

Statement by Nyunggai Warren Mundine - Fairfax Media defamation settlement

26 July 2015

Just over 12 months ago, Fairfax Media published a series of articles about a mining deal at Lake Disappointment, Western Australia, involving the Martu people, the Western Desert Lands Aboriginals Corporation (WDLAC) and Reward Minerals. These articles were published throughout Fairfax's network of newspapers both in print and online. Many of the articles were re-printed by other news and current affairs platforms, including Indigenous media outlets and on social media.

Fairfax made a number of inflammatory allegations against me in those articles; allegations which were untrue, harmful to my reputation and standing, both personally and professionally, and particularly damaging to me as an Aboriginal man who regularly deals with Indigenous people, communities and organisations.

Last year I announced that I would take legal action against Fairfax. I can today confirm that those legal proceedings have been settled and concluded with Fairfax agreeing to apologise to me and to provide a retraction.

Fairfax has acknowledged that I had nothing to do with the Lake Disappointment deal, directly or indirectly. They have published an apology in their print and online publications and have withdrawn all criticisms made of me. They have also agreed to remove the offending articles and allegations from their online publications and not to republish them.

I wish to reiterate that I was never involved in negotiations or discussions between Reward and WDLAC or the Martu people, either directly or behind the scenes, nor received any benefits in connection with those dealings.

Notwithstanding the apology and retraction, the harm done to me both personally and professionally by this episode can never be completely undone. I would have preferred not to have spent a year of my life living under the shadow of these allegations and a good part of that year working to reverse this injustice. However, I am pleased to have been vindicated and I am grateful to my family and my legal team, particularly George Newhouse and his team at Shine Lawyers, for their support and advice.

Further questions should be directed to my solicitor:

George Newhouse

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