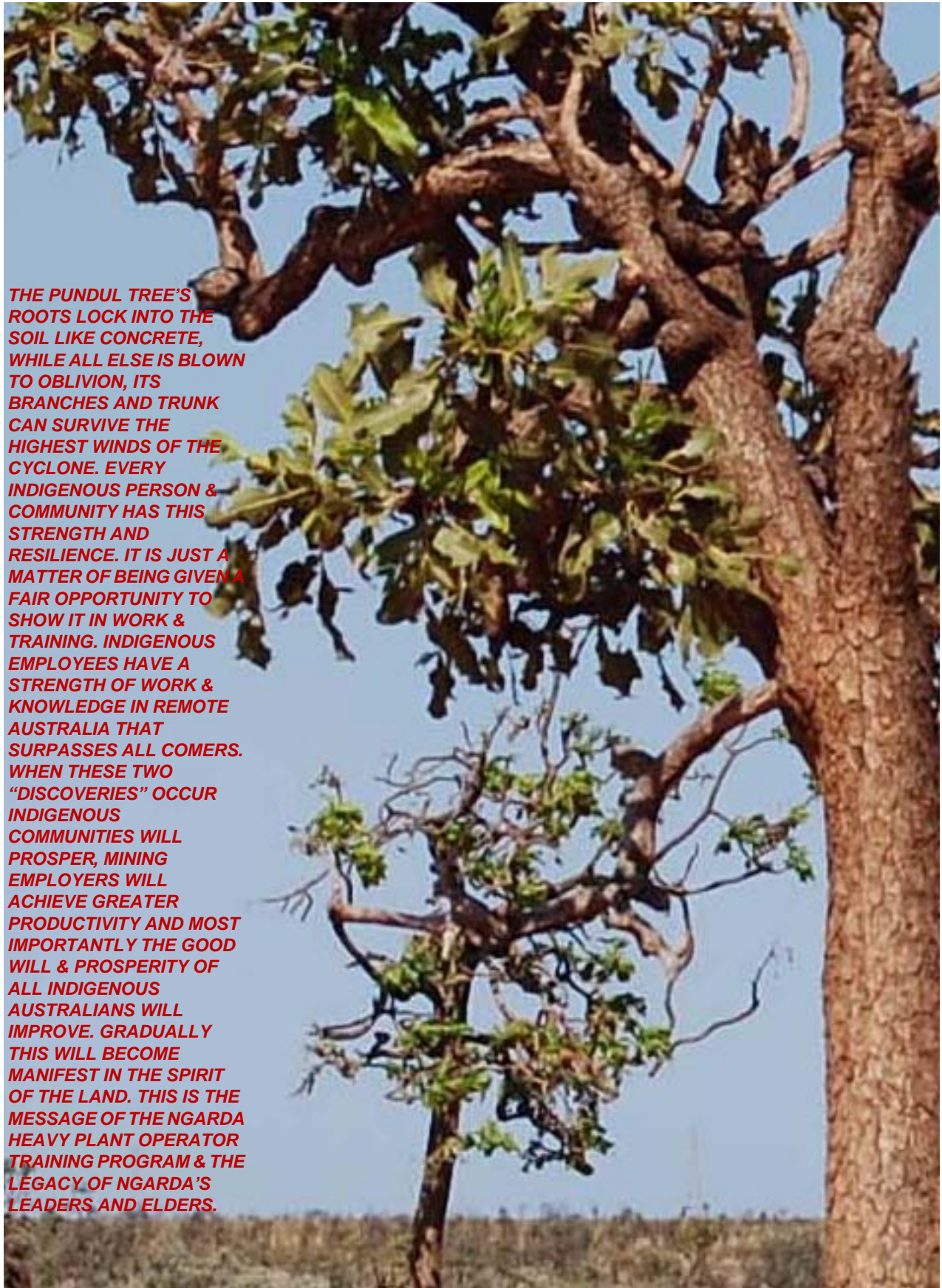


Strength through Enterprise, Work & Training



Report on Ngarda Civil & Mining's Machine Operator Work Readiness Training Strategy



**THE PUNDUL TREE'S
ROOTS LOCK INTO THE
SOIL LIKE CONCRETE,
WHILE ALL ELSE IS BLOWN
TO OBLIVION, ITS
BRANCHES AND TRUNK
CAN SURVIVE THE
HIGHEST WINDS OF THE
CYCLONE. EVERY
INDIGENOUS PERSON &
COMMUNITY HAS THIS
STRENGTH AND
RESILIENCE. IT IS JUST A
MATTER OF BEING GIVEN A
FAIR OPPORTUNITY TO
SHOW IT IN WORK &
TRAINING. INDIGENOUS
EMPLOYEES HAVE A
STRENGTH OF WORK &
KNOWLEDGE IN REMOTE
AUSTRALIA THAT
SURPASSES ALL COMERS.
WHEN THESE TWO
"DISCOVERIES" OCCUR
INDIGENOUS
COMMUNITIES WILL
PROSPER, MINING
EMPLOYERS WILL
ACHIEVE GREATER
PRODUCTIVITY AND MOST
IMPORTANTLY THE GOOD
WILL & PROSPERITY OF
ALL INDIGENOUS
AUSTRALIANS WILL
IMPROVE. GRADUALLY
THIS WILL BECOME
MANIFEST IN THE SPIRIT
OF THE LAND. THIS IS THE
MESSAGE OF THE NGARDA
HEAVY PLANT OPERATOR
TRAINING PROGRAM & THE
LEGACY OF NGARDA'S
LEADERS AND ELDERS.**

PREFACE

We went into the heart of darkness and emerged triumphant. We found a pillar of strength in the form of highly capable and successful Indigenous people. There has never been a training program like the Ngarda Heavy Plant Operator Training Program. 19 out of 20 starters finished the eight week course and in that time achieved tickets and qualifications that some employees of two years standing as operators in mining companies have not achieved. There is still a long way for the trainees to become competent, efficient production workers. But this training showed, what I always knew was the case, that there are hundreds, probably thousands of highly capable Aboriginal people in remote areas that should be working in the Australian mining industry. They have the highest capability and knowledge of the environment and, with their natural hand and eye coordination, they are natural machine operators.

Make no mistake, the success of the program remains to be demonstrated by the staying power and productivity of the trainees. It is one thing to have tickets it is another to evolve to become a strong productive employee within the tough, “hot” production culture which is the Australian mining industry. But I am confident our new employees will go the extra mile for Ngarda.

This interim report presents some of the issues we had to confront in bringing about a successful outcome for the trainees. We invite your comments and discussion. There are still many questions to be asked arising from the training: Why have the trainees not been given these opportunities before? Do we expect Indigenous people to jump over multiple barriers that no-one could be expected to hurdle on their own? Here we have to ask ourselves another question as Indigenous people and as a nation. When it comes to Indigenous affairs, do we dwell too much on the negative? It should be noted here that the people who have excelled at the training are the same people drawn from communities who day after day we read about in the national newspapers. Bad news sells newspapers and makes people watch television programs. So we hear about drugs, alcohol, child abuse, family neglect, violence, day after day in our national media. Believe me there is no stronger advocate than I for strong action on these fronts. I fully support, and our elders, past and present, strongly support, zero tolerance of drug and alcohol abuse and the degradation of some of our communities. But we are becoming too hooked on the bad and the negative. We will not solve our problems by looking to the State or the Courts or someone else to solve these problems. We have to solve them ourselves. One of the best ways to do this is for individuals to get high quality jobs and to give their families a strong, solid, recurring income to rely on

We should not under-estimate the kind of fight our trainees will have in overcoming the ghetto like environment from which they are emerging. This is something that this training program took on front and centre and showed that to be successful trainees need to be supported above and beyond just the task of doing the work and the training. This problem will diminish as we become more successful but it is something that we need to not walk away from now. We like our trainees need to go the extra mile in confronting these issues!

However perhaps the biggest challenge from the successful training program is for the day to day employment practices of Indigenous people in the min-

ing industry. Now that these trainees have shown they have the capacity and temperament to become good employees, the mining industry must become far better employers of Indigenous people. In places like the Pilbara where traditional law is still of the utmost importance, employers need to really understand its implications for employment. Too many non-Indigenous employees and employers have only a stereotypical understanding of what this means and this must be overcome.

The other thing the training throws out as a challenge to employers is the need to create opportunities for multi-skilled people. *Lou Nannup the head trainer of the training has talked to me over many months of the need for our company Ngarda to adopt a more enlightened approach to job rotation and skill development over all our mining sites and operations. Lew's own background in the industry is one in which he spent many years on one machine or one job. Rightly Lew should be in my position right now. But because he was denied the opportunities of promotion and development he remained an operator - a wise and masterful one at that - for most of his career. Lew never fails to make the point to me that having provided the best training to our trainees, we must now give them strong and meaningful roles in our company and we must get away from the expectation of yester-year that a good employee is one who does not mind being chained to his water cart, or bull dozer or grader for twenty years. I want to acknowledge Lew's special contribution to this most successful project and I invite all my senior managers to work with Lew to change our production culture and to create new opportunities through our proposed mining academy for all of our employees.*

The discipline of work is also a challenge for our incoming trainees. The psychology of welfare is extremely negative. It creates an unhealthy expectation that someone will always do something for you provided you do nothing of much consequence and you fit into a box or a category or an image of 'looking for work'. The point about working for our company is that each employee has to create value for us. If they don't we go broke. There is nothing illusory about this. Making profits is real. Each employee's contribution to our company's and their own prosperity is very real.

However I know we will meet these challenges if we adopt the same slogans that I know became the informal mottos for our trainers and trainees during the Heavy Plant Operator Training Program - "go the extra mile" and "by any means necessary to get the outcome".

The front cover of this report features one of the famous pictures of the 1946 meetings of our elders. These were the meetings when the people of the Pilbara asserted their right to economic independence and prosperity. Our trainees carry this legacy within them as do all the language groups of our regions. In this regard I would like to thank Willie Jumbo for his hard work in mentoring our trainees for the duration of the training program. Willie is himself a role model for all our people to look up to.

Thanks to Peter Botsman for going the extra mile as well. I took some criticism for employing Peter, who has no mining industry employment but a long track record at high levels of government, academia and private industry. But I think it is now clear that if we had employed a mining industry trainer as coordinator of the project we would have not achieved the results we have, nor would we have unearthed the challenges we need to face as

employers or as an industry. I implore my fellow mining industry executives to dare to think outside the square when it comes to working with Indigenous people. The great lesson for all Indigenous leaders and communities is that if you have complicated, hard problems you must put highly skilled and experienced people into the front lines and give them their head to do what ever is necessary to achieve strong outcomes. It is no use having highly skilled and experienced people employed on big salaries in Canberra or Perth. We really don't need these people, nor do we need people, no matter how qualified they may be, who will not make a commitment about going down to the coal face and finding solutions at nitty-gritty levels. The last thing we need is more conferences and seminars, we need people of the highest calibre on the ground struggling hard where the real challenges and barriers are in our remote and regional communities! Unless we do this we will be condemned to the insanity of confronting problems again and again and obtaining the same old unsatisfactory results.

Our Indigenous mining elder Lou Nannup, with Peter Botsman worked forty days and nights straight on the training project and put his own health on the line. Peter Donovan at Aboriginal Economic Development in the State government worked for many months with our group to help swing the governmental side of the finances together that enabled the whole project to go ahead. Thank you Peter. Micko O'Byrne, as is his custom, donated his valuable time to support the Indigenous trainees. He flew his plane up from Perth and made a huge impact on everyone who heard him speak. I want to thank BP Australia who stood with us and provided vital support in the form of fuel for the machines. Ngarda Ngarli Yarndu Foundation coordinated the CDEP side from the Yandeyarra and Marble Bar communities. The WA government's education department contributed to mentoring for the project. Alan Scott, Lisa Jenkins and Frank Schwalger of Pundulmurra College went above and beyond the call of duty to support us. Patrick Low was a source of encouragement within the tough environment of DEWR. Shaun Fowler helped us to break through with Job Futures. Wilma Walters was a great help at ITEC. Jason, Kylie, Sam and Bob Neville at Bloodwood Tree Association came together with us to support the licensing costs and gave us a tip truck to use for the training. Thanks to South Hedland Police, Neil Fong in the Department of Corrective Services, the magistrate and staff at South Hedland Justice Centre for seeing our vision and supporting it. Port Hedland Shire let us have free water for the water trucks and special thanks to Mr. Brad Young and Brett Alexander of Outlook Contracting for giving us access to the burra pit that enabled a very good mock mine environment for the vital practical training to take place. Thanks to Brian Hughey, JB, Stretch, Alan Titley. Vickie Joliffe and all of my colleagues at Ngarda who have supported the project and stood shoulder to shoulder with me through thick and thin. The source of all strength for Indigenous families and communities are our wives and mothers - I want to thank my Martu tower of power, Charmaine Tullock, her good advice and counsel to all involved, helped the project to be successful.

