

NATIVE TITLE IN THE NEWS

JANUARY 2013

DATE	STATE	SUBJECT	SUMMARY	SOURCE
05/01/13	WA	New jobs created in WA mining sector for native title holders	Since 2010, Fortescue has created almost \$600 million in contracts and joint ventures as part of the 'Billion Opportunities' venture to Aboriginal businesses in the Pilbara region. There are currently seven land access agreements that provide business prospects for local Aboriginal people. This provides opportunities for native title groups to actively practice ownership and work on traditional lands. As stated by Prof. Marcia Langton, there is now an emerging new Aboriginal middle class created by the employment opportunities afforded by the mining sector.	<i>Weekend Australian</i> (Canberra, ACT, 5 January 2013), 27.
07/01/13	NSW	Prolonged native title appeal over Newcastle CBD	The old Newcastle Post Office, built in 1903, has been closed for more than a decade. It now stands derelict in the middle of town and has aroused discussion on the need for restoration. The NSW government has stated it can't touch the building as it is part of a native title claim to be determined in March 2013.	<i>Newcastle Herald</i> (Newcastle, NSW, 7 January 2013), 4. <i>Newcastle Herald</i> (Newcastle, NSW, 7 January 2013), 1. <i>ABC Regional News</i> (Sydney, NSW, 7 January 2013).
09/01/13	SA	Changes to Federal Government native title respondent funding impacts local councils	Changes to Federal Government funding means that Local Councils will no longer receive financial support from the Native Title Respondent Funding Scheme. This has affected the Coorong Council, currently in negotiations with the Ngarrindjeri people regarding a native title claim that covers the River Murray, Lower Lakes and Coorong areas. Coorong Council now has to pay \$2,500 in extra legal costs, with an extra \$1,000 per annum in costs estimated.	<i>The Murray Valley Standard</i> (Murray valley, SA, 9 January 2013).
10/01/13	SA	Aboriginal remains uncovered during freeway excavation	Skull and bone fragments were uncovered by a worker during excavations near Christies Creek on 15 November 2012. The Kurna and Ramindjerii people have made native title claims over area that includes Christies Creek. Kurna and Ramindjerri people are upset by the discovery, explaining that	<i>ABC Premium News</i> (Sydney, NSW, 10 January 2013).

			they are now at a spiritual loss. Stephen Kenny, a lawyer for the Kaurna people, has expressed concerns that remains have been destroyed due to a lack of heritage monitors on site. Transport Minister Patrick Colon rebutted this by claiming there have been archaeologists and heritage monitors employed on site to identify such problems since works began.	
13/01/13	WA	Woodside's plans to move new gas hub will impact Aboriginal benefits	Woodside's plans for a \$40 billion gas hub at James Price Point may be abandoned in favour of a floating processing plant offshore, after plans were halted in December 2012. Goolarabooloo Jabirr Jabirr native title claimants have been granted a 20-year \$1.5 billion benefits package with Woodside after signing an agreement in June 2011 for the gas hub to proceed. The package includes jobs, training, land grants and health programs. This package would not apply if the floating offshore plant goes ahead. A decision is due to be made in June 2013.	<i>The Sunday Times</i> (Perth, WA, 13 January 2013), 4. <i>The Sunday Times</i> (Perth, WA, 13 January 2013), 5.
14/01/13	SA	Land dispute between the Barnglara and Kokatha people	Plans for the construction of Australia's largest military training area near Port Augusta have been delayed by up to 5 years. Delays in finalising an Indigenous land use agreement (ILUA) for the expansion were caused by a land dispute between the Barnglara and Kokatha peoples. The Barnglara support the ILUA, whereas the Kokatha have objected based on heritage concerns. It is understood the Commonwealth will offer the Kokatha \$2 million to compensate for their heritage concerns and to allow the ILUA to proceed.	<i>The Australian</i> (Canberra, ACT, 14 January 2013), 16.
15/01/13	WA	Viento and the Kookadaideri Contracting Services Pty Ltd establish agreements for mining in the Pilbara	Viento Group Limited and the Koodaideri Contracting Services Pty Ltd have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), to establish strategic joint ventures and cooperative business agreements. Both parties plan to tender various mining opportunities in the Pilbara region for maintenance and construction projects on the native title lands of the Banyjima people.	<i>AAP Finance News Wire</i> (Sydney, NSW, 15 January 2013).
16/01/13	TSI	Elders from Murray Island seek legal advice on how to reverse a QLD Indigenous land transfer.	The Meriam Elders Group of Murray Island will travel to Brisbane to seek advice on how to reverse a recent Indigenous land transfer by the Queensland government. This transfer was made possible through a deed granted to Mer Gedkam Le, the RNTBC for the Meriam people which holds and manages the native title rights determined in the <i>Mabo</i> decision. The Elders Group is strongly opposed to the transfer of the Mer, Dauer and Waier Islands to the Mer Gedkam Le	<i>Koori Mail</i> (Lismore, NSW, 16 January 2013), 7.

