

Working in Partnership  
*The Mining Industry and Indigenous Communities*

# Murdi Paaki Regional Workshop Report

Prepared for

**Department of Industry Tourism and Resources**

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Canberra, ACT 2601

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Grant Sarra Consultancy Services  
ABN 19492 613 302

Prepared by Grant Sarra  
Grant Sarra Consultancy Services  
Lot 95 Patricia Street  
KARALEE QLD 4306

**Telephone:** 07 3294 6096  
**Mobile:** 0417 502 049  
**Email:** [gsarra@bigpond.net.au](mailto:gsarra@bigpond.net.au)

Angela Kreutz  
ASK Consultancy  
Ulric Street  
INDOOROOPILLY QLD 4000

**Mobile:** 0414 891 968

Edited by Dr Sally Sheldon  
Projects Coordinator  
Dugalunji Aboriginal Corporation  
PO Box 1538  
MT ISA QLD 4825

**Telephone:** 07 47482060/4749 5003  
**Fax:** 07 47482061/4749 5653  
**Mobile:** 0427 860 499  
**Email:** [myuma@bigpond.com](mailto:myuma@bigpond.com)

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Working in Partnership – *the Mining Industry and Indigenous Communities Program* was launched by the Australian Government on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2001. The program is administered by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (DITR) and primarily seeks to promote long-term partnerships between Indigenous communities and the exploration and mining industry.

In addition to promoting long term partnerships, the program aims to support and encourage the ongoing cultural change that continues to occur between the exploration and mining industry and Indigenous communities throughout Australia. In so doing, it seeks to build on relevant research which has been conducted in relation to sustainable mining practices.<sup>1</sup>

Since the program's inception, the Department has developed, and continually updates an information kit which:

- presents selected case studies of successful partnership relationships between mining companies and Indigenous communities throughout Australia, showing a variety of approaches and outcomes;
- reflects the diverse experiences of some of the people involved in the partnership process;
- illustrates the achievements of particular companies and Indigenous communities; and
- provides information on the relevant government and industry programs that may be used to provide support for partnership initiatives.

The information kit can be accessed by contacting the Department directly or through its Indigenous Partnerships Program website, at: <http://www.industry.gov.au/indigenouspartnerships>.

The program has involved the conduct of a series of regionally based workshops in key areas of interest throughout Australia. Previous workshops have been conducted in:

- 2002 - Alice Springs, NT
- 2003 - Kalgoorlie and Port Hedland, WA
- 2004 - Rockhampton and Cloncurry, QLD
- 2005 - Muswellbrook NSW and Townsville, QLD
- 2006 - Wollongong and Orange, NSW

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Indigenous Support Services and ACIL Consulting, *Agreements between Mining Companies and Indigenous Communities: A Report to the Australian Minerals and Energy Environment Foundation*, 2001 (available at <http://www.naturalresources.org/minerals/CD/docs/mmsd/australia/finalreport/Indigenous.pdf>); The Allen Consulting Group, *Indigenous Communities & Australian Business: From Little Things, Big Things Grow*, 2001 (available online at <http://www.bca.com.au/content.asp?newsid=87347>); D Brereton, "The Role of Self-Regulation in Improving Corporate Social Performance: The Case of the Mining Industry", Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining, University of Queensland, 2002 (available online at [http://www.csr.uq.edu.au/docs/brereton\\_2002\\_1.pdf](http://www.csr.uq.edu.au/docs/brereton_2002_1.pdf)); L Tedesco *et al*, *Indigenous People in Mining*, Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics, 2003.

All workshops have served to bring together stakeholders in major regional centres of mining activity, and to facilitate the discussion of local issues and progress towards achieving local outcomes. The Murdi Paaki workshop, held at the Cobar Memorial Services Club on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> and Friday 6<sup>h</sup> October 2006, represents the tenth in the series of workshops conducted throughout Australia.

## **1.1 Murdi Paaki Workshop**

Following the successful delivery of an earlier workshop held in Orange, and in recognition of the geographical size of the western NSW region, DITR re-commissioned Grant Sarra Consultancy Services to research, plan and facilitate an additional workshop for the Far West region of the State. It was agreed that this particular workshop could be aligned to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) - Murdi Paaki Trial<sup>2</sup> regional priorities and involve Indigenous representatives of the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly, key Government agencies and relevant mining companies in the region.

The Grant Sarra Consultancy Service's workshop planning and facilitation team consisted of:

Grant Sarra - Project Director and Lead Facilitator, Grant Sarra Consultancy Services;

Angela Kreutz - Project Researcher and Co-Facilitator, ASK Consultancy

Dr Sally Sheldon - Researcher and Editor, Dugalunji Aboriginal Corporation

## **1.2 Purpose of this Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide:

- An overview of the Murdi Paaki regional workshop, including: theme, aims, methodology and structure;
- Details of workshop presentations and discussions;
- Details of agreed priorities and actions from the workshop; and
- Suggestions to enhance future partnership initiatives in the region.

The report recognises the diverse situations and circumstances that confront exploration and mining companies and Indigenous Traditional Owner groups throughout Australia. For this reason, the suggestions provided in this report are not to be taken as necessarily applicable to other regions throughout Australia.

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to Australian Government (2006) Murdi Paaki Information Booklet-as part of the COAG Whole of Government Indigenous Trials-represented by the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly; Australian Government through the Department of Education, Science and Training: and State of NSW through Department of Education and Training.

## **2. WORKSHOP PLANNING**

### **2.1 Theme, Aims and Expected Outcomes**

The central theme of the Murdi Paaki workshop was the desirability of mining companies, Aboriginal Traditional Owner groups, Murdi Paaki Community Working Party representatives and relevant government agency and service providers linked to the Murdi Paaki COAG Trial site, exploring possibilities for partnership building, in a context in which they:

- recognise that they have much to learn from each other; and
- acknowledge the potential for mutual benefit that exists in establishing sound working relationships and open and honest dialogue.

The workshop's central aim was to provide a neutral regional forum, in which all stakeholder groups could meet to discuss regional problems and issues and consider regional solutions relevant to the support of partnerships. The workshop was designed to assist all stakeholders to forge for themselves initiatives which they could develop and direct at a local level, wherever possible making more effective use of existing resources. In addition to the standard aims used for each session in previous workshops held in the series, the Murdi Paaki workshop aimed to:

- continue to promote positive interactions and enhance relationships between the various Traditional Owner groups and organisations, exploration and mining companies and key government agency and service providers;
- provide industry with a greater awareness and understanding of the rationale, objectives and priorities incorporated under the auspices of the Murdi Paaki COAG Trial site;
- provide industry with a greater awareness and understanding of the partnership arrangements between government agencies and the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly and Community Working Parties - including an outline of their respective issues, challenges, roles, functions and aspirations;
- enhance understanding of and sensitivity toward the problems and issues that continue to impact upon Indigenous Australians, particularly in relation to exploration and mining in the region;
- provide the Murdi Paaki Indigenous community representatives and government agency and service providers with an overview of the minerals industry including an outline of each stage in the mining process, industry project requirements, potential employment and contracting opportunities available and the skills required to compete for these opportunities on merit;
- provide the opportunity for all stakeholder groups to discuss partnership opportunities and processes in the region that could enhance mutual outcomes for all stakeholders.

Participants were encouraged to move beyond short-term problems to focus on the long-term mutual benefits that could be generated through an effective partnership process. The intention was to direct stakeholders' efforts beyond debate towards a constructive dialogue addressing the six main themes of the Working in Partnership program:

- Employment
- Education and Training
- Business Opportunities
- Cultural Awareness
- Capacity Building
- Economic Empowerment.

## 2.2 Methodology

In keeping with the workshop aims and the approach taken at earlier workshops in the program series, the Murdi Paaki workshop was designed to maximise the time available for participant discussion of key issues. The workshop agenda was organised into the following sessions:



Sessions were ordered to allow discussion to develop as naturally as possible, while being progressively channelled in a constructive direction to focus on the achievement of the workshop aims. Strict adherence to the agenda was never an imperative and a degree of flexibility was built into the two-day program.

### **2.3 Workshop Participation**

A total of 50 people attended the Workshop. A complete list of workshop participants is provided in **Appendix A** to this Report.



## 3. WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

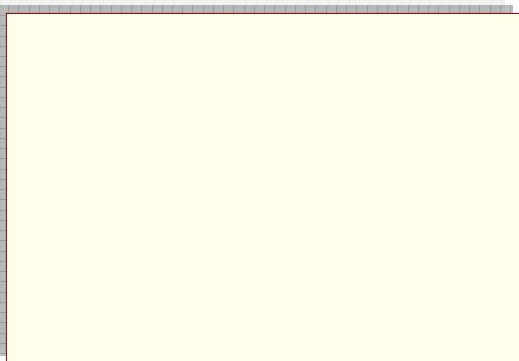
### 3.1 Introductions and Scene Setting

The workshop opened in a spirit of goodwill, with Grant Sarra, the lead facilitator, acknowledging and paying respect to the traditional custodians of the land – both past and present.