Barry Taylor
Executive Chairman, Ngarda Civil & Mining



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OVERVIEW IN POINT FORM

1. The outcomes and results of the Heavy Plant Operator Training program prove that there is a talented, dedicated and, large population of potential Indigenous mining employees in regional, remote and very remote areas. Indigenous machine operators would be a highly cost effective and efficient human resources solution for the Australian Mining Industry at a time of a dramatic skill and labour shortages. But there are many major barriers that stop what should be a logical and complementary relationship forming between Indigenous people, communities and Mining Employers. These barriers have to be systematically attacked at micro-levels if the mining industry is to reap the benefits of an active, talented workforce as well as the external benefits of developing a strong partnership with the Aboriginal community.
2. Despite the success of the plant operator training program Aboriginal people are up against **the deadliest of foes: the permanence of second best, mediocre options in training, recruitment of employees, welfare systems, law and order practices, licencing, cultural and employment practices.** Because of the sheer number of these problems getting things right is difficult and challenging. There are major obstacles to overcome and it is necessary to operate outside of one's comfort zone as a matter of course. This inevitably involves taking risks, doing many things differently and doing a lot of hard, detailed work to find solutions. For salaried personnel in rule bound public institutions it is often impossible to even see the problems. For private sector mining managers who must meet tight production targets, giving up trainers, resources and equipment for ostensibly wild projects is understandably not on the radar screen. For trainers in public institutions meeting the needs of industry and Aboriginal people invariably means breaking the rules that have come to govern them and often involves working completely outside the boundaries of their employment. For governments it is easier to appease vested interests and seem to be doing something rather than plunge into a series of nitty gritty challenges with no easy way out.
3. **Luckily for once, with the remarkable Aboriginal leader Barry Taylor at the helm, with Willie Jumbo, speaker of five languages and a remarkable example for his people as mentor, with Ngarda Civil & Mining's support, with the constellation of Federal and State public service champions who have supported this project, with the support of the TAFE leader Alan Scott and his staff at Pundulmurra College, and last but no least with a senior Aboriginal mining elder, Lew Nannup, as head trainer, the plant operator training program was able to do things differently.** However no-one involved with this project is under any illusions. The obstacles to be overcome often seem stronger than the resources available to be deployed against them. This report is designed to lay out the path to long term solutions. It is a written record of the things that are badly needed to bring about lasting opportunities for Aboriginal people in the mining industry. These solutions go beyond

politics and will require strong micro level work over a long period of time.

4. The recruitment of production workers and management is seen to be a process which is external to the business of mining. Unfortunately training and the development of human resources often comes a very long last in a hot market where production is everything and it is probably this factor alone that most discriminates against Indigenous workers. Indigenous Australians are severely disadvantaged by their access to school and trades education. **It has long been the view of Ngarda Civil & Mining's seasoned managers, who have recognised the innate talents of Aboriginal workers and machine operators, that something different needed to be done to address these problems.**
5. Ngarda Civil & Mining is a remarkable company with 50 per cent ownership of Ngarda Ngarli Yarndu Foundation & Indigenous Business Australia and 50 per cent Leighton Contractors. It's rise from a small Indigenous employment creation project to major Pilbara contractor in mining and civil works is simply unparalleled in contemporary Australia. One of Ngarda's proudest achievements is Indigenous employment that is consistently well over 50 per cent of its employees. From this first hand experience Ngarda has always gone where no other employers would go and it has invariably set an example and a model for other employers to emulate.
6. Ngarda's strong realisation was that without dedicated mining training aimed at developing pre-employment skills, the only Indigenous workers that could make it in the mining industry would be that small minority of Indigenous Australians who have completed secondary and trades education or have an extraordinary capacity for toughness and resilience and are capable of breaking through barriers on their own. It is this latter group that currently characterises the majority of senior Indigenous mining industry personnel. The question is: can a much larger group of Indigenous employees overcome the barriers that currently exclude them from the mining labour market? This was the problem that Ngarda wanted to crunch. Ngarda's Executive Chairman Barry Taylor reflecting the philosophy of his father Kangushot, who strove for Aboriginal economic independence from the famous 1946 Pilbara cattle station walk off, was that local Aboriginal people just needed an equal chance and they would shine.
7. But Taylor and Ngarda were definitely not advocating some mere, illusory equal opportunity process. They advocated bringing Indigenous people up to the point where they could walk on to a mine site as exemplary trainees. So much more than a normal trades or school or academy based training was necessary. To provide opportunities for the current generation of Aboriginal workers there had to be a "whatever it takes" approach. Whatever shortcomings needed to be addressed, Indigenous trainees were to be brought up to the level where they could get an equal opportunity of employment.

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8. No-one could have anticipated the “extra-training “problems that had to be addressed once this “whatever it takes” approach was taken. There are thickets of bureaucratic problems that need to be overcome just to give Indigenous Australians an equal chance at employment. To overcome these barriers requires deploying people with the highest skills on the ground where it matters. If this is done the mining industry will reap many benefits from employing Indigenous workers in rural and regional Australia. But it will be kidding itself if thinks that all that is needed is another training scheme, mining academy or tertiary or trades based institution.
 9. **The most important way of mobilising the large Indigenous workforce in regional and remote areas of Australia is to make a major investment in mining work readiness training and preparation.** Indigenous people show a unique prowess towards machine operation and a capacity to work long hours in harsh environments in remote and regional Australia. However, they are severely disadvantaged in securing the necessary paperwork and credentials that give them a passport into mining work. This, along with a vision of creating highly suitable mining workers with pre-knowledge of their industry, was behind the planning of the the plant operator training program. The purpose of the program is to overcome the multiple barriers that stop the productive deployment of the Indigenous workforce and to place them at the top of the queue in terms of qualifications and tacit knowledge and ability.
 10. In the current circumstances, when the focus of mining companies is squarely on maximising production on a 24/7 basis, the ability and need to focus on the minutiae of Indigenous people’s lives and the hindrances they face in gaining employment is outside the mining industry’s radar screen. With the best will in the world mining employers cannot get to the detail of why there are problems in recruiting, retaining and building a long term employment relationship with Indigenous workers. Similarly academic reports with a bevy of statistics can only report in vague generalities, and provide no guidance on what should be done.
 11. The seasoned managers and senior Indigenous leaders at Ngarda Civil & Mining have long had theories about improving Indigenous recruitment. **To further understand the problem of the lack of Indigenous employment recruitment it was necessary to learn by doing.** Uniquely Ngarda Civil & Mining were prepared to make a major investment in this process. It should be observed that several other potential regional partners were not prepared to take this risk. This was not an easy decision for Ngarda. It came after over two years of planning but even after this process, it came with significant risks of failure and created an unwanted distraction at a time of major expansion within the company.
 12. Completing the training program with a relatively unscreened or targeted group of trainees progressing from start to finish of the training program required a major effort. The trainees simply needed an

even chance to show their talents and capacities. Giving them an equal chance required a level of skill, resources and time that no-one could have anticipated. The training program required a level of investment and human resources that would not normally be devoted to a training program of this kind. This report outlines the learning that has come from Ngarda's courageous investment in the future of Indigenous Australia.





INTRODUCTION

Ngarda Civil & Mining's Machine Operator Work Readiness Training program was designed to train Indigenous people in Mining Machine Operations. It involved a 2 year planning process involving complex and sustained negotiations with Federal and State governments and agencies and other private sector partners.

With demand for resources at an exceptionally high level, the mining sector is currently experiencing boom conditions. In the Pilbara region the strength of the boom is reflected in the demand for skilled staff, including machine operators. At the same time as this boom is taking place, there continues to be ghetto-like, high levels of Indigenous unemployment, poverty, ill-health and distress in the regional and remote centres.

The challenge was to match the skill levels of local Indigenous people with the needs of industry. Some doubted whether this could be achieved. However, as this report shows, the training component of the whole process was the easiest thing to deliver. The Indigenous trainees had natural skills at machine operation achieving high levels of skill in a short period of time. The kind of machine operations that the trainees performed competently are usually only performed after over 12 months of employment in the mining industry. It was clear that there are many tacit skills and knowledge sets about the environment and the harsh Pilbara working conditions that had simply been overlooked when it came to assessing the competency and skill levels of local Indigenous people.

However there were many, many other barriers to overcome before the trainees could be classified as "work ready". Many of these barriers were of a complicated nature and in order to challenge and overcome these barriers this report has faithfully documented them. In some cases we have been successful in overcoming them, in other cases a resolute and purposeful long term effort involving all of the partners behind this project will be necessary.

The need to look at a more substantial longer term mining sector training Academy for Indigenous people in the Pilbara region remains; however the Mining Work Readiness training was designed to specifically address the general problem that many Indigenous people are overlooked for mining jobs despite being highly proficient with a number of attributes that the mining industry is looking for.

The training program was designed to provide Indigenous people with the competencies and experience to operate heavy machinery in the mining industry in the shortest reasonable time without compromising safety. This involved thorough classroom theoretical preparation, practical skill development, knowledge and intensive machine operator training including the completion of modules that can be used to obtain full accreditation, namely

Certificate III Civil Construction (Plant Operations). It was one of the standing principles of the training that even when high skill levels were achieved, full tickets and accreditation of competency would not be something that would be sought as an end in itself.

Our view was that we wanted to provide the most competent entry level mining employees that would become future operators and potentially Indigenous role models within Ngarda Civil and Mining. Like every other employee, however, the successful graduates would have to satisfy the work place based assessment and accreditation process. There is no quick way to become a competent machine operator. Only experience on the job over time in different conditions can bring competency and skill.

20 Indigenous people from Yandeyarra, Marble Bar and the South Hedland community were recruited to take part in the training. Some had limited or no prior mining experience. Others had been in graders, dozers, and trucks since they were young children.

The machine operator training was conducted at Pundulmurra College with the trainees based and living in Port Hedland and, remote community participants from Yandeyarra and Marble Bar, provided with accommodation at the College.

Ngarda Civil & Mining offered full time employment on a trainee wage for the eight weeks of the training and a year long traineeship on industry standard salary and conditions to all participants that successfully completed the pilot and future program.

If successful the training was to pave the way for other similar programs. Currently Ngarda require a significant number of vacancies for machine operators and estimate they could require up to a further 100 by June 2007.

The training involved three weeks of machine operations at a mock mine site in the 'burra pit' being used to develop the current Port Hedland Hospital.

The emphasis of the practical training was to operate the machinery correctly and safely; gradually allowing increased efficiency of operation as confidence developed. The mock mine environment approximated mine conditions while minimizing risk of damage to equipment and operators. The trainers provided instruction, coaching and practice sessions until the trainee displays competencies at an acceptable standard to operate plant and equipment under indirect supervision.

The initial budget for the training was approximately \$16,000 per trainee. The project was supported by BP Australia, Ngarda Ngarli Yarndu Foundation, Pundulmurra College, DEWR, Job Futures, ITEC, Bloodwood Tree Association, Port Hedland Shire and Aboriginal Economic Development. Special thanks to Mr. Brad Young and Brett Alexander of Outlook Contracting



Entry Point		Entry Level		Career Opportunity
Untrained, Unacknowledged Skilled, Unknown Indigenous Workforce	⇒	Work Ready People * Work Readiness Programs * Pre-Traineeship training	⇒	Semi-Skilled Roles
		Successful Completion ▽		
Semi-Skilled Roles	⇒	Entry Level Roles * Formal Traineeships * Operators * Administration * Supply	⇒	Supervisory Roles * Supervisor * Scheduling/dispatch
		Further Study ▽		
Apprenticeships	⇒	Skilled Tradespersons * Electrician * Welders * Mechanics * Fitters	⇒	Supervisory Roles/Middle Management Roles * Supervisor * Superintendent * Maintenance Planning * Project Roles
		Further Study ▽		Further Study ▽
Cadetships		Professional Roles * Engineers * Geologists * Environmental Scientists * Accountants * IT Professionals		Middle/Senior Management Roles * Technical Specialists * Technical Project Roles * Supervisor * Superintendent * Managers * Executive Management

OUTCOMES

Ngarda's Heavy Plant Operator Training (HPOT) was designed to bring the unknown or unacknowledged skilled Indigenous workforce to the forefront of mining industry employment. Many Indigenous people have a strong skill base that is just not registered through the current mining recruitment process. HPOT built on those skills, established credentials for those skills, provided the necessary inductions and requirements to ensure that the employees were high class, high calibre employees ready to start mining employment.

