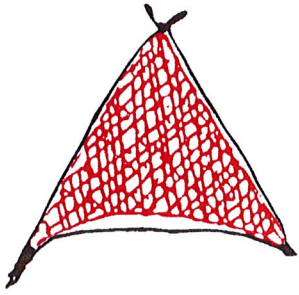


## LAYNHAPUY HOMELANDS ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

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27 May 2021

Dear Hon Minister Lawler,

I am writing on behalf of the Yirrkala Rangers to express our support for the draft Declaration to Prohibit Subsea Mining in the Northern Territory announced by you on 10 May 2021.

Yolngu clans from the Blue Mud Bay region initiated a native title determination over sea country leading to a declaration by the High Court of Australia recognising the ownership of intertidal waters over Aboriginal land. This continues the Yolngu peoples' deep commitment to caring for our sea country.

The Yirrkala Rangers work on behalf of Yolngu to care and manage the Yolngu estates as part of the Laynhapuy Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) as our old people have since time immemorial. Yolngu established the IPA in 2006 after much consultation and under our IPA Stage 2 now covers an area of 16,800km<sup>2</sup>, that includes 5,628km<sup>2</sup> of sea country.

The *Laynhapuy IPA Management Plan (2017-2022)* states very clearly that "land and sea are one" and that "Sea country is an integral part of Yolngu culture and dreaming." The Plan also identifies the expiration of the moratorium on seabed mining as a "significant potential threat to sea country" and a major danger to "our interests in the marine environment and our cultural integrity" and calls for these to be "properly protected in relation to proposed new developments and included in government policy".

Yolngu sea country and sacred sites are irreplaceable and for Yolngu to be healthy our sea country needs to be healthy. Activities that interfere, damage or extract material from the Yolngu sea estate are of great concern because of the potential to impact Yolngu, our culture, connections, country and livelihoods.

We support the Declaration to Prohibit Subsea Mining and call for it to be extended permanently. We also call on the NT Government to ensure that it consults properly and extensively with Traditional Owners about any future proposal to lift the moratorium on seabed mining. To ensure our treasured coasts continue to thrive we also call on the government to continue and increase its support for sea country ranger activities.

Please accept this submission and our support for the draft Declaration to Prohibit SubSea Mining in the Northern Territory.

Regards,

Lirripiya Mununggurr, Yirrkala Ranger Coordinator

*DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE*