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**PRESS RELEASE**  
**YINDJIBARNDI ABORIGINAL CORPORATION**  
**Roebourne, WA**  
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## **Corporate Promises Hide Native Title Swindle**

For the Yindjibarndi people country means Ngurra or home, and all the language, law, songs and spiritual belonging that come to us from tens of thousands of years.

Country in the Pilbara south of Roebourne is our home. We have a deep ancestral connection to the land.

And, with that we have a responsibility to make sure any decisions made about that land today, will be beneficial for future generations.

The Yindjibarndi people are the traditional owners of the land on which the Fortescue Metals Group (FMG) wants to build a major iron ore project. We already have a determination of native title in land adjacent to the Solomon Hub Project.

It's a project that the company says has the capacity to produce around 60 million tonnes of iron ore each year. At current prices that's worth more than \$9000 million. It has the potential to be even more if iron ore prices continue to rise.

We acknowledge that development of the area has great potential business, education, training, and housing opportunities for the Yindjibarndi people, but negotiations about that development must be honest and equitable.

We believe so far that has not been the case.

FMG has offered a fixed-price \$4 million a year cash payment and further money tied to an investment in indigenous employment; which we believe is not fair or equitable. This is a tiny offer compared to industry standards.

The deal aims to win control of our country for a song and deny Yindjibarndi the capital to develop our own enterprises and community programs.

FMG Chief Andrew Forrest claims he wants to free Aboriginal communities from a 'hand out' mentality by letting them work at his mine.

But, he fails to understand that Yindjibarndi want to grow their own communities and structures according to our own minds and aspirations, not the ambition and ideology of big mining companies, which have a clear commercial agenda.

True self-development happens when the will and spirit of a people are at the center of it; where respect, equal treatment, and a real chance to develop exists.

Not when a mining magnate bearing promises holds out his hand and tells you to eat out of it.

Other mining companies in their Native Title negotiations offer jobs and training, not as a trade off on land, but as an opportunity open to any willing citizen.

It's dishonest to try and leverage cheap access to our traditional lands on the premise of the opportunity of employment.

The leader of the State Opposition, Eric Ripper, is also concerned about FMG's negotiations with the Yindjibarndi.

He now plans to raise, in Parliament, his concerns that “FMG had inappropriate influence” on the outcome of the meeting by allegedly having people bussed in for a vote.

Everyone is talking about the meeting that was held at Roebourne on March 16. FMG says the Yindjibarndi people voted overwhelmingly to work with the company. We dispute this, the meeting was a sham and anyone who has watched our video can see that for themselves. We are seeking legal advice from our lawyers at Slater & Gordon as to the validity of that meeting and its outcome.

Our corporation is run on democratic lines by a clear majority. It has been acknowledged for its excellence in training, video, production, cultural recording and archiving, broadcasting, publishing and heritage management. We are proud of the work that we do and the community that we represent.

We aim to secure a bright future for our young people.

We need an honest ‘commercial agreement’ with FMG, that acknowledges our standing as the people of this land, and that offers us real choice and participation.

This is the least we can leave to our future generations.

Independence, responsibility, hope, self-development, and the confidence to reach for these aims; the trust needed for partnerships of real respect and equity – these are the roads out of dependency and welfare.

In the light of FMG’s divisive conduct with negotiations - Mr Forrest’s declaration of “love” for the Aboriginal people is a cruel deceitful joke.

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For background & research materials please visit: [www.yindjibarndi.org.au](http://www.yindjibarndi.org.au)

**NB: Stills and video available on request.**