



Group seeks Fortescue hub audit by EPA

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Native titleholders over the lands that host **Fortescue's** Solomon iron ore hub want government regulators to investigate the site's environmental and heritage compliance, in the latest iteration of a long-running stoush between the miner and the Yindjibarndi people.

The Yindjibarndi Ngurra Aboriginal Corporation has written to West Australian Environment Minister Reece Whitby asking him to audit the Solomon hub's compliance with the approval conditions granted for the project in April 2011.

Those approvals were granted by WA's Environment Protection Authority before the Yindjibarndi were awarded "exclusive" native title rights over the Solomon region in 2017. Those exclusive rights were further cemented in May 2020, when the High Court refused to hear **Fortescue's** appeal.

Yindjibarndi Ngurra Aboriginal Corporation chief executive Michael Woodley said the conditions applied to the 2011 approvals were "much weaker" than modern approvals, including for nearby mines such as **Fortescue's** Eliwana.

"We want the EPA to report on the adequacy of the implementation conditions of the Solomon iron ore project and their capacity to avoid, minimise, rehabilitate and offset its impacts to our land, water and cultural heritage," said Mr Woodley.

The call for a review comes as the Yindjibarndi continue their pursuit of **Fortescue** for compensation over the mining of iron ore on ancestral lands. The Yindjibarndi are believed to be seeking between \$500 million and \$1 billion as part of their claim.

A **Fortescue** spokesperson said the company was compliant with legislation and took its cultural heritage responsibilities seriously. "**Fortescue** will continue to work closely with our First Nations partners."

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