



**GOLDFIELDS
LAND & SEA
COUNCIL**

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North West Claims News

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Joint management of former stations

Work is progressing toward securing the involvement of traditional owners in the management of former pastoral leases around Sandstone that are being established as Department of Environment and Conservation (formerly CALM) reserves.

The stations are Black Range, Lake Mason and Kaluwiri (north of Sandstone) and Bulga Downs, Cashmere Downs and Ida Valley to the town's south. The project includes parts of the Mount Forrest area.

During 2005–06 CALM provided the GLSC with funds for field trips and meetings with traditional owners to get their views on possible joint management arrangements. During these trips it was agreed that the first step is to establish interim park committees. Further meetings will hopefully take place this year.



Station field trip members take a break. L-R Anthony Harris, Richard Narrier, Anthony Richardson (CALM) and Kado Muir.

Sandstone land

The signs are good that the Department of Industry and Resources may soon agree to the lifting of mining-related restrictions on a 'lost lands' reserve (Reserve 25272) on the western edge of town. The GLSC has been working hard to have the block, which is currently vested in the Shire for camping purposes, re-instated as an Aboriginal reserve.

In a meeting last year with the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure the GLSC urged her to support the transfer of the reserve to indigenous ownership, in exchange for another block of unallocated Crown land in Sandstone that a local business has applied for use of.

Mining benefits for Koara

The GLSC's Murray Hutchings has been assisting Koara claimants with negotiations for a fair distribution of the proceeds of payments from mining agreements to claimants and their families.

Although the Koara claim is not currently registered the GLSC managed to bring a successful application to the court which ruled that a number of old negotiating rights remain in place and need to be honoured. The

State had argued these old rights were no longer valid.

A new land access agreement with a gold miner is in the final stages of negotiation. Benefits from the agreement will include funding for the administration of Koara affairs, a scholarship fund, a percentage of gross revenues from the mine, and an agreed percentage of the sale price should the mining tenements ever be on-sold.

Lake Miranda

The mineral exploration company Breakaway Resources Ltd has withdrawn its application to disturb registered heritage sites at Lake Miranda, which lies within the Sir Samuel claim.

In February last year (2006) the company conducted a survey of an area south of the lake, in conjunction with traditional owners of the country. The survey identified areas of cultural significance. The company subsequently made an application under the Heritage Act to disturb the ground as part of a drilling program (Section 18 application). Represented by the GLSC, the traditional owners registered their opposition with the State Government's Aboriginal Cultural Materials Committee, after which Breakaway Resources withdrew the application.

CLAIMS UPDATE

Sir Samuel

The GLSC's preparation of connection material for the new Sir Samuel native title claim is expected to be completed by the end of March.

All the reports required for the connection process (from historians, linguists, archaeologists and anthropologists) have been completed and are currently being reviewed. Once this is done, the connection reports will be lodged with the State Government and other major respondents. A preliminary assessment of the reports indicates that connection to country for the traditional owners included in the new claim is strong.

At the last meeting of the Sir Samuel claim group in Leonora in December the GLSC had hoped to finalise the new claim. Unfortunately, some people have resisted that process, a move that might cause a further delay with registration of the new claim.

The next meeting for the new Sir Samuel claim is scheduled for 16th February. It's hoped that the claim can be finalized then, as this is vital for securing the right to negotiate for the traditional owners of that country and for them to be able to continue negotiations with the State Government for a consent determination of native title. A consent determination will secure not only a recognition of

connection to country but also an ongoing right to negotiate with mining companies and others.

Mediation

This year the GLSC will be continuing its efforts to resolve the overlap issues as-

ing to the GLSC for preparation and conduct of the trial of the North West claims until the outcome of the Wongatha trial is known. Faced with this funding problem, the GLSC, with assistance from the National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT), successfully persuaded the State Government and other respondent parties to agree to the mediation program for the North West claims. That was possible because of the commitment expressed by claimants at the land summit to resolve overlaps. The mediation program has increased the chance of avoiding a very expensive and lengthy trial, while also allowing resources to be focussed on achieving a negotiated outcome. Ultimately, the success of the mediation program depends on the claimants coming together to resolve overlaps.

New lawyer for North West

Russell Trott has joined the GLSC's legal team as a Senior Solicitor, replacing Michael Meegan in looking after native title claims in the North West Goldfields.

Russell has extensive native title experience and was most recently working with law firm Mony de Kerloy. Michael has taken a position with the Yamatji Land Council as Principal Legal Officer.



sociated with the North West Cluster of claims, and to achieve mediated outcomes for those claims that do not overlap others. Several of the claims (Wutha, Koara, Mantjintjarra Ngalia, Ngalia Kutjungkatja) were part-heard in the Wongatha proceedings. Others (Sir Samuel 1 and 2, and Tjupan 1 and 2) fall entirely outside the Wongatha claim area.

Meetings with the State Government and other respondents to the claims are scheduled for early this year. It is hoped that these discussions will result in the setting of key goals for the mediation process and the resolution of overlaps.

Last year, the Federal Government's Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC) decided against providing fund-

Mantjintjarra Ngalia

A new Mantjintjarra Ngalia claim was lodged with the Federal Court on 21 December 2006. The new claim will now be subjected to the registration test prescribed by the Native Title Act. The GLSC has just been advised by the National Native Title Tribunal that it hopes to make a decision on whether to register the new claim by the 11th February. The Mantjintjarra Ngalia people are to be congratulated for their efforts in working together to resolve overlaps and getting their new claim lodged. If achieved, registration will likely deliver financial benefits to the people, given the anticipated mining activity in the Mantjintjarra Ngalia claim area.

Help required for indigenous tourism trail

The Shire of Leonora has appealed to traditional land owners to help it with establishing a tourist trail for visitors.

The Northern Trail is being established by shire Project Officer Janice Kendall who outlined the plan to a Sir Samuel claim group meeting late last year where it received a favourable reception.

Janice has asked that people consider sharing their stories by making them available to visitors on story-boards at stopping points along the trail and in brochures.

While no one will get paid for giving their stories, it is hoped that people will understand that improving non-Aboriginal people's understanding of indigenous heritage will bring long-term benefits in areas such as reconciliation and improved access to land for Aboriginal people.

Strict guidelines will apply to the stories: visitors will be required to respect the places referred to and they must not wander from the trail. Important Aboriginal sites won't be advertised to tourists. If you'd like to help please contact Janice at the Leonora Shire on 9037 6944.