In accordance with the traditional law and custom of Indigenous people, Grant advised that this was not his place to speak on local Indigenous cultural business as this was the sole responsibility of the elders among the traditional custodians of this region. Grant explained that the purpose of workshop was not to identify and solve all problems confronting stakeholders within the two days available, but rather to provide an opportunity to identify and discuss issues of concern, and to consider future actions that could be taken to address any problems through a more productive partnership process.

Ms Elaine Ohlsen on behalf of the Ngiyampaa people officially welcomed participants to the workshop. Elaine explained that her family was able to trace their active cultural and spiritual connections to the land in the Cobar region as far back as the year 1700. She indicated that the time was right for the Working in Partnership workshop, as she felt there were many issues that need to be addressed.

Elaine explained that, from her perspective, mining companies did not appear to understand the fundamentals of Aboriginal culture. She offered as an example the fact that she was generally the only person whom industry people approach on Indigenous matters of importance in the region. This type of



approach often places her in the difficult position of having to make decisions on behalf of all her people, when in fact this decision making process should include several other important members of her group. Elaine also suggested that her people should be afforded the opportunity, when conducting cultural heritage surveys for exploration or mining projects, to select and use appropriately qualified Archaeologists to ensure that their cultural heritage could be

correctly identified, preserved and managed into the future. Elaine also expressed concern that Indigenous people were not being placed into mining jobs owing to a lack of appropriate formal qualifications, and advised that if partnerships were going to work in the region, all people need to share responsibility.

Following Elaine's welcome, Grant outlined the aims, objectives and expected outcomes of the workshop and encouraged all attendees to try to put themselves into the shoes of other stakeholders to gain a better understanding of their problems and issues and to better appreciate their aspirations and priorities.

### 3.1.1 Working in Partnership Program Overview

David Abbott, Coordinator of the Working in Partnership Program in DITR, offered a short explanation of the nature, purpose and history of the Program. He explained the Program's primary objective was to foster improved relationships and to promote the need for effective long term partnerships between Industry and Indigenous people to become the "core business" of individual companies. Key program elements include:

- The development of the Department's Working in Partnership – Mining and Indigenous Communities case study Information kit and Website;
- The delivery of a series of regional workshops in key mining areas throughout Australia;
- The voluntary formation, by workshop participants, of regional committees to take forward the issues raised at workshops (in particular, to continue networking, dialogue, information sharing, etc); and
- The support of additional projects, such as targeted training in corporate governance and capacity-building, that delivers benefits commensurate with the program objectives.

David identified the conduct of regional workshops, such as the Murdi Paaki Workshop, as the central feature of the Working in Partnership Program. Explaining the rationale and objectives of the workshops, David made the following points:

- All Traditional Owner groups and companies operating, or with interests in the designated catchment areas, are invited to attend along with key Government agencies and community service providers;
- Workshops are designed to be interactive, delivered in a neutral environment and outside any immediate negotiation or confrontational settings;
- Workshops benefit from open and honest information-sharing and awareness-raising for all stakeholder groups, particularly in relation to cultural issues, industry project requirements and relevant government programs;
- Workshops allow for the identification of problems and issues and, in some cases, allow for targets for future action also to be identified;
- Experience at past regional workshops in the series has shown that new relationships are formed and existing ones enhanced through workshop participation.

***“If regional partnership committees are established as a result of these workshops – they need a driver at the local level to coordinate future partnership activities...”***

David Abbott  
Department of Industry, Tourism & Resources

David explained that two regional committees formed in Queensland in 2004, as an outcome of the regional workshops held in Rockhampton and Cloncurry, continue to meet on a quarterly basis with limited Departmental support. Both committees continue to develop, use fluid membership structures, and are open to all interested stakeholders.

However, David advised that, as in these other regions, the Department was willing to conduct follow-up meetings in the Murdi Paaki region if this was considered desirable. He stressed that in addition to the Department's ongoing commitment and support, all regional committees formed as the outcome of a regional workshop need a driver at the local level to coordinate future partnership activities. He concluded his presentation by showing a video featuring the Kalgoorlie regional workshop held in 2003 and by encouraging all stakeholders to maintain a positive focus.

### **3.1.2 Working in Partnership: A NSW Industry Perspective**

Simon Andrews, Manager Education, NSW Minerals Council, presented a brief overview of the NSW minerals industry.

Simon advised that the role of the NSW Minerals Council (NSWMC) was to:

- Represent the State's minerals industry to provide a united voice;
- Promote a dynamic, efficient and sustainable mining industry in NSW;
- Work closely with government, community and other industry groups and stakeholders; and
- Strive for innovative ways of improving industry and developing good relationships.

Simon explained that while the minerals industry is primarily focused upon securing appropriate access to resources and land for exploration and mining, it, like other industries, must comply with relevant legislation to conduct its business effectively.

For this reason, industry is committed to best practice in the areas of occupational health and safety, environmental preservation, and the development of strong relationships with communities.



Simon explained that industry attempts to build relationships equally with local communities on either an organised or voluntary basis. Many companies throughout NSW had established successful collaborative partnership arrangements with community groups, with some of these developed voluntarily, while others had been driven by factors such as external planning and approval processes. He felt that industry should adopt a partnership approach with local communities in all areas in which it operates.

Simon highlighted access to land, exploration, skills shortages and meeting the current demands of the Chinese and Indian economies as being the major challenges currently facing the industry. With respect to skills shortages, he advised that education and training was a major focus, requiring local community input and support in order to develop appropriate solutions. For the benefit of all workshop participants, Simon provided a summary of the mining workforce and current industry activities in the Broken Hill and Cobar districts. He noted that the regional industry supports a total of approximately 1,700 fulltime employees plus contractors. With a "multiplier effect" of four non-industry jobs being created for every industry position, an estimated 6,800 further jobs are supported by the industry in local communities. The workforce is today constituted by both professional and non professional employees. With the advent of greater flexibility in living arrangements, this workforce is on average younger, and shows a greater participation by women, than in previous decades.

By way of illustration, Simon briefly profiled the following five major mining operations within the region:

**Broken Hill Mine – Perilya**

- Zinc, Lead and Silver
- Workforce of 500 fulltime employees plus 200 contractors
- Estimated mine life 10 – 12 years

**Pooncarie Mine (Ginkgo) - Bemax**

- Ilmenite, Rutile and Zircon
- Workforce of 53 fulltime employees plus 46 contractors (mine)
- Workforce of 47 fulltime employees plus 22 contractors (processing plant)
- Estimated mine life currently 15 years (could be 40 – 50)
- Exploration continuing

**CSA Mine – Cobar Management PL**

- Copper and Silver
- Workforce of 280 fulltime employees plus 50 contractors
- Estimated mine life 15 years

**Endeavor Mine – CBH Resources**

- Zinc, Lead and Silver
- Workforce of 235 fulltime employees plus 75 contractors
- Estimated mine life 10 years

### Peak Gold Mine

- Gold, Copper and Silver
- Workforce of 140 fulltime employees plus 50 contractors
- Estimated mine life 6 – 8 years.

Simon informed participants of the NSWMC's Community Engagement Handbook: Towards Stronger Community Relationships (which can be ordered via: [www.nswmin.com.au](http://www.nswmin.com.au)) and other useful information and programs that are publicly available, including:

- EnviroSmart Grants and Awards Program
- Pilot Mining Education Bursary Scheme in Central West
- Individual company training initiatives
- Careers CD 'Prospects – thrills and skills in the minerals industry'
- Partnership programs with Indigenous groups.

***"...industry should adopt a partnership approach with local communities in all areas in which it operates."***

Simon Andrews  
Manager Education  
NSW Minerals Council

Simon explained that the NSWMC supported the Working in Partnership process and was actively involved in the development and lead-up to programs held in the Hunter Valley, Illawarra and Central West throughout NSW - all of which had resulted in positive dialogue.

He drew particular attention to the Hunter Valley workshop, which had resulted in the local Indigenous community formalising their strategic goals and priorities for cultural heritage and environmental protection, cross-cultural communication, capacity building and economic

development, and the industry responding to this initiative through a commitment to support a partnership approach in the Hunter Valley region.

Simon concluded his presentation by acknowledging the positive efforts and contributions of Georgina Beattie, Deputy Director Environment & Community NSWMC, CBH Resources, Perilya, Bemax, Cobar Management PL, and Peak Gold Mines toward the Working in Partnership process.

