

NATIVE TITLE IN THE NEWS

FEBRUARY 2013

DATE	STATE	SUBJECT	SUMMARY	SOURCE
05/02/13	AUS	Concerns raised over proposed changes to native title laws	Submissions in response to the Federal Government's proposed changes to native title laws have been received from the Minerals Council of Australia, The National Farmers Federation and the Queensland and Western Australia governments. The submissions express concern over the proposed amendments which were first proposed by former Attorney-General Nicola Roxon at the 2012 Native Title Conference in Townsville. The main concern for pastoralists was the inclusion of agricultural land within the definition of a 'park', while the Western Australia government declared the changes unnecessary.	<i>The Australian</i> (Canberra, ACT, 5 February 2013), 1 <i>The Koori Mail</i> (Lismore, NSW, 27 February), 14
05/02/2013	WA	Yinhawangka people sign ILUA with Rio Tinto	The Yinhawangka people have signed an Indigenous land use agreement (ILUA) with Rio Tinto, which gives the company access to the claim area for iron ore mining operations in the central Pilbara. Michael Meegan on behalf of Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation says that the deal will provide financial and cultural benefits for the Yinhawangka people.	<i>AAP Bulletin Wire</i> (Sydney, NSW, 5 February 2013) ABC Premium News (Sydney, NSW, 6 February 2013) <i>The Courier Mail</i> (Brisbane, QLD, 6 February 2013), 28
06/02/2013	AUS	Federal Opposition to vote against native title amendments	Federal Opposition legal affairs spokesperson Senator George Brandis indicated that the Coalition party would vote against the native title amendments proposed by the Federal Government. Senator Brandis has said that the amendments are unnecessary and that the current governing arrangements strike the right balance.	<i>The Australian</i> (Canberra, ACT, 6 February 2013), 6
06/02/2013	NSW	Githabul Elder arrested for protesting	A Githabul elder was arrested after a number of protesters were removed from a campsite in the Edan Creek State Forest, adjacent to a planned coal seam gas drill site. The Githabul protestors claim that the site exists within a forest subject to a 2007 ILUA which put an end to mining in the area.	The Northern Star (Lismore NSW, 6 February 2013), 5 <i>The Koori Mail</i> (Lismore, NSW, 13 February), 21

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07/02/2013	NSW	Gomeroi native title claim has 140 respondents	140 respondents have joined the Gomeroi native title claim extending across much of north-western New South Wales. Justice Jayne Jagot read out the list of respondents which included some of the world's biggest publicly listed companies such as Xstrata, Anglo Coal and Santos. The matter has been listed and is awaiting further instruction in the Federal Court on 24 June 2013.	ABC Regional News (Sydney, NSW, 7 February 2013)
07/02/2013	WA	James Price point gas hub project facing further uncertainty	Following a meeting with the native title claimants held in Broome concerning the gas hub project at James Price Point, the Goolarabooloo claimants have indicated that they will seek to discontinue the current combined native title claim that was first lodged with the Jabirr Jabirr peoples 15 years ago. This split would further jeopardise the Kimberly gas hub project that the Western Australia government and Woodside negotiated with the joint claimant groups 2 years ago.	ABC Premium News (Sydney, NSW, 7 February 2013)
11/02/2013	AUS	Uncertainty surrounding land tenure in Northern Australia	The Northern Territory government has declared that easing land-use restrictions in Northern Australia to promote diversification in agriculture would require changes to the Native Title Act. In response, the Northern Land Council has indicated that any leases should be negotiated under the current governing arrangements and that any proposed changes would be contested.	<i>The Australian</i> (Canberra, ACT, 11 February 2013), 4
13/02/2013	NT	Koongarra incorporated into Kakadu	Djok elder Jeffrey Lee has welcomed the decision by the Federal Government to repeal a law that would allow uranium mining to take place on his native title lands, an area known as Koongarra. The decision would see the area of land effectively incorporated into Kakadu National Park. Former Prime Minister Bob Hawke hailed Mr Lee as a great Australian.	<i>The Koori Mail</i> (Lismore, NSW, 13 February), 3
14/02/2013	WA	The Federal Court rules in favour of Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation	The Federal Court has ruled that the Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation (YAC) is the only group legally permitted to represent native title holders in the ongoing Pilbara mining dispute with Fortescue Metals Group (FMG). Previously, FMG had entered in to negotiations for the Solomon Hub iron ore mine with the Wirlu-Murra Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation (WMYAC), a breakaway Yindjibarndi group. FMG Chief Executive Nev Power said that the decision would not affect its current or future operations and that it had always been FMG's intention to come to an agreement with all Yindjibarndi people. Shortly after the Federal Court decision, FMG announced that a \$200 million	<i>The Australian</i> (Canberra, ACT, 14 February 2013), 23 ABC Premium News (Sydney, NSW, 14 February 2013) <i>The Koori Mail</i> (Lismore, NSW, 27 February), 12 <i>National Indigenous Times</i> (Malua Bay, NSW, 27 February 2013), 11

