

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Wanthiwa everyone, welcome to edition 2 of Yindjibarndi Wangka.

I first would like to let all members know that I have relocated from Roebourne to Ngurrawaana Community, back on Ngurra where my grandfather established his community now 40 years ago. My day-to-day work on Yindjibarndi matters will have no effect on my duties and responsibilities while living and working from Ngurrawaana. In fact, I believe being on Ngurra will give me more time and space to effectively conduct my duties to continue with the growth and expansion of the Yindjibarndi Nations' further development of our 3C structure.

My commitment to YAC and YNAC is still very much front and center for me. The role of each PBC is to work in the best interest of its members and Native Title obligations to Ngurra and the connections we have to it, by protecting song-lines, special and significant sites, birth places, burials and stories that gives Yindjibarndi its identity. The compensation claim against FMG for mining without an ILUA and without Yindjibarndi's free, prior and informed consent is just one example on why we must continue fighting for our rights and interest which will be reinforced to the Federal Court of Australia in August when we pursue fair compensation to all Yindjibarndi.

Yindjibarndi Nation Limited (YNL) will continue to provide support and assistance to members / groups in creating a better, safer, and productive community and that we continue work hard to address the challenges that affects our community and members. To this end, YNL, along with Yurra and the ranger team, will be based at our landmark Ganalili Centre from August. To reach an outcome that improves the lives of all members we must all work together, we must also realize that the next generation are counting on us.

I am always available to speak with any member. I can be reached via my mobile or through my email.

Michael Woodley

Our Ngurra, our wealth and opportunity



Wind and solar energy, business services and construction are just some of the ambitious opportunities now being pursued by the Yindjibarndi Nation group to achieve community, cultural and commercial benefits for generations to come.

Plans for the businesses that are owned by Yindjibarndi Wealth Pty Ltd were explained in detail at a full-day "planning and information" session attended by directors and elders at the Ganalili Centre in Roebourne in April. Directors and elders showed keen interest in the presentations, with many of them asking numerous questions.

Yindjibarndi Wealth is a separate organisation that is wholly owned by the Yindjibarndi Community & Commercial Ltd (YCCL). It has either full or majority ownership of the emerging businesses that were discussed at the session. Yindjibarndi Wealth is already earning income from these businesses, and the returns are set to grow in the years and decades to come : (continued on p.2)

Yindjibarndi Ngurra ideal for Renewable Energy



The Yindjibarndi leadership learned how their country is ideally suited to generating wind and solar energy and selling it to major users such as mining and energy companies. Yindjibarndi Wealth last year established Yiyangu (which means fresh or new) as a 100 percent owned Yindjibarndi enterprise that is looking to partner with ACEN Australia, part of a major international business working in this field.

In June, directors of YAC and YNAC endorsed resolutions that allow Yiyangu to execute the formal agreements with ACEN to create Yindjibarndi Energy Corp (YEC), put the development loan in place and confirm the parties' (ACEN, Yiyangu and YAC/YNAC) intention to work together on these projects.

YEC will be 25% owned by Yiyangu with the option to take a 50% interest in projects.

Mr Ricato explained how Yindjibarndi Ngurra sits outside Wind Region D – which is the area where cyclones come

through – while still having significant wind and solar potential. Yindjibarndi Ngurra is also close to the existing transmission networks owned by Rio Tinto, and it has a good road network, as shown in the map.

Mr Ricato said that the Yindjibarndi people, through Yiyangu, will always be the primary land tenure owners for any project development. But in any likely development, ACEN will cover 100 per cent of the costs, while Yindjibarndi will be able to own 25-50 percent of every developed project, and receive a rental income as well.

ACEN CEO Anton Rohner (pictured) told the meeting that the company's Filipino parent had been operating for 178 years. He said ACEN had a target of generating 6-7 Gigawatts of renewable energy by 2030 and that about half of this could come from Yindjibarndi country. This would be three times the output of the Muja power station near Collie, the largest power plant in WA.

Mr Rohner explained how ACEN had a solar project in New England, NSW, where it had made sure the traditional owners were engaged in the entire process. Much of the land in NSW is freehold so the traditional owners had previously not been able to access their land, but through the ACEN project they were able to go back their country and protect significant sites (see article p.12). During the construction period, ACEN engaged Traditional Owners through fencing and ground maintenance and is working to secure long-term contracting opportunities for the life of the solar farm.

