

Media Release



Fortescue rejects claims in The Age newspaper

PERTH, 15th October 2011: Fortescue Metals Group (Fortescue) wishes to correct a number of claims made in two reports in The Age newspaper on Saturday 15th October.

Journalist Jan Mayman's claims that Fortescue was fighting government attempts to protect Aboriginal graves are not correct.

"We make every effort to avoid sites of high significance, including burial sites, ethnographic (story sites), engraving and rock art sites. In fact the route for our Solomon rail line was realigned several times to avoid all high significance engraving sites identified in the area," Fortescue Chief Executive Officer Nev Power said.

Fortescue recently asked the Western Australian State Administrative Appeals Tribunal (SAAT) to review some of the Ministerial Conditions set in one of the Section 18 approvals for the Solomon Hub. That review was sought because, in our view, several of the conditions were uncertain and not legally sound.

On the land covered by this approval, there are no Aboriginal Heritage Sites containing human remains. Every Section 18 approval contains a standard condition relating to the protection of human remains and Fortescue willingly abides by that condition.

Fortescue has worked and continues to work closely with Yindjibarndi people including many Yindjibarndi Elders to identify Aboriginal heritage sites on the Solomon project.

Fortescue categorically denies Ms Mayman's allegation that a set of human remains has been disturbed by exploratory drilling. No remains have been disturbed at the Solomon Hub. The remains Ms Mayman refers to are located high on a ledge in a cave and are well protected by an exclusion zone. No exploratory drilling has been conducted in the vicinity.

Both the Federal Court and the Native Title Tribunal have found that Fortescue has negotiated in good faith with the Yindjibarndi people for the past four years. In 2010, the Federal Court dismissed Michael Woodley's legal action against Fortescue's application for mining leases at Solomon and the Western Australian government granted Fortescue the three mining leases required to start mining.

Fortescue has negotiated and reached an agreement with the majority of the Yindjibarndi community.

The National Native Title Tribunal recently rejected Michael Woodley's claims about the significance of the Solomon area in a decision relating to the grant of mining leases for the Solomon Hub.

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