

100th Indigenous land use agreement a native title 'milestone'

17 November 2003

Australia has passed an important milestone today with the registration of the country's 100th indigenous land use agreement (ILUA). The President of the National Native Title Tribunal President Mr Graeme Neate said the 100th ILUA highlighted native title's continuing progress.

'These types of agreements are now among the most important native title options for indigenous communities, developers, infrastructure suppliers and local, state and commonwealth government agencies,' Mr Neate said. 'They allow everyone to get on with business while respecting each other's rights.'

Indigenous land use agreements are legally binding agreements usually made between native title claim groups, developers and or government agencies. They can be made whether or not there has been a determination that native title exists on the land under claim. They can also be made over areas where traditional owner groups have not made a native title claim.

ILUAs deal with specific issues such as access to land for activities like mining and they can include assurances around cultural heritage and environmental protection, employment and training opportunities and



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communication between parties.

The 100th ILUA, registered with the Tribunal today, is between the Central Land Council representing traditional owners and two mining companies, Newmont Gold Exploration and Normandy NFM. It allows for exploration and mining by Newmont/Normandy in an area north-west of Barrow Creek in the Northern Territory.

Mr Neate said most (58 per cent) of the 100 ILUAs now registered were in Queensland with a significant proportion (42 per cent) relating to mining and mineral exploration. Other recent ILUAs have allowed for national parks to be created, Aboriginal community living spaces to be established in the Northern Territory, a new industrial estate to go ahead and power and telecommunications infrastructure to be built.

'In the 10 years since the Native Title Act was created, much work has been done on the part of Tribunal staff and members, native title representative bodies, private companies and government agencies to make the law work for the people on the ground,' Mr Neate said. '100 ILUAs is a great testament to all of their dedication and hard work.'

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