



WA:Cultural landscape 'obliterated' at mine, court told

AAP Newsfeed

February 17, 2025 Monday 7:32 PM AEST

Copyright 2025 Australian Associated Press Pty. Ltd.



Length: 409 words

Dateline: BRISBANE Feb 17

Body

The Country where **Fortescue** Metals Group has dug up tonnes of iron ore will be returned to Traditional Owners as "large pits in the land", once mining operations have ceased, a court has been told.

The federal court is considering how much compensation Yindjibarndi native title holders could receive from **Fortescue** Metals Group, as closing submissions begin in the long-running legal dispute.

Yindjibarndi Ngurra Aboriginal Corporation are seeking compensation from **Fortescue** over "economic and cultural loss" due to mining operations.

Fortescue began mining at the Solomon hub in the Pilbara in 2013 without agreement from the Aboriginal corporation, instead dealing with a breakaway group.

During his submission, barrister for Yindjibarndi, Vance Hughston told the federal court the devastation to Country had been enormous, as had the wealth generated for **Fortescue** and the state of Western Australia.

"The only party missing out in all of this is the Yindjibarndi people," he said.

"Country, physically and culturally is being destroyed, they're locked out of that Country and they are not receiving a dollar's compensation from the wealth that is being generated from their Country."

Mr Hughston said the Solomon mine hub is in an area of Country that was "effectively pristine", but cultural and physical aspects of the land had been destroyed.

He said mining would continue until at least 2045, and then undergo several years of rehabilitation.

Mr Hughston said rehabilitation works "will never restore the land to its original quality" and the "cultural landscape will remain obliterated".

"What will be returned will be large pits in the land," Mr Hughston said.

"Effectively, we say in our submissions, that native title has really been extinguished ... this Country has been lost to them, they won't be going back to this Country when the miners finally leave." Lawyers for Yindjibarndi argue compensation should take into account the amount the native title holders would have been able to negotiate with

WA:Cultural landscape 'obliterated' at mine, court told

Fortescue, while the miner has said the amount should be calculated without reference to the value of any minerals on or in the ground.

"That's what miners pay us for and how they pay us," Mr Hughston said on Monday.

"They want that access to the land to get the minerals and they will pay a percentage royalty on the minerals that are mined and sold."

Closing submissions are expected to continue on Tuesday.

Load-Date: February 17, 2025

End of Document