



29 Aug 2016

Sydney Morning Herald, Sydney

Author: Sarah Danckert • Section: Business News • Article type : News Item

Classification : Capital City Daily • Audience : 102,512 • Page: 20

Printed Size: 187.00cm<sup>2</sup> • Market: NSW • Country: Australia • ASR: AUD 14,967

Words: 399 • Item ID: 648887712

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# Forrests fail to stop drilling on their WA cattle station

## Uranium exploration

Sarah Danckert

Mining magnate Andrew Forrest has lost another attempt to stop a company run by Perth Glory owner Tony Sage from drilling for uranium on the Forrest family cattle station in Western Australia's Pilbara.

The Supreme Court of Western Australia dismissed an application on Friday by Mr Forrest and his wife Nicola's company Forrest & Forrest for a review of a ministerial decision allowing Cauldron Energy to explore parts of Minderoo Station.

The decision by Justice Paul Tottle comes after nearly four years of legal wrangling between the Forrests and Cauldron Energy, which counts Mr Sage as its executive chairman.

A spokeswoman for Minderoo Station said: "We do support mining as long as it respects environmental management and is fully compliant with the law."

Minderoo Station spans 240,000 hectares near Onslow in the mineral-rich Pilbara region and takes in part of the Ashburton River.

Mr Forrest purchased the property in 2009 but his family has reportedly been associated with the area for more than 100 years. Earlier this year, Mr Forrest lost a separate bid to stop another miner, Yarri Mining, from applying for sand mining tenements within Minderoo Station.

Mr Forrest, chairman and major shareholder in iron ore miner Fortescue Metals Group, objected to Cauldron's application for three mining exploration licences over parts of

Minderoo Station. He objected in part over concerns Cauldron did not have enough money to "undertake exploration in a manner that addressed the risks of polluting Ashburton River and related aquifers".

Mr Forrest launched legal action after the state's mining minister

gave Cauldron the green light to apply for the mining tenements on the Forrests' land in December 2014.

The ministerial decision to allow drilling overturned an earlier call to by WA mining warden Kevin Tavener to block Cauldron from ex-

ploring for mineral deposits on parts of Minderoo Station, after hearing Mr Forrest's protest in December 2013.

Mr Tavener blocked Cauldron over concerns it did not have enough cash at the time of applying for its exploration licences.

The Tavener ruling sent shock waves through WA's mining scene, with junior explorers concerned it set a precedent that explorers needed full funding before applying for tenements.

In the period between Mr Tavener's decision and the minister's decision, Cauldron had won the backing of Chinese investors through an \$11 million share sale agreement.

**'We do support mining as long as it respects environmental management.'**

Minderoo spokeswoman