As the table above demonstrates (red highlight) work readiness training is a critical front end add on top of what most mining companies would regard as recruitment or human resource development. The training drills into an untapped human resource that is not on the radar screen of the mining industry's current recruitment process. It ensures that incoming Indigenous employees have the highest quality entry level and work ready credentials as well as skills, knowledge and understanding of mining and a core level of competency in heavy machine operations. In other words, the task is to take Indigenous people who would currently not be considered as potentially high level employees and to re-cast them so that they have the highest possible skill set as entry level candidates for plant operator jobs in the mining industry.

THE FIRST CURRICULUM:

Over the past two years of planning the Ngarda Work Readiness Training program the first curriculum evolved from a concept of running completely in a "mock mine" situation to the final outline which utilised the capacity of Pundulmurra College, accepted a structure within the Certificate III Civil Construction (Plant Operation) and utilised the Ngarda culture of Aboriginal leadership and seasoned mining management. Within each module Ngarda inductions, machine training documents and assessments were used where accredited and appropriate.

Week 1

Day 1 15/10/07

Morning session Campus induction, Enrolment forms, Tour of campus, Ngarda Employment Pack

BBQ welcome lunch (invitation to all working parties / management involved in pilot program)

Afternoon session Job Futures Forms, CDEP Forms, STEP Forms, Community and site inductions, Introduction to the Training Peter Botsman/Lou Nannup/Frank Schwalger

Day 2 16/10/07

Morning session What Ngarda is all about? Summary Regional Manager Alan Titley, Lou Nannup

Afternoon session DVD, Into / mine site working Health and hygiene

Day 3 17/10/07

Morning session Into to Mining Jargon via site visit, Basic OH&S, Sign safety/ personal safety (parts A & B)

Afternoon Session OH&S unit, Operational safety measures, OHS Assessment

Day 4 18/10/07

Morning session Drug and alcohol test (Pilbara Population Health), Identify & report Incidents / Tagging & signage: use Ngarda documentation
Identify & Assess risk Treat Risks & complete records, Practical: identify & report,tagging and signage:

Identify and assess risk: how to identify and assess then practical

Afternoon session Hazard identification – theory and practical: Take 5’a JHA’s

Day 5 19/10/07

Morning session *Continued and revision from day 1:* Identify & report Incidents / Tagging & signage: use Ngarda documentation

Identify & Assess risk Treat Risks & complete records, Practical: identify & report,tagging and signage:

Identify and assess risk: how to identify and assess then practical

Afternoon Session Hazard identification – via site visit, Take 5’a JHA’s - Take 5’s JHA done on site during visit -Group Discussion on take 5.s and JHA’s completed from on site visit

Week 2

Week Day 6 22 Oct.

Morning session Front End Loader Theory, Measurements & Calculations,

Afternoon Session Front End Loader Theory Instruments Assessment

Day 7 23 Oct.

Morning session Front End Loader (continued) Assessment, Skid Steer Video

Afternoon Session Skid Steer Loader, Instruments Assessment

Day 8 24 Oct.

Morning session Environment, Culture & Heritage Evelyn Kroczek

Afternoon Session Environment, Culture & Heritage, Evelyn Kroczek

Day 9 25 Oct.

Morning session 4WD: part 1, Theory, OH&S Use of all equipment and processes

Practice

Afternoon Session Practice communication: including mine site jargon,

Radio operations: use of radios

Practical: radio operations with demonstration and practical with 4wd equipment

Day 10 26 Oct.

Morning session BHP Nelson Point Site Tour

Afternoon Session BHP Nelson Point Site Tour, Revision, Skid Steer Practical

Week 3

Day 11 29 Oct.

Morning session Senior First Aid Certificate **Afternoon session** Senior First Aid Certificate

Day 12 30 Oct.

Morning session Senior First Aid Certificate **Afternoon Session** Senior First Aid Certificate

Day 13 31 Oct.

Morning session Senior First Aid Certificate, Exam and Theory **Afternoon Session** Senior First Aid Certificate Exam and Theory

Day 14 1 Nov.

Morning session Communication in workplace DVD, Theory assessment **Afternoon Session** Dump Truck DVD & Theory

Day 15 2 Nov.

Morning session Fire Safety, Skid Steer Pre-Start **Afternoon Session** Conduct Shovel Operations, Theory Assessment Sheet

Week 4

Day 16 5 Nov.

Morning session Front End Loader Theory, Assessment Sheet **Afternoon session** Self Assessment Checklist

Day 17 6 Nov.

Morning session DVD Front End Loader, DVD Bulk Material Truck Operations **Afternoon Session** Conduct Shovel Operations, Bulk Material Truck Operations

Day 18 7 Nov.

Morning session Front End Loader Theory, Assessment Sheet, Conduct Shovel Operations, Bulk Material Truck Operations **Afternoon Session** Self Assessment Checklist, DVD Front End Loader, DVD Bulk Material Truck Operations

Day 19 8 Nov.

Morning session Dozer DIIR Operator Technique, Dozer Theory Assessment, Dozer D10R Operator Technique **Afternoon Session** Grader Theory Assessment, Operate Light Vehicle Theory Assessment

Day 20 9 Nov.

Morning session OHS Assessment, Pre-start checks on dozer, Loader Practical **Afternoon Session** Pre-Start Training, (Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Grader), Light Vehicle Assessment

Week 5

Day 21 12 Nov.

Morning session OHS DVD Leanne Stone **Afternoon session** Loader Practical, Pre-Start Checks

Day 22 13 Nov.

Morning session JHA, Pre-Start Check, **Afternoon Session** Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck Pundulmurra Land-

scaping Job

Day 23 14 Nov.

Morning session Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Pundulmurra Landscaping Job

Afternoon Session Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Pundulmurra Landscaping Job

Day 24 15 Nov.

Morning session Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Pundulmurra Landscaping Job **Afternoon Session** Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck Pundulmurra Landscaping Job

Day 25 16 Nov.

Morning session Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Pundulmurra Landscaping Job **Afternoon Session** Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck Pundulmurra Landscaping Job

Week 6

Day 26 19 Nov.

Morning session Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Pundulmurra Landscaping Job **Afternoon session** Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck Pundulmurra Landscaping Job

Day 27 20 Nov.

Morning session Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Pundulmurra Landscaping Job **Afternoon Session** Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Pundulmurra Landscaping Job

Day 28 21 Nov.

Morning session Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck Finish Off Pundulmurra Landscaping Job **Afternoon Session** Planning for Burra Pit Landscaping/Mock Mine Simulation

Day 29 22 Nov.

Morning session D&A Test Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Excavator

Burra Pit Landscaping/Mock Min. Simulation Planning

Afternoon Session Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Excavator

Burra Pit Landscaping/Mock Min. Simulation Planning

Day 30 23 Nov.

Morning session D&A Test Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Excavator Burra Pit Landscaping/Mock Min. Simulation Planning **Afternoon Session** Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Excavator, Burra Pit Landscaping/Mock Min. Simulation Planning

Week 7

Day 31 26 Nov.

Morning session D&A Test, Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Excavator Burra Pit Landscaping/Mock Min. Simulation Planning **Afternoon session** Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Excavator Burra Pit Landscaping/Mock Min. Simulation Planning

Day 32 27 Nov.

Morning session D&A Test, Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Excavator Burra Pit Landscaping/Mock Min. Simulation Planning **Afternoon Session** Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Excavator Burra Pit Landscaping/Mock Min. Simulation Planning

Day 33 28 Nov.

Morning session D&A Test, Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Excavator, Burra Pit Landscaping/Mock Min. Simulation Planning **Afternoon Session** Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Excavator, Burra Pit Landscaping/Mock Min. Simulation Planning

Day 34 29 Nov.

Morning session D&A Test Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Excavator. Burra Pit Landscaping/Mock Mine Simulation **Afternoon Session** Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Excavator, Burra Pit Landscaping/Mock Mine Simulation

Day 35 30 Nov.

Morning session D&A Test, Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Excavator, Burra Pit Landscaping/Mock Mine Simulation **Afternoon Session** Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Excavator, Burra Pit Landscaping/Mock Mine Simulation

Week 8

Day 36 3 Dec.

Morning session D&A Test, Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Excavator, Burra Pit Landscaping/Mock Mine Simulation **Afternoon session** Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Excavator, Burra Pit Landscaping/Mock Mine Simulation

Day 37 4 Dec.

Morning session D&A Test, Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Excavator, Burra Pit Landscaping/Mock Mine Simulation **Afternoon Session** Practical Training on Grader, Skid Steer, Front End Loader, Tip Truck, Excavator, Burra Pit Landscaping/Mock Mine Simulation

Day 38 5 Dec.

Morning session *Graduation*, **Afternoon Session** *Revision*

Day 39 6 Dec.

Morning session Preparation of Personal Production Time-shares, Personal books on testing and assessments for course, 4WD Drive Practical (For some trainees) **Afternoon Session** Preparation of Personal Production Time-shares, Personal books on testing and assessments for course 4WD Drive

Practical (For some trainees)

Day 40 7 Dec.

Morning session Revision 4WD Drive Practical (For some trainees), **Afternoon Session** Revision 4WD Drive Practical (For some trainees)

The 20 components of the course were as follows:

1	W2060	(BCCCM1001B Follow OH&S Policies & Procedures)
2	C5006	(HLTFAIA) Apply Basic First Aid (Senior First Aid Certificate)
3	W2079	(BCCM3005B) Carry out site based risk control processes
4	W2061	(BCCM1002B) Conduct Workplace Communications
5	W2258	(MNMEGS312A) Recover a four wheel Drive Vehicle
6	W1758	(BCCCM20009B) Work in Confined Spaces
7	W2085	(BCCPO30008B) Conduct Skid Steer Loader Operations
8	W1740	Conduct Dozer Operations (Part 1, Plan, prepare & Conduct Operational Checks)
9	W1747	Conduct Wheeled Front Loader Operations (Part 1, Plan, Prepare & Conduct Operational Checks
10		Conduct Tip Truck Operations
11	W1744	Conduct Excavator Operations (Part 1, Plan, Prepare & Conduct Operational Checks)
12	W1750	Conduct Grader Operations (Part 1, Plan, Prepare & Conduct Operational Checks)
13	W2091	Conduct Water Cart Operations (Part 1, Plan, Prepare & Conduct Operational Checks)
14	W1748	Conduct Wheeled Front Loader Operations (Part 2, Safe and Effective Operation)
15	W1749	Conduct Wheeled Front Loader Operations
16	W1751	Conduct Grader Operations (Part 2 Safe and Effective Operations)
17	W1752	Conduct Grader Operations (Part 3, Plan, Select, Remove & Fit Attachments)
18	W1744	Conduct Excavator Operations (Part 2, Safe & Effective Operation)
19	W1744	Conduct Excavator Operations
20		HR Licence

It is also important to note that as part of all of this training and indicating a new level of cooperation with TAFE, fourteen Ngarda Civil & Mining modules and inductions were completed as part of the training. These inductions and training are normally completed over the first two years of employment

of an incoming trainee. There is a great deal more to be written about this dimension of the Ngarda Training curricula and in future courses a great deal of improvement in quality can be made.

RESULTS

The matrix on page 25 indicates the successful completion rate of the 20 training components by the twenty trainees. The TAFE modules, components of Certificates II & III of Civil Construction (Heavy Plant Operation) are represented by the top columns of the table and the 20 original trainees are represented by the rows of the table. An asterisk indicates that the module has been started but needs to be completed in the next phase of the trainees training at work. A cross indicates that the training has been completed. P indicates that the results for that component are pending. NYS indicates that an application for an extraordinary licence has not yet been submitted due to a suspension order.

It should be noted that Parts 2 & 3 of heavy plant machine operations are usually completed over a period of twelve to twenty four months. The point of the work readiness training is to get trainees into the position where these later modules can be completed at a later date on a mining site. Some of the trainees had the capacity and skill to complete these modules over a period of eight weeks. No-one expected this result and indeed the trainers were extremely wary about giving approval to Parts 2 & 3 practical aspects of the heavy machinery operators. Trainees had to show an outstanding level of skill to achieve a successful completion. It is important to observe here that this does not mean that the trainees are efficient high production operators but at this stage they have passed all TAFE components necessary for them to be able to operate a machine on their own, safely within a production environment. In other words, they are competent, inducted entry level employees who are now ready to do the skill development necessary to ensure they are high level competent production workers.