### 3.1.3 Mining and Indigenous Communities in Australia

To complement the previous presentations and to place the Murdi Paaki Workshop into a specific local community perspective, Grant Sarra presented a brief overview of mining and Indigenous community activities and relationships throughout Australia.

Over the past two decades, there have been significant and positive changes in the process of building effective relationships and partnerships between industry and Indigenous Traditional Owner groups throughout Australia. In most instances, mining companies now acknowledge the significance and importance of working closely and building effective relationships with Traditional Owner groups in order to secure their “social license to operate”<sup>3</sup>.

Grant explained that while the general relationship building and partnership process was very positive, there were still instances where it could be improved. He stressed that where individual stakeholder groups involved in this process remain reluctant to establish open and honest partnership dialogue, they will continue to remain on an unnecessarily steep learning curve, and will therefore struggle to understand their respective problems, issues, needs and aspirations. In instances where this occurs, there continues to be needless confusion and conflict, which has the potential to seriously damage any positive relationship or partnership that could otherwise be established.

To set the scene and offer a focus for each stakeholder group in the Murdi Paaki region, Grant outlined the broad aspirations and needs of each stakeholder group, as these had emerged from earlier workshops in the series:

- Mining and exploration companies want expedient access to land for the purpose of their activities;
- Governments want industry to explore and mine in the interests of national economic prosperity;
- Government agencies want to achieve tangible Social Justice outcomes – access, equity and participation for Aboriginal people; and
- Indigenous people, wherever possible, want to identify and preserve their ancient cultural heritage and enjoy the same prospects for employment, economic prosperity and quality of life as other community members.

In relation to these points, Grant explained that the Murdi Paaki region was very similar to other regions throughout Australia and, therefore, the success of any partnership would depend on each stakeholder group’s desire and willingness to show leadership by coming together to consider and discuss their respective problems, issues, needs and aspirations in an open and honest manner.

Because solutions to difficult problems were unlikely to be devised within the next two days, Grant suggested that the workshop be used to develop mutual awareness and understanding, and as the foundation and framework for generating a genuine commitment among each group to progress issues by working in partnership.

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<sup>3</sup> Refer to *Enduring Value: The Australian Minerals Industry Framework for Sustainable Development*, Minerals Council of Australia, 2005.

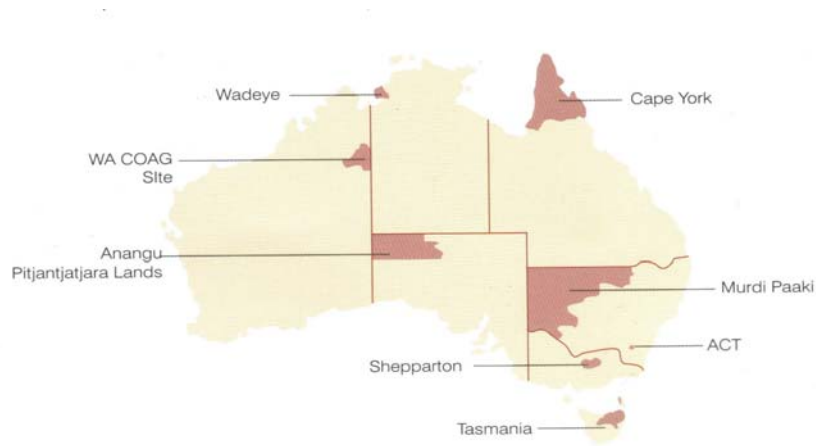
### 3.1.4 Murdi Paaki COAG Trial

A joint presentation was delivered by Jennifer Ledger, Department of Education, Science & Training (DEST) and Sam Jeffries, Chairperson of Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly, to explain the background, functions, governance structure and current activities relating to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Murdi Paaki Trial.

In 2002, COAG<sup>4</sup> agreed to improve their approach to the delivery of government programs and services to Indigenous communities throughout Australia with the view to improving outcomes. It was agreed to trial eight sites throughout Australia, with Murdi Paaki being the trial site chosen in NSW.

The COAG initiative involves governments working together with Indigenous communities to achieve better results for people on the ground through a more effective use of government expenditure.

The eight trial sites around Australia are shown on the map below:



With respect to the Murdi Paaki trial site, Jennifer advised that the government was fortunate to find that community governance arrangements, in the form of the Regional Assembly, were already well established, providing the opportunity for government and the community to come together from the outset.

From a government perspective, the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) for the Australian Government and the Department of Education & Training (DET) for the NSW Government were the lead agencies initially responsible for the Murdi Paaki trial site. More recently, they had been joined by the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) and the Commonwealth Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC). Jennifer explained that action teams, consisting of key members from each of the lead agencies, now meet on a regular basis to spearhead work on the ground.

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<sup>4</sup> Refer to Australian Government (2006) Murdi Paaki Information Booklet-as part of the COAG Whole of Government Indigenous Trials-represented by the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly; Australian Government through the Department of Education, Science and training: and State of NSW through Department of Education and Training.

Since 2003, the Murdi Paaki trial has been working to improve the effectiveness of partnership arrangements across Commonwealth and State jurisdictions. An overarching Shared Responsibility Agreement between the Commonwealth, the NSW Government and the Murdi Paaki Regional Council was signed in August 2003 and is currently being reviewed to extend the co-operative arrangements between all parties.

***“...in all of these activities  
the community must be  
engaged to ensure  
success...”***

Jennifer Ledger  
Department of Education, Science & Training

The Regional Assembly, chaired by Sam Jeffries, consists of a number of Community Working Party (CWP) Chairs who meet on a regular basis with key government agencies to discuss and advise on community-based needs, priorities and outcomes.

Each CWP has developed Community Action Plans (CAP) to provide government with a picture of community needs. These now allow for appropriate strategies to be developed to address specific needs in a collaborative manner.

A Regional Employment and Economic Development Strategy was the first priority identified by the Regional Assembly.

This has been progressed by a number of State and Commonwealth Departments, led primarily by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) and the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA). The Strategy endorsed by the Regional Assembly embodies the following six broad objectives and linked actions:

- Local jobs for local people
- Targeted industry strategies
- Established vocational training and education pathways
- Improved contracted service provider performance
- Support for employers to recruit and retain Indigenous Australians
- Development of enterprise opportunities.

To date, however, no specific investigation of Indigenous employment options within the mining industry had been undertaken. Jennifer therefore suggested that the workshop could provide a valuable opportunity for all stakeholders to come together in an open and honest way to begin to address this important issue.



## Murdi Paaki

Having originated as a Regional Council area in 1993, under the auspices of the former Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), the present Murdi Paaki COAG Trial site covers more than a third of the State and includes the major communities of Bourke, Brewarrina, Broken Hill, Cobar, Collarenebri, Coonamble, Dareton, Enngonia, Goodooga, Gulargambone, Ivanhoe, Lightning Ridge, Menindee, Quambone, Tibooburra, Walgett, Weilmoringle and Wilcannia.



The area has an approximate population of 65,000 people, of whom 10,000 (15.4%) are Aboriginal.

The Murdi Paaki Region covers the traditional lands of a number of Aboriginal nations or language groups, included the following:

- Paakantji
- Ngiyampaa
- Wangaaybuwan
- Ngemba
- Wayilwan
- Murrawari
- Wangkumara
- Muti Muti
- Ualroi
- Baranbinja
- Malyangapa
- Gamilaroi

Sam Jeffries emphasised that the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly (formerly the Regional Council) had long been at the forefront of development within regional NSW. Once established, the Council had recognised and embraced the need for effective regional planning as an integral feature of its operations, and this subsequently led to the formation of a number of positive relationships, partnerships and strategies in the region. Integral to the continuation of this forward-planning has been the role performed by each CWP within the Region as part of the COAG Murdi Paaki Trial process.

### **3.1.5 NSW Government Two Ways Together Policy**

Rachel Ardler, NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs, detailed the NSW Government's "Two Ways Together" Policy to highlight the linkages with the Murdi Paaki COAG Trial.

The Two Ways Together Policy represents an agreed and coordinated whole-of-government approach which commits key government agencies to improving the well being of Aboriginal people in NSW.

The Policy is focused on working collaboratively to address Indigenous disadvantage in a sustainable manner and is built on the following premises:

- i. That previous ways of operating – without input from Aboriginal people about the appropriate means of developing and delivering programs and services – have resulted in poor outcomes;
- ii. That the NSW Government is not achieving maximum return on its investment in Aboriginal programs and services;
- iii. That resources are wasted because of a lack of coordination and collaboration on service delivery, program and policy development;
- iv. That agencies and communities lack capacity to work effectively together; and
- v. That Aboriginal issues must be addressed holistically. For example, achievements in education can only be sustained if a person's health, family life and housing are also satisfactory.

