MINING AND INDIGENOUS TOURISM IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

CRC

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SUMMARY

Objectives of the Study

The first of its kind undertaken, this study used a case study methodology to investigate the opportunities for using 'soft' and 'hard' mining project infrastructure to support the development of indigenous tourism operations in northern Australia.

Key study objectives were to:

- Assess the potential to develop existing natural and indigenous cultural tourism resources in areas proximate to mining operations;
- Identify how mining operations could support indigenous tourism ventures in these areas; and
- Assess the willingness of mining companies and indigenous communities to cooperate in such initiatives.

The findings of the study will be of use to indigenous individuals and groups seeking to develop sustainable tourism opportunities, mining companies, policymakers and the tourism industry more generally. The study has also identified several issues requiring further research.

Methodology

The study area was defined as northern Australia. This area contains numerous Aboriginal communities and outstations – many of which still maintain customary practices and traditions – which are proximate to the natural landscapes greatly attractive to tourists. There are also a substantial number of large mining operations in these areas.

The study methodology involved three elements: a literature review; wide consultation with representatives of mining companies, Aboriginal communities and tourism agencies; and field visits to three case study sites.

The case studies comprised the regions around: (a) Comalco's Weipa bauxite mine on the western Cape York Peninsula of Queensland; (b) the Century mine in the southern Gulf of Carpentaria, north-west Queensland; and (c) the Argyle Diamond mine in Western Australia's East Kimberleys. These sites were chosen on the grounds that the mines were located in or near areas with considerable tourism potential, a substantial indigenous population was living in these areas, and mine management was formally committed to supporting indigenous enterprise development.

Key Findings

Tourism Potential

Numerous mining operations in northern Australia are located in or near areas that have substantial tourism potential. Primary attractions are the natural environment (including national parks, World Heritage Areas, and wilderness areas), cultural heritage sites[1] and landscapes, and the mines themselves, which are also significant drawcards in some cases. Aboriginal land and land management regimes, sites and cultural knowledge should all be considered potential tourism products.

The Benefits of Increasing indigenous Involvement in Tourism

There is currently only very limited indigenous involvement in tourism ventures in northern Australia, notwithstanding the relatively large indigenous populations residing in this region.

Increased indigenous participation in the tourism sector could benefit indigenous people by:

- Providing enhanced economic opportunities in the form of employment, training and additional income, particularly for those communities where there is a lack of alternative economic opportunities;
- Promoting self-determination, although this will depend on the extent of indigenous control or ownership, and the success of the venture;
- Developing business and governance skills that can then be applied in a range of different contexts;
- Promoting cross-cultural awareness and understanding, and the realignment of stereotypical views about indigenous communities;
- Preserving elements of traditional culture and presenting acceptable aspects to a wider audience;
- Highlighting and encouraging systems of indigenous management of cultural landscapes and biodiversity;
- Fostering a more accurate and acceptable presentation and interpretation of indigenous cultural heritage and landscapes; and

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[1] Note that cultural heritage sites include historic stations, roads, camps and crossings, and are not exclusively Indigenous.

- Encouraging a more pragmatic and sensitive approach to the process of obtaining the permissions and enacting the protocols required when entering or using environments or sites controlled by indigenous peoples.

Mining and Indigenous Tourism

Leading companies in the mining industry have made strong public commitments to contribute to the sustainable development of the communities and regions in which they operate. Facilitating greater indigenous involvement in tourism is one way in which mining operations in northern Australia can give practical effect to this commitment.

Mining infrastructure includes *hard* types – such as accommodation facilities, sewage and water services, transport corridors, airstrips, planes, boats, and other vehicles – and *soft* types – such as enterprise and business capacity, training schemes, and professional and trade expertise, including access to government networks and contacts. *Soft* infrastructure support will mainly be available while the mine is still operational. In the case of *hard*, or physical, infrastructure, there are two main options, depending on the life expectancy of the mine. Where a mine has a short life expectancy, the opportunities will primarily involve the use of recycled infrastructure following closure. On the other hand, where a mine is expected to have a long life, infrastructure could also be used during its operational phase.

