



FEBRUARY 2024

ISSUE 01

NEWSLETTER

Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation

Welcome to the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation Newsletter where we will provide you with updates on what's going on behind the scenes, upcoming events, announcements and business opportunities.

- In this, our first edition, we will share with you:
- *Acting CEO Report*
 - *Administration Update*
 - *Council of Elders*
 - *Program Snapshots*
 - *Ghow Swamp*
 - *Kingfisher*
 - *Ulunja Farm*
 - *Dharnya Centre*
 - *Energy*
 - *Memberships*

ACTING CEO UPDATE

I am pleased to say 2024 has started with lots of activity in all sections of the YYNAC organisation. Our focus for the first part of 2024 is to increase the quality and frequency of:

- Corporate Communication
- Provision employment to several additional Yorta Yorta staff members
- Employment of a Community Engagement Officer to start delivering a suite of benefits to the YYNAC community

On the corporate communications front, Candice Duggan has been appointed to manage all communications from the organisation, be it regular newsletters, website and social media updates, communication with partners and media inquiries. Plans to employ 5 to 7 new employees in the coming months are well under way, with three young Yorta Yorta people being offered positions already. The position of community engagement officer is now on the YYNAC website and social media.

We are happy that projects are on the move!

- The **Ulunja Farm** is fully replanted.
- The construction contract has been awarded for the **Dharnya Centre**.
- The **Kingfisher** is ready for launch for 'skipper training' purposes.
- The planning application has been lodged with Moira Council for the **Cultural, Language and Exhibition Building (Barmah Stage 2)**.



As new initiatives in 2024, the **Cultural Heritage Unit (CHU)** will start engaging with the NSW state and local government (LGAs) to begin delivering CHU services in NSW. The new **Education (and curricular) Team** have started engaging with Elders to document content for interpretive material and the curriculum to be delivered through the school's program at the Dharnya Centre.

The **new disciplines of Energy and Climate Change, Bio-Diversity and Co-Management** of Ghow Swamp will keep the **Whole-of-Country Team** very busy in 2024. The **Woka Wolla** team has had an uplift in contracts to be delivered before June 30, 2024, that will see an escalation in activities and employment.

Finally, it is pleasing that more and more Yorta Yorta community are submitting resumes for work at YYNAC. Please continue to do so in 2024 because it enables us to fill positions quickly and employ more community members during this exciting time of growth.

Rowan Jayasuriya, Chief Operating Officer & Acting CEO



ADMINISTRATION UPDATE

Our names are Jack James and Paula Smith and we are from the firm Rodgers Reidy in Perth.

On 15 November 2023, the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations appointed us as the special administrators of Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation (YYNAC) until 17 May 2024.



We are at Stage 2 of the special administration process which is focused on restoring YYNAC to good operational order before we begin Stage 3 which ultimately results in the corporation returning to member control. We are happy to assure you that throughout this period YYNAC is operating as business as usual with no disruption to services and programs.

Some updates we want to share with you are:

The recruitment process for a new permanent CEO is under way and until then Rowan Jayasuriya will continue in the role of Acting CEO, a role he has undertaken since before our involvement. The recruitment process is being undertaken by Pipeline Talent who are 100% Indigenous owned and managed.

The Advisory Group has been formed following a nomination process. The main focus of the advisory group is to review the Rule Book to strengthen governance at YYNAC as well as considering how best to strengthen the Corporation as a whole. The Group members are:

- Ray Ahmat
- Curt Garwood
- Denise Morgan-Bulled
- Janet Bromley
- Nicole James
- Dr Lois Peeler

The 2023 AGM details have been announced. The meeting will be open to members and will provide us more opportunity to share with you the progress that is being made and for members to ask any questions.

WHEN: 11am on Saturday, 23 March 2024

WHERE: Yenbena Training Centre, 2-8 Schier Street, Barmah Vic 3639

2023 Financials statements are completed and they confirm that YYNAC is in a good financial position.

We recently issued our 2nd special administrators' newsletter which provides more detail on the above points and this and the 2023 AGM Notice has been mailed out to members as well as being available on the ORIC website at oric.gov.au

Paula and Jack, Special Administrators

COUNCIL OF ELDERS

On a beautiful sunny day in Barmah, we hosted our first Council of Elders meeting for the year.

