



Wednesday October 28, 2015

Media Release

Media Release for the West Australian

Historic agreement reached between traditional owner groups for fish farm in Kimberley Aquaculture Development Zone

The Mayala, Dambimangari and Bardi Jawi communities have formed a unique joint venture with Maxima Opportunity Group and today began the process of securing production licences and leases in the State Government's Kimberley Aquaculture Development Zone.

The Government is soon to open applications for those interested in fish farming in the KADZ with assessment due to begin before the end of 2015.

Aarli Mayi project spokesman John Hutton said the three traditional owner groups have agreed to come together and consolidate their separate interests in the KADZ to form the Aarli Mayi project that provides critical economic mass.

"The Aarli Mayi Aquaculture Project will enable the vision of the Kimberley Saltwater Country people by providing the foundation for an independent commercial future and healthy communities," Mr Hutton said.

"The three Traditional Owner groups say the Aarli Mayi venture proposes to develop a fin fish farm in the Kimberley Aquaculture Development Zone in Cone Bay.

"This unique co-operation between three Traditional Owner Groups is about building a saltwater asset for saltwater people.

"The Aarli Mayi project presents more than just job opportunities for traditional owners. It's about ownership of the country that the asset sits on, and the asset itself.

"And there are roads to be built, accommodation needed for workers, ice works for product, trucks for transport and much more. Many of these associated businesses could be aboriginal owned and operated."

Mayala elder Sandy Isaac said the Mayala people are looking forward to the project to build on their seafaring and marine husbandry skills for future generations.

"The three Traditional Owner groups have shown great interest in aquaculture on our country and we now want to work together to own and develop a significant business for the future of our kids."

Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation Chairman Warren Barunga said his people are very keen on the opportunity.



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“We want something that will continue for years down the track so that younger people can have more opportunity.”

Bardi Project Committee representative Russell Davey said “We welcome education and job opportunities for our people on our saltwater country and fully support an initiative such as this.”

Bardi Elder Irene Davey said “The Aarli Mayi Project is about our children being able to identify an education and career pathway that they can see and touch, that they really want to be involved with.”

Mr Hutton said the traditional owners in this region have been farming saltwater country for thousands of years and believe this project represents an evolution from the cultural practices of traditional fish traps into a modern industry servicing a global market demand for seafood.

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Picture opportunity: can be arranged with a local Traditional Owner representative in Perth