A number of major mining companies, including Rio Tinto and its Argyle Diamond Mine operation in Western Australia (refer to Chapter 7), have indicated a willingness to facilitate access to, or the transfer of, substantial mining infrastructure to local indigenous communities for tourism purposes, and to provide other means of support, such as training assistance. To date, however, such initiatives have tended to be mining company initiated and local interest has been variable. This presents a significant challenge, as indigenous tourism ventures are unlikely to be sustainable unless indigenous people themselves have some level of ownership over tourism enterprise ideas and are motivated to become involved.

Relevant Tourism Market

Surveys of tourists indicate that many international visitors to northern Australia would like to experience greater exposure to indigenous culture and people. The Kimberley and Gulf regions already have a substantial regional tourism industry, although currently there is only very limited Aboriginal involvement in this industry. Weipa and its mine, in comparison, are situated within a region less developed in terms of tourism but retaining much significant potential. The cultural and natural attractions situated on Aboriginal lands in each of the three regions could be readily marketed to both international and domestic tourists.

Obstacles and Opportunities

Actions that mining operations might take to facilitate greater indigenous involvement in tourism include:
- Providing Aboriginal groups with the rights to run mine tours, and/or requiring other tour operators to employ Aboriginal people;
- Ensuring that Traditional Owner perspectives are presented in any mine tours conducted;
- Allowing Aboriginal tour operators, or operations with significant indigenous involvement, to utilise transport infrastructure such as airstrips and roads to bring tourists into an area;
- Providing Aboriginal people with training and employment opportunities that are transferable to the tourism sector (e.g. catering, administration and community liaison);
- Linking up Aboriginal people who are interested in starting a tourism venture with relevant government and private sector organisations;
- Making technical expertise available to assist communities develop and maintain tourism-related infrastructure (e.g. power generation, water supply and waste disposal systems for bush camps);
- Donating buildings that are no longer needed by the mine to serve as cultural and/or visitor centres;
- Providing start-up financial assistance, or facilitating access to sources of assistance, to promising Aboriginal tourism ventures;
- Mentoring new businesses in the start-up phase; and
- Using company and site-level publications (e.g. newsletters, annual reports) to promote Aboriginal tourism initiatives to employees and the wider community.

Closure of a mine may present further opportunities, particularly where the mine is question has been a fly-in fly-out operation and there is an accommodation camp attached. Some possible options here are to:
- Convert some or all of the camp into a tourist facility that could be owned by – and preferably operated by – an Aboriginal organisation, either alone or in partnership with other organisations; and
- Relocate demountable buildings from the lease to Aboriginal land to provide accommodation or other facilities for tourists.

Obstacles to developing these opportunities include: the distance from major tourism centres and inadequate local infrastructure; a lack of relevant business expertise and access to start-up capital; and, in some cases, an apparent disinterest in communities in becoming involved in tourism ventures.

Development of opportunities will often require the involvement of other groups, such as regional indigenous organisations, protected area management agencies, funding bodies and organisations with specialist expertise in tourism and business development. Working partnerships between these stakeholders can help to ensure that strong land management links are established across larger catchments, including Aboriginal lands, mining reserves, and designated protected areas. Such partnership arrangements could also foster a very useful exchange of information, best practice, and management policies and procedures across these management areas.

Protected Area Management

The managers of the national parks and World Heritage Areas near to the case study sites were operating under severe budgetary constraints and were struggling to cope with rising visitor numbers. There appeared to be little enthusiasm for additional or alternative tourism ventures, especially where this might increase visitor numbers or generate additional management responsibilities or service requirements. None of the parks appeared to have management plans that specifically addressed Aboriginal-initiated tourism possibilities.

Similarly, there was very limited involvement of Aboriginal people in the management of nearby protected areas. At Boodjamulla National Park (Case Study 2) there were several Aboriginal rangers on staff, but their roles appeared to take little advantage of the staff being Aboriginal people with possible connections to that country. Moreover, the performance of protected area management bodies was not viewed very positively by indigenous communities.