The Policy is backed by the highest level of NSW Government and formally involves the Federal Government through the mechanism of a Bilateral Agreement. The Policy acknowledges the social and economic disadvantage of Aboriginal people in NSW and requires all levels of government to work together in a genuine and concerted effort to change the appalling and stagnant national indicators of Indigenous well being.

A ten year vision has been adopted, directed towards outcomes across seven key priority areas:

- Health
- Education
- Culture and Heritage
- Housing and Infrastructure
- Justice
- Families and Young People
- Economic Development.

In order to achieve these outcomes, the Policy seeks to improve, among other things:

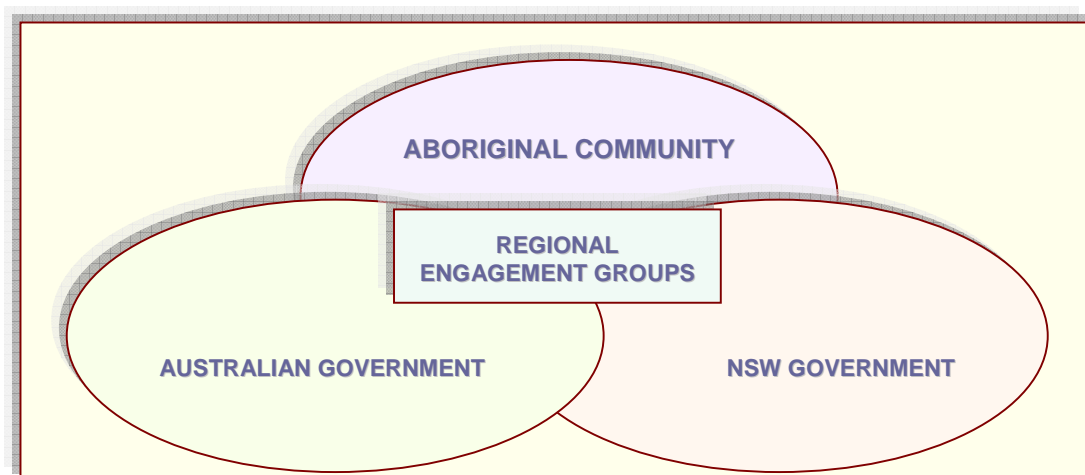
- Capacity of individual Government agencies working with Aboriginal communities;
- Capacity of communities;
- Planning and decision making processes;
- Accountability;
- The Whole-of-Government approach to Aboriginal Affairs.

There are seventeen initiatives currently being funded from a budget of 40 million dollars over a four year period. These initiatives specifically focus on:

- Reducing incarceration and breaking the cycle of family violence;
- Improving Year 3 and Year 5 literacy and numeracy and school retention rates;
- Otitis media – conductive hearing loss;
- Increasing Aboriginal employment; and
- Improving living conditions.

The regional implementation process involves a process of direct consultation, by a number of Regional Engagement Groups throughout NSW, with key Commonwealth and State Government agencies and Aboriginal communities to identify priorities, develop regional action plans and compile regional progress reports.

At the local implementation level, Regional Engagement Groups undertake coordinated, local planning activities with up to three priority communities in each region using local level indicators to identify priorities and to measure outcomes.



Progress reports are compiled for the Premier on a biennial basis with the next report being due in 2007.

A recent initiative supported under the Policy is the development of “Job Compacts”: formal alliances between private industry groups, Chambers of Commerce, Aboriginal organisations, State and Commonwealth agencies and local governments, whose aim is to increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal people. By building upon the good work already done by the private sector to achieve better employment outcomes for Aboriginal people, Job Compacts could realise additional benefits:

- A means of addressing local labour shortages;
- Creation of a longer-term sustainable local workforce;
- Increased goodwill in the local community.

From a mining industry perspective, Rachel suggested that the development of mining industry specific Job Compact could also contribute to:

- An increase in the number of Aboriginal people employed in mining sector jobs and in ancillary jobs supporting the mining sector; and
- The use of Aboriginal businesses that support the mining sector.

## **3.2 Regional Partnership Case Studies**

A series of short case studies were delivered by Kevin Donnelly, Bemax Resources Ltd, David Chapman, Western Institute of TAFE, Phillip Sullivan, an Ngilyampaa Traditional Owner and Chair of the Mt Grenfell Board of Management, and Dorothy Rao, NSW Mining Industry Skills Association (MISA) and Resources and Infrastructure Industry Skills Council (RIISC). Each case study was designed to highlight industry, government and community partnership initiatives in the region.

### **3.2.1 Bemax Resources Ltd**

Kevin provided a brief history of Bemax Resources Ltd’s mineral sand mine operation and discussed the Barkandji Training Employment and Education Program (BTEEP).

Bemax is one of Australia’s premier mineral sands companies which had commenced its first commercial mining operation in the Murray Basin in 2005, at its Ginkgo Mine. Kevin emphasised that Bemax is committed to the sustainable production of titanium and zircon minerals, and is equally committed to the protection of natural and social environmental values.

Kevin listed a number of different skills required to develop and operate a mine and separation plant:

- Mine engineers
- Metallurgists
- Laboratory technicians
- Surveyors
- Geologists
- Safety professionals
- Trades personnel
- Production operators
- Environmental/rehabilitation
- Mobile plant operators
- Administration staff
- Hospitality workers

As part of the BTEEP, Bemax had committed to offering 12 month traineeships to Indigenous Barkandji people. The type of traineeships made available depended on the job vacancies at that time. Kevin advised that BEMAX did not want people to be put onto a “Job Roundabout”, and preferred that people become involved in traineeships where there was a possibility of securing permanent employment at the traineeship’s conclusion. Kevin stressed that the permanent placement of trainees was dependent upon the work ethics, willingness and adaptability of the trainee.

Several organisations assisted with the employment strategy, including the Sunrasia Area Consultative Committee (ACC), Job Networks, the Registered Training Provider for the Pre-employment program (TAFE William–Angus, Victoria) and the Australian Apprenticeships Centre.

***“...permanent placement of trainees was dependent upon the work ethics, willingness and adaptability of the trainee.”***

