



**Yamatji Marlpa**  
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

## **Nyangumarta celebrate recognition of Country and Culture**

**Media Release: 11 June 2009**



The Nyangumarta People today celebrated the Federal Court's recognition of their culture and country in Western Australia's Pilbara region.

The Nyangumarta native title determination application was filed in 1998 and covers approximately 33,843 sq kms along the Eighty-Mile Beach area and extending east into the Great Sandy Desert region. Justice Anthony North made today's determination to recognise the Nyangumarta People's rights to desert, pastoral and coastal land.

Over 100 Nyangumarta community members celebrated the event with traditional ceremony, dance and storytelling. Guests included:

- Nyangumarta community representatives, including actor Brandon Walters, star of the film *Australia*
- "Baz" Luhrmann, Australian film director, screenwriter and producer
- Mr Simon Hawkins, Chief Executive Officer, Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation
- The Honourable Justice North
- The Hon Robert McClelland MP, Attorney-General of Australia
- The Hon Christian Porter MLA, Attorney-General of Western Australia

- Mr John Catlin, Member of the National Native Title Tribunal
- Representatives from local government, mining and pastoral industries also attended the celebrations.

Nyaparu Rose, Nyangumarta Traditional Owner, believes today's recognition of her people's rights to their traditional country is not only important to her community, but to Aboriginal people all across Australia.

“We come from Nyangumarta country and we speak for the land. Native title is very important to us because it has allowed us to get our country back, to protect our spirits and sites, to go camping, hunting and fishing. Before native title we never had any recognition as Traditional Owners, we had no rights in our own country. Now we feel empowered.”

Janet Stewart, Nyangumarta Elder said, “Before native title we knew that we owned our Country, but nobody else recognised that. As part of the native title process we've developed a good relationship with the pastoralists so that in the future we can both look after the country together.”

Simon Hawkins, CEO, Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation, the legal representatives for the Nyangumarta People said, “The Commonwealth and State Governments have indicated that they are keen to focus on the link between native title and improved outcomes for Traditional Owners. If government is serious about 'closing the gap', support is now needed to enable the Nyangumarta People to realise their aspirations and improve economic and social wellbeing.”

Plans are now in effect to establish a community at on Wallal Downs and the Nyangumarta people have established an Aboriginal Corporation called, 'Niyamarri Pukurl' to administer their business. Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) were registered immediately after today's determination between Nyangumarta and Wallal Downs, Anna Plains and Mandora Station. The agreements deal with the practical issue of co-existence between native title holders and pastoral stations.

***Image Caption: Nyangumarta community members with Justice Anthony North***

***Additional images available on request.***

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## About Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) is the native title representative body for native title claims in the resource-rich Pilbara, Murchison and Gascoyne representative areas of Western Australia. The organisation has a representative area of almost one million square kilometres and represents over 25 native title claims, all with their own language, culture and traditions.

YMAC is run by an Aboriginal Board and provides a range of services to its members including claim and future-act representation, heritage protection services, community and economic development and natural resource management.

### For further information and interviews contact:

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