All of the trainees completed the modules on the most important modules involving health and safety, drug and alcohol, theoretical studies of machines and mine site inductions. When the course was first designed it was not expected that the trainees would proceed to much more than pre-starts, take 5s and basic operations. They not only went beyond this phase of operations but successfully completed two projects including the restoration of a burra pit. This gave them practical experience far beyond that originally envisioned in the planning stages of the work readiness training.

It is important not to over state the level of competency or achievement of the trainees. The work readiness training operation is meant to produce outstanding work ready candidates for full time traineeships for a variety of semi-skilled positions. This result was achieved. But the trainees are trainees not yet fully competent production workers. The same level of care and development that applies to the development of any worker needs to be provided for the incoming trainees. In fact careful thought needs to be given to the transition that the new generation of Ngarda trainees make into the full time productive workforce. (See Barrier 22) We recommend that in addition

to the excellent mentoring provided by Mr. Willie Jumbo there be a skills development and workplace orientation coach and the best person to fulfil this role is Mr. Lew Nannup who has worked as head trainer for the Ngarda plant operator training course. Mr. Nannup, along with the coordinator, worked 40 straight days to ensure that the course was a success. In future courses Mr. Nannup, and Indigenous mining pioneer, with as much knowledge as the senior executives of Ngarda, with his thirty years of plant experience in the mining industry, should play an advisory and coaching role as head trainer and workplace coach. He should be assisted by trainer assessors of his own choosing that can conduct the more active roles within the machines each day.

TEMPERATURES



As the Chart above demonstrates the trainees worked in tough conditions. Most of the plant did not have air conditioning. The ten hour practical training days were quite demanding. Most trainees thrived in the heat. They were used to the conditions, and for many the hot part of the year is their favourite season.

ATTENDANCE



The attendance over the eight weeks of the training and measured by the hours worked ranged from 100 per cent in the first week to a low of 86 per

cent in the third week. There were some external factors at play that have been analysed in the barriers and solutions section of this report. For example, in week two and part of week three of the course it was worth more than double the training remuneration for one of the trainees to stay in prison in order to pay off accrued fines. The first three weeks also involved intensive class room theory and inductions.

These figures also reflect the fact that in week 6 one of the trainees dropped out of the training completely because of law and order matters. The attendances were not adjusted to account for this, so that the hours dropped by the effect of this situation are indicated in the chart. It should be noted that before dropping out the trainee had not missed a day of attendance. In Week 7 another trainee was not able to attend for five days due to injuries arising from domestic violence.

Every trainee had to do battle with a range of severe environmental disincentives to attend the training. However as can be deduced from this, the commitment of all the trainees was most apparent throughout the training course. At times the trainers and coordinator were disappointed with the lack of attendance particularly preceding or following weekends or following pay-day. Structural changes to the way that payments are made have been recommended in this report and questions of work place incentives to discourage days off before and after weekends should also be considered.



DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTS

Drug and alcohol tests were continued on a random basis for the first four weeks of the course. 246 alcohol tests were conducted and 20 more expensive drug and alcohol tests were performed. In the second week of the practical training a breathalyser test was instituted at the start of work each day for every trainee. This followed a comprehensive drug and alcohol training induction in which the effects of drug and alcohol were discussed in great detail. The results of the drug and alcohol tests are indicated above.

Part of the reason for the success of this process lay in the comprehensive discussions held before the testing started. Each trainee knew that positive

results would result in loss of pay, inability to participate in the training and for successive positive results, possible dismissal from the training program.

Over the eight weeks there were 5 positive results for alcohol and one positive drug and alcohol test occurred at the very beginning of the training before most of the class room discussion on drugs and alcohol occurred.

In each case of a positive result trainees were counselled about the consequences of positive results for employment within the mining industry. In every case the positive results for alcohol were a result of drinking occurring the previous evening. Most of the education here was about how only a few drinks in a twelve hour period before work could result in a positive alcohol test that would jeopardise employment through instant dismissal on many mining sites. The heavy drinking environment, which all of the trainees were accustomed to, was a constant challenge and barrier. Most trainees did not drink at all through the week and some did not drink at all from the date of the first interview for places within the training program. But the culture of alcohol is all pervasive and deadly for Indigenous people and requires ongoing thought, training and counselling.

COSTS



The overall costs of the training remain to be finally calculated. However the initial costings of the training are captured in the chart above. It was initially estimated that the costs of the training would be between \$15,000 and \$25,000 per trainee, depending on site, hire of equipment and access to accommodation and training facilities. Of this it was anticipated that Ngarda and private sector partners and sponsors would bear about 60 per cent of all costs, Federal government would bear about 20 per cent of the costs and State government the remaining 20 per cent.

While the exact costs of the training are still to be calculated the proportion of training costs are unlikely to change. It is expected that significant reductions in costs can be made as the training course evolves, however, this is also very much dependent on the site in which the training is conducted.

29 per cent of the costs went to trainer wages, accommodation and administration. It was thought that this sum might be lowered for future training programs, however, given that the major finding of the report is that a variety of non-training barriers and challenges needed to be tackled, it may well be that this figure is a good indicator of the costs of future projects and that this proportion of the sum is well justified. 25 per cent of the costs were to be spent on the hire and fuel of plant and equipment. Again this seems to be a good indicator. It is essential that reliable plant and equipment is on hand for the duration of the training program. One of the improvements for a future curricula is to bring forward some practical components of the training so that trainees experience plant operations at an earlier stage in the course. This may increase the hire of plant and equipment. Given the hot production culture of the Pilbara it is also essential that plant and equipment be booked well in advance of the training and it is expected that a premium will have to be paid for such a privilege. 21 per cent of the costs went to trainee wages and employment costs. This is an important cost that distinguishes the Ngarda training from other training programs in which trainees are not taken on as full time employees. 'There is too much training and not enough employment' is the cry throughout Indigenous Australia and it is a well justified grievance. Paying a full time wage and signing up each trainee as a fully fledged employee is a signal of the major commitment of the company to the project. 15 per cent of the costs of the training went to student accommodation and messing. It is likely that this sum will increase in future training projects. Accommodation and messing is an essential way of stabilising the environment in which a trainee can take on new challenges and learning. The last 10 per cent of the project costs went to TAFE Enrolment fees, drug and alcohol testing and protective clothing and equipment.



BARRIERS & CHALLENGES

From the outset the Heavy Plant Operator Training program involved strong mentoring and the support of the Indigenous community. But this ingredient is often cited as a magical cure for all ills. Strong community and family support is necessary to bring about strong results in training and work. But strong moral and traditional support alone is not enough to win through the many barriers and challenges Indigenous people face when trying to secure employment in the mining industry. To be effective training has to be more than training. The motto of the Heavy Plant Operator Training program was 'go the extra mile' and the principle adopted through out the training program by the trainers and coordinator was "whatever it takes". If sitting in a court room for days on end meant that a barrier could be overcome then it was done. If talking to a Homeswest official was the best way to overcome a barrier then that was done. If going through a database with a Centrelink worker meant that a disincentive to quitting the training was overcome then that was done. If driving a bus to pick up people who had no licence and no means of transport meant that trainees would feel an extra incentive to come to the training then it was done. If talking to uncles, fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, cousins meant more encouragement to come to work and training on time then it was done. What ever it took. So the added ingredient of the Ngarda approach was that beyond just training every barrier, challenge and obstacle that stopped an Indigenous person gaining a fair opportunity of employment was taken on. Many of the barriers stopping Indigenous people from winning a fair go at work can and should be removed by the concerted efforts of mining employers, State and Federal government and by the ongoing action of Indigenous people and communities. We document them here, along with solutions and responsibilities for future work.



**TO RECOGNISE
POTENTIALLY
OUTSTANDING
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BEING ABLE TO
REGISTER THE TACIT
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UNDERSTANDING
THAT INDIGENOUS
MEN WHO HAVE BEEN
THROUGH
TRADITIONAL LAW
HAVE OF THEIR
ENVIRONMENT. THIS
IS AS POTENTIALLY
IMPORTANT AS
CONVENTIONAL
TRAINING AND
EDUCATION.
HOWEVER ALL TO
FREQUENTLY THESE
THINGS ARE NOT
RECORDED ON
CONVENTIONAL
RESUMES. NOR ARE
THEY DISCUSSED IN
CONVENTIONAL
INTERVIEWS.**

BARRIER 1: THE INITIAL COSTS AND SOURCES OF FINANCE FOR INDIGENOUS WORK READINESS MINING TRAINING

One of the significant disincentives for Indigenous mining work readiness training is its initial high costs. The table below provides an approximate estimate of the costs of mainstream and Indigenous recruitment.

Step	Mainstream	Indigenous
Advertise/Promote	- advertise in newspapers, websites with employment agencies Cost per recruitment; \$1-5000 estimate	- community visits, hand outs, family communications, mentors - mentors and Indigenous personnel - community notice board Cost per recruitment: \$2-7000 estimate
Processing Applications/ Resumes, Short listing and Selection	- processing of hard copy or electronic submissions - assessing applications and resumes - telephone interviews and reference checks - final short list - interview by HR officer - medical, alcohol & drug testing - security clearance Cost per recruitment: \$3-6000 estimate	- mentors and community communications exercises -liaison with CDEP and Job Agencies - assistance in preparing applications - physical collection of applications and resumes - interview by trainers, mentors, hr reps, managers - cultural and mainstream checks Cost per recruitment: \$2-8000 estimate
Work readiness training	\$0	- Whatever is necessary to ensure applicants are first class candidates for entry level mining training positions including multiple issues as documented in this report Cost per recruitment: \$12-16,000 estimate
Offers of Employment	- successful & unsuccessful applicants informed in writing Cost per recruitment: \$500-1000 estimate	- successful graduates of work readiness training are offered longer term contracts of employment Cost per recruitment: \$500-1000 estimate
Ongoing Employee Retention Programs	- financial incentives, anti-poaching strategies, significant oncosts Cost per recruitment unknown	- mentoring, cultural support, financial incentives, strategic oncosts, work coaching Cost per recruitment unknown
Total	\$4,500-12,000	\$18,500 - 32,000 with training support \$9,600 - \$19,200

Mainstream employees involve a cheaper initial outlay for mining employers. However if training support and finance

could be simplified and more readily obtainable than the gap between Indigenous and mainstream employment can be significantly reduced. Moreover there are potentially large savings from the employment of local Indigenous labour over time. Mainstream employees often do not have experience or knowledge of local environments and sometimes cannot take the harsh conditions of the Pilbara. There is a major housing shortage in all mining regions and so the on-costs associated with mainstream employees are extremely high and the costs of retaining such workers in a relatively tight labour market are very high. Our view is that the investment in an Indigenous labour force, with a strong work readiness program and ongoing employee retention program, would be comparatively cost efficient. This view remains to be tested. However our hypothesis is strong for a number of reasons. Indigenous people often have a natural affinity with machine operation. They often have multiple sources of housing and accommodation in areas throughout the Pilbara region and given a strong mentoring and retention program make loyal, long term workers. Furthermore the incentives to do well on behalf of their family and community are also extremely strong. Nevertheless to gain access to the Indigenous labour force means overcoming a series of barriers which impede their recruitment, employment and retention as mining workers.

The other consideration for the mining industry is that it is fast reaching the point where it is difficult to recruit skilled and experienced mainstream labour for remote and regional areas. The Indigenous labour force in this context comes into contention as a strong contributor to profitability and the future development of the mining industry.

Finally the commitment of the minerals industry to increasing Indigenous workforce participation and the increasing rights of traditional owners to negotiate jobs for Indigenous community members is a major factor in making investments in Indigenous employment and participation worthwhile and profitable.

SOLUTIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Indigenous workforce participation will not increase through the imposition of quotas or percentages but rather a recognition that Indigenous employees are a comparatively profitable human resources investment. Individual mining companies must do the detailed work, often involving an assessment of off balance sheet externalities, to demonstrate to themselves and their shareholders that Indigenous workers are strong assets. Responsibility: Individual Mining Companies

Indigenous regional and remote employees involve heavy ini-

tial outlays but pay off these costs over time through cheaper on-costs than those associated with mainstream employees which are becoming considerable imposts for most mining companies. Employers and the minerals industry should continue to commission careful analysis and agree on the break-even costs of recruiting and retaining Indigenous employees, This should form the basis of a reasonable budget for pre-employment training and ongoing Indigenous employment retention programs. Responsibility: Minerals Industry Employers

Federal and State governments should also pay special attention to the break-even costs of recruiting and retaining Indigenous employees and provide supplemental finance to ensure that these programs and strategies can readily be put in place. Responsibility: Federal and State government Also on this see Barrier 2.



Lou Nannup - Mining Elder & Head Trainer

**BARRIER 2: POOR
INFORMATION &
ACCESS TO
SUPPLEMENTAL
GOVERNMENT
SUPPORT FOR
INDIGENOUS
TRAINING AND
EMPLOYMENT
RETENTION
PROGRAMS**

It should be remembered that compulsory, integrated primary and secondary Indigenous education is only a post war phenomenon in most Australian states. The mining industry should not be expected to meet all of the costs of the failure of the society to provide equal training and education opportunities for Indigenous Australians over time and in the current situation. For most Australians meeting the costs of Year 1-12 education and post school education and training have been regarded as a right since before the turn of the century. However if you are an Indigenous Australian in a remote community, the issue of who will meet the costs of your education and training and guarantee its quality has been much less certain. This is a situation where no-one wants to own or take responsibility for contemporary ramifications of a significant historical problem. State and Federal governments do not want to acknowledge the price of the inadequacy of current education and training for Indigenous people and employers, quite understandably, do not see that they should have to pay for the costs of this inadequacy in order to generate potential employees. As a result, the potential to develop smart solutions such as Ngarda Civil & Mining's pre-employment training is often simply lost or seen to be too hard. This makes Ngarda Civil & Mining's commitment to the current program of great note and significance.

**SOLUTION &
RESPONSIBILITIES**

Given the historical neglect of Indigenous employment and training, a fair ratio of training costs might be 60 per cent Federal and State government and 40 per cent mining employers. However, in actuality the pilot program involved costs of about 62 per cent Ngarda Civil & Mining, with 38 per cent of the costs being shared by Federal and State government agencies and other partners. A fair ratio of costs should be agreed upon and used as the basis for planning pre-employment training and Indigenous employment retention programs. Responsibility: Mining Industry Employers and Federal and State government Education and Training Agencies

**BARRIER 3:
POTENTIAL SOURCES
OF GOVERNMENT
SUPPORT & FINANCE
FOR THE INITIAL HIGH
COSTS OF
INDIGENOUS MINING
TRAINING ARE
HIGHLY
COMPLICATED AND
BUREAUCRATIC.**

Not only is the ratio of costs for Indigenous pre-employment training prohibitive, for mining industry employers to wed together viable finance involves a nightmarish traversal of Federal and State funding agencies, employment agencies, education and training institutions. One of the principal reasons for the successful implementation of the pilot plant machine operator training course was the initial grant provided by the WA's Indigenous Economic Development, and the inside knowledge and coordination provided by an outstanding State public servant Peter Donovan, this allowed for some of the implementation and planning costs to be met. However even with this funding and support most employers would understandably balk at the complex bureaucratic processes that determine Indigenous training and skill development.

**SOLUTIONS &
RESPONSIBILITIES.**

Federal and State governments should provide funding for multi-skilled consultants with the capacity to wed together the various Federal and State government funding programs to the point where it becomes viable to conduct Indigenous pre-employment training. Responsibility: Federal and State Government

Continually educate Federal and State governments about the need to simplify the financing of Indigenous pre-employment training and preparations particularly for training programs involving 20-30 participants. Responsibility: Mining Industry Association and individual mining companies

Adopt a top down and bottom up strategy in relation to bureaucratic blockages. In other words find the problems at grass roots levels and refer them to the highest levels of the bureaucracy to remove the obstacles. This involves a strong level of cooperation between training and development personnel and people of appropriate status in the company who can deal with Ministers and Senior bureaucrats. Within Ngarda Civil & Mining the Executive Chairman Barry Taylor acted as a champion of the training program and was able to finesse many problems that were encountered in the setting up the training program. Responsibility: Individual mining companies.

**BARRIER 4: THE
WELFARIST NATURE
OF TRAINING
INVESTMENT
FUNDING**

There is an old saying in Indigenous Australia: “Blackfellas have had more training than the clowns in the Moscow Circus. We want jobs”. It is ironical in this context that most of the sources of funding available to support pre-employment training require Indigenous Australians to be unemployed trainees. In effect the system rewards the funding of training programs which go no-where other than to produce pieces of paper that are increasingly regarded as no indication of an employees potential. There are a very large number of Indigenous people drifting from training program to training program with great disenchantment and down-heartedness with a closet filled with qualifications and tickets. It should also be observed here that normal training programs involve about 20 hours a week of contact teaching. So the habits of work, and building up the endurance necessary to work a 12 hour shift in the mining industry is not part of the training orientation.

**SOLUTIONS &
RESPONSIBILITIES**

In the Ngarda Civil & Mining plant operator training program all trainees were hired on contract from the day they began their training. This was insisted upon by Ngarda’s Human Resources Manager Vickie Jolliffe and was one of the winning factors of the program. It ensured that trainees viewed the program as more than just another training program. It also provided an incentive for finishing the training in order to win further entitlements. There is no way that you can fake employment. All trainees were employed with full entitlements including superannuation and all other entitlements of an employee. It was an incentive to finish the training in order to obtain greater pay and conditions. So from day one the trainees, many of whom, had never received superannuation or other entitlements, had to learn about these things and to familiarise themselves with the paperwork and requirements involved. A full briefing about these matters and entitlements is a very useful training exercise in itself which further cements the relationship between the trainee and the employer. All this completely shifts training from a welfarist to a real jobs orientation. Responsibility: Individual Mining Companies/Employers

BARRIER 5: CHANGES TO CDEP CREATE A POVERTY TRAP OF PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

Those participants who did not have access to the CDEP because of the Federal Government's abolition of CDEP in the Port Hedland area were disadvantaged as against who entered the training programs from Marble Bar and Yandeyarra CDEP. For these Marble Bar and Yandeyarra participants the CDEP payment could readily be used as a partial financing of the wage component of the training program. However with the abolition of CDEP the residents of Port Hedland and other urban communities could not access any wage subsidy for the plant operator training.

SOLUTIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Either the Federal government should allow trainees for mining industry pre-employment training to sign on to a CDEP so that the wage subsidy component can be used to finance a trainees costs or it should abolish the requirement that the job seekers allowance cannot fund wage subsidies for those undertaking trainee employees undertaking training. Responsibility: Federal Government



**BARRIER 6:
MONOPOLIES OF
INFORMATION/LACK
OF TRANSPARENCY**

The complication for regional city based Indigenous people of moving from CDEP to Job Network and Centrelink payments is that the amount of subsidy for training is dependent on the negotiations an employer conducts with a Job Network Provider. There are several problems here. The actual conditions of funding for Indigenous training are unclear and the nature of the rules and conditions applying to training funding varies from provider to provider. A significant problem here is that the Job Network Funder is the holder of the key pieces of knowledge and information that is available to support Indigenous training and this can only be obtained with a considerable amount of information

**SOLUTIONS &
RESPONSIBILITIES**

Employers need to be given clear information about the sum of funding available to support the training and development of their potential employees so that they can plan training strategies particularly in areas where there are skill shortages in regional and remote Australia. Government agencies or government contracted groups should not be the master of this information, merely its keepers. Responsibility: Federal government



BARRIER 7: FUNDING FOR TRAINING IS TIED TO PARTICIPANTS INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES, PROHIBITING THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR MULTIPLE PARTICIPANTS

Most employers would never have the time to negotiate with Job Network Providers about subsidies for training. Having to negotiate with multiple Job Network Providers on the basis of each potential candidates personal employment history and job agency affiliation is a costly and complicated process that employers simply cannot afford. Because Ngarda Civil & Mining is absolutely committed to the employment of Indigenous trainees, and because it had secured funding from the State government to partially cover this time consuming exercise, it was able to cut through the labyrinth. The Job Futures Manager in Port Hedland Shaun Fowler should be commended for providing a sum of \$5200 per trainee for the eight week training program. This set a precedent which could be negotiated with other Job Network providers. Thus Ngarda Civil & Mining was able to obtain about 33 per cent of the costs of the training.

SOLUTIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES:

*Pre-employment training programs conducted by employers should be eligible for a standard sum per trainee regardless of their individual circumstances or Job Network provider.
Responsibility: Federal Government*



**BARRIER 8 ABSTUDY
RECIPIENTS ARE
EXCLUDED FROM
RECEIVING FUNDING
FOR MINING WORK
READINESS TRAINING**

Despite the fact that one of the candidates for the Ngarda Work Readiness Training Program was not able to receive the training subsidy negotiated with Job Futures, on the basis that he had already received an Abstudy allowance, Ngarda Civil & Mining accepted the extra costs of training this candidate. However this is a situation which must be rectified. It effectively discriminates against trainees who have done or are doing extra studies. The practical training and study that is able to be done when a job and income are guaranteed such as that of the Ngarda work readiness training should not be negated in favour of institutional studies.

**SOLUTIONS AND
RESPONSIBILITIES**

Receipt of Abstudy funding should not be a basis for excluding candidates for mining work readiness training. Responsibility: Federal Government



**...MANY MIDDLE AGED
INDIGENOUS MEN OF REMOTE
COMMUNITIES...HAVE NEVER
EVER HAD THE OPPORTUNITY
TO OBTAIN A LICENCE. MANY
DRIVE UN-REGISTERED CARS
ON A NETWORK OF BUSH
TRACKS AND ROADS.
INVARIABLY WHEN THEY
HAVE TO CROSS A
STATUTORILY DEFINED ROAD
OR A HIGHWAY THEY ARE
PROSECUTED BY POLICE FOR
BEING UNLICENSED AND
DRIVING AN UNREGISTERED
VEHICLE AND A LONG,
UNENDING CYCLE OF
PROSECUTIONS BEGINS THAT
FREQUENTLY LEADS TO THE
LOSS OF A DRIVERS LICENCE
FOR LIFE AND JAIL....
HOWEVER, THESE SAME
BUSH DRIVERS HAVE THE
HIGHEST LEVELS OF SKILLS,
THEY HAVE UNPARALLELED
BUSH SKILLS AND
KNOWLEDGE, THEY CAN FIND
THE SHORTEST AND SAFEST
ROUTES THROUGH PERILOUS
DESERT COUNTRY AND THEY
CAN FIX VEHICULAR
PROBLEMS THAT WOULD
PARALYSE MOST
COMMUTERS. FOR ALL THESE
REASONS INDIGENOUS MEN
ADAPT TO THE HIGHEST
LEVELS OF MACHINE
OPERATIONS IN THE
SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME
AND WOULD MAKE AN
OUTSTANDING
CONTRIBUTION TO THE
MINING INDUSTRY IF THE
EXTERNAL LICENSING AND
LAW AND ORDER PROBLEMS
IN WHICH THERE ARE
ENVELOPED FROM AN EARLY
AGE CAN BE
SYSTEMATICALLY TACKLED.**

BARRIER 9: DEWR'S STEP PROGRAM DOES NOT ADEQUATELY FUND WORK READINESS TRAINING.

Mining employers, other than those with an absolute commitment to Indigenous mining employment such as Ngarda Civil & Mining, are reluctant to collaborate or to meet the initial high costs of Indigenous mining work readiness training. DEWR's STEP program is supposed to provide funding to encourage Indigenous and unemployed people to move into paid employment. It in effect provided 25 per cent of the costs of the eight week plant operator training program. It provided a further sum based on the completion of a one year period of employment. It is clear that this would not be an incentive for most employers who, with the best will in the world, would see the prospect of investing a substantial sum in training and then employing unskilled Indigenous trainees for this period of time as a risk. STEP therefore does not adequately fund the most important component of the Indigenous transition to job process.

SOLUTION

There should be a separate STEP fund that funds Indigenous work readiness training. Responsibility: Federal Government



BARRIER 10: MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSING & RENEWAL

For the mining industry as a whole one blemish on a drivers licence frequently means that the candidate is screened out of the recruitment process. On the results of the Ngarda Mining Work Readiness training program over 70 per cent of Indigenous men would not be able to obtain mining work on this basis alone. This despite the fact that all of the candidates for the training were natural machine operators and drivers with extraordinary awareness about their tasks and their environment.

