



Growing Aboriginal Participation



## Foreword by Robert Isaacs

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia's (CME's) publication, highlighting successful Aboriginal education, employment, training and economic development stories in the Western Australian resources sector. As a proud Noongar man and Elder from the Whadjuk – Wardandi Tribe, and the Western Australian of the Year, I aspire to see Aboriginal people in Western Australia thrive economically, culturally and socially.

The relationship between Aboriginal people and the industry has transformed from court rulings and forced collaboration to an environment of genuine, sustainable opportunities and partnerships. This has happened in a relatively short period of time and is something Aboriginal people, Aboriginal businesses and the Western Australian resources sector should be proud of.

That's not to say there haven't been and won't be bumps along the way. In particular, the cyclical nature of the resources industry makes it challenging. However, the signs are good and the medium term future looks positive. Despite the current tough environment in the sector, between 2013 and 2015 Aboriginal employment in the Western Australian resources sector has grown from 4.2 per cent to 5.5 per cent. This may sound like a small increase, but if we look at the real numbers, that's another 1000 Aboriginal people employed in the sector in this time, which is a great result.

“...highlighting successful Aboriginal education, employment, training and economic development stories in the Western Australian resources sector.”

If we look at Aboriginal employment across Western Australia, which sits at 3.1 per cent, the resources sector is way in front. I would like to challenge other industries to take the approach the resources industry has taken in implementing programs and support to ensure Aboriginal people are given the opportunity to develop their careers. CME's 2015-2025 Resources Sector Outlook predicts that, by 2020, 8.2 per cent of the resources sector will be Aboriginal people. This is a fantastic beacon to be heading towards and again something for other industries to aspire to.

In my role at Keystart as the Director for the Social Lending Scheme, I have seen the difference home ownership makes to the ongoing betterment of Aboriginal people. Through employment opportunities in the resources sector, many Aboriginal people have been able to go down the path of home ownership which is a very important step to economic and social independence.

Whilst there has been success in recent times for development opportunities for Aboriginal people, there is still more work to do, but there is a great foundation to build on to ensure more Aboriginal people and Aboriginal businesses can benefit from the opportunities available in the resources sector.

Congratulations to CME for putting together this publication.

**Dr Robert Francis Isaacs**  
**OAM JP Ph.D (Hon.)**  
**2015 Western Australian of the Year**



## Message from the Chief Executive

This publication highlights some outstanding partnerships between the resources sector and Aboriginal communities, and demonstrates industry's commitment to improving employment, training, leadership and other economic opportunities for Aboriginal people in Western Australia.

The efforts of resources companies and Aboriginal communities to build lasting partnerships are supported by strong economic and social drivers, founded on mutual benefit and a genuine partnership approach. Resources operations depend on building and maintaining the trust and confidence of the communities in which they operate. To enable future industry development, including land and resource access, industry acknowledges its continuing social licence to operate depends upon the proper and effective formation of close and productive relationships with Aboriginal communities.

Despite the current industry transition from construction to operations, the Western Australian resources sector performs well compared to other industries in terms of indigenous participation. According to the 2015 CME Diversity Survey, indigenous participation in the sector has increased to 5.5 per cent in 2015 up from 4.2 per cent in 2013. The survey results highlight the positive commitment made by the sector, even in recent challenging times.

With a diversity of operations in all regions of Western Australia, the resources industry recognises the value of working within strong, vibrant communities, whether in regional centres or remote communities. Resources companies are continuing to take a leadership role in partnering with Aboriginal communities neighbouring their operations, to grow Aboriginal employment and economic development throughout Western Australia.

**Reg Howard-Smith**

“With a diversity of operations in all regions of Western Australia, the resources industry recognises the value of working within strong, vibrant communities...”

# CME Aboriginal Working Group Welcome

The Aboriginal Working Group is a forum for CME member company representatives to discuss issues around the education, training and employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the Western Australian resources sector.

In 2013, CME's biennial *Diversity in the Resources Sector Survey* indicated the workforce participation rate of Aboriginal Australians in the Western Australian resources sector was unchanged from 2011 figures of 4.2 per cent. As such, CME convened the Aboriginal Working Group (AWG) to focus greater attention on this issue, and facilitate discussion and strategy development among member companies to promote greater workforce participation of Aboriginal Australians in the Western Australian resources sector.

