

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday June 30, 2011

Gumala Aboriginal Corporation
1 Stadium Road, Tom Price,
Western Australia

www.gumala.com.au



Gumala Aboriginal Corporation (GAC) is pleased to announce today's official opening of the Gumala 0-5 Studio, which is an early childhood learning centre in our remote WA Pilbara community of Wakuthuni. This whole-of-community infrastructure initiative has been made possible thanks to our innovative partnership with The University of Melbourne.

The project has involved the design and construction of an early education centre at Wakuthuni, as well as an early childhood education and care program. Many of the permanent residents living at Wakuthuni, which is located between Tom Price and Paraburdoo, are GAC Members.

This initiative breaks new ground in the systematic development of evidence-based, sustainable education and housing strategies as part of a broad community building exercise.

The project has included the involvement of the Wakuthuni community at all stages and aspects of the research process and the development of project agreements. GAC, the Wakuthuni community and The University of Melbourne have worked closely together to deliver outcomes based on an agreed and shared vision.

It is anticipated that GAC and The University of Melbourne will explore the development of a long term, integrated partnership.

Keith Hall, Chairman, Gumala Aboriginal Corporation:

"This project has been delivered on-time and on-budget. We believe it will result in dramatic improvements in the early educations of our youngsters living at Wakuthuni and our other remote communities.

"During the first five years of the lives of our young children out in these communities, education and care-giving are paramount, and they will now go hand-in-hand thanks to this fantastic project. This will lay the foundation for good outcomes right through their schooling.

"The initiative is going to give our kids a vastly increased chance of obtaining great long-term educational outcomes, and as we all know, a good education is a vital way of opening up pathways to a prosperous future.

"The early childhood centre has been specifically designed for our remote Indigenous community, and includes a care program in the community. Gumala has worked hard with our partner, The University of Melbourne, from planning through to construction."

ABOUT GUMALA

Gumala Aboriginal Corporation (GAC) is the seventh largest Indigenous corporation in Australia and the largest indigenous corporation in the Pilbara region of Western Australia.

Created in 1996 to negotiate the Yandi Land Use Agreement, which was the first major land use agreement to be signed in Australia, GAC is a member-based organisation (current membership : approximately 1200 Traditional Owners).

In 1996, the Nyiyaparli, Banyjima and Innawonga peoples negotiated and signed a historical Yandi Land Use Agreement with Hamersley Iron Pty Ltd (a wholly-owned subsidiary of Rio Tinto). Gumala Aboriginal Corporation was created to represent the collective interests of the Traditional Owners in the negotiations with Hamersley Iron and to develop and sign the Agreement.

The Agreement was the first major land use agreement to be signed in Australia. It enabled Hamersley Iron to proceed with developing the Yandicoogina mine, located on the Hamersley Ranges of the Pilbara region (Banyjima, Innawonga and Nyiyaparli traditional lands). Gumala Aboriginal Corporation's head office in Tom Price is located approximately 120km west of the Yandicoogina mine.

The Agreement ensures that the following benefits will be delivered to the Banyjima, Nyiyaparli and Innawonga people for the life of the mine and beyond:

- Education, training and employment opportunities and initiatives
- Support for pastoral station operations
- Heritage protection work
- In-kind assistance for community development
- Business development
- Community development
- Health and well-being programs

For images of the opening ceremony, contact:

Peter Caruso
Communications Officer
Gumala Aboriginal Corporation
M: 0428 881 847
P: (08) 9361 0522
E: peter.caruso@gumala.com.au