The next steps involve a draft ILUA that would spell out job opportunities, before working on project assessments and approvals with the Yindjibarndi community and the State. Approvals from regulators will also be needed, as well finalising the design and commercial agreements before a final investment is taken. Construction could begin within the next 5 years.

Yurra moving into construction

Yurra's CEO Liam Wilson told the meeting how the business established 10 years ago had expanded from landscaping and grounds maintenance to civil and industrial services, railway maintenance and scaffolding for Woodside's LNG plants. He said that Yurra now had 182 staff, with 34 per cent identifying as Aboriginal. He made a special mention of Yindjibarndi man Terrance Warrie who has been with the business for nine years. (Cont. p3)

August hearings on Ngurra for FMG compensation case



More than 12 days of hearing on Ngurra, in Roebourne and Perth, have been locked in by the Hon. Justice Stephen Burley of the Federal Court of Australia following a directions hearing in June 2023.

Justice Burley has been appointed to preside over the Yindjibarndi-FMG compensation case following the promotion of her Hon Justice Debra Mortimer to the role of Chief Justice. Justice Mortimer heard [early] evidence in March this year from two frail Yindjibarndi elders, one of whom has since passed away.

At the June directions hearing, FMG confirmed that it would call four witnesses to give evidence, presumably against the right of the Yindjibarndi people to be

compensated for mining on their land without an agreement. The four witnesses will be identified on 7 July 2023.

Yindjibarndi Ngurra Aboriginal Corporation (YNAC), the prescribed body corporate for the Ngurra where FMG's Solomon Hub Project mine is located, will call 22 witnesses. YNAC intends to take the Judge to Ganjingarrinhuna, near the Solomon Hub Project to show the destruction of Yindjibarndi Ngurra. Yindjibarndi men will also give restricted evidence about the songs and stories for Ganjingarrinhuna and Gamburdayinha.

In June, Justice Burley (pictured) indicated that he wanted the case to proceed and as a result he said that any further amendments to YNAC's Points of Claim would require document discovery which would delay the case. The evidence will be heard near the Solomon Hub mine, where FMG has extracted around \$50 billion of iron ore since 2013 from Yindjibarndi country without the consent of the traditional owners.

Justice Burley has a background in commercial law, specialising in patent, copyright, trademark, designs and confidential information cases. He also appeared in cases involving trade practices, competition and consumer law, and administrative law.

His Honour previously worked as a barrister in Sydney before being appointed to the Federal Court of Australia in May 2016.

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Yurra, which means sun, launched with the help of a \$350,000 loan from Yindjibarndi Wealth. The loan was repaid ahead of schedule. Yurra is 66.6 percent owned by Yindjibarndi Wealth. Three years ago, it began paying dividends back to Yindjibarndi Wealth. Mr Wilson said Yurra would provide a "constant flow of dividends" to Wealth.

The next phase in Yurra's expansion is to acquire a majority share of the construction firm GBSC Yurra, which had worked on the Ganjalili Centre along with numerous projects around the Pilbara. The merged group would more than double the workforce and turnover of Yurra. This merger has since been finalised.

Cedrent car hire looking to expand around Australia

Yindjibarndi Wealth owns 50 percent of the WA operations of Cedrent Enterprises, which is part of the global Enterprise car rental group. Cedrent also owns

a franchise that operates in South Australia and the Northern Territory with 11 locations, including Darwin. In WA, it operates in Karratha, Newman, Port Hedland, with plans to open up soon in Kalgoorlie.

In a presentation by Cedrent's Dan Walmsley, he explained how a plan to merge the WA and SA/NT operations would provide greater fleet flexibility and help to expand the business.

YCCL has asked KPMG to review the merits and value of the merger proposal, which would require Yindjibarndi Wealth to invest an additional \$1 million to buy into the merged entity.

Mr Walmsley explained how the merged group would be able to expand into the Perth, Adelaide and Uluru Airport airports, and how the larger group would be able to better manage its fleet of vehicles. Minutes produced by Amalee Spring provided the basis for this article.