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			mining services joint venture at its Solomon Project would be awarded to the benefit of WMYAC and Eastern Guruma.	
15/02/2013	QLD	Torres Strait Islanders await outcome of High Court hearing on commercial fishing rights	The High Court of Australia has reserved its decision on whether Torres Strait Islanders still hold the native title right to fish for commercial purposes or whether this was extinguished by fisheries legislation. Chairman of the Torres Strait Regional Authority Joseph Elu is hoping that the case will provide the foundation for Torres Strait Islanders to benefit from the \$34 million seafood market.	<i>The Cairns Post</i> (Cairns, QLD, 15 February 2013), 2
20/02/2013	NT	Native title negotiations may delay start of Ord Expansion Project	The Northern Territory government has yet to confirm whether the Ord Expansion Project, due to start in September 2013, will go ahead on schedule. Director of the Ord Development Unit Lorraine Corowa has said that the first priority is further discussions with relevant native title parties, many represented by the Northern Land Council.	ABC Rural News (Sydney, NSW, 20 February 213)
25/02/2013	AUS	Former Prime Minister Paul Keating backs Native title amendments	Former Prime Minister Paul Keating has publicly backed the proposed native title amendments in a speech to the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC). The gathering was held on North Stradbroke Island nearly 2 years after QYAC won a 16-year battle to have their native title rights recognised. Keating stated that the current native title arrangements had become too cumbersome, too expensive and too legal before going on to encourage the community to make the most of the determination.	<i>The Australian</i> (Canberra, ACT, 25 February 2013), 7 <i>The Courier Mail</i> (Brisbane, QLD, 25 February 2013), 11 The Bayside Bulletin (Cleveland, QLD, 25 February 2013) <i>National Indigenous Times</i> (Malua Bay, NSW, 27 February 2013), 1
26/02/2013	VIC	Information sessions held in Bendigo ahead of native title agreement	Bendigo is set to host information sessions as Dja Dja Wurrung leaders prepare to sign a native title agreement. The agreement will grant native title over a large area of central and western Victoria and will come thirteen years after the native title claim was first lodged.	ABC Rural News (Sydney, NSW, 26 February 2013)
27/02/2013	QLD	Dispute over native title rights to be heard in Federal Court	The Federal Court is set to hear evidence from several traditional owner groups from the areas surrounding Roma, St George and Surat in southern Queensland. The hearing is in relation to a number of large coal seam gas projects in the area and affects who will receive royalties from the mining projects.	The Queensland Time (Brisbane, QLD, February 27) <i>News Mail Bundaberg</i> (Bundaberg, QLD, 27 February 2013), 15 <i>The Northern Star</i> (Lismore, NSW, 27 February 2013), 11 <i>The Chronicle</i> (Toowoomba, QLD, 27 February 2013), 3