



Yamatji Marlpa ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

WA Traditional Owners Unite to Protect Aboriginal Heritage

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Today over 70 Traditional Owners representing each region of Western Australia converged on Parliament in an historic show of solidarity against the State government's proposed amendments to the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 (AHA)*.

The delegation met with Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Hon Peter Collier MLC, Hon Brendon Grylls MLA and Ben Wyatt MLA, where they voiced their concerns about the amendments, and presented a petition signed by over 1600 concerned community members.

YMAC Co-Chair and respected Njamal Elder, Doris Eaton, urged the Minister to remove the proposed Amendment Bill and begin a meaningful consultation process.

"This is the first time we've met with Minister Collier to discuss these proposed changes. The Heritage Act should be protecting Aboriginal culture and heritage. Our heritage must be treated with the same respect as Built heritage, not weakened for industry to destroy it.

"This delegation of Traditional Owners is here to show the government we are united, and speak with one voice. We will not remain silent as our land, Country and sacred sites are ruined," says Mrs Eaton.

Simon Hawkins, YMAC CEO, says most of the delegation travelled huge distances from around Western Australia and included representatives from Kimberley, Pilbara, Western Deserts, Midwest, Murchison Gascoyne, Goldfields and South West.

"The diversity of this delegation shows that Traditional Owners want to be heard when it comes to issues that affect their cultural heritage. We've also had signatures coming in from around Australia, so it's not just WA people who are concerned.

"Today the minister made a commitment to discuss alternative wording, to ensure the legislation empowers Aboriginal people, and also to give opportunity to discuss this wording before it is presented to Parliament. We look forward to these discussions."

Photos and Video available here, higher re versions available on request:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7bqoaem66hul7qi/AAAU_uDf-r1OXOiuL30GmALwa?dl=0

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For further information visit www.aboriginalheritage.net.au

About Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) is the native title representative body for native title claims in the Pilbara, Murchison and Gascoyne areas of Western Australia. The organisation has a representative area of almost one million square kilometres and represents over 20 native title claims, all with their own language, culture and traditions.

YMAC is a not-for-profit organisation, 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.