## Priority Issues

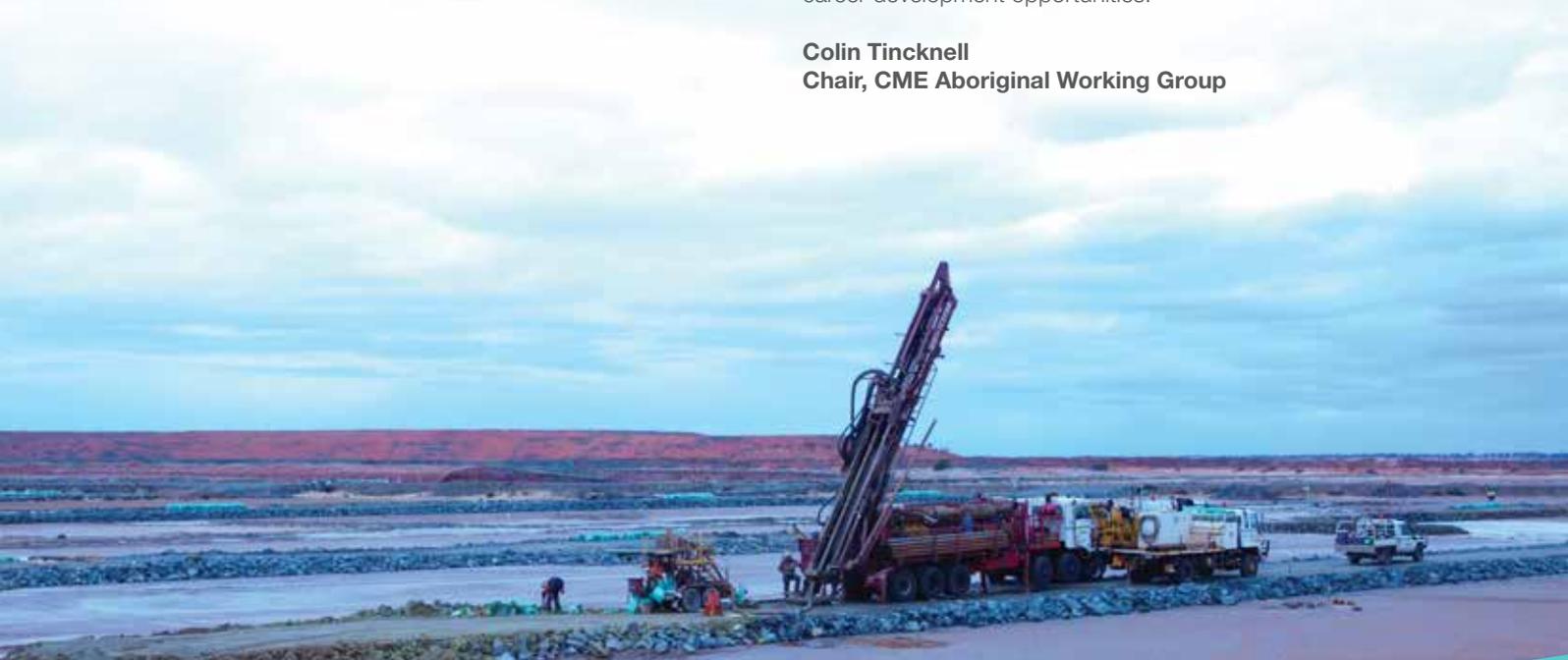
1. Grow the capacity of indigenous employees to develop long term (permanent) careers with opportunities for career progression and adaptation to technological change
2. Retention of indigenous employees
3. Collective impact
4. Industry commitment.

## Objectives

- To provide input into CME on issues relating to the workforce participation of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders;
- To promote the positive role the resources sector plays in the employment and training of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in Western Australia;
- To provide a forum for discussing legislative and policy changes;
- To act as a channel for information from/to CME committees; and
- To share information, current research and best practice pertaining to the attraction, retention and career progression of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in the WA resources sector.

The Aboriginal Working Group will continue to promote the importance of workforce diversity and looks forward to growing the partnership with Aboriginal people in education, training and career development opportunities.

**Colin Tincknell**  
Chair, CME Aboriginal Working Group



# Socio-Economic Benefits of Employing Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders

There are many advantages to employing Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people, including:

- Increased diversity of thought
- Better access to talent
- Increased community engagement.

To harness the benefits of diverse teams, organisations need to be inclusive. Inclusive organisations foster greater altruism, engagement and information-sharing, and experience decreased turnover. There is a rising tide of research and data showing diversity and inclusion is more than just the right thing to do. There is a clear business case to justify the imperative to make significant progress in building diverse workforces.

The resources sector has gone some way to meet this challenge and it is now, in times of challenging commodity prices, to ensure the sector maintains its focus on growing diversity. The resources sector values strong, trusting and mutually respectful relationships with Aboriginal communities. There is an emphasis on building these relationships through employment and training, environmental and cultural awareness, and the preservation of country.

This publication presents 10 individual case studies, each detailing the progress, successes and challenges of a number of organisations within, or in connection with, the Western Australian resources sector. The publication content was drawn from resource sector companies, ATSI businesses, and community partnerships.

ATSI employment has continued to grow in recent years, despite the industry moving from the construction phase into the operational phase. Resources sector companies continue to support and develop new employment and training initiatives for ATSI people, and the case studies in this publication reflect the ongoing commitment of the resources industry to genuine, positive engagement with ATSI communities.

The case studies have been categorised according to four themes:

- Training and Employment;
- Community Partnerships;
- Engagement with Aboriginal-owned Businesses; and
- Industry Collaboration.

The key commonalities that emerge from the case studies in this publication are:

- Successful employment of ATSI people depends on a developmental process, from education and work readiness, to training and employment;
- Sustainable employment of ATSI people requires mentoring, ongoing development and support. Mentoring should occur both within and outside of the workplace, and capacity building within the community via supportive external mentoring is of paramount importance;
- Companies and workplaces should have strong cultural awareness and offer training programs to encourage acceptance within the workplace and aid retention;
- Both companies and ATSI organisations must acknowledge that to be sustainable, employment of local indigenous people must be commercially viable and productive to industry standards;
- The resources sector must support the growing range of initiatives by established, independent, self determining ATSI enterprises;
- Education is an important aspect of successful employment for ATSI people, who should be encouraged and supported to pursue lifelong learning across a range of fields; and
- The resources sector recognises its responsibility in assisting local people to prepare for a future after this intensive phase of resource extraction operations.

