



Northern Land Council

MEDIA RELEASE

McArthur river decision a win for commonsense

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NLC Chief Executive, Norman Fry has today applauded the Supreme Courts decision ruling in favour of traditional owners in relation to the expansion of the McArthur River Mine in the Borroloola region of the Northern Territory.

“Today’s decision is a victory for commonsense,” Mr Fry said.

“The impact of this project demanded that an open and transparent process be adopted. Unfortunately for the NT Government this ‘back-door’ approach in approving the project has brought nothing but shame on them.

The scale of the expansion proposal put before the minister and its potential impacts were matters of serious concern for traditional owners because it posed considerable social and environmental impact risks,” Mr Fry said.

“In the 21st century, mining agreements with Aboriginal people are standard industry practice. Xstrata, it seems, was motivated solely by self-interest and greed, and has only itself to blame for failing to engage with traditional owners and the community regarding the proposed diversion of the McArthur River mine and the expansion.

I congratulate the traditional owners for showing great strength and commitment to back up their concerns by initiating the court action,” Mr Fry said.

The McArthur River is an extensive river with a diverse channel system. Impact assessments of the proposal indicated that an alteration to its natural course would have had significant impact on many traditional and commercial activities downstream of the mines operations.