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INDIGENOUS AGREEMENT FOR MINERAL EXPLORATION IN GAWLER RANGES

An Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) has been struck to pave the way for potential minerals exploration in South Australia's remote Gawler Ranges.

Attorney-General Michael Atkinson will travel to the banks of Lake Gairdner today to sign the ILUA on behalf of the **Rann Government**.

Also joining the special signing ceremony at the 'Waltumba' campsite will be representatives of the **Gawler Ranges Native Title Group**, the **South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy (SACOME)** and the **Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement**.

"This is one of 17 Minerals Exploration agreements that the ILUA negotiation team expects to have in place across S.A. by the end of 2009," says Mr Atkinson.

"These agreements set out arrangements for the mining industry to access native title land for exploration while respecting the culture and interests of the traditional owners.

"The Rann Government is setting a national example in its support for the ILUA negotiation process that allows often complicated native title issues to be resolved for the benefit of all.

"Today's signing is yet another illustration of how parties from all sides can come together and reach a workable agreement without the need to go through the courts."

SACOME Chief Executive Mr Phil Sutherland says the pre-negotiated ILUAs represent a significant milestone in providing timely and cost-effective access to land.

"At the same time, it offers long-term benefits to the traditional owners, including the preservation of Aboriginal heritage, access payments and a commitment to use all possible endeavours to develop work, training and educational opportunities around the resources industry," Mr Sutherland says.

The Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement's, Native Title Unit, executive officer, Parry Agius, says the Gawler Ranges ILUA is testament to what can be achieved through negotiation.

"The resources industry has a good understanding now of Aboriginal people and they are willing to work with us and include us in their operations. This agreement produces great outcomes for everyone," says Mr Agius.

Mr Agius congratulated SACOME and the resources industry for their commitment to the ILUA process and ensuring that an appropriate balance of everybody's rights was achieved.

"We can now all share in the wealth of the land," Mr Agius says.

In the event of any discovery leading to a mine, a new ILUA will be negotiated about production.

Background:

The ILUA system is a voluntary process designed to resolve native title issues without the need for expensive and time-consuming litigation.

The agreement is made between native title claimants and other people who have an interest in the land or waters, such as pastoralists, farmers and miners, and provides certainty on how the lands or waters can be used.

ILUAs are negotiated separately from the activities of the National Native Title Tribunal, but completed ILUAs are registered with the Tribunal and are legally binding.

For further comment from the:

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