Increasing the involvement of Aboriginal people in protected area management would have a number of benefits, including: more sensitive and appropriate interpretation and regulation; greater presence of 'park' staff and therefore an enhanced capacity to provide coverage; increased visibility and involvement of indigenous owners and managers; perceived support for local initiatives and the tourism industry; and a closer alignment of natural and cultural heritage management and objectives.

A change in organisational culture and funding arrangements is required to enable management bodies to deal with the changing status of particular protected areas, increasing visitor numbers, regional development generally, and a steadily growing and keen interest on the part of overseas visitors in indigenous cultural heritage and protected area management.

Successful Ventures

Capacity is a key issue for successful tourism ventures, particularly in the short to medium term. Aboriginal enterprises that have the best chances of succeeding are likely to be small-scale operations that are developed in partnership with established operations. 'Bigger picture' options, such as establishing Aboriginal-owned and operated resorts on former mining leases, will need to be supported by a long-term program of capacity building and are likely to require substantial equity from government or private investors. Small-scale ventures can have a vision for how they can expand or be linked together as capacity grows. Careful evaluation is required of proposed tourism plans and their prospects, as well as likely community impacts. Aboriginal people need to be made aware of what they can reasonably expect a tourism venture to require of them, what it may provide for them in terms of financial reward, and what support is available.

Research

There is a clear need for timely and accurate market research into the level of demand for and potential earnings from a range of indigenous tourism ventures. These investigations could encompass how indigenous tourism ventures might be enhanced by involvement with mining-focused tourism. It is important to understand how interest translates into real demand, and if the increasing interest in indigenous tourism products that has been identified within the international market also exists in the larger domestic market. The difference between an indigenous tourism business offering a general product and that which sells a product defined as having a cultural and heritage focus must be considered carefully, as the expectations and impacts generated by the latter are substantially different in relation to visitation and use of indigenous communities, sacred sites and fragile ecosystems.

Future Action

Chapter 8 details suggested future action relating to the following:
1. Mining Industry;
2. Protected Area Management Bodies;
3. Government; and
4. Indigenous Organisations, Groups and Individuals.

Further Research

1. Further detailed study of tourist demand for indigenous cultural tourism products should be undertaken, with particular emphasis on the potential for facilitating partnerships between mining operations, indigenous communities and protected areas managers.
2. Timely and accurate market research needs to be conducted into the real level of demand for, and possible earnings from, tourism ventures that could potentially be of interest to indigenous communities and individuals.
3. The opportunity should be taken to continue monitoring and assessing the initiatives already in train at the case study sites, with the aim of identifying and further exploring issues, problems, and, ideally, successful solutions. In addition, the Sustainable Tourism CRC should consider funding an action research project to investigate and demonstrate the potential for utilising soft and hard mining project infrastructure to support the development of indigenous tourism ventures.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Project Aims and Benefits

This study has investigated the opportunities for mining project infrastructure, located in the more remote areas of northern Australia, to be used to assist with the development of sustainable tourism initiatives involving local indigenous people. The secondary aims were to create sustainable economic and cultural opportunities for indigenous groups, and to determine if the study's findings would be useful for government tourism and Aboriginal enterprise policies. The key research questions addressed and discussed in the concluding chapter are:

- What natural and cultural sites/activities exist in mining areas that could attract tourism?
- How has mining infrastructure been used and in what other ways can it be used by indigenous communities for tourism activities?
- Are indigenous communities and mining companies willing to co-operate on such projects?
- How might the potential for local or regional tourism develop in such a partnership?
- How developed is the existing tourism industry, market and infrastructure in remote regions?
- Is there a sufficient demand for the type of tourism product to be offered by indigenous communities?
- What is required to ensure that communities have the capacity to provide the tourism product?

