

## ILUA agreed for solar, wind on *ngurra*

An Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) to advance renewable energy generation and storage on Yindjibarndi *ngurra* has been sent to the National Native Title Tribunal for registration.

The application for the entity to be known as 'Yindjibarndi Renewable Energy Project' ILUA was lodged on February 28. Relevant parties had one month to lodge objections, which is seen as unlikely. As a result, a decision on the application is expected by early April.

The parties to the ILUA are the two Yindjibarndi PBCs, and Yiyangu, a business 100 per cent owned by Yindjibarndi Wealth. In turn, Yiyangu owns 25 per cent of the lead company, Yindjibarndi Energy Corporation, with the balance controlled by the global renewable energy business ACEN.

The ILUA relates to both Yindjibarndi determination areas, about 13,000 square kilometres. But the initial projects will target the north-western corner of the Determination areas, which overlaps the Rio Tinto railway (cont. p.4)

## Housing Minister open to new Yindjibarndi projects



Minister Carey, in green shirt fourth from right, with Yindjibarndi CEO Michael Woodley, far right, Kevin Michel MP and Yurra trainees and employees at the Ganalili site. Photo: NYFL.

**Western Australia's Housing Minister John Carey was impressed with progress on the Ganalili Transitional Housing build and expressed keen interest in hearing about other housing projects in the pipeline during a visit to Roebourne late last year.**

Mr Carey toured the Ganalili site and met with local trainees who had been working on the project. He said the project was a "a significant gain for the Roebourne community".

After the visit Mr Carey viewed a future plan for an elders housing project and seemed interested to hear more about this and other Yindjibarndi projects.

The visit was followed by a meeting at his Perth office in February with three Yindjibarndi Nation Limited (YNL) staff to discuss future plans, including the launch of a Community Housing Organisation (CHO) and acquisition of vacant lots in Roebourne. (cont. p.2).

## Housing Minister open to new Yindjibarndi projects

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The \$10.5 million project, which will offer self-contained flats, a training facility and support services, is due to finish construction in the first half of this year. It commenced in late 2022 and is being built by the Yindjibarndi contracting business Yurra. Asked about the visit and the meeting, a spokesperson told YNN: “The Minister is always happy to meet with key community leaders and hear what’s important to them.”

YNL is at an advanced stage of finishing the governance work to establish the CHO which will give Yindjibarndi a solid platform to secure government support for new housing.

During the visit the Minister spoke with Yindjibarndi director Margaret Ranger, pictured below, who began talking AFL before explaining to Mr Carey how the community wanted to move forward.

The Ganalili housing project is funded through the state government’s \$200 million North West Aboriginal Housing Fund.

The Minister said: “This is going to be a significant gain for the Roebourne community, to provide this both training facility, but also importantly, to create new accommodation for apprentices and trainees who will have stable, secure housing.”

The Minister was asked by a Ngaarda Media journalist Cassie Ariuu about the large number of vacant public houses in Roebourne and across the Pilbara. He said the government was spending hundreds of millions on maintenance and refurbishments.

“Each house depends on how viable it is, so, what’s the level of investment needed to get that house back into the market?” he said. “It can be hundreds of thousands of dollars, and it can be constrained by the availability of trades.”

“I’m aware that, across Western Australia, at any one time, we’ll have vacancies in the system. We have around 36,000 public houses in the system.”

“We do everything we can.”

## Yindjibarndi Housing Strategy finalised

The Yindjibarndi Housing Strategy, finalised in December 2023, sets out a clear path for how the Yindjibarndi nation can take more control of our housing needs and outcomes. As a long-standing priority for Yindjibarndi members, Yindjibarndi Nation has already begun improving housing options in Roebourne with the Ganalili Transitional Housing program, due to open in mid-2024.

The Yindjibarndi Housing Strategy represents our long-term commitment to taking the lead on improving housing for our people. Our immediate priorities include continuing to support the establishment of the Ganalili Transitional Housing program, working with our elders to consider how we best support their housing needs, and building our capacity as a housing organisation through strategic partnerships.

## First-hand insights into clean energy revolution



Minister Whitby with Yindjibarndi CEO Michael Woodley during the on country visit.

**Western Australia's Minister for Energy, Environment, and Climate Action Reece Whitby visited key sites on Yindjibarndi ngurra in early February to gain his own perspective on the potential for the Pilbara region to generate energy from the sun and the wind.**

And in the Philippines late last year, Yindjibarndi leaders have also gained insights into how these projects work from the top of giant, 100m-tall wind turbines, as well as at ground level through meetings with villagers who live near the projects.