Abby-Rose Cox (left) with Shanine Ryan, Woodside Indigenous Employment Senior Advisor



# Training and Employment Programs

## Case Study – Woodside Indigenous Scholarships

In 2014 Woodside initiated a relationship with St Catherine's College in Perth to work together in administering and delivering tertiary and community scholarships to indigenous students residing at the college.

This year, six scholarships and three community cadetships were offered to students studying across a range of disciplines including engineering, commerce, education, law and health. This brings the total number of students now supported by Woodside scholarships to 20 out of 55 currently enrolled students residing and participating in the college's indigenous access program, known as Dandjoo Darbalung.

Recently the program was successful in obtaining additional national funding to complement the many personal development, tutoring, mentoring and cultural connection sessions provided to the students. The mentoring offered by Woodside staff, who have been matched with each of the 20 scholarship holders, allows St Catherine's students to create industry networks that will prove invaluable to their future success.

For Woodside, the tertiary scholarship program is an alternative pipeline into the graduate development program, with the community cadetship based on building capability in the broader community. Woodside's contribution to St Catherine's is one example of working with the community to help build a diverse pool of potential leaders and technical professionals for the future.

The first Woodside community scholarship recipient to graduate says she is excited about deploying her newly acquired skills in her home community of Broome. Abby-Rose Cox, 23, completed her 12-month course at Notre Dame University in June and is about to finish her final 10-week practical work experience – the last element of her graduate teaching diploma. She is undertaking the work experience at St Mary's Secondary College in Broome, and says: "It's fantastic to finish my studies and start putting into practice what I have learnt".

She began her academic journey at the University of Melbourne, where she studied a Bachelor of Arts extended program with 13 other indigenous students from across Australia.

It was during these studies she first came into contact with Woodside after joining the National Indigenous Cadetship program in 2011 as a law cadet, and participating in two work placements at Woodside. The scholarship gave Abby-Rose the drive to successfully complete her degree and enabled her to continue to fulfil her passion for education. She hopes to use her degree to work with other members of her community to help shape the next generation of nurses, doctors, teachers and other trained professionals.



## Case Study – Rio Tinto Aboriginal Business Development

Rio Tinto's Aboriginal business development strategy aims to improve the wellbeing and prosperity of Aboriginal people through actively supporting sustainable growth and participation of Pilbara Aboriginal businesses across its iron ore operations and projects, and within the broader regional economy.

To deliver these outcomes, Rio Tinto focuses on:

- Providing contracting opportunities for Pilbara Aboriginal businesses, where possible, and support throughout the tender process;
- Increasing employee support and understanding of Aboriginal business development and contracting commitments;

- Supporting Aboriginal businesses, not only to work with Rio Tinto, but to expand and diversify into other markets; and
- Working with joint ventures to build capacity, employment and training opportunities.

Recently, Rio Tinto's Cape Lambert port operations has focused on ways to ensure opportunities for Pilbara Aboriginal businesses to continue in a tighter market. The focus has resulted in a number of contracting opportunities for Roebourne-based Aboriginal businesses, including Brida, one of the Pilbara's longest-serving Aboriginal business.

Brida was recently awarded weed control and grounds maintenance at the port. Cape Lambert port operations general manager, Jamie Robinson, says Brida's achievements and commitment to safety and performance were highly regarded by the business. Brida has continued to demonstrate a formidable safety record (270,000 hours LTI free) and quality grounds services, aided by a proud staff of 75 per cent local Aboriginal people. Achieving a qualified and self-managed 100 per cent Aboriginal team onsite is a goal Brida has been working towards for some time and demonstrates how Brida and Rio Tinto are building leadership in the Roebourne community.



Brida and its parent company, Ngarliyarndu Bindirri Aboriginal Corporation (NBAC), are 100 per cent Aboriginal owned and governed, and the executive team is excited about the opportunity to work at Cape Lambert.

NBAC chief executive officer Susan Shirtliff says the proximity to Rio Tinto's Cape Lambert port operations is an excellent opportunity for Pilbara Aboriginal people and the new contract gives locals more confidence in employment opportunities.

"Roebourne will always be nestled alongside Rio Tinto's coastal assets – a phenomenal opportunity for the town. They are determined to keep working in partnership to transform people, in

both Rio Tinto and the community, and to continue progressing opportunities together," Susan says.

Rio Tinto has recently delivered Pilbara Aboriginal business awareness training to Cape Lambert employees, further implemented at its Dampier port operations. The company has also collaborated with Lockforce to deliver safety and qualification training to 14 local Pilbara Aboriginal businesses and a further 20 Pilbara Aboriginal businesses in Tom Price. These ongoing collaborative efforts make a long term positive impact on Pilbara Aboriginal businesses.