This study is the first of its kind undertaken in Australia, and will contribute to an important social goal: the generation of economically and culturally sustainable business ventures in indigenous communities. It will assist indigenous organisations, tourism industry bodies and mining companies to develop strategies for utilising mining project infrastructure to support sustainable tourism initiatives involving local indigenous people. The benefits to the tourism industry include:

- Documentation of the existing level of utilisation of mining project infrastructure to support indigenous tourism activities;
- Highlighting of potential opportunities to make greater use of mining-related infrastructure;
- Identification of issues that need to be addressed if these opportunities are to be realised; and
- Creation of a platform for participating in discussions with mining companies and government agencies about greater utilisation of this infrastructure.

As this was a scoping study, it is not practical to quantify the expected financial benefits of the project. However, over the longer term, increased utilisation of mining project infrastructure could bring substantial economic benefits to indigenous communities and regional tourism economies. This project has highlighted these opportunities and provided a foundation for more detailed work in developing specific opportunities.

Potential Users of this Research

The outcomes of this research will be used to: (a) encourage mining companies and government bodies to facilitate greater utilisation of mining project infrastructure to support indigenous tourism ventures; (b) assist indigenous organisations to identify and pursue opportunities to utilise this infrastructure; and (c) identify issues requiring further, more detailed, research investigation.[2]

Potential end users include: Aboriginal Tourism Australia; the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources; indigenous Business Australia; small and medium scale indigenous tourism enterprises, state tourism agencies and regional tourism bodies; and mining companies with operations in northern Australia (e.g. Alcan, BHP Billiton, Rio Tinto, Xstrata and Zinifex).

Proponents of the Project

The study was conducted by the Director of the Centre of Social Responsibility in Mining, Professor David Brereton (Project Leader), and the Director of the Aboriginal Environments Research Centre, Associate Professor Paul Memmott. Both Centres are part of the University of Queensland. Further input was provided by

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[2] The value of this report is maximised by it being read in conjunction with several other valuable source documents and guidelines that are currently available. These include: the Australian Heritage Commission's *Successful Tourism at Heritage Places* (AHC 2001), the Department of the Environment and Heritage's *Steps to Sustainable Tourism* (DEH 2004b) and *Protecting Natural Heritage* (EA 2003), and the Western Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management's *Indigenous Ownership and Joint Management of Conservation Lands in Western Australia* (CALM 2003). See also Appendices B and D.

Associate Professor Joseph Reser from the School of Psychology at James Cook University, and from Dr Jeremy Buultjens of the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management at Southern Cross University. The research staff who worked on the project included Tanuja Barker, who is associated with the Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining and Linda Thomson, Tim O'Rourke and Catherine Chambers, who are associated with the Aboriginal Environments Research Centre.

The composition of the research team allowed for a genuinely cross-disciplinary and often interdisciplinary consideration of complex issues, with the team also bringing considerable practical and field experience in applied research and community development to the project.

Project Design and Methodology

This project was discussed with Ms Lois Peeler, the Chair of Aboriginal Tourism Australia, who expressed in-principle support for the proposed research. Discussions were also held with representatives of the mining companies Zinifex (formerly Pasminco) and Rio Tinto, who flagged indigenous business development as a major priority for their organisations and indicated strong interest in the proposed project. These people formed the project's Industry Reference Group to provide ongoing advice. The methodology undertaken for this study involved three elements: a literature review, wide consultation with relevant parties and case study preparation. These are discussed below. Chapters 2 to 4 discuss, in turn, tourism in Australia, mining companies and their relationships with indigenous Australians and their enterprises, and the issues raised by proximate protected area and their management regimes. These subject areas arose out of the literature review and analysis undertaken and the consultations that were conducted. Chapters 5 to 7 provide details of each case study. The final chapter brings the findings from these studies together and outlines a set of recommendations.

