Trapyard (image: Tiane Pederson).



Congratulations Ishmael!

YMAC congratulates Nyangumarta Ranger Ishmael Hunter for his 2025 Rio Tinto Leadership Award for being an outstanding student in completion of his Cert III in Conservation and Ecosystem Management at North Regional TAFE. Ishmael (left) is pictured here with Bardi Jawi Oorany Ranger Natasha George (right) and Gary Lienert from North Regional TAFE.

Malgana Rangers providing care and protection for Shark Bay



Malgana Rangers built locally sourced 'rock sieves' to help control erosion (image: Cameron Perrett).

The Malgana Rangers are leading a series of impactful projects across the Shark Bay World Heritage Area, combining traditional knowledge with modern technology to protect, manage, and share their connection to Country. The Malgana Ranger Program is operated by the Malgana Aboriginal Corporation (MAC), supported by YMAC.

As part of a community engagement and capacity-building initiative, Malgana Rangers participated in advanced drone training across February 2025. The workshops covered Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) regulations, drone flight planning, and data collection for landscape monitoring. These skills are now being used to monitor sensitive ecological and cultural sites from the air – offering a new perspective to on-Country care.

This training was crucial in supporting the rangers' broader work on erosion control at Hamelin Station, with aerial surveys enabling the mapping of key structures like leaky weirs and rock sieves, which slow water runoff and preserve soil.

Malgana Rangers delivered more than 40 days of on-ground restoration at the Flint Cliffs erosion site on Hamelin Station Reserve.



Erosion at Flint Cliff (image: Cameron Perret).

Activities included:

- Constructing erosion barriers using locally sourced rocks in wire mesh ‘rock sieves’
- Installing leaky weirs to reduce runoff damage
- Conducting site inspections and maintenance
- Undertaking feral animal control using camera traps, 1080 baiting, and innovative Felixer devices.

These practical techniques, paired with traditional land care methods, helped protect critical habitat and prevent further landscape degradation. Equipment training – including courses in skid steer and mini excavator operation – has also boosted the rangers’ ability to undertake future works independently.

Beyond ecological outcomes, the program has empowered cultural reconnection and intergenerational knowledge sharing. The MAC Rangers and Cultural Advisors hosted several cultural awareness events at Hamelin Station, involving interpretive walks, language sharing and storytelling.

During these events, Elders shared traditional place names, stories, and land care practices to younger rangers – critical steps in ensuring cultural continuity and safety in work on Country.

In addition to on-ground works, the rangers contributed to interpretive materials to be featured at Hamelin Station. This includes signage with cultural and ecological insights, with planned installations at the caravan park, homestead, and along the Biligurdu Track.



A Felixer device, assisting with feral animal control on Malgana Country (image: Cameron Perrett).

Workshops in late 2024 saw the Malgana Rangers collaborate with Bush Heritage Australia (BHA) to develop these resources. Rangers contributed designs and provided language translations for signs that will share Malgana knowledge with visitors.

The combined efforts of ecological restoration, drone technology, cultural revitalisation, and community storytelling are emblematic of the unique and powerful role the Malgana Rangers are playing in the Shark Bay World Heritage Area.

Inspecting the erosion site at Flint Cliffs (image: Cameron Perrett).



Traditional Ecological Knowledge Guidance Project

YMAC's Land and Sea Management (LSM) team, in collaboration with Pilbara ethnobotanist Vicki Long, has been working on an innovative initiative to support the development of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) survey technical guidance.

The project aims to provide clarity and improve both the consistency and quality of TEK reports being produced. When published, the guidelines will act as a standard framework for the design and scoping of TEK surveys in the context of the Environmental Protection Authority's Social Surroundings requirement during the Environmental Impact Assessment process.

Social surroundings surveys in the context of First Nations communities usually entail the assessment of First Nations values and concepts, such as the notion of Country, bush tucker, bush medicine, mythological features of the landscape, water flows and song lines. These surveys require specific expertise to capture information related to ethnobotany and other TEK.

