

Yinhawangka people receive Native Title Recognition

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The Yinhawangka people are today celebrating the legal recognition of their land and culture at an on-Country Federal Court hearing at the Rocklea Pastoral Station. The event was co-hosted by Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC), the Representative Body for the Pilbara Region and the Yinhawangka Aboriginal Corporation (YAC), the Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) nominated by the Yinhawangka people to manage native title matters.

This Determination of Native Title comes after 20 years of robust negotiations with the State Government of Western Australia. The Determination Area embraces the townsite of Paraburdoo, the Aboriginal communities at Wakathuni and Bellary Springs, six pastoral leases, crown reserves and unallocated crown land.

Yinhawangka country is both resource-rich and imbued with cultural significance. The Yinhawangka Determination Area is home to many sacred sites including ancient rock art; traditional tool-making places; ceremonial grounds; permanent pools and places of spiritual significance connected to cultural song lines and stories.

The Yinhawangka People continue to look after country by passing on the cultural knowledge of their ancestors and teaching the next generation.

Rodney Parker, Yinhawangka Traditional Owner said, "It is a proud day for us as Yinhawangka people. After all of our hard work we are finally recognised as the owners of this land. We would like to thank YMAC for all of their support. Today is a celebration, a coming together of the three clans within this group. We stand together, this is the day that we have been waiting for. Today is a good day. A win for Yinhawangka is a win for other Indigenous groups in the area."

Simon Hawkins, CEO of YMAC, said, "The Yinhawangka People successfully negotiated a consent determination which included the recognition of exclusive native title rights and interests in seven areas of cultural significance located on unallocated Crown land, this is a great outcome and the Yinhawangka People should be very proud"

Justice Bromberg said, "The court congratulates the Yinhawangka claimants, the State and the non-State respondent parties for negotiating and agreeing to the making of consent orders. We hope that the Yinhawangka people enjoy both spiritual and material prosperity."

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. It 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 interviews please contact **Melissa Luciola** on **0458 010 483** or at mlucioli@ymac.org.au