Literature Review and Consultation

A desktop survey was undertaken to identify and analyse the relevant published and unpublished literature. An initial comparison of the locations of mine and indigenous community sites was conducted to identify areas of northern Australia where there may be potential to develop indigenous tourism ventures utilising mining project infrastructure. The fields of literature surveyed were:

- Tourism:
  - ✓ Australian tourism
  - ✓ Indigenous tourism (international)
  - ✓ Australian indigenous tourism
- Protected areas:
  - ✓ Commonwealth and state protected areas (heritage management literature)
  - ✓ Protected areas and Aboriginal people
  - ✓ Protected area management partnerships
- Indigenous society
  - ✓ Aboriginal communities (specific)
  - ✓ Tribal or language groups (specific)
  - ✓ Aboriginal enterprises literature

- Mining
  - ✓ Australian mining
  - ✓ Australian mining and sustainability
  - ✓ Australian mining and socio-economic impacts
- Mining and indigenous people
  - ✓ Mining and Aboriginal people
  - ✓ Mining and Aboriginal people and Native Title
  - ✓ Mining and socio-economic impacts on Aboriginal people
  - ✓ Mining and Aboriginal tourism

Consultations were conducted with representatives of mining companies operating in northern Australia to identify current levels of involvement with local indigenous communities, and to ascertain their interest in and support for the utilisation of mine infrastructure for tourism-related purposes. Other consultations were undertaken with representatives of relevant indigenous, government and research organisations, including: Aboriginal Tourism Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, the Centre for Regional Tourism Research, Environment Australia, the Commonwealth Department of Industry Tourism and Resources, and the Minerals Council of Australia.

Definition of Study Area and Mining Infrastructure

As in other parts of Australia, within the Kimberley, Arnhem Land, Gulf of Carpentaria and Cape York regions of northern Australia, there are numerous Aboriginal communities and outstations that maintain customary practices and traditions. These communities are often situated in, or near to, pristine areas including national parks. This study's guiding premise was that such a combination of cultural and natural environment experiences could potentially form the basis for establishing sustainable, small-scale tourism projects involving local indigenous people, if some of the main obstacles to developing such ventures in these areas, such as the lack of suitable infrastructure coupled with poor transport access, could be overcome. For some communities, a possible strategy for addressing these issues would be to utilise the infrastructure of nearby mining projects (such as airstrips, access roads, accommodation facilities and surplus buildings). Most of the larger mining companies with operations in northern Australia are formally committed to promoting the sustainable development of local

indigenous communities, and these companies were found to be willing to assist in the development of small-scale tourism ventures involving local indigenous people, provided they had the potential to be economically viable, would not interfere with mining operations, and all legal and/or financial liability issues had been addressed[3]. It was further determined that opportunities existed for communities to develop tourism activities that incorporate the actual mining operation. Thus the area of northern Australia, or all of the mainland north of the Tropic of Capricorn or latitude 23° 30″ south of the Equator (refer to Map 1), was selected as the study area.

For the purposes of this project, mining infrastructure was broadly defined to include *hard* types such as accommodation, sewage and water services, transport corridors, airstrips, planes, boats, and other vehicles, as well as *soft* types like enterprise and business capacity, training schemes, and professional and trade expertise. Also, two distinct types of infrastructure usage were identified, which depended on the life expectancy of the mine. For a mine with a short life expectancy, the use of recycled infrastructure after the mine closes down would be the most likely option, whereas for a mine expected to have a long life, infrastructure could also be used during its operational phase.