Producing guidelines for the design and scoping of TEK surveys seeks to address the existing disconnect between First Nations values and priorities and the requirements of the environmental approvals process, which are typically based on Western science. It has been important that the process for capturing cultural knowledge came from a grassroots approach, and that cultural protocols are considered in bringing together a set of guidelines that are culturally appropriate.

To support the development of the guidelines, YMAC's LSM team organised a workshop, held in Karratha. In attendance were Traditional Owners from ten different Pilbara groups, who shared valuable contributions and raised key questions to consider in the development of the guidelines. The workshop provided an opportunity to gather direct input and feedback from Traditional Owners on what is essential to include in the TEK survey guidelines. Key components discussed included survey type, preparation, methods, concerns, and outcomes for the relevant Traditional Owner group and community.

YMAC thanks all the workshop participants for sharing their knowledge. Outcomes include promoting the adoption of a methodology that respects the principles and values of First Nations communities during the environmental assessment process, while fostering improved engagement between industry proponents and First Nations communities impacted by project developments.

The guidelines are currently being developed, with an aim to be finalised in 2026.

This project is supported by funding from the State Government's Natural Resource Management (NRM) program. Find out more about the NRM program at bit.ly/StateNRM.

Traditional Owners participated in a TEK workshop in Karratha, organised by the YMAC LSM team (Image: José Kalpers).





Celebrating the Exmouth Gulf Marine Park. Left – right: Member for the Pilbara Kevin Michel MLA, Minister for Environment Matthew Swinbourn, WA Premier Roger Cook, NTGAC Vice Chair Rachael Hicks, NTGAC Chair Karla Tittums, Australian Marine Conservation Society CEO Paul Gamblin (image: Radhika Kayarat).

Protecting land and sea Country: historic milestones celebrated in the Gascoyne region

In a landmark series of achievements, Nganhurra Thanardi Garrbu Aboriginal Corporation (NTGAC) have taken major steps toward securing greater protections and joint-management of their Country – both land and sea.

On Friday, 29 August, on-Country celebrations marked the formal creation of a significant new conservation estate across approximately 380,000 hectares in the Gascoyne region. This includes the establishment of Jarralya National Park and Boologooro Nature Reserve, made possible through an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA). These areas will be jointly-managed by NTGAC and the WA Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), under the State Government’s Plan for Our Parks initiative. This milestone reflects the deep connection the Traditional Owners have to their Country and their enduring commitment to its care and protection.

Just days later, on Friday, 5 September, another historic NTGAC announcement was made. In response to the Exmouth Gulf Taskforce’s Final Report, the State Government committed to creating a ‘whole-of-gulf’

marine park – recognising the globally significant environmental and cultural values of the Exmouth Gulf region. The marine park will be jointly-vested with and co-managed by NTGAC, ensuring Traditional Owners are at the heart of decision-making for this vital marine ecosystem.

YMAC is proud to have supported NTGAC throughout both the ILUA negotiations and Exmouth Gulf Taskforce process. These outcomes represent years of hard work, advocacy, and determination by the Traditional Owners and everyone else involved; they are a testament to the power of collaboration and importance of First Nations leadership in conservation.

Together, these achievements mark a new chapter in land and sea management in the region; one grounded in cultural knowledge, community empowerment, and shared responsibility for the future.

NAIDOC Week 2025: Celebrating Culture,

YMAC proudly celebrated NAIDOC Week 2025 across multiple locations, with activities and events that embraced this year's theme, 'The Next Generation: Strength, Vision & Legacy'. From award ceremonies to community events and cultural sharing, the week was a powerful reminder of the importance of empowering young leaders, honouring Elders, and strengthening connections to Country and culture.

National NAIDOC Week Awards

The week began with YMAC Board Members and First Nations staff attending the National NAIDOC Week Awards Ceremony in Boorloo (Perth).

The prestigious event recognises outstanding First Nations individuals who have contributed significantly to their communities and beyond.

YMAC was proud to see Trevor Farrell Jnr, a youth representative from the Yamatji on Country Youth Program, named a finalist in the Youth category. Congratulations Trevor on this inspiring achievement.