Learning about when the world was soft

A team of Yindjibarndi elders, leading archaeologists and staff have begun exploring the ancient places at Jirndawurrunha and Bangkangarra to uncover rich history and further solidify evidence that the Yindjibarndi people have been occupying the Ngurra for more than 50,000 years.



Dr Kane Ditchfield drives the 1m probe into the soft sediment. Photo: Juluwarlu.

Yindjibarndi man Kevin Guinness joined the trip earlier this year and said: “What they are doing at Millstream shows the people that Yindjibarndi has been there long time, like when we talk about Ngurra Nyujunggamu (when the world was soft).”

The Yindjibarndi people were accompanied by UWA Laureate Chair of Archaeology Professor Peter Veth and his team of archaeologists on a detailed reconnaissance of Yindjibarndi Ngurra. Mr Guinness described the work as a “real privilege to have him and his team, and to support and work alongside us”. He was joined by another senior Yindjibarndi man, Middleton Cheedy.

The trip at Bangkangarra proved to be fruitful from the outset, with findings that indicated occupation going back more than 53,000 years. This is older than the significant sites on Solomon Hub mine which were believed to be the oldest sites on Yindjibarndi Ngurra.

Professor Veth and his team were able to determine this by using an archaeological probe (pictured) which they drove 1m deep into the ground of the rock shelters. A deep layer of sediment was found in the rock shelter, which provided valuable information about the palaeo-environment—the environment that has been preserved in rock records—and of past human activity.

Mr Guinness said evidence found in the shelters placed them in the top 5 per cent of First Nations Peoples heritage found in Australia “The condition of the rock shelters was good. When they put the probe into the soil and they reckon that probe could’ve gone further down, kept going,” he said.

When asked about the significance of the 1m depth, Professor Veth said: “We expect the excavations at the two rockshelters in Ganyjingarringunha Ngurra (Kangeenarina Gorge) to be deeper than 1m. This depth usually means relatively old dates, often returning greater than 40,000-year ages in the Pilbara. Given their closeness to a permanent waterfall Bangkangarra, we might expect the evidence for habitation by Aboriginal people to be repeated and likely continuing through times of great climate change. Each site usually has a unique occupation and depositional record, and we will work carefully to preserve and profile that record.”

For Mr Guinness, this trip meant a lot to him because “It makes me proud to be Yindjibarndi, that’s where my ancestors walked before, and I think show the world we were the first to walk this country.” Later he added that: “The archiving of this will be very important for us Yindjibarndi, it proves that we were there first. We walked that country first.”

He hopes that this project with Professor Veth will enable to Yindjibarndi people to prove their occupation of Millstream and be able to reclaim it from the State Government. “Before it was claimed by Water Corp and the Government it was called Jirndawurrunha... we want to put it back to Jirndawurrunha, maybe one day we change the name back.”



Yindjibarndi Elder, Middleton Cheedy (Boonja), performs the Wuthurru, or as Boonja calls it, the 'knock on the door', welcoming and introducing Manjangu (strangers) to Yindjibarndi ancestors who eternally inhabit that spiritual space, at the rock shelter excavation site. Also pictured is Yindjibarndi Elder, Kevin Guinness and UWA archaeologists, from left to right, Wendy Reynen, Kane Ditchfield and, Project Convener, Professor Peter Veth. Photo: Juluwarlu.

There are further hopes that this work will also help show the significance of Bangkangarra to mining companies. The first reconnaissance was used to scope out the rock caves and provide preliminary reports that would help Peter Veth and his team complete the second reconnaissance which will involve excavation.

Mr Guinness is looking forward to attending the excavation mission in July, hoping to find more artefacts - "Hopefully when they dig below the surface they find more, you never know, they might find a fireplace there."

Peter Veth advised that the excavation in July will also focus on "Millstream Station Jirndawurrunha near Millstream Island Yirrangunha where people have camped in the past."

Professor Veth and his team will use methods other than the archaeological probe to determine occupation at Millstream as well. He said: "Although there have been old cattle yards and fencing here in the past, the presence of wetlands means old camping places are likely to have survived and extend well back into the past. This will be one of the first open sites worked on and dated from Yindjibarndi country".

The researchers are working with ten different Indigenous communities and corporations to gain a deeper understanding of the connections. The study will cover an area spanning from Exmouth, through the Pilbara region and right out to the Western Desert.

