



Northern Land Council

MEDIA RELEASE

McArthur River Mine: NLC calls for mining agreement

29 August 2006

Northern Land Council (NLC) Chief Executive, Norman Fry, today welcomed Environment Minister Marion Scrymgour's call for "a legal agreement or legislation to guarantee positive social benefits" regarding the McArthur River lead/zinc mine near Borroloola, and called for Xstrata to immediately enter bone fide negotiations with traditional owners.

"Xstrata wants to trample on Aboriginal rights and culture by permanently diverting a major river and interfering with a significant rainbow serpent Dreaming site, without negotiating an agreement with the traditional owners", Mr Fry said.

"It's no wonder traditional owners are strongly opposed to the development", Mr Fry said. "They know that in the 21st century mining agreements with Indigenous people are standard industry practice, including at the nearby Century Zinc and Weipa mines in Queensland and at the Argyle diamond mine in Western Australia."

"Xstrata makes over \$300 million gross revenue per annum from traditional land regarding a mine which will operate for up to 80 years, but has made no attempt whatsoever to settle the native title compensation claim which was lodged in 1997."

"And Xstrata has never paid any royalties to the NT Government because it claims never to make a profit", Mr Fry said.

"The real question is whether the Territory is getting a fair deal from Xstrata, which is one of the largest lead/zinc producers in the world."

"Xstrata must demonstrate that it is prepared to be a good corporate citizen and immediately negotiate an agreement with the traditional owners", Mr Fry said.

"And Mining Minister Kon Vatskalis should make clear that approval for further mining is contingent upon Xstrata agreeing to enter good faith negotiations for a mining agreement with the traditional owners."