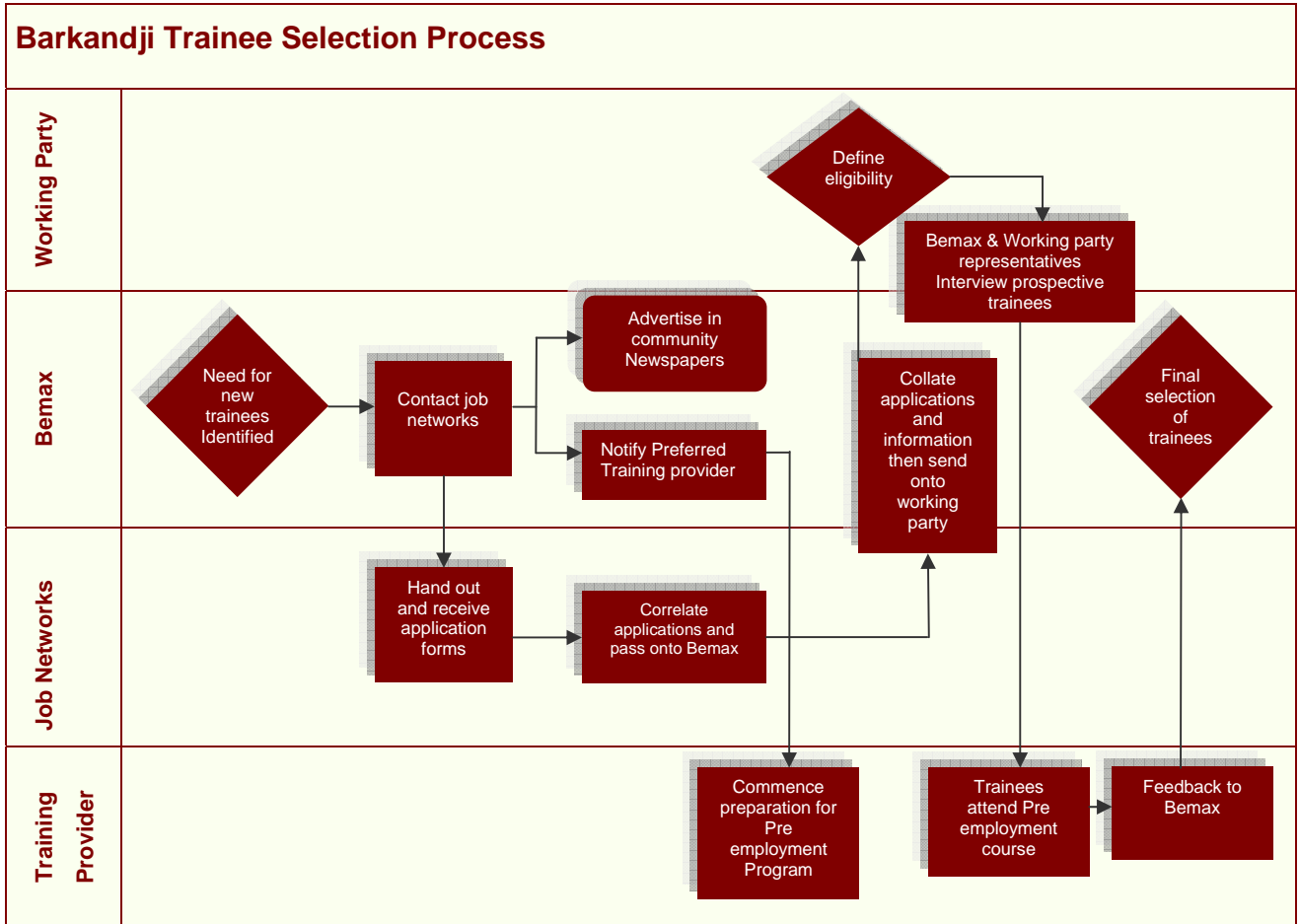
Kevin Donnelly  
Bemax Resource Limited

Kevin explained that of the 15 initial applicants for traineeship positions, nine were able to commence their training course: several did not turn up for interview, and several others either did not turn up for their medicals or had failed certain aspects of the medical.

The nine successful applicants were offered positions with Bemax on 12 month contracts, during which time they receive regular performance appraisals. There are currently seven Indigenous trainees:

- five trainees undertaking Certificate II Extractive Industries;
- one trainee undertaking Certificate III Laboratory Operations;
- one trainee undertaking Certificate II Business Administration.

In summary, the Barkandji<sup>5</sup> trainee selection process involved a number of steps as outlined in the diagram below:



Kevin explained that the pre-employment program was successful and continues to be developed and improved.

### 3.2.2 Western Institute of TAFE – The Condobolin Experience

David Chapman delivered a presentation on the three-way partnership that had been established between Barrick Gold, the Wiradjuri Condobolin Corporation (WCC) and the Western Institute of TAFE to deal with pre-vocational training at the Lake Cowal Gold mine.

***“...without Barrick, TAFE and WCC creating a partnership involving the whole community, the program could not have been established”***

David Chapman  
 Western Institute of TAFE

<sup>5</sup> Kevin explained that the Barkandji people were the traditional land owners on which the mine operation is located and the people involved in the land claims had specifically asked that BEMAX show preference to the their people.

The objective of this partnership was to ensure that Indigenous people from the WCC had equal opportunities to benefit from the Lake Cowal development. The training program consisted of pre-employment preparation and an 'Introduction to Mining' course. The program was designed to go beyond what would normally be expected in a prevocational course of its kind, and provided students with an opportunity to continue with further certificates after completion. The program ran five days a week over a period of 18 weeks - Monday and Tuesday were spent at the WCC for mentoring purposes, with Wednesday, Thursday and Friday being allocated TAFE days. The key subjects in the Introduction to Mining course included:

- Cultural protocols
- Work Safely
- Communication in the Workplace
- Application of local risk control processes
- Operation of a forklift
- Operation of light vehicles
- Identification and assessment of environmental and heritage concerns
- Operating a personal computer



One aim of the program was for Indigenous people to understand the mining culture. To achieve this, students would be asked to put themselves in the shoes of an employer, and to assess each others' competence. In addition to above key subjects, the following subjects were also added to the program:

- Hand and Power Tools
- First Aid
- Green Card
- Numeracy and Literacy
- Undertake Direct Seeding
- Machinery Operation
- Geology.

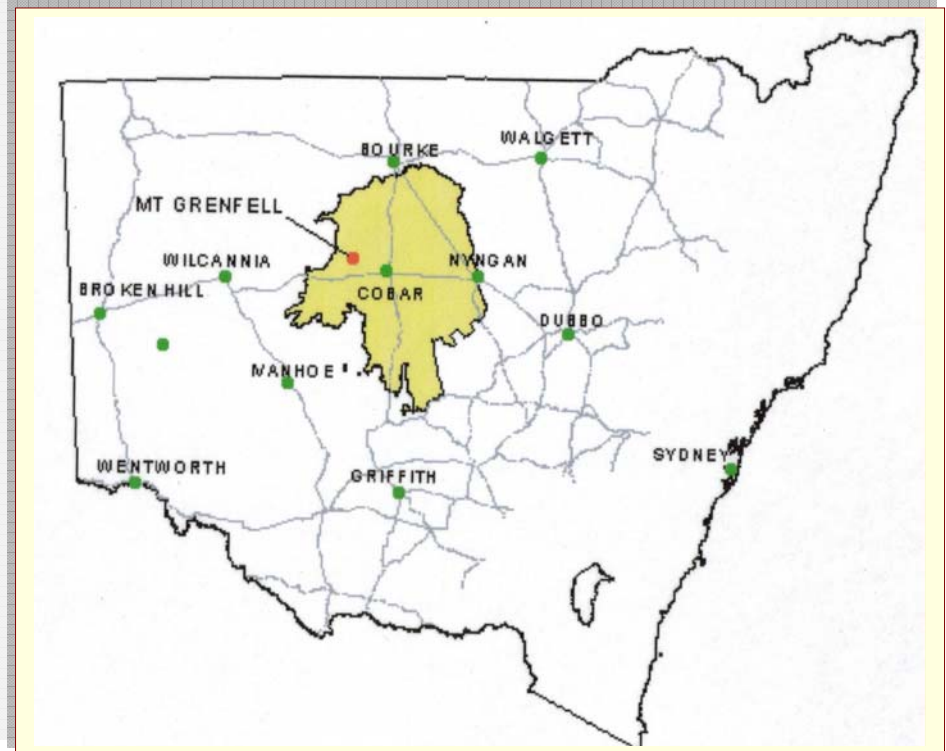
The skills acquired through participation in the program are transferable into other avenues of employment or further training, outside the mining industry. David concluded his presentation by acknowledging the genuine efforts of all parties involved in the process: without Barrick, TAFE and WCC, creating a partnership involving the whole community, the program could not have been established.

### 3.2.3 Mt Grenfell Indigenous Land Management

Phillip Sullivan opened his presentation by emphasising the need for government to consult with local Indigenous people prior to making laws relating to land management.

Phillip suggested that although it was now compulsory for Indigenous people to be involved in the decision making process in the context of major land developments (such as mines), they were often consulted when it is already too late to have substantial input into a proposal.

Phillip acknowledged that over the past ten years there have been



improvements in the way land is being managed in partnership with Traditional Owners. However, he stressed that this would need to continue into the future – "we have to move together and work together, whether it hurts or not".

Phillip showcased the work that had gone into developing an appropriate management regime for the Mt Grenfell Historic Site as an example of an effective partnership process. He felt that the Mt Grenfell site was today looking better because the land is being managed the way local Indigenous people want land to be managed.

The consultations leading to the hand-back and adoption of an appropriate management regime for the Mt Grenfell Site had developed as follows:

- 1991** First meeting at Mt Grenfell Site occurred with Tim Moore, the Minister for the Environment.

***"...the Mt Grenfell site was looking better because the land is being managed the way local Indigenous people want land to be managed..."***

Phillip Sullivan  
Ngiyampaa Traditional Owner  
Chair Mt Grenfell Board of Management



- 2002** Lease negotiation commenced and nineteen panel members were selected to represent Ngiyampaa community.
- 2004** Lease was finalised and the Historic Site hand back took place on the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2004.
- 2005** The Mt Grenfell Board of Management officially appointed.
- 2006** Governance training delivered to Board members and consultants contracted for a series of projects, all of which involved paid Ngiyampaa workers.

The projects established as a result of the negotiations included:

- Flora and fauna surveys
- Cultural sites survey
- Landform survey
- Ethno-botanical project
- Art monitoring
- Art site protection
- Interpretation design plan
- Training
- Erosion monitoring

### **3.2.4 Training Options for Indigenous Employment**

Dorothy Rao outlined the respective roles and responsibilities of the MISA, RIISC and Training Providers as follows:

- RIISC and MISA responsibilities include: industry-driven research, design, development and implementation of competencies and qualifications in the areas of coal mining, civil construction, construction materials (extractive industries), drilling and metalliferous mining.
- Training Provider (in this case, TAFE) responsibilities include: development and delivery of training programs aligned to the above competencies and customised to the particular needs of the enterprise and participants involved.

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd (NCVER) has acknowledged the need to incorporate best practice principles for adult learning and to create culturally supportive and flexible environments to enhance Indigenous learning.