Of the major barriers facing Indigenous people licensing issues is the greatest obstacle to being recruited into mining jobs. Of the twenty candidates for the plant operator training strategy fourteen or 70 per cent of the applicants had major problems with drivers licences that required much painstaking work just to get to the point where applications for extraordinary licences or applications for learner permits could be lodged.

It should be noted that many middle aged Indigenous men of remote communities have frequently been driving from the earliest possible age but have never ever had the opportunity to obtain a licence. Many drive un-registered cars on a network of bush tracks and roads. Invariably when they have to cross a statutorily defined road or a highway they are prosecuted by police for being unlicensed and driving an unregistered vehicle and a long, unending cycle of prosecutions begins that frequently leads to the loss of a drivers licence for life and jail. The likelihood of prosecution is exacerbated by the fact that in the informal Indigenous bush driving network the common rules of the road are very different from those on the high way and the likelihood of alcohol being consumed is high. But these bush drivers have the highest levels of skills, they have unparalleled bush skills and knowledge, they can find the shortest and safest routes through perilous desert country and they can fix vehicular problems that would paralyze most commuters. For all these reasons Indigenous men adapt to the highest levels of machine operations in the shortest possible time and would make an outstanding contribution to the mining industry if the external licensing and law and order problems in which there are enveloped from an early age can be systematically tackled. For the most part this has to be done on an individual basis.

Unravelling this cycle of prosecutions is an onerous task. Most training organizations would not regard working with individu-

Court No. PH 2355/07

South Hedland Magistrates Court
of Western Australia

NOTICE OF RESULT OF HEARING

Take notice that on the hearing of an application under section 76 (1) of the Road Traffic Act, 1974 on the 22nd day of November 2007 the Court made an order on the following terms:

Extraordinary licence varied to include, to drive to and from work and for the purposes of employment within a 500km radius of South Hedland Post Office in the course of his employment with Ngarda Civil and Mining



Court Officer, South Hedland

APPLICANT:

NAME: Shane William FOLEY
ADDRESS: 7b Denman Place, SOUTH HEDLAND 6722
6 February 1970

als to get the necessary fines, paperwork, identification credentials and other materials together to apply for a licence as within their brief. But if the high quality workforce that is stopped from working because of this problem is to be harnessed then this is exactly what must happen. It is the estimate of this report writer that beyond the eight weeks of training, another twelve weeks of work may be needed to work through the licensing issues of each Indigenous individual with these common licensing problems.

Within the Pilbara licensing has been recognized as an important issue. Bloodwood Tree Association has been formed to provide a service for helping Indigenous people to obtain their drivers licences and Bloodwood Tree cooperated with the Ngarda mining work readiness project through allowing the use of their truck for the mock mine and practical training aspects.

However, it is clear that much more than just a drivers licence testing and instruction organisation is needed. Almost every Aboriginal person above the age of eighteen in a remote area community is likely to have a history of driving offences that require a painstaking process of paying off fines, applications for extraordinary licences, applications for learners permits, and a general unshackling of multiple suspensions, breaches and disqualifications.

Case Study

The task of the Ngarda mining work readiness training was to eliminate any barriers that would stop the Indigenous trainees from obtaining a job on a mining site as a plant operator. The licensing characteristics of the trainees varied from those who had an HR licence, those who had C Class drivers licences and those who had over a period of years lost their drivers licences for traffic offences of varying severity. It was an objective of the training course to ensure that all trainees had a licence that would allow them to drive to work and to operate machines at work with a licence. For fourteen trainees this meant applying for and obtaining an extra-ordinary drivers licence. Applying for extraordinary licences is an onerous task for an employer when it involves multiple Aboriginal applicants. It means dealing with two State bureaucracies: the justice and court bureaucracy and the licensing administration bureaucracy. Sort out the licensing issues for the trainees was one of the more onerous tasks of the project. The information provided by court and

justice and licensing administrations is often at odds. Without a dedicated staff who know exactly what the law and administrative requirements are, the tasks are difficult and frequently lead to a very large amount of time being wasted.

For a remote area Aboriginal person, it is the contention of this report that, it would be simply impossible to obtain an extraordinary level without high level help and support. Notwithstanding the sympathetic supporters within the South Hedland Magistrates Court and the Corrective Services Staff it took all of the wit, skills, determination and stamina of all of those associated with the training course to deliver a basic level of licensing to all of the trainees. At the end of the course we failed to deliver licences to all trainees because it was simply not possible to ensure that all of the aspects of the licensing requirements could be delivered within an eight week time frame. However the process of obtain a licence had been started.

One of the seemingly more straight forward processes was to vary an extraordinary licence of one of the trainees. This trainee had lost his licence in the early 2000s. However he had two years experience as a plant operator at Argyle Diamonds and was a relatively skilled operator. He had been granted an extraordinary licence in 2005 in the Broome area for non-mining employment involving a well known household pest rid service. The advice from the South Hedland Magistrates Court was that there was no need to apply for another extraordinary licence for this trainee. A simple application to vary the original extraordinary licence was needed. As a result of this advice an application to vary the licence was lodged and this went through the South Hedland Magistrates court with the full support of the magistrate on November 22, 2007. To validate the variation required a visit to the South Hedland Post Office who are the administrative centre for licensing in the area. After bringing the decision of the court to the post office for validation the trainee was told that the extraordinary licence could not be granted because the original extraordinary licence had been suspended. This is the normal train of events when an employee leaves the employment of the sponsor of the extraordinary licence. This had occurred when the trainee had left Broome to return to his home in South Hedland. So at this stage the information from the licensing bureaucracy completely contradicted the information from the justice department. Most Aboriginal people would have gone no further than this advice. However, the paperwork for a re-application for an

extraordinary licence was then prepared and once again a visit was made to the South Hedland Justice Complex to lodge a new application for an extraordinary licence on behalf of the trainee. Once at the Justice Complex the original advice to vary the Broome based extraordinary licence was queried. Only because the advice from the Justice Department was so strong, another trip to the Post Office was made, and this time the licensing department in Perth was called. Their advice was that in addition to the original extraordinary licence being granted and then suspended another application for an extraordinary licence had been lodged, this time by Job Futures, on behalf of the trainee but that it had not been validated and this was why the variation sought could not be granted. At this stage again most Indigenous and non-Indigenous people would have given up with the variation process and simply lodged another application for an extraordinary licence. The problem here is that applying for a new extraordinary licence is a time consuming process and involves a deal of paperwork, and at best a half day visit to the Magistrates court by sponsoring employer and employee. On a whim Broome Court was phoned and the decision for the un-validated extraordinary was faxed to the South Hedland Court. This along with the Nov. 22 Magistrates Court decision was then taken to the Post Office. The idea was to make a payment to validate the original extraordinary licence application so then also validating the variation of the extraordinary licence. Another visit was made to the South Hedland Post Office. The process was explained. However after a phone call to Perth it was maintained that the variation of the extraordinary licence could not be made. Again at this stage most people would have given up. However yet another phone call was made to the Licensing head office in Perth. It was explained that the decision of the Broome Court was on hand and the variation approved by the South Hedland Magistrates court was on hand. Thankfully the licensing branch agreed to phone up South Hedland post office to approve the validation of the existing extraordinary licence and then subsequently the variation of the licence allowing the trainee to operate in the Port Hedland region. South Hedland Post Office then finally agreed to accept payment of \$168.30 thus validating the extraordinary licence. So an application process which had started three weeks earlier and which had required a court appearance that began at 9.00 am on November 22, was finally resolved after a full days efforts at 3.30pm on November 22.

It should be noted that the variation process is a relatively simple process when compared to the full application of an extraordinary licence.

SOLUTIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Licensing matters are currently a vast problem area for Indigenous people when seeking mining work, however they can become a major work and training incentive.

Thanks to the very enlightened support of South Hedland's local magistrate and the work and support of police prosecutors of South Hedland Police and the support of Neil Fong, WA's Assistant Commissioner of Corrective Services, a tremendous breakthrough and precedent has been set with the legal recognition of Ngarda's Mining Work Readiness Training as the basis for the granting of an extraordinary licence that gives a successful trainee full driving rights and legal status on mining sites.

The nineteen modules of the Certificate III Civil Construction (Plant Operation) which involve drug and alcohol education, daily alcohol tests during the practical training and rigorous theoretical and practical training in the operation of heavy plant and machinery have been recognized as the basis for a trainee who has lost his or her licence to gain an extraordinary licence. Once an extraordinary licence has been granted the very beneficial effect is that the licensee must maintain his or her employment to retain that extraordinary licence. This creates a powerful incentive for successful licences to overcome great barriers to continue their employment and to guard their licences by very careful driving and safety awareness. This is a major win solution for the prospective mining employee, mining employers, police, the justice system and the community as a whole. In the opinion of this report writer it is perhaps the most significant single achievement of the mining work readiness training which will open up a whole new horizon for thousands of potential Indigenous mining employees. It is also one of the powerful reasons for the continuation of the mining work readiness training and the continuing relationship that has been forged between police, the justice system, Ngarda Civil and Mining and other mining industry employers. The task ahead is to recognize the precedent that has been set, namely using the nineteen modules of the Certificate III in Civil Construction (Plant Operation) as a strong basis for a magistrate to grant an extraordinary licence. Responsibility: Ngarda Civil & Mining, Attorney General, Department of Planning and Infrastructure, Corrective Services

If the mining industry wants to recruit local Indigenous people as employees then a major investment has to be made in taking those many Aboriginal people who have lost their licences, either through fine, suspension or direct court order, into licensing renewal processes. One of the direct outcomes of the Ngarda Pilot Plant Operator program was to restore licensing rights or to conduct most of the necessary training to allow trainees to obtain their Heavy Rigid Drivers Licence. The outcomes here were to set in train court hearings to obtain extraordinary licences for fourteen trainees and to gain Heavy Rigid Licences for six trainees. Setting up the extraordinary licences applications is a task that most employers or training companies would not see as part of their brief in recruitment. However this one set of tasks is perhaps the most important means of ensuring a large number of highly experienced and skilled machine operators becomes available within Indigenous communities. It should be noted that given the current system this is an onerous and time consuming activity.

Responsibility: Minerals Industry Employers

*WA Justice and Licensing bureaucracies need to share a common licensing database that puts citizens in charge of their own licensing information. Particular efforts must be made to ensure that the process of applying for extraordinary licences is transparent, clear and straightforward. **Responsibility: WA State government***

*Employers should be provided with financial support to break through licensing requirements for Indigenous trainees. In our opinion it is the employer and not separate organizations charged with gaining licences for Indigenous people that are critical. Employers have to sponsor the extraordinary licensing process. They are therefore the best means of effectively investing in any licensing services required by their employees and trainees. **Responsibility: Federal & State governments***

**BARRIER 11: THE
CYCLE OF MOTOR
VEHICLE OFFENCES
WITHIN INDIGENOUS
COMMUNITIES**

Indigenous people in remote and regional areas often enter into a cycle of driving misdemeanors that leads to disqualification and suspension and often jail. There is no public transport in remote or regional Aboriginal communities. There is no alternative but to drive to just about every major life event from shopping to entertainment. It is frequently the case that Aboriginal people start driving below the legal driving age and without a driving licence. The pressures of family life are such that young people are instructed by elder members of their family to drive under such circumstances. It is also frequently the case that young people are instructed to drive when under the influence of alcohol. They are perceived to have the best capacity to handle the alcohol. This leads to an almost 100 per cent conviction rate when it comes to quite severe traffic offences.

**SOLUTION &
RESPONSIBILITIES**

*Nothing less than a Royal Commission into the cycle of motor vehicle offences within Aboriginal communities is needed to get to the heart of the profound problems here. Such a high level inquiry should inquire into the issuing of licences, driving tuition within Aboriginal communities, car ownership and registration, transport pressures in remote and regional areas.
Responsibility: State Government*



**BARRIER 12:
PILBARA'S TWO
SPEED ECONOMY &
THE WELFARE
VORTEX**

The Pilbara's two speed economy: a high earning, high earning gold rush like economy and a low earning, low spending welfare economy has a dramatic effect on people's propensity to seek work and training. Alongside workers earning six figure incomes are families living on incomes as low as \$12,542 per annum. One might think that the existence of the high paying resources economy might create opportunities for people on welfare to move into employment. But the sheer economic distance between the predominantly Indigenous welfare economy and ghetto and the highly affluent "Cashed Up Westies" or CUWs economy has a huge psychological effect. It seems an impossible dream for many Indigenous people that they will be able to break out of the welfare economy. The payment of a training wage of \$536 for the first four weeks of the training and \$804 for the last four weeks of the training gave the trainees of a taste of a better wage. But it also swung Centrelink and Homeswest bureaucrats into action. If trainees did not declare an estimate of their income, not only did the trainees lose their existing pension payments, they also lost their child support payments. This created a perverse effect in which single income women with children actually ended up worse or even with their previous welfare income. Adding insult to injury because their incomes went up, the rental for their Homeswest houses also rose. Despite all the supposed work that has been done on reducing the poverty trap effect of income payments, trainees were actually told by some anonymous civil servants that they would be better off staying on benefits. In other words the forces pushing Indigenous people back into the welfare economy and ghetto are profound. It is necessary to move to an entirely new mindset to take full advantage of added income and benefits derived from employment. In so many ways Indigenous welfare recipients are pulled back to the welfare mindset. Most trainees had a feeling of indifference about obtaining work and a feeling of pessimism about whether training will actually pay off for them. In addition when you receive benefits and pensions there are certain advantages. You don't have to spend 10 hours a day in the Pilbara sun working, your time is your own and your families. When there is no net economic benefit from training and employment, there is a clear incentive not to attend work and training. In a two speed regional economies like the Pilbara, when people attend work and training there needs to be an immediate cash benefit and there should be a moratorium on all benefits and subsidies for a twelve month period until clear savings and benefits can be accrued and the psychology of the benefits of working and paying taxes has caught hold.

Case Study

One of our trainees with four dependent children received a sum of approximately \$600 per fortnight in parenting payments and a further

sum of \$500 per fortnight in pension payments. In addition the family lived in a subsidised Homeswest House. Upon receiving the first month's training wages the parenting payment and the pension payments were with-held. This occurred because the trainee did not make an estimate of her extra income. Perversely Centrelink immediately stop all payments because they fear the probability of over payments. At the same time Homeswest increase the rental on the family house.

If the trainee had declared the income to Centrelink the family would have been slightly better off, but not a great deal better off. It may be argued that the training came with a guarantee of higher pay in that Ngarda Civil and Mining were offering a full waged position of approximately \$34 an hour at the end of the training period. Therefore it was worth it for the family to go through the training period in order to earn this substantially higher pay. However even this substantial pay level takes some time for the benefits of employment to overcome the years of unemployment. It is the view of this report writer that there should be a moratorium on parenting payments and subsidised rent for at least twelve months in areas like the Pilbara. If this was done then people emerging from the welfare ghetto would for the first time be shoulder to shoulder with their Cashed up Neighbours for the first time.

SOLUTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

There should be a moratorium on parenting payments and rental subsidies for the first twelve months of employment for people who have been long term unemployed in regions like the Pilbara. Responsibility: Federal and State government. This would follow on the recent decision made by the State government to provide a moratorium on evicting people who earn high mining incomes from Homeswest houses. These are minimum requirements to ensure that the two speed economy of the Pilbara does not include a welfare vortex within it.

**BARRIER 13: THE
PERVERSITY OF WA'S
FINE SYSTEM/LAW &
ORDER POVERTY
TRAP**

In a two speed economy like South Hedland where Indigenous families pull up at petrol bowsers and put \$1.50 of petrol into their car tanks, a fine of over one thousand dollars is psychologically crippling. Invariably poor people attract the most attention from law and order authorities, and spend the highest proportion of their incomes on the results of law and order incursions. Almost every trainee had a considerable number of fines to pay off. In Western Australia unless fines are paid off, or at least some effort to pay them off has been made, then your motor vehicle licence becomes invalid. Worse still if you do not make an attempt to pay off a fine you will invariably end up in jail. This is why in Roebourne Regional Jail 297 of its 300 inmates are Indigenous. Many of these people are never sentenced by a court. When there is no attempt to pay off a fine a bench warrant is issued and people are simply taken straight to jail by the police. Issues as seemingly general as these had a direct effect on the pilot machine operator training program.

Case Study

In the third week of the plant operator program we had a cogent reminder of the perversity of the fines payment and law and order system in Western Australia. On the weekend one of our most promising trainees was riding his motor cycle around in the scrub behind South Hedland. Police were investigating a stolen motor cycle and stopped the trainee on a routine check up. They found that our trainee had about \$1700 in unpaid fines and a bench warrant had been issued for his arrest. So as a result of this random check our trainee was taken to the watch-house. Because it was a week-end no-one was on hand to talk to the police about the training program and how well our trainee had been doing. On late Friday evening the Executive Chairman was contacted and on late Sunday the coordinator began to talk to the trainee about his options. It was quickly recognised that the trainee would be better off in cash terms by staying in Roebourne Jail for eight days. That way he would pay of \$1700 in fines, whereas if he attended the training he would certainly learn a lot, have gained a senior first aid certificate but he would only have earned \$500 for the same week. So this was the decision was taken. While there he observed that of the 200 inmates at Roebourne Regional Prison 197 were Aboriginal. We took the most economically rational decision but the effect of the week in jail had a very debilitating effect on the trainees health and psychology. He went from high spirits and enthusiasm to a real battle with a latent diabetes condition. Most of the remainder of the course was spent on re-gaining health and spirits.

**SOLUTIONS AND
RESPONSIBILITIES**

There should be a moratorium on jail sentences for individuals who have not paid fines while they are attending full time traineeships or

are in employment. Responsibility: Western Australian State Government.

When Indigenous employees have finished their training and are in full time employment, employers should institute a periodic payment deduction for outstanding fines. This will need to be compulsory in order for trainees to meet their obligations. Responsibility: Employees



BARRIER 14: FOOD AND NUTRITION

One of the most successful parts of the Ngarda Mining Work Readiness Training was the morning breakfast meal, this was one of the most important draws to ensure that trainees attended work and training on time. Trainees also packed a lunch for the day. It is one of the more noticeable differences between non-Indigenous and Indigenous employees in the mining industry that over-weight fly-in mining personnel have ready access to messing, while needy local Indigenous people whose families are often under-nourished and in need of good food are locked out of the mess. It should be noted that in the initial stages of the training program there was a noticeable coolness of local mess workers to the appearance of Ngarda's local Indigenous trainees in the mess. This quickly subsided but it certainly brought home to the trainers the segmented nature of the mess. Access to good food and nutrition was one of the clearest advantages in the minds of the trainees of Ngarda's training and employment strategy.

SOLUTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Whether working on day shift or on a two week on and one week off shift all Indigenous employees should have access to messing. This will dramatically improve work attendance and morale and remove one of the points of bitterness between local Indigenous workers and their fly in fly out counterparts. There should also be a significant Indigenous food content available in the mess including local kangaroo meat and other local food sources. It is important to note that without this bush tucker component current mess arrangements may well exacerbate diabetes conditions for Indigenous employees. Responsibility: Mining Employers and Accommodation and Messing Contractors



**BARRIER 15:
TRANSPORT**

For low income families, often without cars or licensed drivers, and without adequate public transport in remote and regional areas, transport is critical to ensuring the attendance of trainees. This is a lesson that many successful Indigenous training and employment programs have put into practice which should also be put into practice by the Mining Industry. The legendary Director of Tranby College, Kevin Cook, used to spend most of his time in the car ferrying and picking up students from regional areas when they came to Sydney for further study. The Moree based Aboriginal Employment Strategy makes a point of ensuring that start up employees are driven to work by another Indigenous person in the first stages of employment. Transport to work and training is literally the difference between success and failure for a training and employment program. Ngarda's bus was one of the major assets of the training program. It became a base for students waiting for machine training in the mock mine operations and it picked up students from their houses each morning for training.

**SOLUTIONS AND
RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Transport to and from work for the first twelve months of work and training is an essential requirement for mining employers. This should involve a pick up service from home involving a bus or car pool that is run by Indigenous employees themselves and is funded by employers. Responsibility: Mining Employers.





BUDGET.

DELAYED
SATISFACTION

2 PROBLEMS
TOO MUCH
TOO LITTLE

LIVE \$
EAT \$
HEALTH \$
CLOTHES.

TRANSPORT
EDUCATION
ELECTRICITY
H₂O

- LICE
- Henry
- Shane
- James

- Dion
- Rodney
- Kevin

- .JJ
- Clinton
- Richard

- Shane

Micko O'Byrne flew his own plane up from Perth to Port Hedland to address the Ngarda trainees. He gave an inspirational lecture about his own journey from the worst poverty to prosperity. The three hour lecture had a special impact on the trainees.

BARRIER 16: ONE BITE AT THE CHERRY/ HARDNESS OF OLDER GENERATION OF INDIGENOUS & NON-INDIGENOUS MINING EMPLOYEES

Indigenous people cannot be expected to overcome the many barriers to employment in the mining industry in one go. Often it will involve multiple bites at the cherry. Because many of the current older generation of non-Indigenous and Indigenous employees have done it relatively tough, there is an expectation that Indigenous trainees will instantly take and understand the opportunities that are offered to them in the form of training. For many of these older trainees there was no training, no cultural awareness, no sympathy for traditional law practices or extended family obligations. Work involved very tough conditions in remote bush areas with minimal trips home. There is something special about these people, and certainly Ngarda has a large proportion of its employees who embody this tradition. While the spirit and “go harder for Ngarda” endeavour of these employees should never be lost, it needs to be recognised that the current generation of employees are fighting against different foes that are just as difficult as the old world of mining was. Just getting fit enough to work a ten hour day or jumping over the many barriers detailed here is difficult. It is essential that Indigenous trainees are allowed multiple attempts to enter the mining workforce and a first failure should not be seen as a sign of lack of character. It may well be the opposite.

SOLUTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Employers should keep an ongoing record of each Indigenous persons training and skill development process. Trainees should be allowed multiple bites at the cherry to complete the necessary requirements for employment in the mining industry. Older employees need to understand the multiple obstacles and barriers that the current generation of employees must overcome to obtain employment. Responsibility: Mining Industry Employers.



BARRIER 17: ILL HEALTH & DISEASE

Ill health and disease is a significant impediment to regular attendance at training and employment. Diabetes is a particular problem which reinforces the need for mining employers to consider a food and nutrition program for local employees. Messing for Indigenous employees should involve a significant component of bush tucker food including kangaroo meat, dugong and turtle meat, bush turkey and other natural bush foods and spices. Employees with diabetes need to be referred to the local diabetes area health officer and their program of medication and diet needs to be supported at work. Workers who have diabetes and have learned to manage the problem need to be on hand to provide counsel to younger employees encountering the problem for the first time. Health education about the dangers of alcohol for those with diabetes also needs to be an ongoing part of work and training education.

SOLUTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

All Indigenous employees should be required to undergo fitness and health programs as part of their regular employment obligations and this should be a significant part of mining work readiness training. Health and fitness programs were not a part of the Ngarda Machine Operator Training program and need to be included in the curriculum of the next program.



**BARRIER 18: PAYDAY
BLUES**

The most perilous days for the Ngarda work readiness training program were the day after payday and the days preceding and following weekends. In the initial planning for the training program these problems were anticipated. It was hoped to have completed the training at Yandeyarra community which did not have the temptations or environment of South Hedland. A great deal of effort was made to identify the finance re-furbish the former Yandeyarra bail facility as training accommodation.

It is a moot point whether housing the trainees away from a centre like South Hedland or Port Hedland would solve the problem of payday or weekend blues. Trainees would inevitably have to live in an environment where, for example, non-Indigenous employees exercised their rights to partake in alcohol after work. Moreover whether working at a mine site or on a day shift, Indigenous employees inevitably have to return home and have to deal with the temptations of extra money and the demands from relatives and friends.

There is however a point at which the environment in a town like South Hedland is all consuming. As it currently stands this environment will pull down even the strongest worker or trainee. New employees and trainees deserve the chance to be able to make a go of it without having to deal with the consequences of what is in effect a low income ghetto. If one person in a family is working and ten people are not, which is about the statistical ratio, then there is no way that the person who is working can hold their income for very long after payday let alone save.

If a person is trying to resist the temptations of drinking, gambling and other anti-social behaviour then they need to be given a chance to do so within a neutral environment in the first stages of their training and work.

It should be noted that to make a break with such behaviour often involves very painful family breaks that frequently involve threats of physical violence and psychological torment. Trainees and workers need protection so that they can ride out these difficult transitions.

