



Workshop 12 – Integrating global challenges

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Acknowledgement

Here at Curtin, we are learning on Whadjuk Noongar boodja. I would like to acknowledge the Whadjuk Noongar people, and their culture and connection to country.

I offer the class's respects to the Whadjuk Noongar Elders, past present and emerging.

! Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander users of this material are advised there may be images, viewings, stories, photos and written materials of people which could be disturbing and/or of persons who are deceased.

**Indigenous
Australians**

Rio Tinto blasts 46,000-year-old Aboriginal site to expand iron ore mine

**Mining company was given permission to blast Juukan Gorge cave,
which provided a 4,000-year-old genetic link to present-day
traditional owners**

Calla Wahlquist

🐦 @callapilla

Tue 26 May 2020 20.59
AEST



🔗
30k



Only inland site to
show continuous
occupation since
before last ice age

Preserved human hair
from 4 ka directly
links to modern
peoples

Sacred to the Puutu
Kunti Kurrama and
Pinikura people

Destroyed on Sunday
24th May 2020 at the
start of Reconciliation
Week.



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How did this happen?

In 2013 Rio Tinto was **granted consent** by the WA state govt to destroy or damage the site in pursuit of iron ore mining. At the time the site was thought to be 20,000 years old

Archaeological digs to salvage artefacts before destruction showed its increased significance.

The Puutu Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura (PKKP) Aboriginal Corporation **asked** for it to be protected as one of the most sacred sites in the Pilbara.

But heritage laws in WA do not allow permits to undertake works to be revoked. **Rio Tinto was legally entitled to go ahead with the blasting if it wished.** They did so and said:

“Rio Tinto has worked constructively together with the PKKP People on a range of heritage matters and has, **where practicable**, modified its operations to avoid heritage impacts and to protect places of cultural significance to the group,”

Identify the power dynamic in this scenario



1

“Rio Tinto has worked constructively together with the PKKP People on a range of heritage matters and has, where practicable, modified its operations to avoid heritage impacts and to protect places of cultural significance to the group,”

2

3

- 1) Power and control over Aboriginal sacred sites is invested in the (western system) govt and the organisations they delegate power to. **Aboriginal people still do not have control or decision making powers over their own heritage**
- 2) Heritage, culture and spiritual issues are seen as **secondary to economic imperatives** – hence “where practicable”
- 3) These sites are seen by non-Aboriginal authorities and media as having. **Cultural significance only for the communities concerned.** Their national and global importance is ignored. Compare to protection of European pre-historic sites, or outcries / grief over damage to western heritage.

This destruction is a direct consequence of the deliberate colonial devaluing of Aboriginal cultures



Fortescue and Andrew Forrest lose High Court appeal over exclusive native title of WA's Yindjibarndi people

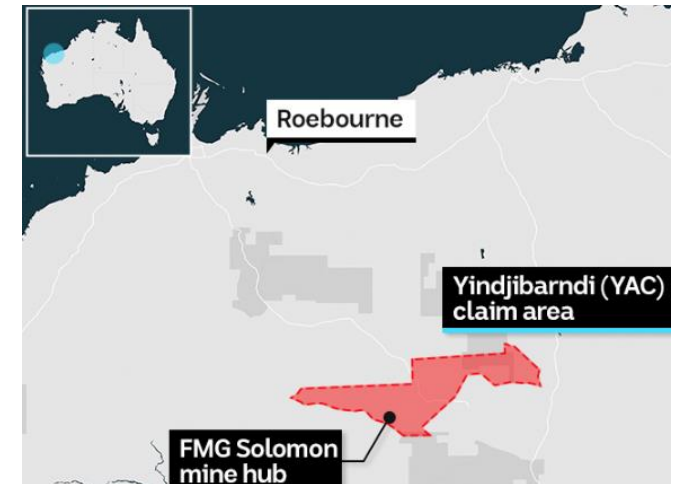
By Indigenous affairs correspondent [Isabella Higgins](#) and the Specialist Reporting Team's [Nick Sas](#)

Posted 4h ago, updated 5m ago

Exclusive Native title applied in 2003. Is usually non-exclusive – it requires holders be consulted on land-use, but does not give them the final say on who accesses their land and for what.

FMG found iron ore in 2005. The YAC asked for 0.5% of the future royalties in exchange for agreement for the mine. FMG refused. In 2017, the Yindjibarndi people were granted exclusive Native Title on the land.

FMG said they would respect non-exclusive native title, but they disputed the right of the Yindjibarndi people to exclusive control of their Country.



<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-29/fortescue-andrew-forrest-native-title-yac-high-court-decision/12299700?fbclid=IwAR2A-nDuJXq7T5sQZunk71n1-dkZaNAWV2h9qhc3MoRkrqxcg6D8IO6Pe1w>



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"[FMGs case against the native title ruling] really boils down to an argument that if the colonisers have come in and flexed their muscles and made it the case that Indigenous people are subservient to them, then that is a basis for taking away their rights." (Greg McIntyre, lawyer specialising in Native Title issues)

"We've had to struggle for everything we have today. And it's just been a dreadful course of action. But I still have a generation of Yindjibarndi people coming up, hopefully for the next 70,000 years, and I need to look after them." (Michael Woodley, Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation)



Activity

In your group identify what industries / careers would you each like to enter after your degree.

Picking two or three of these careers or industries, identify and report back on the slides:

- How do these intersect with Indigenous communities in Australia or globally?
- What issues have arisen with the past interaction of these industries with Indigenous communities, culture, or knowledge? Give a brief outline of a case study (this will require some research)
- What steps could you take as a scientist in these industries that would contribute to positive change? (note these don't have to be big headline things – they may be modest day to day activities).

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1sVt-uVcxY2S08FKYcvTE3mD6nqUQ1krqSodpvxwWETE/edit?usp=sharing>

Reflection

Class discussion / yarning circle (as far as one is possible online!):

Give one main point from your reflection on your experience in this unit
(remember yarning circles centre on listening to all voices, not on judgement – this is a safe space to say what you genuinely think or feel).



Before Next Week



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Submit your final reflection (and any other outstanding assessments!)

Complete eVALUate!

Go outside and look at the small and large beauties of the Whadjuk Noongar boodja around you. Take a breath.

Thank you for making this an excellent semester

THANK YOU

Make tomorrow better.