The six principles of best practice for adult learning identified by NCVER are:

- Intercultural competence
- Respect
- Negotiation
- Meaningful outcomes
- Relationships
- Indigenisation

As Dorothy explained, these principles imply a recognition and validation of Aboriginal language and communication practices and show an understanding of how these differ from standard practices.<sup>6</sup>

Dorothy advised that there were four possible entry level training programs currently available into the industry in the region:

- Certificate I in Resources and Infrastructure Operations
- Certificate II in Mining Indigenous Traineeships
- Australian Apprenticeships (Traineeships with RIISC or Apprenticeships in traditional trades such as mechanical and electrical trades)
- Specific TAFE Programs and Courses.

The aim of all of these training programs was to provide a set of broad-based skills for the whole industry, thereby creating greater opportunities for individuals.

The training programs reflect and reinforce a nationally consistent standard, in which the graduation certificates relate to the following qualifications:

<b>Certificate I</b>	Pre-employment program
<b>Certificate II</b>	Under supervision
<b>Certificate III</b>	Minimal supervision
<b>Certificate IV</b>	Supervisor or Manager

The Certificate I in Resources and Infrastructure Operations was developed to:

- Respond to industry sector requirements for new recruits;
- Provide potential new recruits with the knowledge and skills to gain employment in the relevant industry sectors;
- Act as a competency recognition pre-employment program which results in a nationally recognised qualification; and
- Reflect the role of entry level employees in operations within various industry sectors.

During the program, participants are required to perform a defined range of activities while completing the following mandatory unit requirements:

- Work Safely and follow OH&S policies and procedures;
- Communication in the workplace;
- Contributing to the quality of work outcomes; and
- Participating in environmental work practices.

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<sup>6</sup> See 'Getting' into it! - Working with Indigenous Learners <http://www.resourcegenerator.gov.au>.

In addition to the above mandatory units, participants are required to complete two of the following program elective units:

- Conduct of local risk control
- Reading and interpreting maps
- Collection and preparation of samples
- Planning and organisation of work
- Measurements and calculations
- Use of resources, infrastructure and power tools
- Operating small plant and equipment
- Operating light vehicles
- Handling materials and safe disposal of toxic materials
- Reading and interpretation of plans and specifications
- Applying basic first aid
- Operating personal computers

The Certificate II in Mining Indigenous Traineeships is an employment-based, structured learning program which requires participants to complete the following seven mandatory units:

- Communication in the workplace;
- Working safely;
- Contributing to quality work outcomes;
- Applying local risk control processes;
- Participation in environmental work practices;
- Operating light vehicles; and
- Use of computer and related programs in the workplace.

In Dorothy's assessment, while these existing training programs provide a framework for partnerships between the industry and Indigenous communities, they could work better through the following actions being taken:

- Ongoing developments of formal partnerships between industry and Indigenous communities;
- Active involvement of the Employment Agencies and Australian Apprenticeship Centres;
- Ensuring that particular training programs are customised to meet the needs of specific, target mine sites;
- Ensuring that training skills development programs align with and complement company and business strategic objectives;
- Ensuring that training programs align with and meet the needs of Indigenous communities; and
- Adequate resourcing and continuous improvement of the programs.

### 3.3 Defining Partnerships

The opening presentations set the scene for a group discussion of the meaning of a “partnership” and it was agreed that following broad working definition could be used as the basis for subsequent workshop discussions.

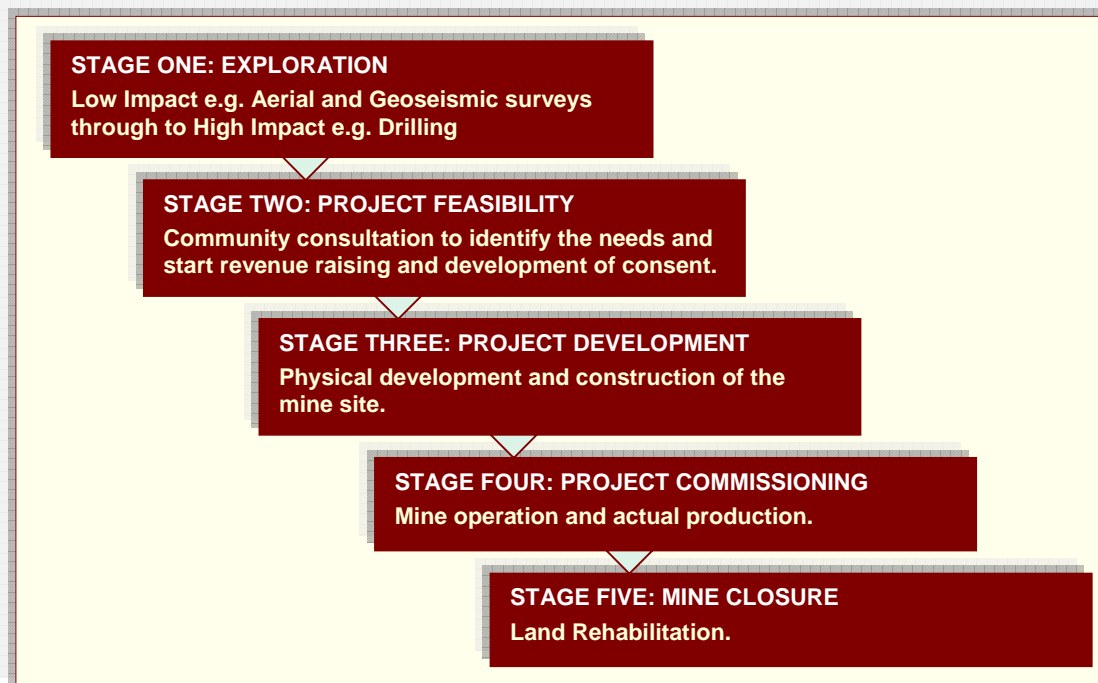
#### **All participants generally agreed that partnerships were effectively:**

“...all about trust, commitment and leadership at every level, vision, respect, the long-term view, resolving conflicts, flexibility, clear and effective strategies, sustained competitive advantage, ownership, empowerment, attitude, innovation, removing hidden agendas, teamwork, people, suppliers, customers, customers customers, suppliers’ suppliers, communication, hard work, making/taking time (a lot of it), cooperation, respect, compromise, interdependence, sharing everything (information, strategy, vision, people, ideas, risk), imagination, creativity, initiative, lateral thinking, friendship, under-compromising, over-delivering, unraveling/managing complexity, getting the basics right the first time every time, exceeding requirements and expectations and achieving world class”.

*(T Lendum, the Strategic Partnership Handbook – A Practical Guide for Managers, McGraw Hill Book Company Australia)*

### 3.4 Defining the Industry Stages

Tanya Huon, Cobar Management Pty Ltd, in collaboration with Grant Sarra and Simon Andrews, presented the following broad outline of stages in the industry process<sup>7</sup> to act as a guide for participants during their respective problem analysis sessions.



<sup>7</sup> In general, the broad stages for exploration and mining in NSW are defined as: Exploration, [Feasibility], Planning and Approval, Development, Operations and Mine Closure.

## 3.5 Problem Analysis

In the problem analysis session participants were divided into their respective stakeholder groups (Government and non-Government Partners, Indigenous and Industry) and asked to identify the real problems which they each faced during the entire mining process.

A full summary of the problems identified by each stakeholder group is presented in Appendix B.

The following broad thematic problems were identified by all stakeholder groups during the problem analysis session:

- Communication
- Mutual Awareness
- Training and Employment.

### 3.5.1 Communication

The industry group highlighted that the absence of a functional Aboriginal Land Council in Cobar made it difficult to determine who to consult in the Aboriginal community about cultural heritage and other important industry related matters.



Government stakeholders highlighted that they also had problems trying to identify who to consult in the Aboriginal community. This problem however, had been rectified through the Murdi Paaki Trial which now provides direct access to the Chairs of each Community Working Party as part of the Regional Assembly.

Indigenous stakeholders advised that they often didn't know who to contact within individual mining companies to discuss their problems, issues, concerns and aspirations and felt that there was a need to develop a regional communication strategy.

### 3.5.2 Mutual Awareness

All stakeholder groups acknowledged that there was a need to develop a better awareness and understanding of each other's aspirations and requirements to maintain a successful partnership process at the regional level.

Industry stakeholders felt strongly that there was a poor understanding of the mining culture. They stressed that it was important to improve the community's understanding of the mining industry as a whole to move beyond the "us and them" attitudes that often prevail. They also felt that industry's culture and values were often in conflict with Aboriginal culture and values, and that a greater awareness and education was required to develop mutual understanding.

The Indigenous group felt that there was an urgent need to develop an awareness process to bring the stakeholder groups closer together. They felt that this was particularly important in terms of cross-cultural awareness training and in the process of recruiting and retaining Indigenous people within industry.