Perth Office Celebration

YMAC's Perth office hosted an in-house NAIDOC celebration, with the team coming together for a NAIDOC morning tea and weaving activity, led by Nadine Foley from Culture Weave. The activity reflected this year's theme and the importance of cultural connection in the workplace. Staff feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many appreciating the opportunity to connect through culture in a meaningful way.

Carnarvon Engagements

In Carnarvon, Geraldton staff participated in a number of NAIDOC events, including the much-loved Elders Morning Tea at the Carnarvon Community Hub.

Now in its third year, this YMAC-hosted event has become a highlight of the local NAIDOC calendar, providing Elders from the Gascoyne region with a culturally safe space to connect, share stories, and enjoy morning tea. Gift bags and raffle prizes added a festive touch, honouring the invaluable role of Elders in our communities.

YMAC also hosted a stall at the Carnarvon Family Fun Day, offering hands-on activities.

These fun and creative activities are more than just entertainment – they are an important part of YMAC's commitment to community engagement, creating opportunities for cultural connection, education, and relationship building in the region.



YMAC staff at the Carnarvon NAIDOC Elders' Morning Tea (image: Samantha Drummond).

Community, and the next generation



YMAC Project Officer Ken Capewell with his Community Recognition Award at the Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Services Awards (image: Tash Gillespie).

Recognising YMAC Staff Excellence

A big congratulations to YMAC Project Officer Ken Capewell who received the Community Recognition Award at the Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Services Awards for his outstanding work in the Yamatji on Country Youth Program.



Culture Weave leading a NAIDOC weaving session for staff at the YMAC Perth office (image: Heather Dowling).

First Lights Drone Show in Geraldton

YMAC's final NAIDOC Week engagement took place in Geraldton in October, where we were proud to support the Yamatji Southern Regional Corporation's NAIDOC Celebration 2025. The event highlight was the First Lights Drone Show – a breathtaking visual tribute to First Nations culture, history, and achievements.

More than just entertainment, this spectacular light show was a powerful form of visual storytelling, honouring Country and community by bringing shared stories to life in the night sky.

As part of our involvement, YMAC also hosted a community stall, further supporting the event and creating opportunities for connection and cultural celebration.

The activities during NAIDOC Week highlight YMAC's deep commitment to amplifying First Nations voices, supporting our youth and Elders, and fostering genuine recognition and reconciliation.

NAIDOC Week is a time of reflection, pride, and celebration – and we're honoured to stand alongside our communities to mark this important week.



YMAC stall at the Carnarvon NAIDOC Family Fun Day (image: Catherine Armstrong)

Social Surroundings on-Country

Earlier this year, the Research, Country and Culture Services (RCCS) team enjoyed a day of extended learning with Professor Richard Vokes. Richard is a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Western Australia and the team were delighted to attend his presentation on the emerging topic of Social Surroundings.

Social Surroundings is a multi-faceted way of assessing how significant development impacts a person or community in areas such as aesthetic, cultural, economic and social values.

The wide skillset of YMAC's RCCS team means we are well placed to carry out Social Surroundings assessments. Now that industry in Western Australia requires it under the *Environmental Protection Amendment Act 2020 (WA)*, the team is implementing these skills in partnership with Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) clients.

Richard provided an overview of how Social Surroundings came about as a consultation tool to assess impact. From its humble beginnings on a busy flight path adjacent to Heathrow Airport, it is now required worldwide to ensure environmental justice is front and center for large multi-million-dollar developments. Social Surroundings consultation allows communities to secure distributional fairness of environmental benefits and burdens for current and future generations.

On the face of it, undertaking a Social Surroundings assessment can sound like an onerous and intimidating task. We asked Richard, "How can we ensure we are making the most of our skills and providing the best service possible for our clients?"

Richard broke it down for us; sharing his knowledge on consultation design and the need to consult with a wide range of experts on many perceived impacts such as dust, noise, water, vegetation, fauna, visual and cultural.