Teachings from the Dawn of Time

The Yindjibarndi ‘creation story’, Ngurra Nyujunggamu, opened Karratha’s Red Earth Arts Festival in May to a packed audience. The production, which involves a cast and crew of more than 50 people, along with numerous puppets, tells how all creation is written into the Yindjibarndi landscape and was sung long ago, filling Yindjibarndi Ngurra with sacred meaning and deep religious significance. At the dawn of time, the world was Ngurra Nyujunggamu—as soft as clay and the sky was very low. Our Creator, Mingkala, sang the songs from which all life and Ngurra evolved. These are some of our stories. In June the performance was staged at the Melbourne Convention Centre, and Juluwarlu Group Aboriginal Corporation plans to take it around Australia. Photos courtesy of Juluwarlu Group Aboriginal Corporation.



Guest performer Rubeun Yorkshire as the Marbinkarra (spirit/medicine man)



Wimiya Woodley, telling the story of the Warnggarnga (Crow), and how he became black. The crow teaches the importance of keeping to the Galharra Law system (relationships between skin groups) and knowing our place in the world.

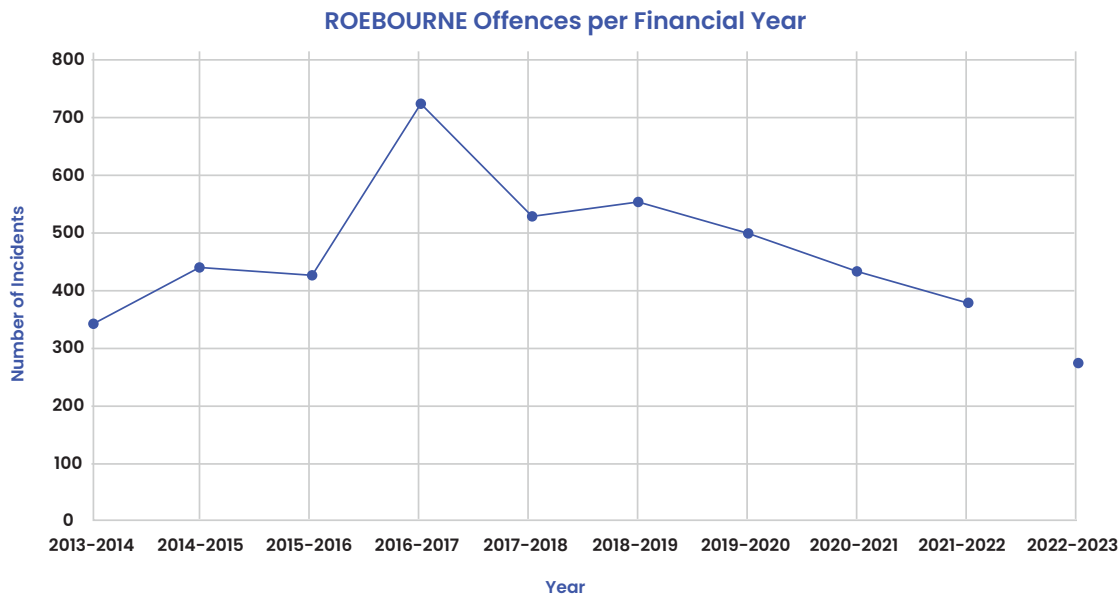


Scene One, depicting the Bilyjirmara Marrga and Yarranymarra Marrga as they shape the Ngurra.



Left, Barrimirndi carving his way through Yindjibarndi Ngurra, making permanent pools and teaching the community hard lessons about following law and learning from mistakes. Right, Laura Woodley has the finishing touches made to her costume by production designer Richard Jeziorny.

Peace and quiet returns to Roebourne



WA Police crime data showing that the number of offences is heading for a decade-low.

When thousands of mineworkers flooded into Roebourne from the early 1970s onwards, the once peaceful pastoral town became synonymous with alcohol, fights, and other anti-social behaviour.

The beer flowed late into the night at the old Vic Hotel, and it became a place of crime and social dysfunction for the local community.

