



Yamatji Marlpa
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Native Title Agreement over Dirk Hartog Island

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The Malgana people, state government and pastoralists will today announce a native title agreement over Dirk Hartog Island which gives Traditional Owners greater involvement in the management of the world heritage area.

The agreement involves converting Dirk Hartog Island, which was a pastoral station, into a national park.

The island, known as Wirruwana in the local Malgana language, is an area of high conservation value and is also the site of the first European landing in Australia. The island is covered by the Malgana native title claim, and a number of Malgana people have lived and worked on the island.

Malgana Traditional Owner, Kelly Oakley, believes preserving the islands high conservation and heritage values are important to all West Australians.

“Wirruwana has always been a place of special significance to our people. By conserving the island’s Aboriginal heritage, biodiversity and historical values we are ensuring that all West Australians can enjoy it’s extraordinary beauty,” she said.

In exchange for it’s consent to the national park project, the Malgana native title claim group have negotiated co-operative management of the terrestrial reserves in the Shark Bay World Heritage area. The group will receive a 5 hectare reserve on the island for the purpose of teaching Malgana culture to future generations.

The Malgana group have also reached an agreement with the former pastoral lease holders, the Wardle family. This agreement provides for employment opportunities and the recognition of traditional ownership in relation to the expansion of tourism operations on the island.

Ms Oakley has high praise for all parties involved in the agreement negotiations.

“The collaborative approach the Malgana native title group, state government and pastoralists took in reaching this agreement is the key to its success. Involving our people in the co-management of reserves in the area and allocating a site on the island where we can practice

law and culture, is recognition of our standing as the Traditional Owners of the Shark Bay area. This recognition and the respect shown is very important to Malgana people.”

Simon Hawkins, CEO of Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (YMAC), legal representatives for the Malgana native title claim said, “We have been proud to represent the Malgana people in these negotiations and extend our congratulations to all parties on reaching a successful agreement.” **ENDS**