			RNTBC. This has caused community tension due to differing views between Mer families and the Elders group on issues of governance.	
16/01/13	Federal	Federal Government seeks feedback on the native title process	The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs has called for submissions to be made about the <i>Native Title Amendment Bill 2012</i> . The amendment clarifies the meaning of negotiating in 'good faith', enables parties to agree to set aside the historical extinguishment of native title in parks and reserves, and streamlines ILUA processes. Submissions close on the 31 January 2013.	<i>Koori Mail</i> (Lismore, NSW, 16 January 2013), 18.
23/02/13	Federal	Inquiry into members of the National Native Title Tribunal	An Inquiry has been launched into the National Native Title Tribunal in response to various media accusations concerning undeclared conflicts of interests by employees. Former Attorney-General Nicola Roxon referred this matter to the High Court of Australia.	<i>National indigenous Times</i> (Canberra, ACT, 23 January 2013).
24/01/13	SA	Attorney-General backs claim to overturn a SA Federal Court decision on native title fishing rights	Former Attorney-General Nicola Roxon has backed a High Court challenge made by various Aboriginal groups to overturn a ruling made by the South Australian Supreme Court. The ruling declared that native title fishing rights have been extinguished in South Australia. Ms Roxon claims that while South Australian legislation may have extinguished commercial fishing rights, it has not extinguished <i>all</i> rights to fish. The High Court will hear this matter in February 2013.	<i>The Australian</i> (Canberra, ACT, 24 January 2013), 4.
29/01/13	QLD	Cape York to be nominated as UNESCO World Heritage site	The Federal Government hopes to nominate Cape York for UNESCO World Heritage status. The nomination can only be submitted with the consent of traditional owners, giving them the ultimate right to allow this nomination.	<i>The Conversation</i> (29 January 2013).
30/01/13	WA	Traditional owners have called on the UN to intervene in Woodside's Browse gas project	Goolarabooloo people, traditional owners in the Kimberley region, have sent an urgent appeal to the UN's Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The appeal outlines that their rights under Articles 15 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are being violated by the government of Western Australia and resource companies. The group has claimed that the state government's bid to compulsorily acquire land is in contravention of the right to free, prior and informed consent.	<i>AAP General News Wire</i> (Sydney, NSW, 30 January 2013).
31/01/13	TSI	Landmark High Court hearing on native title sea rights	On 12 February 2013, the High Court will hear an appeal from the Torres Strait Regional Sea Claims Group over a Federal Court decision that native title does not extend to commercial fishing rights as they were extinguished by state fisheries	<i>The Cairns Post</i> (Cairns, QLD, 31 January 2013), 10.

			legislation. The Warran people of Western Australia, who were denied reciprocal native title rights last year, have applied to be heard in support of the Torres Strait Islanders.	
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