Hello and welcome to the 22nd issue of YMAC News, the newsletter of Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation.

We are pleased about the decision by the Federal Court in August to recognise the Banjima people’s native title. The Banjima people and their legal teams have worked so hard over the last 15 years to finally make it to this point. You can read more about this and see some photos from the day on pages 4-5.

We are also glad to report on some significant progress in the Kariyarra and Jurruru native title claims, which both had preservation evidence hearings in recent months. For more on this, see pages 6-7.

We have some great stories in this edition about a scholarship for Yugunga-Nya students, a visit by some of the Yamatji Committee members to the Western Desert, and a new book by elder Clarrie Cameron.

We were saddened by the passing in May of longtime YMAC employee Roz Charter. Roz worked closely with the Board of Directors over her years at YMAC, and several Board members attended her funeral. The Board offered condolences to Roz’s family. She will be greatly missed.

We hope to see all of our members at the Annual Regional Meetings in November. Until then, thanks for reading this issue of YMAC News.
In July this year, three students from the Yugunga-Nya native title claim received laptops as part of a scholarship program from Doray Minerals.

Aimee Lee Radcliffe from Geraldton Senior College, Meekatharra District Highschool’s Luther King and UWA science and geology student from Mt Magnet, Dana Anaru were the lucky recipients from round one of the scholarship program.

The mining company and the Yugunga-Nya people entered into an agreement in April 2012 over the Company’s Andy Well gold project in Yugunga-Nya country about 45km north of Meekatharra.

The agreement includes financial compensation, heritage protection measures, cross-cultural awareness training for Doray employees and preferences for Yugunga-Nya businesses.

In addition to these measures, the Doray Minerals Scholarship fund provides assistance to Yugunga-Nya young people to realise their educational goals.

The Yugunga-Nya Working Group elected a Monitoring and Liaison Committee (MLC) to work with Doray and YMAC in the implementation of the agreement.

The MLC is responsible for choosing the scholarship winners. MLC member Leonie Gentle said, “I’m glad that Doray’s been involved and that something has got going to help our young people. We’re lucky to have a mining company here that wants to work together well with the Yugunga-Nya people. We’ve never had anything like that before. This scholarship can help our children’s future, and I’d like to thank them for that.”
The Banjima People of the Central Pilbara are celebrating the end of a 15-year native title claim following a Federal Court decision on 28 August to recognise their cultural rights to around 10,200 square kms of traditional lands.

Banjima country is the ‘engine-room’ of BHP’s Pilbara iron ore operations along with major project areas for Rio Tinto, Hancock Prospecting, Fortescue Metals Group and numerous other resource companies. It includes areas around Karijini National Park and the asbestos mining town of Wittenoom. Banjima country extends west towards Tom Price, and east towards the town of Newman.

The Banjima People lodged their first native title claim in 1998 and have been in litigation with the WA State Government since 2011 after being unable to progress a negotiated outcome. This win for the Banjima people means their culture, heritage and connection to country will be formally recognised under Australian law.
Alec Tucker, Banjima Elder said, “This is a joyful day for us. We’ve been looking forward to this for a long time. We’ve been waiting for so long. We know its Banjima country, it’s my grandfather’s country, my father’s country - I think the old people would be happy about today.”

Simon Hawkins, CEO of YMAC said it was disappointing to see one of the strongest cultural groups in the Pilbara forced into trial by their own government. “The strength of the evidence was overwhelming, there was no need to put the Elders and community through this. The WA State Government needs to catch up with the rest of Australia, stop waging expensive legal battles and take a more collaborative approach.”

A formal recognition ceremony and celebrations will be held on Banjima Country at a future date.

“We know it’s Banjima country, it’s my grandfather’s country, my father’s country.

-Banjima elder Alec Tucker
Preservation evidence is a way to record or ‘preserve’ the evidence given by elders for their native title claim. Since a native title trial can take many years, it is important to make sure the elders have a chance to tell their stories while they are still well enough to do it.

Preservation evidence is given just the same as other court evidence—witnesses give their evidence in front of a judge and they are questioned by the respondents’ lawyers.

During the week of 22 July, the Federal Court held a Preservation Evidence hearing on Jurruru Country. The Jurruru preservation evidence included Site visits with Jurruru elders, the Court and respondents in and around Ashburton Downs Station, and evidence from Toby, Peggy and David Smirke in Paraburdoo.
During the week of 27 May, the Federal Court held a Preservation Evidence hearing on Kariyarra country. Kariyarra elders Irene Roberts and Elsie Williams gave evidence about their traditional connection to country that can be used if there is a trial for the Kariyarra claim in the future.

YMAC acknowledges all of the hard work that went into these two hearings, and congratulates the witnesses, for standing up for their people and their culture.
Earlier this year, Yamatji Regional Committee members visited Wiluna Martu Rangers from the Central Desert region. Central Desert’s Birriliburu ranger team, Kanyirinpa Jukurrpa’s Martu rangers, Department of Environment and Conservation, and the CSIRO have teamed up for a project to look after country through fire management.