After the visit, Mr Whitby told YNN: "Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation has made significant contributions to the State Government's decarbonisation efforts. YAC's commitment to providing renewable power to the Pilbara community and WA's decarbonisation journey is obvious. I applaud YAC striking a partnership with ACEN International to help further that commitment."

"It's obvious YAC has devoted significant thought to this development, given its closeness to existing electricity infrastructure" he added.

"I look forward to seeing further details from YAC as the project progresses through the planning and approvals process."

The future projects will be built as part of Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation's partnership with renewable energy business ACEN. The two have established Yindjibarndi Energy Corporation (YEC) which will give Yindjibarndi an interest of up to 50 per cent in projects.

A visit last year to ACEN's operations in Ilocos Norte province in the Philippines was aimed at understanding how to develop up to 3 gigawatts of renewable capacity on Yindjibarndi country.

The visit led by Yindjibarndi CEO Michael Woodley included emerging leaders Terrence Warrie and Curtis Lockyer, along with the CEO of YEC Craig Ricato.

Mr Woodley said he was impressed by the ACEN facilities he'd seen in the Philippines, including the way the company had engaged with local villagers.

This follows a visit earlier last year in which Mr Woodley and other senior Yindjibarndi people travelled to the New England region of NSW to look at how ACEN had engaged with Traditional Owners for the development of a solar farm. The development led to the opening up of a sacred site to TOs which had been previously locked up by private land holders.



Curtis Lockyer, Terrance Warrie, Michael Woodley and Craig Ricato inspect the inside of a wind turbine during the Philippines visit.

Mr Woodley said Yindjibarndi *ngurra* was ideally suited for renewable energy development because it is located outside the extreme cyclone zone. “So we made the decision early on to establish a small team and find a partner with the right values and capabilities, which led us to ACEN,” he said.

“We’re finding ways that we can continue to contribute our Native Title land to one of the most important challenges of our lives, which is to reduce emissions and assist with climate change.”

“It’s good for the climate. It’s good for the environment. It’s good for First Nations people. In this case, it’s good for Yindjibarndi. It’s good for the local economy.”

In Stage One of the development, YEC plans to develop around 700 megawatts of combined wind, solar and battery storage, to be built on Yindjibarndi country in the next few years. The cost of the Stage One projects are around \$1 billion.

Mr Woodley said Yindjibarndi people and Elders would be involved in choosing locations for development and some suitable options had already been identified.

Rio Tinto has also partnered with Yindjibarndi to help decarbonise its operations. In October 2023 the mining giant signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to explore opportunities to collaborate on renewable energy projects on Yindjibarndi country. The company is currently assessing the development of approximately 300MW of solar projects. The collaboration opportunities currently being explored by Rio Tinto and YEC if progressed, would be complementary to renewable energy developments on Rio Tinto Iron Ore’s electricity grid.

Rio Tinto has committed to reducing its Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 50% by 2030 across its global operations, with an estimated \$7.5 billion planned to be spent on decarbonisation projects, predominantly in the second half of the decade. These projects will support a longer-term ambition of net zero emissions by 2050.

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The first project, known as Jinbi, is for 75–150MW of solar generation with the option for battery storage. The second, known as Baru, is for 300MW of wind and 250MW of solar generation with the option for battery storage. Baru would be bigger than the largest coal power plant in WA. It would also involve construction of a 55–70km transmission line for connection into WA Government Pilbara Strategic Industrial Areas Located within Yindjibarndi Determination Areas.

In late December, a group of Yindjibarndi women led an environmental survey of their *ngurra* to show the developers the unique flora and fauna of the region. YEC has stated consistently that renewable energy projects on Yindjibarndi *ngurra* will only be developed in areas approved by Yindjibarndi people.

## Terrance Warrie's remarkable career at Yurra



Terrance Warrie with his loader, while working on the Ventia/Main Roads project.

**In April 2014, Terrance Warrie walked into the small office of the newly-establish Yurra contracting business and began working in basic positions like gardening and landscaping.**

The local from Cheeditha had previously held a range of jobs around the Pilbara, such as working at the Brockman mine and with surveyors on jobs that took him far and wide.

At Yurra, it wasn't long before Mr Warrie moved onto more challenging roles and took short courses to improve his skills. His progression over the past decade mirrors that of Yurra, as the majority owned Yindjibarndi company has also moved into more complex and rewarding operations. Yurra, including its majority owned sister company GBSC Yurra, now employs over 400 people and generates about \$120 million in revenue a year.