Richard also reinforced this type of assessment needs early consultation and ongoing management for it to succeed as a tool to protect cultural values for our clients.

An in-depth discussion was also held about how to carry out a consultation on Country, and ways to overcome some hurdles that our clients currently face. Our experts must therefore be mindful in considering information, and encourage full discussion about all the values that our clients deem to be important about a place.

Throughout the day it became apparent that Social Surroundings assessment, if carried out correctly, can be a very rewarding experience for both YMAC's clients and experts alike. YMAC looks forward to continued learning and working in this fascinating and fast-growing space.



Professor Richard Vokes delivering the Social Surroundings workshop (image: Anys Price).

Spectacular Naaguja Country hosts this year's Cultural Awareness Training

This year's Cultural Awareness Training was held on Naaguja Country, and saw YMAC staff spend three days camping and travelling across this spectacular region.

From a campsite at Nukara Farm, participants travelled right across Naaguja Country – through to its border with Wajarri Country – to experience significant sites, hear Dreaming stories, listen to truth-telling, and learn some local history.

YMAC extends our deepest gratitude to Naaguja Elder Mr Derek Councillor from Daarrgi Naaguja for delivering this year's training. Mr Councillor led YMAC staff to visit Joldarnoo Farm, Man Rock, Bootenal Spring, Ellendale Pool, Yuna Dam, Noondamarra Pool, and more.

Undertaking Cultural Awareness Training is vital for our staff, as it helps inform their work and ensures they engage with our members, First Nations clients, and community across our regions with respect and understanding.

This incredible experience was made possible by Mr Councillor's warm welcome, honesty, and openness in sharing his cultural knowledge and in encouraging questions and discussion, with everyone gaining new knowledge and understanding to apply at YMAC and beyond.

To arrange Cultural Awareness Training on Naaguja Country, contact Mr Derek Councillor at Daarrgi Naaguja by emailing daarrginaaguja@outlook.com.



Research Assistant Ben Archer during a Smoking Ceremony led by Daarrgi Naaguja at Nukara Farm (image: Tash Gillespie).



YMAC staff hearing a Dreaming story at Yuna (image: Tash Gillespie).



Mr Councillor sharing truth-telling history of Bootenal Spring (image: Tash Gillespie).



Man Rock on Naaguja Country (image: Heather Dowling).

Country, Culture, People, Future

About us

YMAC News is produced by Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation.

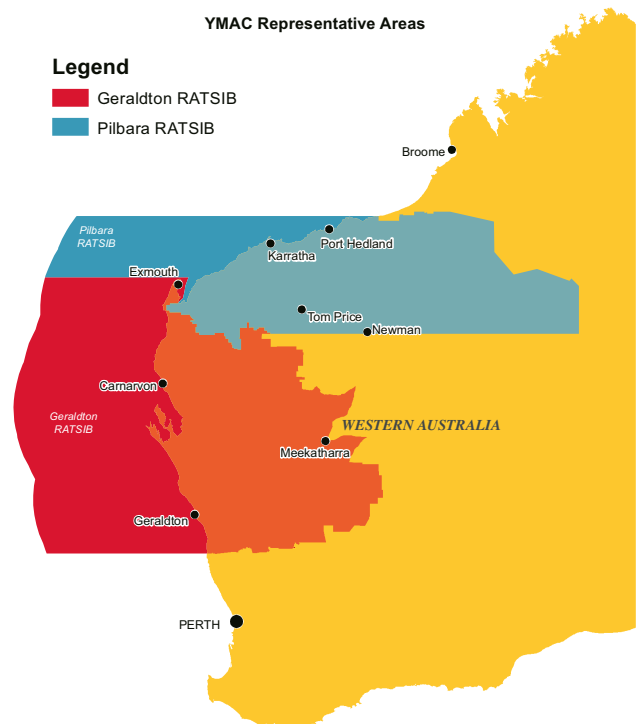
We are an Aboriginal Corporation and the Native Title Representative Body for the Mid West, Murchison, Gascoyne and Pilbara regions of Western Australia.

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.



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