The Western Desert Traditional and Contemporary Fire Project encourages the use of traditional knowledge, and contemporary natural resource management, to map and manage country for the protection of threatened plants, animals and cultural sites. It also aims to limit the spread of large wildfires over the summer months.

Yamatji Chairperson Victor Mourambine, Deputy Chairperson Peter Windie and Regional Committee Members Charlie Lapthorne visited the Wiluna Martu Rangers on their country to learn more about the project, and were also there to celebrate the declaration of an Indigenous Protected Area for the Birriliburu people.

The trip was an excellent opportunity to engage with neighbouring Traditional Owner groups, explore possible future collaborations on country, and gather some great ideas about projects that can be developed in the Yamatji region.
In June 2012, the Federal Government announced a Review of Native Title Organisations. The Review will mostly focus on the roles and functions of Native Title Representative Bodies/Service Providers and Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs).

The Review Team will look into whether current funding and policy arrangements are meeting the needs of Traditional Owners as more native title claims are determined and agreements finalised. They are interested in what types of services and support PBCs need once a native title claim is determined; who should provide that support and how much that will cost.

A number of YMAC Directors and staff met with the Review Team to provide our perspective on these important issues and we are providing a written submission. We have noted that claims are still moving too slowly and the State Government is making the path to a determination even more difficult and costly. YMAC will also emphasise the importance of early planning and support for native title groups as they approach a determination and move to a PBC. The report is due in December 2013.
YMAC member Clarrie Cameron, from the Nhanhagardi tribe of Champion Bay, has lived in the Midwest Region all his life, travelling around from Geraldton to Wiluna.

From station life to dusty outback towns, new book of Clarrie’s campfire yarns reflect his country, culture and identity. He has many stories to tell...

- A huge snake takes refuge under the body of a napping grandfather.
- One 16-year-old girl keeps 300 head of cattle together for weeks without losing a beast.
- Trackers lead police deep into the desert to find a murderer and rescue an abducted woman.

Now others can read them on the pages of his new book Elephants in the Bush and other Yamatji Yarns.

A renowned storyteller, Clarrie has captured his campfire yarns in his book, Elephants in the Bush and other Yamatji Yarns, to share his culture and country with others.

“Clarrie Cameron’s recently released storytelling collection is nothing less than a force of life, almost a diary of culture and history.”

-Darcy Hay, Midwest Times
Annual Regional Meetings

Each year YMAC holds two Annual Regional Meetings (ARMs), one in each representative region. The ARMs are an opportunity for YMAC members to meet with their Regional Committee and members of YMAC’s Executive Management Team and discuss YMAC’s operations and achievements of the past year.

This year’s ARMs will be held on:

**Pilbara: Saturday, 9 November 2013, J.D. Hardie Centre, South Hedland**

**Yamatji: Saturday, 30 November 2013, Kalbarri Sport and Recreation Centre, Kalbarri**

All YMAC members are eligible and encouraged to attend their relevant ARM. Meeting notices are being sent to all members. Please contact your nearest YMAC office for more information on the ARMs.

The Roles and Responsibilities of YMAC’s Regional Committee Members:

- **Eletes or appoints Regional Committee Members**
  - Yamatji Members
  - Pilbara Claim Groups

- **Appoints the Directors and assists the Board in carrying out its functions**
  - Yamatji Regional Committee
  - Pilbara Regional Committee

- **Responsible for the overall functioning of YMAC**
  - Board of Directors

All of YMAC’s Committee members have “general duties”:

- to assist Aboriginal people in their region in achieving their native title aspirations
- to follow all of the laws that affect the corporation
- to act with care, diligence, and good faith
- to prevent insolvent trading
- to not improperly use information
- and to disclose any material conflict of interest.

Some of the important functions of the Regional Committees are to:

- liaise with the Board of Directors about regional issues
- elect members to the Board of Directors
- recommend membership applications to the Board for approval

All of these responsibilities are listed in Rules 7 & 10 of the YMAC Rule Book.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Simon Hawkins, Company Secretary, in our Perth office on (08) 9268 7000.
ABOUT US
YMAGC News is produced by the Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAGC).

We are the native title representative body for native title claims in the Murchison, Gascoyne and Pilbara regions of Western Australia.

We work with Yamatji and Marlpa (Pilbara) Aboriginal people to pursue:

- Recognition and acceptance of Yamatji and Marlpa culture in country
- A strong future for Yamatji and Marlpa people and country

MEMBERSHIP
YMAGC membership is open to all adult (18+ years) Yamatji and Marlpa people. Our membership also includes people who live in other areas but who have a traditional connection to Yamatji or Marlpa country.

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SERVICES
Our work includes:
- Providing legal representation and research to assist with native title claims
- Negotiating land use agreements
- Heritage protection services
- Community, economic and environmental projects

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