



Agreement gives owners a say over their country

A RECENT agreement for the Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park in South Australia has shown how state legislation can work together with native title to ensure traditional owners have a say over their country.

An indigenous land use agreement (ILUA) registered by the National Native Title Tribunal sits alongside an associated co-management agreement which ensures the Adnyamathanha people have an active role in the direction and management of the 128,000ha park.

The native title claimants have an equal role on the eight-member management board appointed to oversee the park – an arrangement made possible by 2004 amendments to South Australian legislation governing national parks.

The ILUA recognises the Adnyamathanha people's traditional rights and interests inside the park and sets out how they can exercise those



rights and interests into the future.

The agreement is the first to cover a national park in South Australia and it is expected to form a blueprint for similar arrangements under the Statewide ILUA strategy. Crucial to the ILUA's registration was an agreement by the traditional owners to excise the park from the remainder of their native title claim.

The Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges include parts of the Northern Flinders Ranges and the national park is a popular destination for campers and outback enthusiasts.

The ILUA was an initiative of the SA Government, supported by the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement (the native title representative body for the State). The Statewide ILUA strategy is co-ordinated by the ILUA negotiation team, part of the Crown Solicitor's Office.

While national parks have been the subject of other agreements around Australia, particularly in the Northern Territory, the South Australian parties have shown how a willingness to work together can produce results everyone can be proud of.

Adnyamathanha people have a pivotal role in the protection and conservation of the park, while continuing their bid for native title recognition in the remainder of their claim area.