



Northern Land Council

MEDIA RELEASE

McArthur River Mine expansion

2 May 2007

Northern Land Council (NLC) Chief Executive, Norman Fry, today said that the Chief Minister's introduction of legislation to override last Monday's Supreme Court decision regarding the expansion of the McArthur River Mine was unfair, unjustifiable and undemocratic.

"The Supreme Court's decision paved the way for improved environmental outcomes and an agreement with traditional owners," Mr Fry said.

"The Supreme Court held that the NT Government had ignored its own legislation when approving the expansion of the McArthur River Mine by a shoddy, backdoor process."

"Now the Chief Minister intends to ignore the umpire, and ride roughshod over the democratic rights of traditional owners and the public. The Chief Minister's position is arrogant, high-handed, and an absolute disgrace!" Mr Fry said.

"Traditional owners will be devastated by the Chief Minister's decision, especially given the recent death of a senior traditional owner who led the campaign for improved environmental outcomes regarding the mine - and whose funeral is this Saturday."

"This action does not give certainty for the mining industry – certainty will only come by including traditional owners and the public in the process," Mr Fry said.

"The Northern Territory will never achieve Statehood under a Chief Minister who makes decisions for only some Territorians, and who has no interest in improved environmental outcomes or an agreement with traditional owners."

"I call on all members of parliament to stand up for democracy and the rule of law and reject this disgraceful legislation," Mr Fry said.

"The Chief Minister and the parliament should accept the Supreme Court's decision as final, and follow the environmental protection process identified by the court," Mr Fry said.

Traditional owners will continue their fight for justice including in Federal Court proceedings which commence tomorrow.