

Fortescue and Yindjibarndi People launch \$3m history and community project



PERTH, 26 August 2014: A team of Aboriginal elders, anthropologists and archaeologists this week commenced important Aboriginal cultural and historical research in the Pilbara on the first expedition of a \$3 million, three-year initiative sponsored by Fortescue Metals Group.

The Gamburlarna Project is an initiative of Fortescue and the Wirilu-Murra Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation (WMYAC), which is a representative of the traditional owners of the land where Fortescue's Solomon mine operates, the Yindjibarndi People.

The project recognises the deep relationship between Fortescue and the WMYAC, and the cooperative approach that has developed between the two parties in the identification, recording and protection of important Yindjibarndi cultural heritage.

The first stage of the Project will record the important cultural heritage of the Yindjibarndi people. The project will create an innovative, interactive map of Aboriginal heritage sites which will use photo and video to bring Yindjibarndi country together with traditional stories, songs, ceremonies, and knowledge, preserving it for future generations.

This week's seven-day expedition is to Satellite Springs, an important cultural area to both Yindjibarndi and Eastern Guruma People, located about 60 kilometres north of Tom Price within the vicinity of Fortescue's Solomon mining hub. It is the first of many trips planned as part of the Gamburlarna Project.

The Project is comprised of a number of parts, including: a cultural mapping and research program; a land management program; a social enterprises program focusing on the Roebourne Community; and an organisational capacity-building program.

Fortescue chief executive officer Nev Power said the project recognised Fortescue's commitment to the identification and protection of Aboriginal heritage and would help Fortescue protect important Yindjibarndi culture.

"Fortescue has always been committed to working with the traditional owners of the land where we operate. That is why we are proud to partner with the Wirilu-murra Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation in this important initiative to record and promote the culture and history of the Yindjibarndi people," Mr Power said.

"This three-year project will increase our shared knowledge of Aboriginal culture and lead to a richer understanding of Australia's first people which is a very positive outcome."

Wirilu-murra director Allery Sandy said the initiative was of great importance to the Yindjibarndi people.

“Our culture has been kept alive for centuries through the telling of stories, but this will go beyond storytelling and archive valuable information to be used by generations to come,” Mrs Sandy said.

Note: Gamburlana is the Yindjibarndi name for a significant geographical feature on Yindjibarndi traditional lands.

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