Map 1: The three case study locations
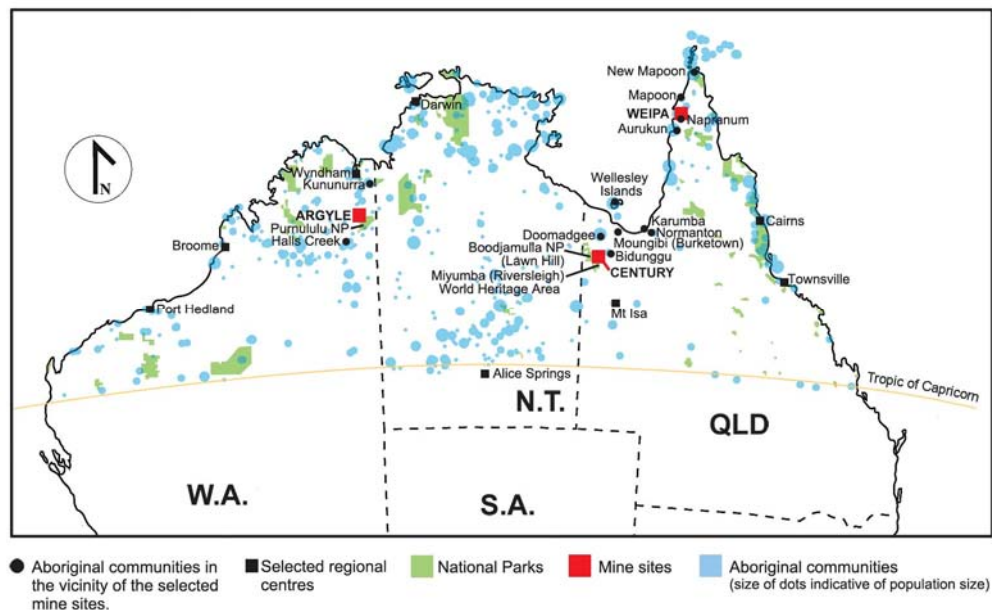
Source: Prepared by Linda Thomson, AERC 2005

Case Study Preparation

To ascertain the accuracy of the overall findings and help to validate the larger template devised for northern Australia, the project team undertook three case studies, encompassing the areas surrounding: (a) Comalco's Weipa bauxite mine on the western side of the Cape York Peninsula of Queensland; (b) the Century mine in the southern Gulf of Carpentaria, north-west Queensland; and (c) the Argyle Diamond mine in the north of Western Australia's East Kimberleys. These locations presented clear opportunities in which to develop synergies between the relevant mines and indigenous tourism ventures. The Weipa field trip was undertaken by Thomson and Buultjens between 23 and 27 August 2004. The Argyle field trip was undertaken by Reser and Brereton between 8 and 12 August 2004. The Century field trip was conducted by Barker and Reser between 4 and 7 October 2004. The primary purpose of these visits was to consult with local communities and mine management, undertake visual inspections and assess infrastructure needs and development opportunities.

Table 1 presents a list of variables and issues that were used to guide data collection in the case studies.

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[3] However, Rio Tinto's Argyle Diamond mine in the north-eastern Kimberley region of Western Australia was considering the feasibility of transferring substantial pieces of *hard* infrastructure, which could be used in a larger scale Indigenous tourism venture. Refer to Case Study No. 3 contained in Chapter 7.

Table 1: Key study variables and issues with regards to mines, Aboriginal communities and tourist attractions

VARIABLES	STRATEGIC ISSUES
1. Mines • On/off Aboriginal land • Mine life/status: winding down/mid life/starting up • Commuting type: fly in labour/locally residing labour • Extent of mine site accommodation • Infrastructure types • Type and scope of operations	• The negotiating capacity of an indigenous group • The pre-planning potential for indigenous tourism • The post-mining potential for use of recycled infrastructure • The potential for flying in tourists • The potential for accommodating tourists
2. Aboriginal communities • Number of communities, including outstations • Population size: large/medium/small • Settlement type: discrete (remote); urban/rural town; urban/regional centre • Existing tourist enterprise/none • Expressed interest/no interest in tourism enterprises • The variable business capacities of Aboriginal communities • The variable cultural capitals of Aboriginal communities	• Size of pool of Aboriginal labour for a potential enterprise • Potential for a small-scale intimate tourism experience • Remote community capacity for enterprises (e.g. CDEP) • The potential for larger-scale tourism projects • The potential for outstation experiences (traditionally oriented) • The extent of community experiences in tourism-type activities • The degree of motivation and commitment within a community to engage in tourism
3. Tourist attractions • On/off Aboriginal land or seas • In protected areas/heritage areas • Local and focused/expansive landscape and/or seascape • Regional tourism industry and existing infrastructure • The nature of local or regional tourism markets • Seasonal versus perennial • Natural versus cultural	• Availability of tourist support infrastructure in a local town • Opening up a new tourist opportunity on Aboriginal land • Tourism organisations to negotiate access to non-Aboriginal land • Tourism organisations to negotiate park management/enterprise agreements • Place-focused tourist activities • Scenic travel tourist activities

