



Yamatji Marlpa
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Wajarri People announce agreement for Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder Telescope

Culture, future and education the focus for Indigenous Land Use Agreement



Wajarri Yamatji representatives with Ministers Grylls, Porter and Buswell at Parliament House.

Media Release: Thursday 26th November 2009

The Wajarri People today celebrated the conclusion of the Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) for the construction of the Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder telescope (ASKAP).

The agreement was officially announced at Parliament House today by the Wajarri People, the Hon Christian Porter MLA, the Hon Brendan Grylls MLA, the Hon Troy Buswell MLA, and Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).

The Wajarri People have approximately 2000-3000 community members and one of the largest native title claims in Australia, including the area chosen for the Australian Square

Kilometre Array Pathfinder (ASKAP) telescope. The agreement area covers approximately 130 square kilometres of land, located 175 kilometres west of Meekatharra.

Anthony Dann, Wajarri Traditional Owner said, “The myth that native title holds up development is false; this agreement was completed in record time and the future is looking bright. I look forward to the prospects that education, employment and training opportunities can bring to our community. It’s an exciting time for Wajarri People, the Mid-West and Australia that such a major development will be happening in our country.”

Simon Hawkins, Chief Executive Office, Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation said, “Given the number of different parties involved, this is an extraordinary achievement that reflects the good-will of all involved. We hope this agreement creates enduring relationships and a strong future for Wajarri People.”

Details of the Agreement

The agreement ensures that any legal questions concerning the use of land, construction and operation of ASKAP are authorised by the Wajarri People.

- A mutually beneficial working partnership has been formalised, including an access protocol for Traditional Owners.
- The construction and operation of ASKAP will be fully compliant with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 (WA)*, ensuring the cultural heritage of the Wajarri People is protected.
- The ILUA provides financial and non-financial benefits for the Wajarri People. The government parties will provide financial benefits for Wajarri People to make long-term improvements to their community’s future. At the request of the Wajarri People, the use and management of the funds are subject to stringent accountability provisions.

Education Opportunities for Wajarri People

As the CSIRO seeks to create one of the most advanced scientific projects in history, a unique educational opportunity has presented itself to the next generation of Wajarri children. With a focus on Pia Aboriginal Community (just 30kms from the proposed SKA site), the parties agreed that:

- Internet would be provided to the Pia Aboriginal Community and school via satellite link.
- 2 annual CSIRO cadetships would be offered to Wajarri youth to work on the ASKAP project over the next 5 years.
- 2 annual CSIRO cadetships would be offered to Wajarri youth to work in any area of CSIRO for the next 30 years.
- Scitech would develop a science literacy and education program to be delivered to the Pia School and other schools with significant Wajarri student population for the next 4 years.
- CSIRO staff would institute a mentoring program for Wajarri students for 5 years.
- The Pia School would visit the site once per year.

These benefits, in particular up to 70 cadetships with CSIRO over the next 30 years, will create an enduring and mutually beneficial partnership between the Wajarri People, CSIRO and the government parties.

The ILUA provides a number of other employment, business and contracting opportunities for Wajarri, as well as creating specific cross-cultural training programs in the CSIRO, run through a newly created Wajarri Aboriginal Liaison Officer position.

The Future

Wajarri People and YMAC are pleased the ASKAP ILUA has helped CSIRO and the government parties advance Australia's bid for the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) project. The ILUA contains agreed mechanisms for all parties to negotiate a new agreement if Australia is successful in its SKA bid.

About Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation

[Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation \(YMAC\)](#) is the native title representative body for native title claims in the resource-rich Pilbara, Murchison and Gascoyne representative areas of Western Australia.

The organisation has a representative area of almost one million square kilometres and represents over 25 native title claims, all with their own language, culture and traditions.

YMAC is 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.

For further information, images and interviews contact:

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