## Case Study – BHP Billiton Iron Ore’s Kworp Kooling Mining Traineeship Program



BHP Billiton Iron Ore developed the Kworp Kooling Mining Traineeship Program after identifying a gap in the required skills and experience of indigenous people seeking jobs in the mining industry. The program provides nationally accredited training to help people without mining experience become skilled operators. Kworp Kooling is a Noongar word meaning “good moving” and symbolises indigenous people moving forward in a positive direction through employment in industry.

The program’s success is based on its practical nature. It begins with a two week induction in Perth before moving to site, where trainees from a range of backgrounds receive job-specific training in a safe environment. There, they learn about BHP Billiton Iron Ore’s mining and corporate policies, and develop new skills and knowledge about mining operations. Learning areas include:

- Occupational health and safety;
- Haul truck operations; and
- BHP Billiton values.



Technical training is complemented by capacity building learning modules focused on life skills to empower indigenous trainees to be successful in their roles and achieve positive employment and social outcomes. These modules include:

- Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage;
- Realities of FIFO employment;
- Healthy lifestyles;
- Financial literacy;
- Goal setting; and
- Lateral violence and conflict resolution.

Having completed the program, trainees receive a nationally recognised Certificate II in Surface Extraction.

Trainee Tamara Slater came from a job as a school bus driver to employment as a qualified dump truck operator on a mine site after deciding to pursue a career with BHP Billiton Iron Ore. These traineeships are a key pathway under BHP Billiton's Indigenous Employment Strategy aimed at creating sustainable employment for indigenous people, and have resulted in 163 indigenous trainees being employed with the business since 2012, with a retention rate of 94.3 per cent.

## Case Study – Sinosteel Midwest Corporation’s Wajarri Education and Employment Fund

The relationship between Sinosteel Midwest Corporation (SMC) and the Wajarri Yamatji people began in 2006 when both parties entered into the Weld Range Heritage Agreement, providing funding for training of the Wajarri Yamatji people.

Following a lengthy negotiation period, the Wajarri Yamatji and SMC successfully formed the Weld Range Sustainable Benefits Agreement in January 2015. This was a momentous occasion with many benefits to flow from the agreement to Wajarri Yamatji before mining commences at Weld Range.

Amongst a range of benefits for the Wajarri Yamatji, SMC committed to a Wajarri Education Employment and Training fund to be implemented over the first five years of the Agreement. SMC saw an opportunity to develop innovative programs to provide real opportunities for the Wajarri Yamatji community.

In 2013, SMC recruited a Wajarri Liaison Officer, Marianne Miller. Marianne worked for the first four months gathering information from community organisations and workshopping possible programs that SMC could develop and implement utilising funding from the Wajarri Yamatji Education and Employment and Training Fund. In turn, these programs would assist the Wajarri Yamatji in securing employment.

The overwhelming consensus in the Wajarri Yamatji community was that there was a substantial need for assistance with obtaining driver’s licences. Community members found it challenging to secure employment as they didn’t have a driver’s licence, which for most jobs is a prerequisite to employment.

Community members listed obstacles such as a lack of access to roadworthy vehicles, fuel, and a person who has held a licence for more than four years to assist with learner driver practice. What the Wajarri Yamatji community needed was a simple, easy to access program to support their career development in this area.



After initial consultation stages, the Wajarri Drive Program was developed. SMC agreed to fund 50 log book hours with a qualified Driving Instructor to assist Wajarri Yamatji people in gaining their driver's licences and educate participants in safe driving practices.

Driving schools Keen Brothers and Midwest Drive School provided services to the Wajarri Drive Program. Participants had initially been signed from the Geraldton area for the 2014 trial. By the end of 2014 the SMC Wajarri Drive Program had enabled 18 Wajarri Yamatji participants to gain their licences.

Participant Rebekah Simpson says, "Thank you for all the support you've given me. I cannot state how important this program was in enabling me to pass my driver's test and get my licence. This will definitely help me with education and employment opportunities for the future and I hope Sinosteel Midwest Corporation continue to assist Wajarri youth."

After a successful 2014 program, SMC decided to expand its program to assist not only Wajarri Yamatji from Geraldton but any Wajarri Yamatji person in a regional centre with a driving school.

Additionally, SMC has agreed to offer assistance with Heavy Rigid and Motorcycle licences. In 2015, the Wajarri Yamatji people are set to achieve 10 more driver licences and six Heavy Rigid or Motorcycle licences.

The 2015 Weld Range Sustainable Benefits Agreement aims to see benefits for the Wajarri Yamatji community continue for many years to come.





## Case Study – BIS Industries Partnership with Fairbridge

### Fairbridge Bindjareb Project

Bis Industries is a leading provider of specialised logistical and handling solutions to the mining and resources industry in Australia. Bis Industries has always been committed to indigenous employee development, operating many successful programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island employees.

One particular program is the Fairbridge Bindjareb Project. As the Foundation Industry Partner, Bis Industries collaborated with the indigenous community, Fairbridge Western Australia Inc. (Fairbridge), the Government of Western Australia and the Commonwealth Government of Australia to launch the initiative in 2010, one of the first of its kind in Australia.

The program provides indigenous people currently engaged in the criminal justice system industry training in a supportive environment that leads to guaranteed careers in the mining and related industries, in a way that leads to positive sustainable change in their lives and the lives of their families.