Mr Warrie is still very much connected with his culture and country. He says he often goes hunting. When his "cousin brothers come around we look for meat, shoot a 'roo', but when the hunting is done he's back at work. He still lives at the Cheeditha community just outside Roebourne where he is surrounded by his extended family.

A typical day for Mr Warrie begins just after 5am when he drives out to a road project on the Tom Price Highway, picking up a coffee at the

Roebourne BP along the way. For about four of these 10 years he worked on Yurra's contract to maintain Rio Tinto's rail network, an extremely demanding role as it involved working in the heat that was magnified by the rail track and ballast.

"It is bloody hot. It is like twice as more hot near the track, because of the ballast and the track, it picks up more heat," he says

Liam Wilson, group managing director of Yurra, says that Mr Warrie was an inspiration to all of the staff at Yurra and a great example of the company's objectives.

"Terrance is an inspiring and very popular member of our team. He is the definition of what we are trying to achieve with Yindjibarndi engagement long term within the Yurra Group. We have provided Terrance with multiple opportunities, challenges and training and he has excelled, all with a beaming smile on this face and an amazing attitude towards the entire team," he said.

"I am so proud of his efforts and what he has achieved in helping us grow the business over the past 10 years. I hope his legacy over the next 10 years will be to inspire many other young men and women to do the same."

David Bradley, Mr Warrie's manager for the past 2 ½ years, says he's not shy about taking on a challenge (cont. next page).

## Governance scholarship for YCCL executive



Governance scholarship for YCCL executive Tenellia Lockyer

Emerging Yindjibarndi executive Tenellia Mokotupu has secured a prestigious scholarship to undertake courses in corporate and Indigenous governance with the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD).

The courses will cover 'Foundations of Directorship' and 'Indigenous Governance'.

Ms Mokotupu, who is the executive assistant for the Yindjibarndi trust (YCCL), said she was

looking forward to deepening her corporate knowledge so that she could better serve the community.

Ms Mokotupu took part in last year's governance training sessions run by Yindjibarndi Nation in conjunction with the specialist training firm MLCS Corporate. During the sessions she made numerous contributions to the discussion and asked a number of probing questions.

The scholarship, known as the First Nations Director Scholarship program, operates in conjunction with the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute (AIGI) and The Observership. In addition, Ms Mokotupu will benefit from 12 months access to AICD Membership and the AIGI's mentoring program.

Outside of work, Ms Mokotupu says: "I'm a Yindjibarndi woman living and working in our community of Roebourne, a mum of 5 doing my best to support my family".

"Most of my working life has been in the community sector. I moved over from NYFL in August of 2023, currently working with YCCL. I'm enjoying the challenges and opportunities for growth in my role as EA to the YCCL trust. Outside of work I love to paint, being out on Country or just being at home with family."

## Terrance Warrie

(cont. from p.5)

"Terrance has always risen to the challenges the management gave him. We definitely challenged Terrance particularly in the last couple of years and at times no doubt have taken him out of his comfort zone but he has always excelled. (cont. next page)

"We took him to the Ventia/MRWA Projects loading roadbase into the triple road trains in the equivalent of a 980 Loader. This is no easy task when there is 15 trucks lined up first thing in the morning wanting to get on the road and he has to load correctly, safely and efficiently."

One of Mr Warrie's recent jobs was closer to home, as he became one of the main operators on a rubbish and concrete removal project at Cheeditha.

"Hopefully with other members of the community seeing him do what he does in their own backyard will further inspire others. It's his smile, attitude and his wicked sense of humour that makes him so good to work with, he should be so proud of what he has achieved and is such a positive role model for others," Mr Bradley added.

## Accolades for *Ngurrawaana* short-film



**A film about returning to country, *Ngurrawaana*, has won a children's short-film award and has been short-listed in the Best Australian Short Film competition.**

Narrated and acted by Yindjibarndi man Wimiya Woodley (pictured above), the film shares deep insights and perspectives on what is gained from returning to country, as well as stunning cinematography of people and land. Wimiya is a graduate of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA).

Ngurrawaana is a homeland on Yindjibarndi *ngurra* established by Mr Woodley's great-grandfather Woodley King in the early 1980s. It was a place for community members to reconnect and avoid the social evils that had taken hold of Roebourne following the arrival of thousands of mineworkers.

In the evocative and often poetic narration, Mr Woodley says in part:

- **Going back to Ngurrawaana, I feel like I can do anything.**
- **I feel like nothing is impossible when I go to Ngurrawaana.**
- **I just feel really deadly.**
- **Ngurrawaana means going back home to country.**
- **I want to create something for my Yindjibarndi people.**

Wimiya said he wrote the script spontaneously during the filming process.

