

Yolngu Nations Assembly

Miwatj, Laynha, Raminy, Marthakal, Garriny, Gumurr-Rawarraṅ, Gattjirrik and Miḍiyirrk



30/1/14

Media Statement

Yolngu Nations Assembly (Yolngu Makarr Dhuni)

Indigenous Treaties

Statement:

Yolngu Nations Assembly (YNA) supports the call for treaties with indigenous peoples.

YNA Co-Convenor, Matthew Dhulumburrk Gaykamaṅu, says:

"We want a treaty because right now we get directives just from the government side- for housing, education, skills training. This is one-sided talk that never ends in things that work.

Government needs to listen to yolngu thinking for yolngu problems.

Treaty is good because we need a foundational agreement for the Australian government and the Yolngu government. Before anything else happens."

YNA Spokesperson, Djiniyini Gondarra, says:

"All of Arnhem Land, we still maintain our law, maintain our language and have our land. We have not been conquered. We need our society recognised."

On Australia day (2014) Dr. M. Yunupingu was awarded a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) posthumous.

Yalmay Yunupingu tells us about her husband Dr Yunupingu, the lead singer of Yothu Yindi, and his desire for a treaty:

"From the Barunga statement (1988) he wrote Treaty to reinforce that word. He wanted treaty because Yolngu were not being recognised as first peoples. He wanted self management, self determination and respect as a human being. He wanted to stop the death of Yolngu law, custom, and language, to stop the genocide of his people. He wanted mutual respect for each other.

Treaty for Yolngu people was a big part of my husband's mission. He wanted harmony. So for that award he received on Australia day, Companion of the Order of Australia, if Australia respects this award, they will respect this call for treaty. He was never angry, he was always calm, let's work toward treaty likewise."