Training was provided through the Bis Industries Skills Development Centre, (a Registered Training Organisation (RTO)) and upon graduation, Bis Industries guaranteed employment to enhance the skills developed through the program.

The project has the following objectives:

- To improve the lives of indigenous Australians through access to accredited training and education that results in real employment outcomes within the mining and related industries;
- To address barriers to participant success through provision of life skills training tailored to individual needs, and access to wrap around support provided by appropriately skilled and qualified mentors; and
- To bring about positive sustainable change in the lives of program participants, their families and their communities through improved economic and social circumstances.

Since inception, the Bis Industries Fairbridge Bindjareb Project has seen 54 prisoners commence the intensive training course, of which 73 per cent of participants achieved full equipment competencies and eligibility for employment at Bis Industries. Almost half the Bindjareb graduates remained with Bis Industries, and only 18 per cent of the project's participants returning to prison within two years of being released. The program also allowed Bis Industries to better evaluate future employees in order to match their skills and improve placement into the workforce to meet the business need.

Bis Industries is incredibly proud to have been the Foundation Partner of such an innovative and rewarding programme, the success of which was based upon the collaborative approach between Fairbridge, the Department of Corrective Services and other industry partners.



The people represented in these images have been employed by Bis Industries and not necessarily involved through the Fairbridge Bindjareb Training Program.

# Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Businesses

## Case Study – Local Contracting Alliance

In 2012, Supply Nation and Woodside hosted an event for a group of Woodside's largest suppliers to explore ways of increasing engagement with indigenous businesses and employment of indigenous people. At that session, a handful of people from the supplier organisations, passionate about this work, came together and activated a partnership which led to dozens of new contracting, employment and development opportunities for Western Australian indigenous businesses. It has also led to many 'buy side' resources sector companies achieving greater proportions of their engagement targets.

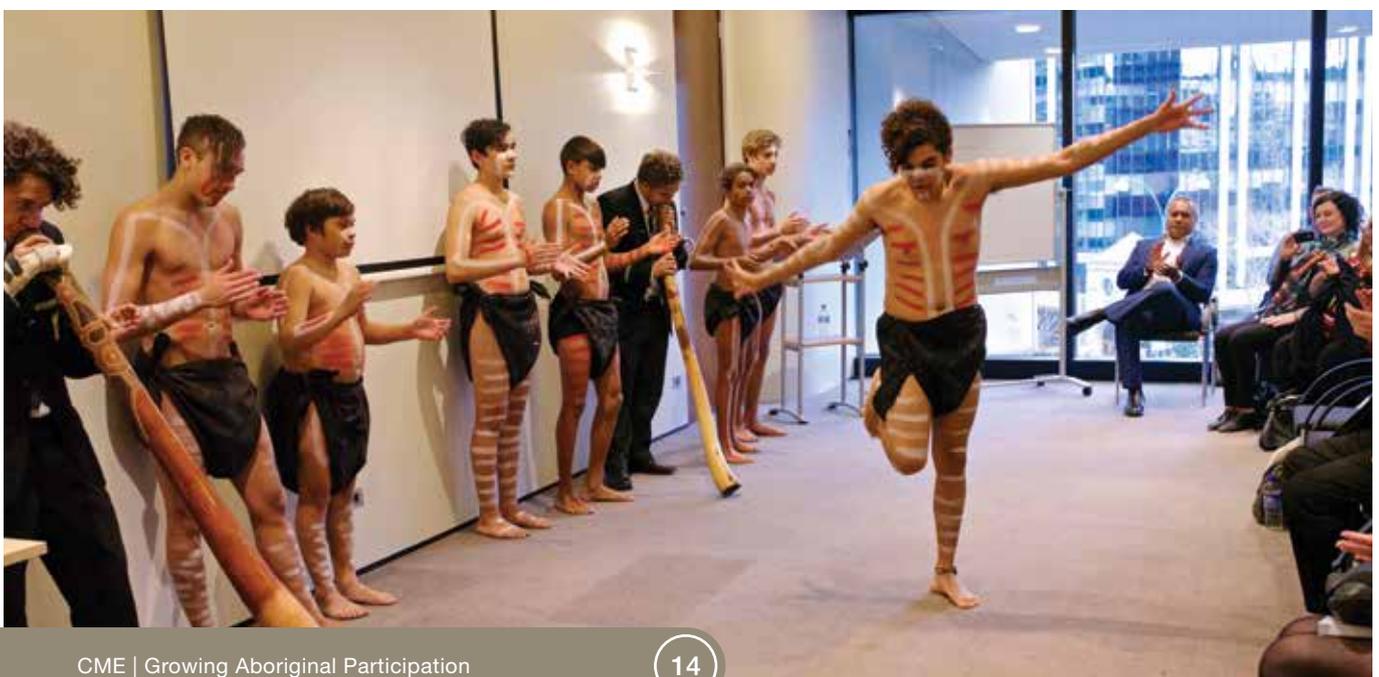
What started that day went on to become the Local Contracting Alliance (LCA). The LCA has since conducted three formal events in Perth and continues to advocate engagement, development and relationships for indigenous businesses with Western

Australian customer organisations. The LCA has brought buyers together with sellers, formally and informally, for conversations that would otherwise be hard to secure. Culturally, the LCA team, events and processes recognise ideas, common ground and workable plans take time to develop.

The traditional one hour meeting and request for proposal (RFP) response is often simply not enough time for a resources sector buyer and an emerging indigenous business to find common ground or the right platform for engagement, workable for all parties. The LCA provides an environment where relationships and knowledge can be built and shared, exploring ways to engage indigenous businesses into sometimes rigid procurement frameworks which can make it challenging to deliver the outcomes the business demands.

Feasibility of solutions, compliance to bidding processes, and myriad other factors must align for any business to win contracts from resources sector buyers. Emerging vendors sometimes need assistance in navigating such frameworks and articulating compelling, workable offers. Development, sharing and time together lead to creative approaches, trust and collaboration to allow a new contracting relationship to be tested and then, hopefully, expanded.

Minerals and energy companies have proven direct and indirect approaches can be highly successful in supporting both established and emerging indigenous businesses. Direct approaches through requests for quotations (RFQ) and tenders in a competitive market have had some success, but where these modes are modified, there appears a broader range of opportunity.



Recent activity at Rio Tinto stands out as one such success story. Rio Tinto engaged indigenous office supplies company Kulbardi to provide goods and services for a defined portion of their requirements: specifically one office floor out of a tower of 30 floors. The engagement was permitted because its scope was controlled, contained and easy to manage. This allowed a low risk entry to a fledgling business whilst Rio Tinto realises the benefits of Kulbardi's world-class service and supply offering. Kulbardi also supplies the Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia's office needs.

The LCA encourages buyers and sellers to overcome real and perceived barriers to trade. Whilst Rio Tinto's 'one-floor-at-a-time' engagement was generated from within their organisation, it serves as a practical example of what can be achieved with a little lateral thinking. The LCA seeks to share such examples

across its network, largely because it's just so 'doable'.

Indirect approaches have also shown strong success. Major project owners such as Chevron and Woodside collaborate with their first tier contractors to engage indigenous enterprises. In delivering into large, often long-term contracts, companies like MMA Offshore are pioneering indigenous business engagement strategies to support the project owners' indigenous participation goals. Project proponents who openly state their engagement targets, and who look to their contractors to participate and report on such activity inject energy into what has until recently, been a somewhat stagnant market for many indigenous businesses.

Another rewarding outcome has been the collaboration between indigenous businesses themselves. These businesses have started selling to each other, sharing and building

knowledge across geographies, and across traditional land owner groups. Likewise, procurement personnel have gained immense value from contact with like-minded peers passionate about delivering outcomes and often trying to do so against the same types of barriers.

LCA is an independent not-for-profit organisation. Many people have proactively contributed to LCA efforts and results, backed by supportive businesses. Rio Tinto, Woodside, Chevron, BHP Billiton, MMA Offshore, Monadelphous, Technip, ISS, Dell, PWCIC and RSM Bird Cameron are just some of these.

New and different outcomes through the LCA are being achieved by fostering a community of people outside of their day-to-day responsibilities, focused solely on enabling contracts by connecting buyers and indigenous sellers.



# Community Partnerships



## Case Study – Newmont

As a global company Newmont operates on the basis of a social licence which produced the Moorditj Booja Community Partnership Agreement between the Gnaala Karla Booja (GKB) Native Title Claimant Group and the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC) on the principles of free, prior and informed consent.

Ratified in 2006, the Agreement acknowledges the GKB claimants have rights to the Boddington exploration and development envelope under Noongar Law. This translates into ensuring the operation not only establishes appropriate management and protection of cultural heritage, but also provides opportunities for the GKB to benefit from the establishment of the mine in Wilman country.

The implementation of the Agreement is overseen by a Relationship Committee that meets quarterly and is comprised of appointed members of the GKB Native Title Claimant Group, SWALSC and Newmont Boddington Gold (NBG).

Commitments contained in the Agreement focus on the areas of employment and training, education support, business opportunities, community development and establishment of a Trust. These commitments have the added benefit of complementing Newmont's drive towards improved diversity and greater local employment within the workforce.

The Agreement has sparked a number of initiatives, including:

- Gnaala Work Ready Program which, in its eighth iteration, provides for a carefully structured program and entry level employment into the Newmont operation;
- Cross Cultural Awareness Training for all Newmont and business partners entering the workforce;
- Kalyagool Kadadjiny Scholarships which provide financial assistance to indigenous students currently studying at Murdoch and Edith Cowan universities; and

- Partnership with the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) to assist local indigenous school students from years 8 to 12 to complete high school and progress into further education, training or employment.

The Community Partnership Agreement has been a learning process for both Newmont and the GKB claimants; however, it has provided clear benefits for both the GKB and direction for the mine. The vision by the company to engage prior to recommencement of the operation paid great dividends for the operation and placed Newmont ahead of the wave associated with the establishment of indigenous land use agreements to support the South West Native Title Settlement.



## Case Study – Northern Star Resources Ranger Partnership

In 2012, Northern Star Resources' Jundee operations partnered with the Wiluna Martu Peoples and Central Desert Native Title Services to develop an environmental compliance arm of existing ranger land management initiatives. The model that emerged consists of up to five indigenous rangers working directly with the Department of Environment and Conservation for one week per month as professional environmental contractors, undertaking core environmental compliance work at the mine. The duties performed by the rangers include biodiversity monitoring, non-endemic flora/fauna management, ground rehabilitation/erosion control, fire regime management, cyanide monitoring, and ecosystem function analysis.

This Aboriginal engagement and employment framework enables multiple outcomes for all partners. For Northern Star Resources, it creates an employment platform where local Martu people can be engaged in a meaningful and strategic way.

The 2014 Muntjiltjarra Wurrugumu Group Employment Survey saw Wiluna Martu rank underground mining as the least preferred form of employment, and ranger land management work as the most preferred. A common view from the Wiluna Martu people prior to the project commencing was while much of their land management activity through rangers was successful on native title or Indigenous Protected Area Lands, it often failed to achieve real traction on mining and pastoral held land.

By employing Aboriginal rangers as professional environmental contractors, the partners are moving beyond labour hire as the main source of entry level local employment. While achieving environmental outcomes, the program also helps build the economic resilience of remote ranger initiatives, leading to further contract work with industry, or direct employment and career development in an environmental field.

Following the success of the Jundee model, Northern Star Resources is developing a similar program with the Gingirana peoples at its Plutonic operation, in partnership with Central Desert Native Title Services, and with support from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

As part of its monitoring and evaluation strategy, the company has partnered with research organisation NintiOne which is using this ranger enterprise model as a case study for its Interplay Project investigating the relationships between health, education, wellbeing and employment. It is hoped the findings will strengthen the case for more Aboriginal people engaging in ranger land management initiatives, and greater levels of support from governments and industry in the context of positioning rangers as a valid remote employment pathway.

## Case Study – Georgiou Partnerships

Since the implementation of the Reconciliation Action Program (RAP) in 2011, Georgiou has striven to provide exposure and opportunity to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through employment pathways and community engagement. Georgiou wanted to identify diverse ways it could better support the vision ‘to walk together as equals,’ and not focus solely on employment.

The solution was to create solid, sustainable and multi-dimensional partnerships that help close the inequality gap, and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Georgiou prides itself on the strength and significance of its partnerships. Finding the right partners was critical in achieving this vision.

Georgiou recognises the importance of building relationships with a range of organisations, and valuing their strengths in servicing the communities they work in. Over the past 12 months, Georgiou entered agreements with three partners who shared the common goal of improving the outlook of the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. These partners are Balga Senior High School, Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, and Rusca Bros.

The Balga Senior High School partnership stems from Georgiou’s desire to play a more active role in the community, and the shared goal of providing increased opportunity for students. This partnership includes the funding of school sports programs, onsite civil construction projects, and mentoring and school based traineeships in both office and site environments. Georgiou aims to be active in the school and help support its many initiatives to provide all students with a greater chance of achieving their life goals.

Yirra Yaakin is Australia’s largest Aboriginal-led theatre company and has been producing and presenting an annual program of quality contemporary Aboriginal theatre since 1993. Georgiou understands the role storytelling plays in educating the community and Yirra Yaakin exists to share Aboriginal stories. As part of this partnership, Georgiou provides funding and support which helps ensure Yirra Yaakin can continue to produce and present world-class theatre that is both entertaining and educational.

Rusca Bros is an indigenous-owned and operated civil, mining and construction company. A memorandum of understanding has been put in place to deliver civil and earthworks construction projects as a joint venture. The common goal is to provide sustainable opportunities in the construction industry for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

Each of these partnerships reinforces Georgiou’s commitment to creating diverse opportunities and building strong, respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the areas where the company works. The aim is to provide varied opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; not just direct employment pathways. These partnerships assist Georgiou to meet its reconciliation vision ‘to walk together as equals’ and provides employees with the opportunity to learn whilst engaging and supporting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

# Industry Collaboration

## Case Study – Rio Tinto and Keogh Bay Training

Between 2000 and 2011, Rio Tinto Iron Ore's (RTIO) Aboriginal workforce grew substantially to over 1000 employees. An effective employee support (mentoring) program had always been part of RTIO's retention strategy but in 2011 RTIO identified the complementary need to develop the skills of its leaders to manage teams including Aboriginal people. Around the same time, Sandy McEwan, a Banjima Traditional Owner and graduate of RTIO's Aboriginal Training and Liaison programs, partnered with Mark Simpson and Matt Wrigley of Keogh Bay to establish Keogh Bay Training and develop the Working with Indigenous Employees (WWIE) program. Rio Tinto supported initial successful trials of the program and the first full roll-out at Paraburdoo where 163 leaders participated.

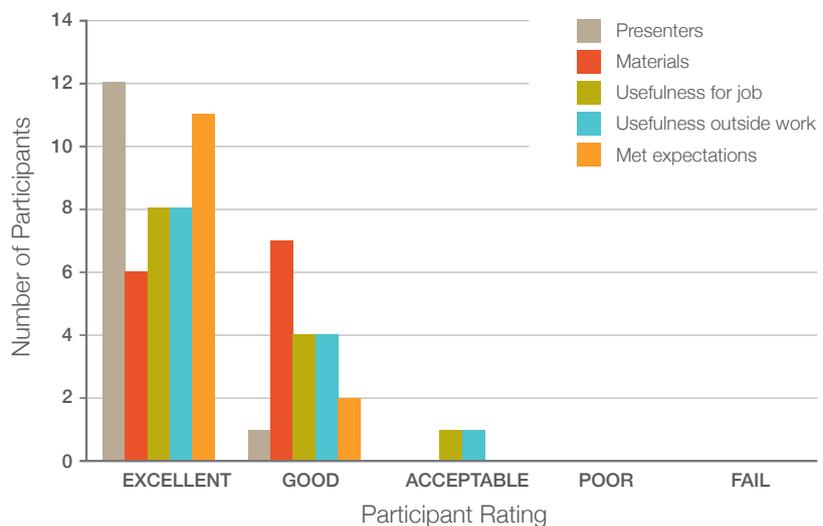
WWIE (branded within RTIO as *Leading Aboriginal People*) offers practical principles and tools to help leaders address issues affecting the retention of Aboriginal employees. For example, the spiritual beliefs of many Aboriginal employees can impact their sense of safety in the workplace. The program explores how leaders can open discussion around this kind of topic and support employees experiencing issues.

The WWIE also looks at miscommunications that can occur across cultures and develops leaders' skills in practical solutions, including the use of plain English. Other topics include managing Aboriginal bereavement obligations, accountability, racism and identity. Fundamentally WWIE aims to give leaders the skills to develop a new conversation with their Aboriginal employees and learn, perhaps for the first time, who they really are.

Leaders' feedback on the program has been outstanding. Most participants rate the program "excellent" on key criteria. In 2016, RTIO plans to conduct a detailed review of how the WWIE has improved teamwork and retention and look for ways to expand the program. Since the initial roll-out in Paraburdoo, the program has expanded across RTIO and many other parts of the Australian mining industry. It has been tailored to other sectors and an open program for all-comers runs each month in Perth. The original facilitation team of Sandy McEwan and Matt Wrigley has grown to include brother and sister combination Sharyn and Brett Derschow, Mark Simpson and Christine Ross. WWIE was featured in the SBS documentary *First Contact* in November 2014.

From the initial support provided by RTIO, WWIE has formed the foundation of a vibrant, Aboriginal-owned training business with an increasing range of specialised programs for organisations aiming to improve their recruitment and retention of Aboriginal people, as well as relationships between Aboriginal people and others in all walks of life.

**Working with Indigenous Employees:  
Open Program 1st Sept 2015**



# Aboriginal Business - Transition and Sustainability

## Case Study – Kirrikin Fashion

Amanda Healy, originally from the Wonnarua Koori people in the Hunter Valley, started her career in the mining industry during late 1980s, working in human resources for BHP Billiton. She stayed for 13 years and then moved on to Rio Tinto's Argyle Diamond mine in WA's East Kimberley region. Amanda also spent time on the Ekati Diamond Mine in Canada but returned to WA in 1998 when she fell pregnant with her son, Max.

In 2003, Amanda decided to start Maxx Engineering to better balance her work and family life. Maxx Engineering had a prolific start with some of the resources industry's biggest companies in the South West and Goldfields. The firm later relocated to Port Hedland to provide fabrications and repairs on mining and processing equipment, as well as key port and rail infrastructure.

The significant expansion of the Western Australian resources sector provided many opportunities for Aboriginal people, including Amanda, to establish businesses and to develop capabilities as business owners and managers. These transferable skills and experiences positioned Amanda to explore other business opportunities.

After continued success over the next 10 years in the engineering space, Amanda sold her business in 2015 and transitioned to the fashion industry from a desire to contribute to the ongoing development of the growing Indigenous business scene.

Her departure from mining has been significant for Amanda, who feels, "that was where she 'grew up,'" but she continues to have a strong association with the Pilbara region. As a prominent Indigenous businesswoman within the global resources industry, Amanda saw her fair share of networking functions. She searched high and low for Indigenous fashions she could wear to corporate events as a way to promote the unique and timeless artworks Aboriginal people produce. To her dismay, she struggled to find the genuine article.

Amanda's lightbulb moment came when she was asked to do some presentations for Reconciliation Australia. She was addressing the oil and gas industry and wanted to wear a scarf with traditional art to showcase the importance of acknowledging Indigenous culture. Much to her frustration, all she could find were non-authentic nylon goods

made overseas, with imitation artworks by non-Aboriginal people. Alongside her business partner, Perth art curator Karen Djordjevic, the two businesswomen decided to launch Kirrikin, a luxury garment venture featuring authentic Indigenous artworks and prints on silk and cashmere.

'Kirrikin' is a Wonnarua word that roughly translates to 'Sunday best clothes.' It is used with the knowledge of the Wonnarua elders. Importantly, a percentage of each Kirrikin item sold is directly returned to the artist involved in the design, as ultimately, Amanda wanted her business to contribute to the ongoing economic and social development of artists and the remote communities in which they live.

With the transition of the resources industry from construction to operations and maintenance, Aboriginal businesses must also be in a position to be flexible and forward thinking. The success of Kirrikin has shown how the development of the Aboriginal business sector in the resources industry can impart the necessary skills and experiences to lead to opportunities and sustainable careers in managing businesses in other industries.





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