Des Jones, representing the Wentworth Community Working Party, perhaps highlighted the importance of raising awareness of Indigenous culture best when he stated that he "had learnt all about your culture (mining and government) – I can read, use a computer and do all those things, but you don't know anything about my culture".

***"...I can read, use a computer and do all those things but you don't know anything about my culture..."***

Des Jones  
Wentworth Community Working Party

### 3.5.3 Training and Employment

The Indigenous group identified training and employment as their most important priority. They felt that it was important for government and industry to develop and use flexible programs to ensure that Aboriginal people were afforded every opportunity to gain, and be retained in, employment in the industry. They also highlighted the need to have mentors in place at mine sites to enhance the retention of Aboriginal people in the workforce.

Sam Jeffries specifically emphasised the need to focus on addressing the issue of unemployment, as he felt that this would bring benefits to the whole community.

***"We need to focus on addressing the issue of unemployment ..., as this would bring benefits to the whole community..."***

Sam Jeffries  
Chairperson, Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly

The Indigenous group identified the importance of developing additional programs at the site level to ensure that Aboriginal people were given the opportunity to advance into higher positions within company structures, and also suggested that consideration should be given to developing a process which ensures that when one Aboriginal person leaves a job, their position could be filled by another Aboriginal person.

Industry was of the opinion that they already employed significant numbers of Aboriginal people and explained that it was often difficult to keep accurate records of the actual numbers of Aboriginal people employed at each site. They indicated that they had a limited knowledge and understanding of government programs used to employ Aboriginal people and also highlighted that they often did not know how to identify or contact Aboriginal people who may be interested in employment within the industry.

Government stakeholders were of the opinion that the Murdi Paaki COAG Trial could lead to the possible future development of an Industry-based Employment Strategy which could significantly enhance opportunities and mutual outcomes for both Aboriginal and industry stakeholder groups.

### **3.6 Regional Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**

Following the problem analysis session, participants were asked to identify what they would consider to be their collective strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats if a regional partnership was developed in the Murdi Paaki region. The following were identified:

#### **Strengths**

- COAG Trial provides the opportunity for an open dialogue
- Registered training organisations can provide flexible training options
- Opportunities to extract more minerals in the region
- Local labour force and Industry could co-exist in the long term
- Shared opportunities and interests can be identified
- Partnership processes have already started – and are working
- There is a willingness to work together
- Positive attitudes
- Indigenous role models already exist in the industry
- Commitment to nurturing the local workforce
- Murdi Paaki – important role and presence of Community Working Party
- Positive communication through Murdi Paaki COAG Trial
- Whole-of-government approach

## **Weaknesses**

- Lack of awareness of Government programs, funding, employment
- Young people appear to lack support
- Not enough investment in other services such as health and education, contributing to an overall service deficiency
- Limited re-investment into local community
- Negative perception of industry - industry needs to present itself better
- Lack of forward thinking and planning in terms of employment strategies
- Weakness in local skills base
- Lack of communication, lack of information and accurate data
- Lack of honesty and trust among all parties
- Lack of collaboration
- Government departments not working in cohesion
- Government needing to be more supportive of partnerships

## **Opportunities**

- Better unity between groups
- Flexible training programs
- Recognising regional differences e.g. Cobar vs Broken Hill
- Potential to develop a Mining school
- Potential for greater cohesion between Government agencies
- Opportunity to improve the image of mining industry
- Opportunities for enhanced training in mining industry

## **Threats**

- Uncertainty of mining industry
- Inertia - apathy
- Local perceptions
- Fear and insecurity about moving forward
- Staff turnover
- Political instability (e.g. effects of change of Government)
- Skills shortage



### **3.7 Partnership Benefits**

Following the SWOT analysis session, participants were asked to consider the potential benefits that could be derived from a regional partnership approach.

The following anticipated benefits were presented:

#### **Partnership Benefits**

- Sharing life and life-style
- Solving each others problems
- Employment for Indigenous people would help solve a broad range of social issues
- Provision for funding to important services (e.g. education) within the partnership process
- Potential to address labour shortage in industry through use of local workforce
- Potential to build local economy.

## 4. WORKSHOP OUTCOMES - AGREED PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

By the completion of the workshop, participants had acknowledged that the development and ongoing mutual success of a partnership approach would require a genuine and pro-active commitment from all stakeholder groups to ensure that regional problems, issues and expectations were effectively and efficiently managed.

With this in mind, the final session of the workshop was devoted to determining which of the previously identified problems (refer to Section 3.5 of this report) would take priority in the short to medium term.



Following a detailed and focused discussion of the problems identified in the earlier session, participants agreed that the following priorities and actions could be progressed in the short to medium term.

### 4.1 Regional Partnership Communication

- Participants agreed to develop and distribute a contact list to industry which would include the contact details for each of the Chairs and Facilitators of the Community Working Parties in Cobar and Broken Hill.

### 4.2 Training and Employment

- It was agreed that industry would provide each Community Working Party with relevant information relating to available employment opportunities throughout NSW. This would include:
  - A NSW mining industry Compact Disc to provide a complete overview of the industry.
  - Details of industry employment opportunities advertised, including details of position requirements and mine site locations.

- It was agreed that the Community Working Parties would identify Indigenous people within the region who were interested in pursuing industry-based employment opportunities. This would include:
  - Personal and location details for each potential applicant.
  - Details relating to the potential applicant's capacity to travel to and from the mine site.
  - An applicant skills profile including details of certificates and other qualifications held by the applicant, relevant to the position.
- It was agreed that, as and when applicant skills deficiencies were identified, training providers would be consulted to develop appropriate training programs to address the site - and applicant-specific needs.
- It was agreed that Dorothy Rao of RIISC would consider appropriate training programs for the regional area.

### **4.3 Industry Awareness**

- It was agreed that industry would initiate the development of local mine site visits for relevant and interested Indigenous groups, in order to:
  - Enhance the overall awareness and understanding of the industry at the local community level
  - Enhance the awareness and understanding of industry-specific environmental stewardship obligations, responsibilities, standards and practices and to demonstrate environmental performance at the mine site
  - Provide a cross-cultural experience.

### **4.4 Innovation and Improvement**

In addition to the above priorities and actions, considerable discussion also focused on additional ways to improve a partnership process at the local level. Key suggestions included:

- The future involvement of other key personnel from local mine sites.
- The need to develop and deliver a targeted local Indigenous Cross-Cultural Communication Program.
- The possibility of building a local partnership framework that could allow also for the discussion of environmental, cultural heritage, tourism, business and other important issues of concern in the local area.
- The possibility of conducting information nights, prior to recruitment, as a positive way of informing potential Aboriginal workers.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Following the conduct of each workshop in the series, a clear need has emerged for follow-up activities to be conducted at the regional level. In particular, for regional partnership approaches between industry, government and Traditional Owner and other Aboriginal groups and organisations to develop and succeed, each of the problems identified during the workshop process needs to be further considered and addressed and a coordinated approach adopted to attain this outcome.

In this regard, the Murdi Paaki region is unique. Unlike other regions throughout Australia, the Murdi Paaki COAG Trial places industry in the fortunate position of having direct access to an existing Aboriginal community and Government/non-Government framework and structure that has the potential to act as a “one stop shop” for industry.



While the existing structure and framework may need to be modified slightly to accommodate industry specific problems and issues (e.g. cultural heritage, environmental impact assessment, community consultation, skills shortages, recruitment) it does provide the foundation to develop a partnership process in the short to medium term.

From an Aboriginal community perspective, the development of a genuine partnership approach at regional level would provide

enormous potential for the Community Working Parties to work closely with key industry personnel at the local mine site level to consider, discuss and address their specific problems and issues: e.g. identification and preservation of cultural heritage and sites of significance, land management, realistic and focused training, employment and business development.

From a government/non-government service provider perspective, the development of a genuine partnership approach at the regional level would enhance the capacity of relevant departments, agencies and non-government service providers to work closely with Community Working Parties and key personnel at local mine sites to assist in the development of local solutions that are tangible, culturally appropriate, innovative, cost effective and of mutual benefit to all stakeholder groups.

At the workshop, DITR offered to support the development of such a partnership approach. However, it was also stressed that such support could only be offered in the short to medium term, primarily to assist in the establishment of a Murdi Paaki Regional Partnership process, should this be deemed appropriate for the region.

With the agreed priorities and actions identified at the workshop in mind, the short to medium term support offered by DTIR would be particularly useful in the early stages of developing an effective regional partnership approach. However, it is important to recognise that the ongoing success of such a partnership approach would require a genuine and pro-active commitment from all relevant stakeholders at the regional level to ensure the effective and efficient planning and management of ongoing problems, issues and expectations.

Should a regional partnership body be formed in the Murdi Paaki region, the initial task will be to define its mandate and role, and to specify criteria for monitoring its own performance.

