

February 2005

Landowners get veto right in Jabiluka deal

Uranium miner, Energy Resources of Australia (ERA), have signed an agreement with the Mirarr people which will allow them to further explore the Jabiluka mine lease in the Kakadu. The Mirarr people will however have the right to veto any future mining in the area. The agreement comes three years after it was mooted.

Toowoomba Chronicle, pg 15. 26-Feb-05.

Dr Fesl discontinues native claim

Dr Eve Fesl, spokeswoman for the Gubbi Gubbi people recently had her application to discontinue her claim granted by the Federal Court. Dr Fesl moved to strike out her claim due to concerns she was not properly authorised according to traditional consensus decision-making, to act on behalf of the Gubbi Gubbi people. The Federal Court also refused a motion by other Gubbi Gubbi members to replace her as the recognised applicant.

Sunshine Coast Daily, pg 5. 24-Feb-05.

Land rights fight looms on route of canal

The Karajarri people, native title holders over thousands of sq kilometres in the Kimberley, have said they will oppose Colin Barnett's plan to build a water canal through Western Australia, if he wins office. The Karajarri people were awarded exclusive possession over an area south of Broome in September 2004. There is around 20 claim groups in Western Australia which the proposed canal will affect.

Western Australian, pg 7. 22-Feb-05.

Ruddock urges Hulls to look in own backyard on native title

Attorney-General Philip Ruddock has said that Victorian Attorney-General Rob Hulls should not shift responsibility to the Commonwealth in relation to native title outcomes, due to Victoria lagging behind the other States. Mr Ruddock further stated that the Victorian Government imposed their own procedural requirements in regards to the native title process.

Parliament House - Media Release. 20-Feb-05.

Native Title claim could be finalised

The long running Gunditjmarra native title claim could be nearing an outcome according to Victoria's native title representative body. Native Title Services Victoria CEO Chris Marshall said negotiations between the Gunditjmarra claimants and the State Government might be finalised before the hearing date (29 March to 01 April). The claim covers approximately 109,000 hectares of Crown land across seven municipalities in Victoria and South Australia. It extends from the South Australian border to Shaw River in the east and the Grampians National Park in the north.

Hamilton Spectator, pg 17. 19-Feb-05.

Native Title process for museum plan

Maldon Museum and Archives are required to go through the native title process before they are allowed to build the Aunty Jack Museum. The new museum will house Maldon's collection of agricultural machinery including the large old Aunty Jack steam engine. Project leader Roger Palmer was surprised at hearing this as he thought all native title issues were resolved early last year. Mr Palmer hopes the facility will still be complete by the end of the year.

Tarrangower Times, pg 5. 18-Feb-05.

World class national parks system gets go ahead

A Parks and Reserves Act has been passed in the Northern Territory, which will set a new benchmark in environmental management, sustainable development and Indigenous affairs, according to Chief Minister Clare Martin. The Northern Territory Government in conjunction with traditional owners in the region, will now aim to establish a world class system for parks and reserves. The comprehensive arrangement allows issues such as land rights and native title to be dealt with without resorting to litigation.

Northern Territory Government, media release. 17-Feb-05.

Aborigines in mine talks

The Koongarra Group has agreed to talk with French uranium mining company AREVA in relation to mining in the Kakadu region. Northern Land Council's Chief Executive Norman Fry said the traditional owners would view their proposal and then decide within the year whether or not to allow AREVA to open a mine three kilometres east of Nourlangie Rock.

Sydney Morning Herald, pg 7. 17-Feb-05.

Aborigines join forces on land rights

A historic meeting of 21 Victorian Indigenous groups took place in Melbourne to call on the State Government to quicken the process of native title claims. The Indigenous groups united to demonstrate to the government that they were tired of delays in relation to the recognition of their native title rights and interests. There is currently 11 rural claims in Victoria pending, with the majority of them having been before the Federal Court for approximately six years.

The Age, pg 6. 17-Feb-05.

Traditional owners plead for native title

More than a dozen Indigenous traditional owners from the Miriuwung group in Keep River, located on the border of the Northern Territory and Western Australia, recently met in Darwin to ask the Northern Territory Government not to ignore their native title rights. The traditional owners made the trip to highlight their case on the eve of the Northern Territory Government passing the Parks and Reserves Act. Since the Ward decision in December 2003, there has been a push by the NT Government for joint management deals in replace of native title claims in relation to parks and reserves.

Northern Territory News, pg 5. 17-Feb-05.

