

20 January 2026

Lot 1083 Welcome Road
PO Box 219
Karratha
Western Australia 6714

To Kellie Walkingshaw on behalf of the City of Karratha,

RE: OCR271984 – CA. 76 – 10 Hedland Place

Gumala Aboriginal Corporation has proudly delivered a high-quality, culturally informed early learning program to the families of Karratha since 2016. The property at 10 Hedland Place has been the home of the Karratha Gumala 3a Early Learning Program and is a recognisable valued community asset.

The Gumala 3a Early Learning Program is based on the Abecedarian Approach Australia (3a), an internationally recognised, evidence-based early childhood education framework. The partnership originally developed by Gumala Aboriginal Corporation with the University of Melbourne and Tom Price Primary School in 2011 at the remote Wakuthuni Homeland community. The 3a approach uses proven strategies such as educational games, conversational reading, and enriched caregiving to support children's cognitive, social, and emotional development from birth to four years of age.

A core strength of the program is its family-centred model, which actively supports parents and caregivers to build skills, confidence, and understanding of their role as children's first educators. This approach ensures learning continues beyond the centre and into the home and community. The program also embeds local aboriginal culture and knowledge, providing a holistic learning environment that fosters curiosity, engagement, and strong cultural identity.

The effectiveness and innovation of the Abecedarian Approach Australia were formally recognised in 2012 through an endorsement partnership with the then Western Australian Minister for Education. Today, Gumala continues to deliver this program across seven early learning centres throughout the Pilbara region.

Gumala Aboriginal Corporation is a not-for-profit organisation funded through partnerships with the National Indigenous Australians Agency and the Department of Social Services. This funding is limited and must support all seven centres. A reduction in rent at 10 Hedland Place would enable Gumala to redirect critical funds toward staff development, educational resources, family transport, and the continued delivery and expansion of this free early learning program.

Supporting a reduced or peppercorn lease for this property would directly benefit the Karratha community by ensuring the ongoing provision of an evidence-based, culturally strong early learning service that delivers long-term outcomes for children and families.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justin Dhu', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Justin Dhu
Chief Executive Officer
Gumala Aboriginal Corporation



To Whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my support for the Gumala Aboriginal Corporation's (GAC) application for support towards a reduced or continuation of a peppercorn lease for the property in Karatha, which is used as a central base to deliver the Gumala 3a Early Learning Program to families and children.

The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) recognises the significant need for culturally safe and place based Early Learning Programs in regional, remote and rural areas of the Pilbara region. Through my engagements with the Gumala team and their development of the 3a Program, it is evident the significant need there is for the delivery of this, and the value in the outcomes it brings.

The importance and impacts of this program are profound, supporting children to be engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education and to thrive in their early years. Through delivery, the 3a program is able to provide parents and caregivers with the skills and confidence to support early childhood education, and positively engage with their child's learning.

Support towards a reduction in rent, or a renewed peppercorn lease at 10 Hedland Place will enable Gumala Aboriginal Corporation to continue to deliver this valued and longstanding program and use these funds to further enhance support through the 3a program to families and children in Karratha.

I wholeheartedly endorse Gumala Aboriginal Corporation's request for a reduced rate of rent, or continuation/renewal of a peppercorn lease to support them continuing to use 10 Hedland Place as the base for the 3a Early Learning Program to be delivered to all families and children in Karratha, playing a vital role in enabling children to thrive and reach their full learning potential in early years.

Yours Sincerely,

Elizabeth Salemi

Engagement Officer

Greater Western Australia

National Indigenous Australians Agency

30/01/2026



Gumala Aboriginal Corporation
Level 2 165 Adelaide Terrace,
East Perth, WA 6004



30 January 2026

Lot 1083 Welcome Road
PO Box 219
Karratha
Western Australia 6714

To Kellie Walkingshaw on behalf of the City of Karratha,

RE: OCR271984 – CA. 76 – 10 Hedland Place

I am writing on behalf of the 3a program supported by Gumala Aboriginal Corporation to formally request consideration for the continuation of the current lease arrangement at 10 Hedland Place, Karratha for a further 12 months with a 12 month option to extend with the understanding that a total of 24 months will be the full extension offered.

As a not-for-profit organisation, Gumala Aboriginal Corporation delivers a critical early childhood 3a program. This program has created a family orientated space, where families feel welcome in a culturally appropriate environment. The staff in the centre are 100% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders which is important to the families attending. A core strength of the program is its family-centred model, which actively supports parents and caregivers to build skills, confidence, and understanding of their role as children's first educators. This approach ensures learning continues beyond the centre and into the home and community.

As our main funding bodies for the 3a program under Gumala, National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) and the Department of Social Services (DSS), 3a has consistently met all funding requirements and achieved the mandated outcomes across all seven early learning centres in the Pilbara region. These are measurable benefits to children, families, and the broader community. These outcomes align strongly with national government priorities around early childhood development, health, and long-term community wellbeing.

Despite this, Gumala Aboriginal Corporation are not in a position to meet the 30% lease deduction amount totalling \$42,000 per annum (excluding GST and outgoings) for 10 Hedland Place. A significant contributing factor is that our primary funding partner, Rio Tinto Iron Ore's Yandi mine site, is approaching end of life and is expected to significantly impact funding into the future.

In Rio Tinto Iron Ore's 2021/2022 annual report the mine's production and economic role have declined as it enters a planned end-of-life phase, with decommissioning and reduced output expected to continue. Replacement capacity through newer projects like South Flank is intended to sustain the broader financial contribution of BHP's Pilbara iron ore operations, however Gumala only has a land use agreement with the Yandi mine site.

Supporting the continuation of a peppercorn lease for this property would directly benefit the Karratha community by ensuring the ongoing provision of an evidence-based, culturally strong early learning service that delivers long-term outcomes for children and families.

Yours Sincerely,

CShillingsworth

Carol Shillingsworth

3a Coordinator

Gumala Aboriginal Corporation