



Yamatji Marlpa
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



Yamatji On-Country Initiative Wins National AIATSIS Award for Excellence in Contemporary Innovation

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YMAC representatives accepting the award in recognition of the Yamatji On-Country initiative, AIATSIS Awards

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) is proud to announce that its Yamatji On-Country (YoC) initiative has been recognised nationally, winning the *Excellence in Contemporary Innovation Award* at the prestigious 2026 Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Summit on Yugambah Country, Gold Coast Queensland.

The award recognises projects that have made tangible and positive impacts in education, health, galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAM), and social awareness through innovative approaches and meaningful community outcomes.

While the award was presented to YMAC, the recognition belongs to the many Yamatji community members, Elders, young people, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs), the Mid West Aboriginal Organisations Alliance (MAOA), and partners who have shaped and strengthened the initiative year after year.

Developed under the guidance of YMAC's Yamatji Regional Committee, Yamatji On-Country is a community-led event that brings together First Nations people from across the Mid West, Murchison



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and Gascoyne regions of Western Australia to meet on Country, share knowledge, identify priorities and develop solutions grounded in culture, lived experience and local leadership.

At the heart of the initiative is the Yamatji On-Country *Call to Action Statement* (CTA), a living framework that captures community priorities and presents practical, community-led solutions aligned with the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*. Through annual consultations and on-Country gatherings, the CTA ensures First Nations voices remain at the centre of decision-making.

A defining feature of the Yamatji On-Country initiative has been its commitment to youth leadership. Since 2021, young people have progressed from attendees to active contributors, participating in dedicated workshops, developing solutions to issues affecting their lives, and presenting directly to community leaders, Ministers and other senior government officials.

In 2024, the youth participants' key priorities were formally integrated into the broader CTA, strengthening intergenerational collaboration and ensuring young voices play a meaningful role in regional decision-making. In 2025, their ideas also inspired the development of an Elders Film Project, an initiative that will pair young people with Elders to record and preserve cultural knowledge through storytelling and filmmaking.

YMAC Co-Chairperson, Peter Windie, said the award reflects the strength and leadership of Yamatji communities and the impact of community-led approaches.

“This award belongs to our communities. Yamatji On-Country exists because our Elders, young people and community leaders continue to come together, share their knowledge and shape solutions for the future.

“What makes this initiative so powerful is that it is led by community, with solutions grounded in lived experience and local leadership. It is a model that is culturally grounded, practical and delivering real outcomes.

“I am particularly proud of the role our young people have played, with their leadership and ideas continuing to shape the future of the initiative.”

YMAC would like to thank everyone who has contributed to Yamatji On-Country over the years, acknowledging that the award is a shared, significant achievement and a testament to the power of community-led solutions.

As the initiative continues to grow, YMAC remains committed to supporting community voices, strengthening partnerships and ensuring that future generations have opportunities to lead, contribute and thrive.

For more information, visit ymac.org.au/events/yamatji-on-country

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Further images and interviews available upon request.

Pronunciation Guide:

Yamatji – Yam-aht-gee; **Marlpa** – Marl-pah

About Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation

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. 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 and future act representation; heritage services; executive office, community, and economic development assistance; land administration, and natural resource management support.
