

A community experience

NATIVE TITLE AND YOU

Continuing our column from the National Native Title Tribunal. This item has been prepared by National Native Title Tribunal case manager TRISH SINCLAIR-JONES

Elders, families, community leaders and local school students gathered in a shady river bed at Oonkalkada (Udialla Springs) last month to witness the signing of an Indigenous land use agreement (ILUA) near Derby, in the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

The signing marked the culmination of three years of negotiations between the Shire of Derby West Kimberley and the Nyikina and Mangala people, assisted by the Kimberley Land Council.

The students travelled from a special off-campus program of Derby District High School called the Mininjirr Enterprise Class, which is teaching students about culture, enterprise and self-esteem.

National Native Title Tribunal member Dan O'Dea, who facilitated the negotiations for the ILUA, said the process had seen strong relationships develop between the groups.

"In going through this process, the parties have developed a better understanding of each others' rights and interests," he said.

"An ILUA has proven to be a flexible and practical way to get people talking in a constructive and positive way."

The proceedings started with a welcome to country by Nyikina Elder Lucy Marshall. Talking in language with English translation, Lucy welcomed all visitors and shared her knowledge of the country and her personal associations with it.

Frank Belou then spoke of his experience being born on Udialla station and growing up in the West Kimberley.

Afterwards, everyone shared a bush feast with a giant billy boiling on the fire.



Oonkalkada caretaker Neville Poelina, second from left, with his daughter Buna-Tuaty Poelina, and Uncle Peter Clancy, who is holding baby Simon Poelina, at the Oonkalkada ILUA signing.

Oonkalkada caretakers Neville Poelina, a Nyikina native title applicant, and his wife Jo Camilleri were proud to host the event on the property, 120km south-east of Derby.

Kimberley Land Council chairman Tom Birch welcomed the signing of the agreement.

"This ILUA is the first between Indigenous people and a local government authority in the Kimberley, and it marks a significant step towards

much better relationships," he said.

"It shows that native title doesn't have to be a cause for concern. Sensible people all across the Kimberley will know they can work out agreements that are fair to all."

Shire president Cr Elsie Archer said the goodwill between the shire and the native title claimants was the key to the success of the negotiations.

"The agreement with the traditional owners of this region demonstrates the

shire's commitment to a positive and just relationship with all Indigenous people living in the shire," she said.

About 20 students from the Mininjirr Enterprise Class witnessed the ILUA signing.

"It was a really valuable opportunity to expose the young people to that and let them see local government people being supportive of the Nyikina Mangala traditional owners," Ann Poelina, who works with the students, said.



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Inquiries: Mading Davies (02) 8836 9437 or 8836 9444 Email: Mading.davies@ahonsw.gov.au. Information Packages: Joanna Gill (02) 8836 9437 or 8836 9444.

Applications Marked 'Confidential' To: Apply on-line at www.jobs.nsw.gov.au or post to Recruitment Officer, NSW Aboriginal Housing Office, PO Box 95, PARRAMATTA NSW 2150 or fax (02) 9635 3400 or (02) 9635 7895.

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