But a place that had become notorious is now returning to its harmonious past, a trend helped by the Yindjibarndi community’s decision to purchase the Vic and turn it into the Ganalili Centre. Evenings in Roebourne are particularly quiet these days, a far cry from decades ago when loud music was played at the pub into the early hours.

WA Police crime data showing that the number of offences is heading for a decade-low.

This positive trend is born out in WA Police crime statistics, which show the number of recorded offences having more than halved over the past six years.

Acting Senior Sergeant Rob Borbely says the reduction in crime in the town coincides with a friendlier

approach adopted by the police in recent years, and a change in demographics. He says that part of the explanation for the sustained improvement is that teenagers are growing up and moving elsewhere.

“Most volume of crime is committed by youth, around 98 percent. Kids do what they do because they’re bored,” he explains. This is why the PCYC in Roebourne and a youth hub in Wickham are important programs for the community.

He said that alcohol was the main factor in the town’s crime. And even though Roebourne was a dry town with a large number of liquor restricted premises (LRP), alcohol was still being brought into Roebourne from nearby towns.

A major focus in recent years has been on young children. The local police command had two youth police officers though neither is Indigenous.

Engagement with youth, especially young kids, has become a key strategy used by Roebourne police in recent years. Police offer kids “snack packs” that contain juice, muesli bars and biscuits and this helps to start a conversation and build a relationship. Police were focusing on “the younger generation to get the



trust of the kids at a young age and gain more trust with the community”, Borbely explains. This enables the police to “have a yarn with the kids on the street”.

The softer approach is what he calls “old school—start nice and escalate [if necessary]”. He said this was a much better approach than “going in hard and trying to de-escalate”.

Borbely says he and the local Sergeant Dale Harmer have developed good relationships with key Yindjibarndi elders in the community such as Middleton Cheedy and Tootsie Daniel. Mr Harmer is a regular guest on Ngaarda Media where he updates the community on law-and-order issues in Roebourne and around the Pilbara (see photo).

Mr Borbely nominates Mrs Daniel as someone he has spent some time with. “I go and sit with her. That’s how to develop trust,” he says.

To continue the positive trend, Mr Borbely suggests three key initiatives that would help. First, he says a bail hostel would help people who are awaiting court proceedings. Secondly, expanded beds in the sober-up shelter and women’s refuge would be positive. Thirdly, he says a safe space is needed for youth or kids who had nowhere to stay due to issues at home.

GET IN TOUCH

Yindjibarndi Nation News—Ngaarda Wangka is published by Yindjibarndi Nation Ltd, a project delivery company established by the Yindjibarndi PBCs. If you’d like to give us some feedback, or suggest an article, please contact: editor@yindjibarndi.org.au

Ngurrawaana update—Building a future on Country



The Ngurrawaana Community Development Plan project, a partnership between YNL and the Ngurrawaana Group Aboriginal Corporation, is a key part of the Yindjibarndi homeland strategy, which was identified as a priority by members during the Rio Tinto modernisation talks in 2021. The project aims to develop an overarching community development plan with sustainable governance, financial and asset management strategies that are needed to support long-term growth of the community.

Ngurrawaana, in the heart of Yindjibarndi Ngurra, is at the core of the Yindjibarndi homeland movement. Established in the early 1980s, Ngurrawaana translates to English as ‘a place of homecoming,’ and currently, it is the only permanent residential community for Yindjibarndi people on our ancestral lands.

Established by Yindjibarndi elders with a clear vision to return to country, Ngurrawaana is a spiritual home for those who live there and represents the potential for Yindjibarndi people to live back on country, to strengthen our social and cultural connection and wellbeing. With this in mind, YNL and the Ngurrawaana Group Aboriginal Corporation are taking steps to plan for a sustainable and empowered future for the community. With a number of accommodation options, a school building and community garden, the vision is to improve and expand existing facilities and breathe life back into the community.

“Like other places across our Ngurra, Ngurrawaana is a special place for many Yindjibarndi people; a place our ancestors called home, and a place our old people chose to return to. We want to respect that legacy and the wishes of our old people,” GM Community, Michael Charlton says.

“Ngurrawaana is a really vital part of our nation building goals, to secure and develop our homelands for future generations, and ensure they are thriving and safe places to foster and support Yindjibarndi wellbeing.”