A chance to plan for the year ahead and meet with the deadly YYNAC staff to look at all the exciting projects.

Every gathering is an opportunity to strengthen our enduring culture. To share, learn and grow. Presentations from the Cultural Heritage Unit, Whole of Country Team, Dharnya Centre and Kingfisher updates (in between a delicious lunch of course!)

Our 2024 Elders Council is comprised of members of YYNAC who are appointed by descendants from our 16 Family Groups.

We are looking forward to the year ahead and acknowledge contributions of our Elders past and present.



Picture Left to Right:

Michael Jackomos – Elizabeth Atkinson Family Group
Robert Russell – Alf Morgan Family Group
Leon Atkinson – Aaron Atkinson and Louisa Frost Family Group
Denise Morgan-Bulled – Bagot Morgan Family Group
Lance James – Ada Cooper Family Group

Apology on the day:

Alf Turner – William Cooper
Rod Briggs – Maggie Toodle
Thelma Nicholson – Robert Cooper



We are hiring!

Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation is growing. If you would like to know of more opportunities available drop in and have a yarn.

For further information and full position description contact Pauline at:



35 Schier Street, Barmah



0458 006 404



hrmanager@yynac.com.au

PROGRAM UPDATES

WHOLE OF COUNTRY TEAM

The Whole of Country Team deliver strategic planning and high level governance around key topics aligned with Yorta Yorta’s Whole of Country Plan.

The team has a focus on a number of programs such as water policy & climate change policy, cultural fire, management of Barmah National Park as a Living Murray icon site, joint management of Barmah National Park, Cultural Landscapes. We are now entering an exciting period with a focus on biodiversity projects, climate change action and renewable energy. In the coming months we will roll out more opportunity for Yorta Yorta community to be employed in these programs.



CULTURAL HERITAGE UNIT

Cultural Heritage is of utmost importance to the Yorta Yorta Nation. The unit assists to protect, promote and preserve Yorta Yorta Cultural Heritage.

The Cultural Heritage Unit has been very busy with numerous Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMP) undertaken across YYNAC Country in which many new solar farms, estate developments, HWY safety upgrades, Adventure Trails and Railway projects are being undertaken. We would like to congratulate Shannon

Atkinson, our Cultural Heritage Officer, who has stepped up to take care of the CHU manager’s role during this period.



NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT - WOKA WALLA

Woka Walla - Natural Resource Management is an established self-funded program with a team of Yorta Yorta staff who engage with many Government bodies i.e. Parks Victoria, CMAs.

Woka Walla’s vision is to have Yorta Yorta and other Aboriginal people participating in real economy, real jobs and real development through a successful on-country YYNAC-led procurement business with strong and innovative partnerships in place.



NEWS

GHOW SWAMP

Ghow Swamp has long been recognised at the state, national and international level as an area of high archaeological and cultural significance.



Ghow Swamp is recognised not only as one of Australia's most significant burial places, but the largest single collection of ancestral remains dating back to the late Pleistocene and Holocene in the world. The complex Aboriginal cultural heritage landscape was registered on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register as 'Kow Swamp Aboriginal Place'. Ghow Swamp was also renowned as a significant meeting place.

LEADING THE WAY

We would like to thank our Elders for their guidance, commitment and shared knowledge.

It is through these stories we pave the way for a better future.

UPDATE

We have received notification from the Commonwealth that Ghow Swamp has been added to the Finalised Priority Action List 2023-2024 for the National Heritage List. This means that the 2022 nomination for Ghow Swamp has now been added by the Australian Heritage Council (AHC) to its assessment workplan, which is great news!

KINGFISHER



The Kingfisher ... where do we start!

We are happy to report that the Kingfisher has undergone all of her 'works' to now see her ready to go back onto the water. She has received her Survey for Commercial operations, undergone some minor repairs and been fully serviced.

We are ready to take the Kingfisher out and water test!

We have obtained an Eco Tourism certificate and the Parks Victoria Licensed Tour Operator certificate. This sees us able to take passengers.

Our sights turn to the training of some new skippers and attracting an experienced skipper to help us train our young ones.