**SOLUTIONS AND
RESPONSIBILITIES**

Training should be carried out in an environment where the temptations and problems of the built up regional centres are absent. The bail facility at Yandeyarra should be refurbished and completed as a training centre. This will dramatically improve participation, absenteeism and would form a welcome respite to the distractions of a regional centre like South Hedland. It would also build strong community support given that the public works undertaken by the training would ben-

efit all of the community. Responsibility: Federal Government funding for Yandeyarra Bail Facility Refurbishment

For the first twelve months of employment and training employers should put into place a life coaching and personal finances program for all Indigenous employees. Responsibility: Mining Industry Employers



**BARRIER 19: MOVING
FROM A WELFARE TO
A WORK
PSYCHOLOGY**

“I’ve earned big money before but it doesn’t last” Off hand remark from one of the trainees during a discussion on money.

Moving from a culture of welfare compliance to a culture of working life is a very difficult transition. From regular visit to the Centrelink, Homeswest and Job Futures office to visits to tax accountants, to keeping tabs on expenditures and learning how to claim taxation or understanding the benefits of superannuation it is a big transition to make. This is not something that can be taught in one or two lectures. Nor is it something that will be computed after the first two or three pay-checks. Much more extensive work that dovetails with the first year of an Indigenous person’s working life needs to be developed. There should be regular savings and plans available to all new Indigenous employees. Employees should be offered payroll savings plans that result in five and ten thousand dollar annual savings goals, home investment plans and car and commodity savings plans.

Micko O’Byrne’s lecture to the trainees used the analogy of a water tank. As he noted it did not matter if more water poured into the tank, if there was a big hole in the bottom of the tank, then no water would be stored. Micko suggested putting a tap on the hole at the bottom of the tank so that water (savings) could be accrued. Indigenous employees need support to put taps on their savings accounts and coaching to allow them to maximise their savings and income from work in the mining industry.

Solutions and Responsibilities: The lecture and ideas espoused in the Ngarda Training program by Micko O’Byrne need to be strongly developed as a module within the Mining Work Readiness Training program.



**BARRIER 20:
FUNERALS AND
TRADITIONAL LAW
OBLIGATIONS**

There are some aspects of Indigenous culture that are more important than any material goods or funds that can be earned in the mainstream non-Indigenous economy. These obligations must be honoured. If they are not then individuals can suffer catastrophic personal consequences. Because of the higher life expectancy of Indigenous people, attendance at funerals often intervenes in day to day life and work. Employers need to respect and honour these traditional obligations. Ngarda Civil and Mining has a strong tradition of respect for workers and trainees traditional obligations and particularly the importance of attending funerals.

**SOLUTIONS AND
RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Contingencies for traditional law and funeral obligations need to be made in training and mining production culture. The consequences of trying to ignore such obligations is failure in building a strong Indigenous work and training culture within the mining industry.



BARRIER 21: LACK OF SUPPORT FROM EXTENDED FAMILY FOR PEOPLE ENTERING THE MINING WORKFORCE

Without the support of the immediate family Indigenous individuals will not be able to meet the obligations of work and training. It is vitally important to go beyond training individuals to embrace the immediate and extended family of Indigenous employees. If a culture of support can be built within the families and extended families of Indigenous employees then there is a high probability of success.

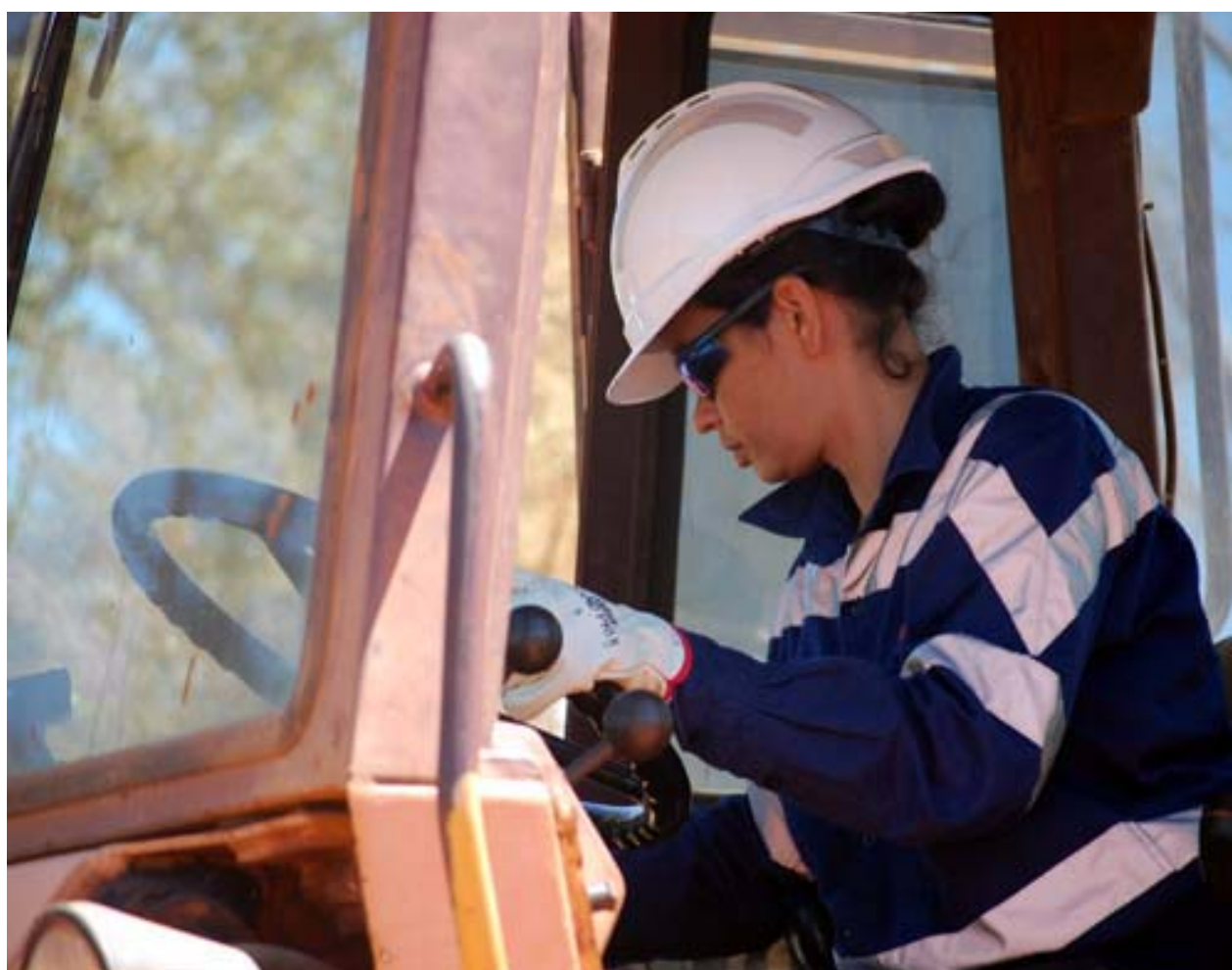
The success of the Ngarda Work Readiness training strategy owed much to the mentoring of Willie Jumbo and the support of Barry Taylor. These two leaders could look into the heart of the community and see where encouragement was lacking or needed. Without this level of support and knowledge training and employment projects cannot succeed. The question for the future is how can mentoring and coaching and support be done better. It is all too often the case that an individual such as Mr. Jumbo who speaks five languages and is greatly respected as a role model is not appreciated within the conventional working environment. For Mr. Jumbo and Mr. Taylor the workday and the working week never ends. Whereas even the hardest working manager can knock off at some time of the day or night, for Indigenous leaders and mentors this is not possible. There is no boundary between work and family life and social and community life. It is clear that many co-workers have no idea of the complexity of the mentoring and advocacy role that such mentors and leaders play in the successful life of a company. In some cases, because mentors and leaders do not lead a conventional desk bound working life, the role of Indigenous mentors and coaches is sometimes not well understood. In fact if companies are to successfully employ high proportions of Indigenous employees then the mentoring and leadership role of Indigenous champions within the company has to be boosted and strengthened.

SOLUTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Ngarda Work Readiness Training Program held a series of bbqs and visits to communities specifically oriented at the family of the trainees to show that the training would be of great benefit not only to the individuals involved but also to their families. These sorts of activities need to be a regular occurrences. They involve minimum costs. They are informal and easy to organise but they have lasting effects and great strong support for the trainees and employees. Such practices seem contrary to the production culture of mining, but in fact they may make the greatest contribution to employee and trainee participation and support. Responsibility: Mining Employers

Mentoring and coaching of employees and trainees during their first twelve months of employment and training needs to be a formal process and each employee needs to have a meeting with a mentor on a monthly basis. Responsibility: Mining Employers

*Cultural awareness has a mixed reputation in the mining industry. Sometimes it can be an industry in itself and may be anathema to company and production culture. This type of cultural awareness is certainly not what is needed. A model of cultural awareness needs to be developed within companies that is about supporting the corporate and production goals of the company as much as it is about supporting Indigenous families and culture. For a company like Ngarda, which is half owned by Indigenous organisations, and which is directly linked to the quest for economic independence in the Pilbara this is a straight forward task. “Going harder for Ngarda” means going harder for the Indigenous community. But just because a company is owned by Indigenous interests and just because a larger majority of its employees does not mean that cultural awareness education is not needed. It is sometimes observed that Ngarda is a family, but is it a non-Indigenous family or an extended Indigenous family that is the model. Cultural awareness is sometimes most needed by people who think that they understand Indigenous culture very well. Regular visits and discussions with organisations like Rangy May are needed. **Responsibility: Mining Industry Employers.***



BARRIER 22: HOUSING & ACCOMMODATION

It is a remarkable fact that in a place like South Hedland which is at the epicentre of the Australian and international mining boom, where housing and accommodation is at a premium, there are dozens of empty houses that are not being utilised. It is also a remarkable fact that hundreds of Indigenous people who have secure accommodation and housing in towns and remote centres are overlooked and unknown by mining employers. It is a further remarkable fact that upon gaining employment with the mining industry the security of Indigenous tenure in a Homewest house suddenly comes under threat through eviction, rental increases and threats regarding any rental arrears. Homewest has partially addressed this problem by placing a two year moratorium on any Indigenous person who gains employment being evicted from their State housing. But the situation of the Ngarda training highlighted the major shortcomings of the rental dimensions of winning full time employment. The Ngarda trainees were paid a full time wage of \$13.50 per hour during the training this constituted a substantial gain on their CDEP or Centrelink payments. As soon as the Ngarda trainees were paid this wage, at the beginning of their training, their rents were lifted, their Centrelink payments were curtailed and their pensions and family payments came under threat. It was a perverse message: as soon as you make the steps necessary to enter full time employment we will make it as hard as possible for you. We will call in all our bills. We will increase your rent and we will harass you about your tenure. This is clearly madness.

SOLUTION AND RESPONSIBILITY

The mining industry needs to lobby the WA government about the dozens of houses that are controlled by Pilbara TAFE that are currently in need of a small renovation budget and are currently un-occupied in South Hedland. TAFE quite rightly argue they have no skill or expertise or budget to run or maintain housing. But there are plenty of companies and private companies who would do so successfully. In the meantime at a time when accommodation in South Hedland run as high as \$100 a room a night in a shared family home, dozens of homes are empty caught between a Perth head office education bureaucracy and a dysfunctional housing bureaucracy. Responsibility: State Government

There needs to not only be a moratorium on the eviction of first time indigenous employees from their Homewest Homes, there needs to be a moratorium on rental increases, rental arrears and any other form of land lord harassment on those who gain training employment in the mining industry for twelve months after they begin their training. Responsibility: Homewest

Mining industry employers need to commission a study of Indigenous housing in mining areas. Improving Indigenous housing may well be a major profitable exercise for mining employers. If mining employers were to offer a renovation plan and budget as part of a remuneration package for Indigenous employees they would not only be supporting local Indigenous employment, they would be reviving the permanent workforce and health of the community. Responsibility: Mining Industry Association

It is the dream of every Indigenous person to own their own plot of land on their traditional country. Mining industry employers need to develop a process for Indigenous employees to win the right to gain access to traditional lands for their own private ownership and to provide finances for its development. This is not a multi-

million dollar hand out but a model for developing land ownership amongst hard working Indigenous men and women who want their own secure properties and private tenure. How much more important might this be than the hand out of Christmas land payments to individuals who have traditional land rights but no lasting place to stay on their own country. Responsibility: Mining Employers.



