



24 June 2006

EMBARGOED UNTIL 1AM SATURDAY 24 JUNE 2006

**BENDIGO CELEBRATION FOR MILESTONE INDIGENOUS LAND
USE AGREEMENTS**

An important ceremony to celebrate the registration of the Regional Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) for exploration between the Minerals Council of Australia, the Dja Dja Wurrung People, and the Wadi Wadi, Wamba Wamba and Barapa Barapa Peoples of central and north central Victoria was held in Bendigo today.

The two Regional ILUAs provide a simple mechanism for explorers to enter into an agreement with the native title claimants in central and north central Victoria that satisfies licensing requirements and provides tangible benefits to the traditional owners of the land. They provide land access for industry and the opportunity for Indigenous people to translate rights into socio-economic outcomes.

The celebration, including a welcome to country, dancing and a smoking ceremony took place at Lake Weeroona, Bendigo. Representatives of the Dja Dja Wurrung native title claim group; the Wadi Wamba Barapa native title claim group; the native title representative body, Native Title Services Victoria; the Minerals Council of Australia; the Victorian mining industry; the National Native Title Tribunal; and the Victorian Government attended the celebration.

Mr Chris Fraser, Executive Director, MCA Victorian Division, said: "The agreements are important both locally and nationally and demonstrate what can be achieved between people of good will."

Mr Graham Atkinson, Chairperson of both NTSV and of the Dja Dja Wurrung native title group, said: "We congratulate the Minerals Council of Australia for the manner in which they approached these negotiations. The Regional ILUAs simplify the process for all."

Mr Gary Murray, a member of the Wadi Wamba and Barapa peoples said: "History will show that Captain Cook didn't get our consent, but the Minerals Council of Australia did. That shows you what happens when people of good will obtain the free, prior and informed consent of traditional owners acting professionally and in good faith. We wish them well."

Contacts: Chris Fraser (MCA) on 0413 833 229
Chris Marshall (NTSV) on 0412 479 701