

## Western Desert Lands Aboriginal Corporation (WDLAC) appoints new CEO

### Media Statement: Thursday, 24 January 2019

The Western Desert Lands Aboriginal Corporation (WDLAC) Board is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr Tony McRae as it's new Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

The Chairman of WDLAC, Mr Melvin Farmer, says that the appointment of Tony McRae was important for WDLAC and the Martu communities it represents.

"WDLAC has experienced the booms and busts of the mining industry, and gone through a challenging period of getting its administration in order.

"We have made real progress over the past few years and look forward to having WDLAC as a strong advocate for our people's native title lands.

Tony comes to WDLAC with more than 30 years experience in leading sustainable economic and social development across the public and private sectors, in a range of profit and non-profit organisations.

Tony was previously a Western Australian MP and Government Minister; he was the first Director of Research & Information at the National Native Title Tribunal; and for more than 3 years to 2018 he was CEO and company secretary for IBN Corporation, WA's largest Aboriginal corporation and charitable trust.

Melvin Farmer said the Board was very appreciative of the work done by Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) and its CEO Simon Hawkins during WDLAC's two-year rebuilding phase.

Mr Farmer said that WDLAC, with the assistance of YMAC, had been successful in:

- rebuilding its relationships with the Martu community, industry stakeholders and government. WDLAC is meeting its compliance obligations for Martu people and, for the second consecutive year, has an operating budget surplus
- reaching agreements with Rio Tinto Exploration Pty Ltd, Carawine Resources Pty Ltd, Newmont Exploration Pty Ltd, Hardey Resources Limited, Alloy Resources Limited and Anitpa Resources Pty Ltd
- supporting the Jiji Program, delivering intensive occupational therapy and speech pathology to Martu children on-community at Punmu, Kunawarritji and Parnngurr.
- partnering with the Martu School Alliance (MSA) to assess a High School Residential Facility to increase education participation and completion of Martu students
- continuing negotiations over management of Karlamilyi (Rudall River) National Park, excluded from the Martu Native Title determination, and widely recognised as being very culturally and spiritually significant to Martu people



- assessing the benefits and risks for Martu people of an Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) over the native title determination area. WDLAC, in collaboration with the KJ rangers, continues to consult with Martu communities on this important issue

Mr Farmer said the appointment of Mr McRae was an important next-step in WDLAC's work in protecting native title, building on-country partnerships, maintaining strong governance and financial management, and increasing the well-being of Martu people.

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WESTERN DESERT LANDS ABORIGINAL CORPORATION (JAMUKURNU-YAPALIKUNU/WDLAC) IS THE PRESCRIBED BODY CORPORATE FOR THE MARTU PEOPLE OF THE CENTRAL WESTERN DESERT REGION IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

On behalf of Martu People, WDLAC hold native title rights and interests, including the right to exclusive use, occupation and possession, which includes the right to control access, of 136,000 square kilometres of land within the Central Western Desert region. WDLAC is extensively involved in numerous projects for the cultural, social and economic benefit of the current and future generations of Martu.

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