



*Dear supporter*

16 December 2011

We would like to thank you for donating to the Yindjibarndi Fighting Fund with a promise.

We Yindjibarndi strongly believe that in making an effort, and by working with supporters, a better, more just outcome for our people will finally be supported by Australian society.

We are mindful of not being too worried about winning or losing in this battle with Fortescue Metals Group and the State Government, but understand that this work of trying to do the right thing by, and better the situation of our children, will never be complete.

At the very least the Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation sees its responsibility as putting on the public record, clearly and consistently, what FMG and the State are doing to our community and our country – for the sake of our children who will want to know what happened, of course – but also for Aboriginal people and non-Indigenous Australians who worry about what is happening, want to learn more, and want to do something about it.

It is important to remember the lessons and to not let slip from sight just how FMG, its executives, legal fixers and heritage managers have worked to dispossess the Yindjibarndi people, using all their legal instruments, by the Trojan Horse of their proposed land access agreement, and by cruel political intervention in our community.

Some miners, by their own choice rather than by law, operate under fair principles of respect and equity. FMG, regardless, chooses to carry on its ‘business-is-business’ purpose, free in the knowledge that it will meet with no serious impediment from the laws or political representatives of this country. It is not just that there is something rotten in the house of FMG, but also in the houses of our government, which invariably give FMG a free pass.

Mr Forrest and FMG’s belief is that mining in the Pilbara is the highest good; and that Yindjibarndi salvation lies in the mining program FMG is forcing on us. FMG’s CEO, Mr Nev Power, has said that FMG can do community development better than our community could ever do for itself.

We disagree. We want Yindjibarndi ideas and possibilities and aspirations to be tested under our own steam and with independent means that rightfully flow from our country, and not grown like mushrooms in Mr Forrest’s cupboard, according to his ideas about what is good for us.

We think a lot about the need to encourage a voice for our people and faith in a future where our identity and country will thrive. However it is not hope that will carry us there, but our efforts to keep learning, broadening our friendships and loyalties, and seeking out new ways to live – all at once strengthened and enriched by the knowledge of our traditions and the country we love so much.

We know that we cannot stop mining; and it is not as if we think that some good cannot be got from mining; but we insist that our lives and our country must not be reduced and crushed under the narrow view and low horizon of the mining economy as urged by FMG.

We would like our testimony to throw light on what is happening here under the dark star of Fortescue Metals Group, and know that in time we will see ever better what action might make us stronger and safer. We feel the spirit of our work can never be extinguished by Mr Forrest. We will keep learning and speaking. We won’t be disheartened. It doesn’t take much to be reminded that even the highest castles of big-headed money crack and come down.

Again, our deepest thanks for your support.

On behalf of my dear teacher, Mr NedCheedy, and all Yindjibarndi brave hearts,

Michael Woodley

CEO Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation

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**PS: One of our friends likes sending us the sayings of wise elders from other tribes. Here are a few favourites:**

*“Liberty without learning is always in peril and learning without liberty is always in vain.”*

John F. Kennedy

*“If a nation values anything more than freedom, it will lose its freedom; and the irony of it is that if it is comfort or money that it values more, it will lose that too.”*

Somerset Maugham

*“If ye love wealth greater than liberty, the tranquillity of servitude greater than the animating contest for freedom, go home from us in peace. We seek not your counsel, nor your arms. Crouch down and lick the hand that feeds you; and may posterity forget that ye were our countrymen.”*

Samuel Adams