This would be necessary to ensure that the approach can command the level of support required to establish a profile in the region, to begin the process of implementing the agreed priorities and actions identified at the workshop, and to consider the development of future initiatives that will carry the partnership-building process forward from this point.

## Appendix A Workshop Participants

William Bates	Wilcannia Community Working Party
Jenny Barker	Brewarrina Community Working Party
William Barker	Brewarrina Community Working Party
Robyn Delaney	Gulargambone Community Working Party
Joan Evans	Cobar Community Working Party
George Fernando	Walgett Community Working Party
Clinton Gibbs	Walgett Community Working Party
Norman Hall	Collarenebri Community Working Party
Sam Jeffries	Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly
Des Jones	Wentworth/Dareton Community Working Party
Janine Mann	Cobar CDEP
Elaine Ohlsen	Traditional Owner
Sharon Ohlsen	Traditional Owner
Phil Sullivan	Traditional Owner
Simon Andrews	NSW Minerals Council
Georgina Beattie	NSW Minerals Council
Keven Donnelly	Bemax Resources
Tanya Huon	Cobar Management Pty Ltd
Karen Irvine	Endeavor Operations Pty Ltd
David Abbott	Department of Industry, Tourism & Resources
Ian Abbott	Department of Primary Industries
Rachel Ardler	Department of Aboriginal Affairs
Jennifer Batten	TAFE
Steve Butler	Department of Aboriginal Affairs
Louise Bye	Department of Education & Training
David Chapman	TAFE
Mark de Weerd	Department of Education, Science & Training
Joe Flick	Department of Employment & Workplace Relations
Glen Gallagher	MAS National
John Harris	Robinson College
Pam Hill	ABL Apprenticeship Centre
Trevor Kennedy	Department of Education, Science & Training

Les Lane	Murdi Paaki Enterprise Centre
Jennifer Ledger	Department of Education, Science & Training
Phillipa McDermott	Department of Employment & Workplace Relations
Daniel Pobje	MAS National
Rick Powell	Premier's Department
Cr Izzie Pretty	Cobar Shire Council
Dorothy Rao	RIISC
Chris Rieksen	ABL Apprenticeship Centre
Cecil See	TAFE
Peter Slattery	Sureway Employment
Amanda Sutton	Mission Australia Australian Apprenticeship Centre
Narelle Symonds	ABL Apprenticeship Centre
Darryl Thomas	Resource Management & Development
Rod Towney	TAFE
Arthur Townsend	Department of Education, Science & Training
Lyn Trevelen	Broken Hill City Council
Tom Warren	Indigenous Coordination Centre
Cr Peter Yench	Cobar Shire Council

## Appendix B Workshop Problem and Issues Analysis

### Industry Responses

- Industry culture and values are often in conflict with Indigenous culture and values, thus there is a need for more awareness and education;
- Different understanding relating to cultural heritage which leads to uncertainty for business – what do they have to deal with?
- Cultural awareness training is valuable and important, particularly to teach employers, who can then go and review their policies;
- Timing issues – unnecessary delays holding up projects - Indigenous communities need to understand that there are timeframes and that they are sometimes unavoidably short;
- There is a need to overcome an ‘us and them’ attitude;
- Rumours and miscommunication have led to a poor understanding of the mining culture - “people just think we dig up the ground and leave it”;
- Lack of information about Indigenous people looking for work within the industry – it is unclear how industry should go about locating and contacting possible employees;
- Poor awareness of structured Government programs to train and employ Indigenous people;
- There exists a conflict of whether to keep tabs on Indigenous employment for the sake of it or not ask employees about their heritage and keep employment based on performance;
- Access to land issues i.e. different requirements for Government owned, private owned and Indigenous community owned land. Industry needs to secure access to land;
- Project feasibility – Environmental Impact Stage – business outcomes and certainty is a big deal. Need to understand ALL issues associated with a project. Government expectations are sometimes not in line with community requirements which create tension that needs to be resolved;
- Heritage site work – personal safety – financial costs associated with site work. Insurance requirements – who is responsible for whom, marrying those ideas with requirements of industry;
- Once a site of cultural significance is identified what needs to happen next – i.e. inconsistent advice given by different community groups - here, government needs to help arbitrate these issues;
- Expectations of financial contributions – if there are such expectations, what are they - and what are the ways to make such contributions beneficial to the community as a whole?

### Government Responses

- More cultural awareness training needed to overcome stereotyping;
- Government does not yet understand the value of the Elders in a community;
- Communication issues: Identifying the right people to speak with i.e. traditional versus historic connection - Who to contact – fragmentation in community (factions);
- How to make contact – get dialogue happening;
- Lack of knowledge of flexibility of an Indigenous family unit and mobility in general;
- Need to look at how we work together;
- Government organisations – what are the respective roles of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Local Land Councils, and other Aboriginal organisations;
- There exists the need to break the cycle of ‘not employing Aboriginal people’;



- There exists the need to break the cycle of unemployment within a family;
  - Training - Our white perceptions are that we learn through reading, yet Indigenous people learn through doing. How can we adjust our training program to suit?
  - Lack of mentoring and support at the workplace for employment – a mentor who is accepting of different approaches and has an understanding for cultural diversity, eg. understanding that Aboriginal people go to a lot more funerals;
  - Jobs – people often need skills development. At same time, cultural differences make this difficult. So, hopefully, it would be good to make this a standard practice;
  - Development of skills – technical roles in mines (skill development required);
  - Need to work out an Aboriginal employment strategy;
  - Need to stay realistic about job opportunities;
  - Need for goodwill and trust;
  - Government has its own problems to deal with, which they are trying to overcome - industry and Murdi Paaki need to understand that;
- Difficult to gain skills and therefore employment;
  - “Breaking into industry” – Indigenous people don’t know who to contact;
  - If given consent, make sure that compliance is maintained;
  - Need to clarify who the groups are – better coordination of the groups. Suggestion that land rights registrar opens up his books so that groups are identified through Aboriginal ownership;
  - Need to change attitudes in communities i.e. beyond the welfare mentality;
  - Need an involvement throughout process;
  - Need openness between all groups and open communication;
  - Indigenous people need to acknowledge that different groups have different objectives;
  - We need to understand each other in a partnership and we need to look at a communication strategy;
  - Need to make sure that Aboriginal people are featured from day one;
  - Substance abuse and alcohol is a problem;
  - Awareness program as part of work experience - so they can make a decision on what they want to do. They need to know what they want and what opportunities there are;

## **Indigenous Responses**

- Need to develop skills so that Indigenous people can fill roles;
  - Need more time to respond to documents – also need resources and trained people so that they can adequately respond;
  - Recognition of the difficulty of moving from unemployment to the workforce and there is an opportunity for government to help in this respect;
  - There should be no screening test - just be based on performance (as with white people);
  - Aboriginal people need to have mentor support at the workplace;
- Mining must trust Aboriginal people;
  - Local factions can divide community;
  - Murdi Paaki is the voice of the community - this is then referred to Traditional Owners (body) and they need to be the final decision makers;
  - A program should be in place that when an Aboriginal person moves up within a company, another Aboriginal person is taken to fill that position.

## Appendix C Participant Evaluations

The following is a table of results from participants' evaluation sheets about the workshop. There were 11 respondents.

	The objectives of the workshop were clear to me and relevant to my role in my Organisation.	2	18%	5	45%	<b>64%</b>	1	9%	3	27%	0	0%
	As a result of the workshop, I have a better understanding of the things other groups see as important in developing partnerships.	11	100%	0	0%	<b>100%</b>	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	The information kit (case studies) provided will be useful in demonstrating to others some of the examples of mining companies working in partnership with Indigenous communities	1	9%	10	91%	<b>100%</b>	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	The time allowed for meeting with and talking to others was about right	2	18%	7	64%	<b>82%</b>	1	9%	1	9%	0	0%
	The social function was worthwhile and a good chance to network with others	10	91%	1	9%	<b>100%</b>	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

109 responses out of possible 110

## Appendix D Participant Comments

- ❖ There is an opportunity to progress further
- ❖ Needs more awareness on mining activities.
- ❖ Moving forward.
- ❖ Anything is possible.
- ❖ Industry & community need to find their common ground in their own time & framework.
- ❖ Commitment to partnerships between industry/local communities.
- ❖ Need for more direction - too relaxed & not adhering to agenda times.
- ❖ Not driven enough / focused / direction.
- ❖ Need to identify participants & agencies that they represent
- ❖ There is a lot of misinformation re indigenous employment in the mining industry.
- ❖ Communication is the key.....way too many misconceptions against the mining industry which are actually not factual.
- ❖ Disappointed in the lack of emphasis of the common link between mining industry & Aboriginals.....environment.

### Participants Comments

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Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> - Friday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2006