



Kimberley Land Council



Yamatji Marlpa
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

MEDIA RELEASE **May 28, 2012**

Federal Court recognises joint native title rights of the Nyangumarta and Karajarri peoples

On Friday May 25, the Federal Court handed down a native title determination to the Nyangumarta and Karajarri communities across shared country near 80 Mile Beach in Western Australia.

The Nyangumarta/Karajarri joint determination resolves two overlapping claims of the Nyangumarta and Karajarri peoples, two different tribal groups who share traditional laws and cultural connection to the area. Justice North handed down the Federal Court's decision at an on-country determination at Anna Plains Station.

The Kimberley Land Council and the Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation acted on behalf of the Karajarri and Nyangumarta claimants to negotiate native title across 2000 square kilometres of land and sea country across Anna Plains Station, a portion of Mandora Station and 80 Mile Beach, in the East Pilbara and West Kimberley regions of WA.

Kimberley Land Council Executive Board Member and Karajarri Traditional Owner Anthony Watson said the Nyangumarta/Karajarri joint native title determination highlighted how two tribal groups could work together to achieve land rights.

"Today's determination is about co-operation and respect for each other. For these two groups to come together, acknowledge their shared interests in this country and achieve a successful native title consent determination is very powerful," he said.

"Native title provides our people with rights; rights to enjoy our country and make decisions about what happens on our country. We welcome today's determination."

Nyangumarta Traditional Owner Margaret Rose said, "Years ago, this country was shared between the two groups, from way back. Native Title brought conflict because we each had to prove that the land was ours. But through strong connection to country, we were able to show how both groups are connected to the land together. This brings hope that other groups can follow this example and share country in a happy spirit. It's appropriate that this is happening in reconciliation week."

Karajarri Traditional Owner Thomas King said Friday's determination was the final step for his people in securing native title across all their traditional country.

"All our land and sea country is now covered by native title. This shows the commitment and determination of our people to pursue land rights. But native title is about more than land rights, it's about finally being recognised as the traditional owners of our country," he said.

"Our people have a great connection to country. Our law, language and culture are vibrant and alive. We want to leave a lasting legacy for our children and with today's native title determination we can achieve that."

The determination is comprised of mostly non-exclusive native title rights, permitting Traditional Owners to hunt, fish, gather, access and conduct ceremonies on their ancestral lands.

Simon Hawkins, CEO of Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation, congratulated the groups on their achievement, "The Nyangumarta and Karajarri people should be very proud, this is a positive achievement for everyone. This is a historic day, and a cause for celebration."

For further information, high res-images and interviews contact:

Lauren Pike, Community Relations Officer, Kimberley Land Council
P 08 9194 0106 | M 0408 436 987 | lauren.pike@klc.org.au | www.klc.org.au

Amy Cargill, Communications Specialist, Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation
P 08 9268 7014 | M 0458 010 483 | acargill@ymac.org.au | www.ymac.org.au