At recent meetings between YNL and the Ngurrawaana Group Aboriginal Corporation, upgrading telecommunications was identified as an immediate priority to provide critical infrastructure and resources for those living in and visiting the community. The partnership also agreed the immediate next steps for the project are to develop a robust strategic plan for the community, develop an infrastructure and asset management strategy, housing maintenance and to engage local and state government on the delivery of essential services.

At its heart, the vision for Ngurrawaana is a hopeful one, focused on the future; it is about Yindjibarndi people settling back on our country for good, being able to live according to Yindjibarndi beliefs and customs, while at the same time having access to jobs and modern technology. As our homeland movement continues to take shape, it is an exciting time for all Yindjibarndi. Ngurrawaana is at the forefront of what is possible for getting back to country, and we are excited to watch the community grow. Watch this space.



Photo caption: Aaron Hubert (chair of YCCL) and Juluwarlu CEO Lorraine Coppin takes part in the Anaiwan smoking ceremony at the opening of the ACEN solar farm at Uralla. Photo YNL.

(from p.12) Yindjibarndi representatives travelled to the opening of the solar project in March and later met with the community at their cultural centre to share information on how they had also preserved their culture.

Lorraine Coppin, CEO of Juluwarlu Group Aboriginal Corporation (JGAC), and YAC CEO Michael Woodley also came bearing many gifts, including the three-volume set of books that map and document Yindjibarndi country.

They met at the Anaiwan cultural centre which is just one small piece of land that has been recovered. Like many other groups in Eastern Australia, the Anaiwan have not had much success in gaining land rights or native title rights to their traditional lands given that it was impacted by colonialism more than 200 years ago.

Mrs Kitchener said the community had to “fight for every little scrap we get. This will bring health and wellbeing back to our people. We fought for this place [the cultural centre]. Only two of us left, this is a testament to our living culture.”

Michael Woodley explained how JGAC initially used funding under the CDEP to carry out the fieldwork required to produce the books.

“The idea of this project is to map the entire Yindjibarndi country. We go out there with the kids and elders, school holidays are a good time, we’d do this work. We could do 12-14 volumes before we map out all the country,” he said.

The Anaiwan leaders were impressed with JGAC’s books, but at the same time they expressed sadness because the freehold title over their land meant that they would be unable to gain the access required to produce these works.

Anaiwan woman Rose Lovelock, who regularly lectures and speaks on cultural preservation, said the community needed to “lead the charge to make sure people see us as a living culture. We don’t have this [the JGAC books]. It’s the stuff we really need to work on. We could really learn from you guys.”

Unlocking cultural treasure



CEO Michael Woodley and Anaiwan elder Les Ahoy (left) at the site of the scar trees.

The Anaiwan people, whose traditional land straddles the highly productive Northern Tablelands of New South Wales, have for generations been denied access to their cultural sites because they were locked up by private landholders.

But this changed in recent years when the renewable energy company ACEN Australia set about building a large solar farm on Anaiwan country. Under State law, the company had to consult the Traditional Owners, and that was when the Anaiwan people saw the scar trees and grinding stones and tools that their elders had told them about.

“We knew about them. Our elders told us about this place, but we didn’t have access to it because it was private land,” Anaiwan leader Les Ahoy said.

“It was only until ACEN come along as part of building the solar plant, they had to do an Aboriginal heritage assessment, so they came to us and said ‘can you do the survey for us?’. Now, all these sites are registered under the NSW government website are protected,” he added.

One of the main sites has four scar trees, along with grinding stones and tools that had been left on ledges, the remnants of an Aboriginal workplace. And other artefacts were scattered all around the site.

Anaiwan leader Cheryl Kitchener said that in meetings with ACEN the community explained that it wanted to develop the site with “holistic values, a tangible history with bush tucker, bush medicine. ACEN did not balk [at this],” she said.

Mrs Kitchener said there were times when the two parties disagreed over how the site would be managed, but “it wasn’t it a matter of walking way”. She added: “It was things like putting in the buffer zones for the area, having local Aboriginal people look after the area. There are ongoing costs that are being born by ACEN.” Ms Kitchener said that other solar companies in the area had “just put in a report—have a survey and that’s it. ACEN has set the precedent for other solar and wind farms to follow suit.”

(Continued on p.11)