He was raised in Roebourne and studied at the Clontarf Aboriginal College in Perth, and is now working in the creative arts industry.

The film is directed by Kieran Satour and produced by Ramona Telecican. The cinematographer was Ryan Andrew Lee and photographer James Evans.

## Passing the baton at Yurra

Ten years is a long time for any business and the Yindjibarndi contracting group Yurra has marked this occasion with renewal at the highest level.

It has appointed a new chief executive, Stephen Rogers, who has worked internationally in the engineering, construction, and resource sectors. He says he was attracted to Yurra because of the values and vision of the business.

He takes over from the founding CEO Liam Wilson who has seen the business grow from a small landscaping operation to one that now delivers complex projects across construction, engineering industries and building services. Mr Wilson has taken on a group managing director role.

"What attracted me to Yurra was primarily the vision and values of the company," he told Ngaarda Media. (Cont. next page)

“Obviously being majority-Yindjibarndi-owned, and very much driven by the Yindjibarndi ‘3C’ model, which is ‘Community, Culture and Commercial’.

“Yurra is the commercial arm, the delivery arm of the Yindjibarndi nation, and we take that responsibility very seriously.”

Mr Rogers says the company wants to employ more Yindjibarndi people.

While one in three workers at Yurra are Indigenous, only a few are Yindjibarndi people.

Mr Rogers said an ongoing upgrade of Yindjibarndi community Ngurrawaana will help employ more Yindjibarndi people. This project has enabled community members to gain ‘White Cards’, essential qualification to work on any construction project.

“We’re looking to renovate a number of houses, support some programs around seeds, and seed storage, and seed planting, and generally look at services and the development of Ngurrawaana,” he said.

“Linked to that is, we’ve had 20 local people who live at Ngurrawaana, residents both young and old, want to come and work as part of those services, which is fantastic.”



Stephen Rogers, left, with group MD Liam Wilson

## Rio Tinto and Yurra running job-ready sessions

If you’re interested in finding out how to get job-ready, drop into the Ganalili centre on a Tuesday morning. The staff can help you with some of the basic steps needed to get a job, such as obtaining a manual drivers licence. Rio Tinto’s employment liaison staff, and staff from Yurra’s Karratha office, will alternate each Tuesday.



RioTinto



We are coming to Roebourne



## Federal Court accepts witness statements on FMG impacts

Following the Federal Court hearings for the Yindjibarndi compensation case last year, the Court reviewed written Statements from Yindjibarndi witnesses. FMG had objected to claims made in these Statements about the “social disharmony” caused by FMG in the Yindjibarndi community. However, the Court has said that parties agreed that this should be dealt with when the judgment is delivered. As a result, late last year the Court published nine of these Statements on its website. The case has hearings scheduled in April and November this year. Here are key excerpts from some of these Statements.

### ANGUS (MACK) MAYAARRINYJBANGUK— I was deeply hurt



When I saw an ABC article about Andrew Forrest’s comments...I was deeply hurt. Comments like this about the Yindjibarndi depicts us like we don’t know how to manage our money even though we established YAC in order to look after the community, to develop it sustainably for future generations and to start businesses for jobs and training Yindjibarndi People. Mr Forrest’s message in the article about how the Yindjibarndi would spend money on alcohol is totally different to how me and my family see our futures.”

### ESTELLE GUINNESS— At the bottom of the pit

I worked on the Mine because I thought it would be good to be able to work on our own *ngurra*. But once I was in the workshop I started working along the bottom of the pits to do welding on the excavators. I saw a lot of land get destroyed. Every time I saw a pit dug, I got upset and so I quit that job. I worked in the Firetail pit. I saw FMG make the pit at Kings Valley and I knew that was terrible. The size of the mine is just awful. I am worried they are going to keep making it bigger and bigger and destroy more and more Yindjibarndi *ngurra*.

### FABIAN ‘CHARLIE’ CHEEDY—Waterways and permanent pools destroyed.

When I would look at the country where the Mine is, it was beautiful. You can see what the Mine area once looked like when you look at the area surrounding the Mine. The Mine site was full of waterways and permanent pools. They have all been destroyed now. Ganyijingarringunha wundu was a large creek that ran through the mine. It is dry now. There is no water in it. FMG has built a causeway up high off the ground along the creek bed.

