



Yamatji Marlpa ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Traditional Owners and iron ore miner agree to work together in heritage-listed Weld Range

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The Wajarri Yamatji people of Western Australia have announced an agreement with iron ore miner Sinosteel Midwest Corporation Ltd. The Agreement is over Sinosteel's Weld Range project 70 kms northwest of the town of Cue in WA's Midwest.

The National Heritage Listed Weld Range is a not only a very significant area to the Wajarri Yamatji people, but also to the history of Western Australia. Sinosteel and the Wajarri Yamatji people agreed on exclusion zones around areas of particular importance, where Sinosteel has agreed never to mine.

Sinosteel has been exploring for resources in the area since 2006 under an exploration agreement made at that time. The mining agreement finalised this week has been in negotiation since 2009.

In addition to heritage protection, the agreement includes financial and non-financial benefits for the Wajarri Yamatji people, such as employment and contracting opportunities.

The Weld Range project has the potential to be one of the major projects serviced by the proposed Oakajee Port and Rail project.

Wajarri Yamatji community member and Chairperson of Meenangu Wajarri Aboriginal Corporation, Des Mongoo said it's been a fantastic day for the whole Wajarri Yamatji community.

"As a Wajarri Yamatji person I was so proud for people to have an opportunity to understand the agreement, say what they want to say, and be heard."

Sinosteel's General Manager, Phil Allsopp said the years of negotiation have resulted in an agreement that not only gives Sinosteel the basis for a viable mining project, but acknowledges and protects the many important heritage sites and cultural areas of Weld Range.

"I am proud that we have been able to reach an agreement that will define the way we work with the Wajarri Yamatji people in the areas of training, business and job opportunities, and heritage protection."

Simon Hawkins, CEO of Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation said this agreement shows that mining and traditional uses of country can co-exist if parties are willing to listen and work cooperatively.

“These negotiations have been conducted sensitively over a period of several years and in this case, it was very important that Sinosteel took the time to listen to the concerns of the Traditional Owners and to offer very strong protections for the heritage values of the Weld Range.

“There are many sacred sites in the area that are important to Aboriginal people throughout the Midwest and beyond, as well as places that are still regularly used by Wajarri families today to carry on their traditions,” he said.

About Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC) is the native title representative body for native title claims in the Pilbara, Murchison and Gascoyne areas of Western Australia. The organisation has a representative area of almost one million square kilometres and represents over 20 native title claims, all with their own language, culture and traditions.

YMAC is a not-for-profit organisation, run by an Aboriginal Board and provides a range of services to its members including claim and future-act representation, heritage protection services, community and economic development and natural resource management.

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