

**Statement: Harry Lansen, senior traditional owner, McArthur River
10 June 2008**

My name is Harry Lansen and the McArthur River Mine is on my country, where my people's dreaming and sacred sites are.

When they made this mine, they broke up a sacred site, marking the turtle dreaming of my people. It was a big rock. I asked them where it is, because they had moved it. But they couldn't tell me. I still don't know where it is.

Now they are moving the whole McArthur River to make room for an even bigger mine. There is a ceremony ground there, a very important meeting place alongside the river. My people would gather around a big old tree, sometimes 300 people might come for many days, from far around. At these ceremony times, my people would take up a lot of space for ceremony, and for camping around the ceremony.

But the diverted river will cut into this area, cutting away almost all of it. And a road is being built on the other side of my tree. Only 20-metres around this tree will be left. The big graders will cut the long roots of the tree and it will die. It will die because of the cutting, and the ceremony could die away forever.

A few years ago we showed the government this area, and other tree areas nearby. The Sacred Sites Protection mob has not registered these nearby areas. They are not protected at all, and they will be destroyed.

Already for this diversion, they have dug up burial areas. They have dug up the remains of my people. What are they doing with these bones?

It makes me sad inside. I carry the law for those places. I am responsible to guard them.

The 20-metre exclusion zone around the old ceremony tree is not enough. The river diversion is wrong.

It makes me sad inside. What can I do alone? I ask for your help.

Thank you.