## KAYE WARRIE— Breaking the Galharra

WYAC members are my own family. It makes me feel very upset that they have split from us. That's my own cousins for me and Stanley [brother Stanley Warrie]. [name suppressed] is our own nephew. His Grandmother and my Dad are brother and sister. To take your own family to Court like Aileen and John Sandy have taken the YAC Directors is disrespectful and not right. This is breaking the Galharra. Under the Galharra, you should have respect for your older members and they don't have that for me and Stanley. They grew up with us at the old Wool Shed - they were close to us.



KAYE WARRIE

## STANLEY WARRIE— Like a cancer

The split was created by FMG and has made Yindjibarndi People break their Law and culture and has damaged our community. The split created by FMG in our community has created yoondri (tearing apart).

There is a fire in my heart that brings out all of my sad feelings and a pain that cannot be healed because of the yoondri in the Yindjibarndi community. Ngayu wirrardgu wurdarna means breaking apart the spirit and that is how I feel. I think about the yoondri that is growing inside Yindjibarndi People like feelings of revenge and hate that grows inside of them like a cancer. It grows hard and burns and you have fires burning with every person you are up against, and you start hating everyone.

## LYN CHEEDY—Makes me feel powerless

Keeping my connection with country is so important. I take my kids and grandchildren camping, visit our birthing sites, visit the old Law grounds, collect bush foods and medicines, go to thalu sites, go to our water holes (yindas), visit the springs (jinbis) and the dreaming sites. Being stopped from doing that is heart breaking for us and that a big hole has been dug on our land is like torture to me. It is very upsetting. If we don't protect the land, it has an impact on the wildlife and everything. It makes me feel powerless.



LYN CHEEDY

*The photographs have been copied from Witness Statements.*



The Yindjibarndi legal team, with community leaders, at Bangkangarra during the hearings in 2023

## Mayaarrinybangu corporation making progress on Buminjina resting place

Mayaarrinybangu Aboriginal Corporation, formally known as Buminjina21 Aboriginal Corporation, is moving ahead with plans for on-country traveller accommodation as well as a centre for youth in Roebourne.

Formally known as Buminjina21, Mayaarrinybangu has developed plans for on-country traveller accommodation and cultural programs, as well as a centre for children and youth in Roebourne. This is the result of support from Yindjibarndi Nation Ltd and the 3CN Trust.

Elder Bigali Hanlon says that Buminjina, located about 150km from Roebourne within the Yindjibarndi determination area, “has a huge history as a significant cultural place used by many Yindjibarndi people for stopover camping while accessing their country”. Last century it was a place where Aboriginal people were taken by police after being removed from their families.

Mayaarrinybangu, which has about 45 members, has also secured rights to an old building in Roebourne where it plans to run children and youth programs. The building was previously used by the Department of Justice but it has stood vacant for many years.

The Wellard St property is now called Buwarri, which means to dream or aspire. After some renovations Buwarri is now operating informally as a ‘kids space’ and a place for artists who need space. The centre is designed so that artists can work while keeping an eye on their children in the “kids corner”.

Bigali said the plans for kids’ program, Kulture for Kids (KfK) includes camping and teaching Yindjibarndi language through art, bush tucker and medicine. Initially, the program will focus on young girls.

“We believe that our program run by Yindjibarndi people for indigenous kids will help reduce kids entering the justice system. It’s about their Identity.”



Elders gather at the proposed site.



A design for a family shelter at Buminjina.

YNL has allocated funds to build a group of shelters out at Buminjina. Bigali said the shelters were crucial because the lack of facilities discouraged people from visiting the important site, and they were needed because temperatures dropped to near freezing in winter.

She said that Buminjina could be used as a place for people to connect with their culture and country.

“Cultural reconnection is really important for Yindjibarndi people who have never connected with their country,” she said.

The project requires making a Development Application and securing a lease over an area of 265ha within Reserve 3305. The decision on the lease is in the hands of the WA Government.

“It’s been a long journey with many ups and downs however I’m confident that the determination and enthusiasm shown we will get there,” Bigali said.



Work underway on renovating Burwarri.

## Yindjibarndi boards look at rule changes

**Directors of the Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation, and Yindjibarndi Ngurra Aboriginal Corporation, approved a process to change their rule book to comply with recent changes to Federal law dealing with membership and disputes.**

YAC directors met in late February to discuss the legislative changes and were briefed by lawyer Keith Thomas of Meridian Lawyers.

Having considered the advice from Meridian lawyers, the meeting resolved to instruct the firm to draft recommended changes and submit these to ORIC for in-principle approval in the first instance.

Mr Thomas indicated that a Special General Meeting should be held in coming months to approve the changes.

Members also approved the 2023 financial statements for YAC and YNAC.

## ABOUT YNN

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