If there is any interest in becoming one of our new Skippers, please ask for the Position Description from Pauline at

hrmanager@yynac.com.au



ULUNJA FARM

Big news at Ulunja – fully planted again!

The Ulunja redevelopment faced a tough year due to the 2022 flood that inundated the farm and caused a total loss of the Manuka plantation. The floods also caused some minor irrigation damage. With the support of ILSC and some changes in the operational plan, Ulunja was fully planted in late 2023. Additional funds have been secured through ILSC in 2023 for the infrastructure required for a new pipeline and pumps to secure our future. The property will now be developed to create the benefits YYNAC are seeking.

The floods did have a silver lining as they allowed the Ulunja crew to implement a solid 12-month weed eradication plan on the property. Due to the years of inactivity, weeds had become a major issue. With the break in the crops, the team did a great job, and the benefits to the new seedlings planted are already showing.



Over the next two years, Wade and his team will maintain the seedling health and control the large weed issue on the property. They will also start to work on the next phase of honey collection and look to start



a partnership with established honey producers in the area. Additionally, the process of increasing the infrastructure on the property has begun with a large shed which will be used for community and training purposes.

Pictured: Gather By Field Manager Martin Brown (plant advisor) with YYNAC Farm Manager Wade Morgan

DHARNYA CENTRE

Exciting times!

Builders have attended Dharnya and we have received final quotes for the removal of the old straw ceiling. These works will see the Murray Pine floor covered with a protective ply, the straw ceiling removed, in readiness for an acoustic ceiling to be installed.



Time to shine!

The Woka Walla team have been on the job pressure washing the externals of the Dharnya Centre, they removed the weeds, mowed and sprayed, and cleaned up the inside in preparation for the protective floor covering to be installed. The work of the Woka Walla team has already made a big difference to how the Dharnya Centre looks and feels. A big thank you to the Woka Walla Team, with more work to come from them as we continue to clean and repair the Dharnya Centre.

Bush University is back!

We are excited to have appointed our Education Development Officer, Vanessa Byrnes and our Education Support Officer, Grace Atkinson. Grace commences in her new role from February 12th. We will see plenty of these two ladies over the coming weeks and months. In addition to education curriculum, this team will produce other interpretive material in consultation with Elders.

GIRGARRE SOLAR FARM



Earlier this year, Enel Green Power Australia (EGPA) commenced engagement with Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation (YYNAC).

Enel Green Power Australia (EGPA) has begun construction for the 93-megawatt (MW) Girgarre Solar Farm project, located approximately 50km west of Shepparton, in Victoria. The project, which involves an overall investment of more than \$140 million, is expected to become operational in early 2025.



Pictured: Damien Saunders conducts smoking ceremony

YYNAC has entered into a 30-year Traditional Owner Engagement Agreement with Enel Energy, one of the world's leading renewable energy providers. This will be the first of many agreements with private developers on country. It fits in perfectly with the YYNAC Energy Plan and Ambitions 2023 – 2030 document produced last year. This agreement will provide employment of a coordinator during the construction period, and funds thereafter for developing engagement activities, education and advocacy to the community for the life of the Girgarre solar farm of 30 years. Over 30 First Nations employees are engaged in the construction phase, the majority of whom are Yorta Yorta locals from the Shepparton area.

Photos by Enel Green Power Australia

Become A Member

The Yorta Yorta Nation is comprised of peoples with undeniable bloodlines to the Original Ancestors of the land of the Yorta Yorta Nation.

A person that is eligible to apply for membership must be an individual who is at least 18 years old and a descendant of any of the following family groups.



Aaron Atkinson and Louisa Frost

Ada Cooper

Alf Morgan

Annabella Howard

Bagot Morgan and Lizzie Walker

Edgar Atkinson

Elizabeth Atkinson

Fred and Sarah Walker

Jack Cooper

Jenny and George Charles

John Atkinson and Emma Murri

Maggie Stone

Maggie Toodle

Robert Cooper

Tommy McCrae

William Cooper

For further information contact:
reception@yynac.com.au



"Gaka yawal Ngulla - Yenbena Yorta Yorta Woka"
Come walk with us, the people on Yorta Yorta Country

Website: WWW.YYNAC.COM.AU

Contact Number: 03 5832 0222

Follow our Facebook page for more updates:
Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation