

## **Yamatji Marlpa Barna Baba Maaja Aboriginal Corporation**

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### **Agreement Shows that Culture and Industry can Co-exist**

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A unique combination of cultural sensitivity and commercial reality was achieved last week in a native title mining agreement signed by the Njamal native title claim group and Australian resources company Moly Mines Limited.

The deal combines a mining exclusion or 'no-go' zone over Coppin Gap, an area of cultural and ethnographic significance for the traditional owners, with a generous compensation package.

Morris Coppin of the Njamal people said that the community was happy that this deal managed to balance important cultural concerns with commercial realities.

"This agreement recognises the importance of Coppin Gap by making it a no-go area but still shows that Njamal people are serious commercial negotiators," said Mr Coppin.

"Njamal also appreciate that Moly Mines has made a real gesture in agreeing to include an exclusion zone," said Mr Coppin.

The agreement concerns Spinifex Ridge, a molybdenum and copper resource located approximately 50 kilometres northeast of Marble Bar in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. The mine is expected to sustain a 15 million tonne mining operation for over 20 years, making it a significant start-up venture.

In addition to the financial element of the compensation package, Moly Mines has agreed to provide education and training opportunities for Njamal people, including guaranteed employment within the mining operation.

"It is always important for traditional owners to be able to work on their country," said Kevin Allen of the Njamal people. "And having employment and training opportunities on country is good for Aboriginal people and for the whole region."

Part of the funding provided in the compensation package will be channelled into the maintenance of traditional law and culture. The company will also work with Njamal to ensure that Moly Mines staff and contractors receive cross-cultural training.

"Having funding that allows us to maintain our law and culture means that we can look after Njamal traditions for today and for our children. This is a very important thing for Njamal," said Terry Wilson of the Njamal people.

Mr Wilson said that it is also important that people who come to work in the mine understand about Njamal, their country and traditions and the cross cultural training will therefore be very beneficial.

The agreement also incorporates a range of environmental and heritage protection elements in line with many of the agreements which Njamal has reached with companies wishing to operate on Njamal country.

The agreement was welcomed by Moly Mines as a positive example of the way that native title negotiations can be about more than just financial compensation.

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