Miners call for more native title funding

Mining companies are calling on the Federal Government to increase funding for native title applications. The underfunding of Native Title Representative Bodies (NTRB) are creating lengthy backlogs and force companies to fund claimants so they can negotiate. Submissions by the mining companies to the Federal Parliamentary inquiry into NTRB's represent a

shift in thinking from eight years ago, when mining companies suggested the government decrease the level of financial assistance.

Australian Financial Review, pg 3. 14-Feb-05.

Yuwaalaraay pursue Indigenous land use agreement over OPA4

The Yuwaalaraay people from the Lightning Ridge area are completing the final stages of their Indigenous Land Use Agreement. The claim stretches from Angledool to the Collarenebri Road and from the western side of Narran Lake to the Big Warrambool. The agreement will not preclude mining in the region, although cultural and sacred sites will be protected in the interim.

Black Opal Advocate, pg 5. 09-Feb-05.

Concerns Heritage Act was breached

The new Victorian State Planning Minister, Rob Hulls, has expressed concern about the Glenelg Shire Council's permit for subdivision of an eight-lot block in regards to the Gunditjmarra native title claim, ahead of his visit to the region. Mr Hulls will visit the site of the major development dispute between the Council, landowners, Heritage Victoria and local Indigenous group and discuss the claim with all involved.

Portland Observer, pg 1. 09-Feb-05.

Canal plan criticised

The Kimberley Land Council (KLC) is opposed to the West Australian Opposition Leader's plan to build a canal from the Fitzroy River to Perth. Executive Director Wayne Bergmann said that the Indigenous communities needed to be consulted in relation to any future development. West Australian Premier Dr Geoff Gallop said that examination of the implications of a project needed to be completed and a tender process needed to take place. National Native Title Tribunal Deputy President Fred Chaney stated the canal plan had major native title and heritage implications, and that communities along the route would need to be consulted.

Koori Mail, pg 6. 09-Feb-05.

SA 'leads way' on native title/Taking pain out of native title fight

The South Australian Native Title Representative Body, the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement - Native Title Unit (ALRM - NTU), are reaching outstanding native title results due to a new model they have introduced. Introduced five years ago, this process of negotiation follows the same manner of negotiations as laid out in Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) negotiations, and was introduced five years ago. Executive Officer Parry Agius, has said that the process builds structure and allows Aboriginal people to sit at the negotiation table to discuss matters pertinent to them.

Koori Mail, pg 7/*Independent Weekly* pg 6. 09-Feb-05.

Native plant export plan

The North Queensland Land Council (NQLC) is lobbying the Federal Government for a license to allow Indigenous people to hunt and export native plants and animals from traditional lands. NQLC spokesperson Terry O'Shane, said that Indigenous people should be given the opportunity to monitor wildlife numbers and be allowed to play a role in the management of pests, such as the cane toad.

Cooktown Local News, pg 5. 02-Feb-05.

Largest-ever native title settlement reached

The Western Australian Government recently announced that the largest native title settlement in the nation's history had been reached, involving 188,000sq km of land in the State's central desert region. Deputy Premier Eric Ripper and the Ngaanyatjarra Council finalised the agreement which included the settlement of six simultaneous applications. The claim stretches from the Gibson Desert nature Reserve to the South Australian border. It recognises exclusive possession native title

over most of the claim area, including special leases, reserves held in trust for the use and benefit of Aboriginal people and unallocated crown land. Non-exclusive possession native title is recognised over the Warburton Range Stock Route.

Murri Views, pg 18. Feb-05.

Elders to tell Barnett he's dreaming

Australia's first Indigenous female MP, Carol Martin, Labor MP for the Kimberley has mentioned there may be resistance from traditional owners if a canal project proposed by Western Australia's Opposition Leader Colin Barnett is given the go-ahead. Ms Martin has said the Indigenous communities had not been consulted about the Liberal State Government promise to build a \$2 billion, 3700 km canal to channel water from the Fitzroy River to Perth, and that the project made a mockery of native title provisions. Mr Barnett also stated that the canal is the only realistic solution to Western Australia's sparse water supply.

Australian, pg 7, 09-Feb-05.

Yolngu people's native title recognised over land and sea

The Federal Court has recognised the Yolngu people's native title rights and interests over the land and waters claimed in the Blue Mud Bay region in Northern Territory's east Arnhem Land. The claim originally lodged in November 2002, is 1,489 sq km in size and is located 50 km north-west of Groote Eylandt. The group will be advised of the full extent of their rights and interests as they are currently being determined.

NNTT Media Release, 08-Feb-05.