



Yamatji Marlpa
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



YMAC Native Title Forums: Let's talk about *WATER!*

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YMAC's Native Title Forums are returning in 2026, with a specific focus on water.

Forums will be held in both the Yamatji and Marlpa regions, with an additional event this year in Perth – which will also be attended by Western Australian Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Water, Climate Resilience, Hon Don Punch MLA.

Traditional Owners and Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBC) directors and staff from within YMAC's representative regions are invited to attend these free events, network with each other, and learn about native title and related processes.

In Western Australia, the recognition of First Nations peoples' rights and interests in water is highly complex and challenging. Being such a broad issue, this year's forums will focus on freshwater rights, access and allocations, specifically within the Yamatji (Mid West, Murchison and Gascoyne) and Marlpa (Pilbara) regions. Further topics around water may be addressed at future YMAC events.

YMAC CEO Simon Hawkins explained this year's 'water' theme has emerged through ongoing discussions with key stakeholders as an issue affecting all Traditional Owners and PBCs in YMAC's representative regions.

"Water rights, access, and allocations is an ongoing and growing concern for Traditional Owners and PBCs navigating native title. At this year's YMAC Native Title Forums, we aim to open a constructive discussion government to encourage all parties to work together in this space," said Mr Hawkins.

YMAC's 2026 Native Title Forums will be held in:

- **Perth:** Thursday, 2 April
- **Geraldton:** Tuesday, 21 April
- **Hedland:** Thursday, 30 April.

The planned format for all three forums will include presentations from:

- Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER)
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC)
- Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH)
- Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration (DMPE)
- National Native Title Council (NNTC)
- Environmental Defenders Office (EDO).



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Traditional Owners and PBC directors and staff from either of YMAC's representative regions are welcome to attend any session that is convenient to them. The forums are in-person events, however, the Perth event will have an opportunity to attend online.

More information, including how to register, is available on the YMAC website at ymac.org.au/native-title-forums

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All quotes to be attributed to Mr Simon Hawkins, CEO, Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation.

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.

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