

## Surveys establish foundation for energy projects on Ngurra

**Yindjibarndi businesses and community members have earned more than \$700,000 over the past year alone from engagements with Yindjibarndi Energy Corporation to survey Ngurra and carry out other activities to support its plans to build solar and wind farms.**

The work has involved women and men working on surveys of flora and fauna, and of the ancient heritage that is a testament to more than 50,000 years of continuous occupation on Yindjibarndi Ngurra. YEC has also engaged Yurra and Yindjibarndi Water as part of its preparatory works.

Yindjibarndi Nation News joined a survey in July on the proposed site of the Jinbi solar farm. The heritage work was managed by Echoes AHS and involved about a dozen Yindjibarndi people.

The Jinbi project, located about an hour's drive south of Karratha, will be built on 527 hectares of the Yindjibarndi Exclusive Native Title Possession area. It will involve up to 200 Megawatts (MW) of solar arrays; • provision for a large scale 375 Megawatt hour Battery Energy Storage System (BESS); • internal access roads; • transmission lines and substations; • other associated hardware and infrastructure.

The figure of \$700,000 was confirmed by YEC CEO Craig Ricato at the Yindjibarndi Expo in August, as he discussed the direct benefits that these projects can generate. YEC's purchases of Yindjibarndi services is likely to reach \$1 million by the end of this year.

The heritage surveys involve a line of about five or six people walking in a line across sections of Ngurra. When they identify possible artefacts, these are brought to the attention of the consultant archaeologists.

The team leader Chad Callaway held a meeting of the Yindjibarndi at the conclusion of the survey and sought views on how much



Glen Lee examines an artefact discovered during the July 2024 survey for the Jinbi solar project. Photo: Ngaarda Media

protection should be given to various sites that have been identified.

He outlined how the group had found grinding patches, pebble mouse mounds, scatter of artefacts, rock art and bailer shells which have been traded from the coast. He then asked the group about the rock art site, and Charley McDonald recommended a 50m barrier should go around it; the granite boulders, 20m.

Mr Callaway said the group had also identified a fairly major water course and he said: "That is something we will come back and do."

He recommended that they salvage the artefacts and put protection zones around where they found the bailer shell.

Mr Callaway then asked what the group considered to be the spiritual and heritage significance of the area.

Hayden Woodley explained how his great-grandfather, Woodley King, came to this place after initiation.

### ABOUT YNN

Yindjibarndi Nation News—Ngarda Wangka, is published by Yindjibarndi Nation Ltd, a project delivery business established by the Yindjibarndi PBCs to deliver community, cultural and commercial projects for the community. To find out more, go to [www.yindjibarndi.com.au](http://www.yindjibarndi.com.au)

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**Colin Derrell said: "I feel happy coming out here".**



The area where the Jinbi solar project will be built.  
Photo: Ngaarda Media.

Charley McDonald said: "The evidence we found proved they came regularly here and stayed for a while. It wasn't one-off". He adds that the bailer shells are evidence of trade with coastal people.

YEC will ensure that all areas that are identified as important places during the surveys are protected and remain accessible by Yindjibarndi people.

Last December, a group of Yindjibarndi women led a survey of flora and fauna in the area where the projects will be built.

The YEC projects are the most advanced of any First Nations renewable energy projects in Western Australia. In April, the National Native Title Tribunal registered the Indigenous Land Use Agreement for the Yindjibarndi Renewable Energy Project (YREP ILUA). This provides Native Title consents for the development of large-scale renewable energy projects on Yindjibarndi Ngurra.



Yindjibarndi men walk a line on the Junbi site in search of artefacts, July 2024. Photo: Ngaarda Media.

## GET YOUR FREE HEALTH CHECKUP

Do you know you can get a free 715 annual health checkup from an AMS or bulk billing service? These checkups are specially designed for Aboriginal people. CEO Michael Woodley says he has struggled in the past with getting a checkup, but says we owe it to our family members to do so.

"As we helplessly witness family members of our community sadly passing due symptoms that could have been prevented, we unwittingly realise that we could also be on that same path. I have stepped up to face my fears so that I can be in control of any situation that may require me to change my lifestyle and improve on my own health and wellbeing. I want to urge other men, women and younger people to do the same."