One of the key variables considered in the study was that of physical proximity. Mines, Aboriginal communities and existing or potential tourist attractions located within reasonable travelling distance of one another (reasonable refers to what is already generally accepted in the area), present a number of opportunities for the development of tourist enterprises emerging out of a partnership between Aboriginal communities and mines. Other possible linkages that were investigated included potential or existing agreements between mines and Aboriginal communities, and those between protected area authorities and communities.

A useful distinction can be made between mines in close proximity to cities or towns established for the sake of the mine, and those in a remote location and not on Aboriginal land. The first case study, the Comalco mine outside Weipa (see Chapter 5) fits the first category. This category can be subdivided into locations that exist on or near a regular tourist travel corridor (arterial sealed highway) or those in a 'cul-de-sac' with low tourist visitation. The other two case studies fell into the second category of remote operations, where Aboriginal communities were located some distance from the mine and other tourist attractions.

Chapter 2

INDIGENOUS TOURISM IN AUSTRALIA

Overview of Tourism in Australia

Tourism is a major contributor to Australia's economy. From tourist expenditure through to its provision of infrastructure, direct and indirect employment, and opportunities for cultural exchange, tourism impacts upon many aspects of Australian life (DITR 2003b). Consumption of its products has increased by 22% since 1997-98 and in 2001-02 was valued at $70.8 billion (DITR 2004a). The domestic tourism sector contributes most to this figure, making up 76% of the total, while the international market accounts for only 24% of Australia's tourist expenditure (DITR 2004a). In 2001-02, the tourism industry contributed an estimated 4.7% to GDP. Though small in comparison to the domestic sector, in 2001, international tourism to Australia generated export earnings of $17.1 billion (ATC 2004). This represented 11.2% of Australia's total export earnings (ATC 2004) and an increase of 34% since 1997-98 (DITR 2004b). Although domestic tourism expenditure was greater than $52 billion in 2002-03 (not including purchases made by outbound tourists), this represented an increase of only 5% on the previous year (DITR 2004a). However, as the majority of Australians fail to take all of their leave entitlements, there is potential for growth in the domestic tourism market (DITR 2003b, p.xv).

Over 90% of tourism enterprises in Australia are small to medium sized businesses. Approximately 40% of these are situated in rural and regional Australia (DITR 2003a, p.7), where the small business sector is also the major source of employment (Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press). Rural and regional Australia is also where 23% of international tourism expenditure and over half of all domestic tourism expenditure occur, together totalling around $31.7 billion (DITR 2003b). Therefore, even a modest increase in the growth of tourism could see potentially significant benefits accrue in regional and country Australia (DITR 2003a, p.7). To this end, the government is encouraging the development of indigenous cultural tourism, in regional and remote areas of Australia, so that indigenous communities may capitalise on their local natural and cultural assets (DITR 2003c; National Tourism and Heritage Taskforce 2003).

The Development of Indigenous Tourism in Australia

Until the 1960s, indigenous tourism consisted of little more than the manufacture and sale of boomerangs and didgeridoos. Around this time, air travel was becoming popular and the numbers of international tourists began to rise. Then, in the 1980s, along with a rapid increase in visitors came the realisation that the economic potential of indigenous tourism had yet to be tapped (Pitcher, van Oosterzee & Palmer 1999). Not only could indigenous tourism operate as a drawcard for the international market, it was a way to expand indigenous employment and training opportunities (Eagles 2001).

Many indigenous Australians have experienced and continue to experience disadvantage in regard to employment and economic development (ATSIA 2003; Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press; Ivory 2003). Compared to the national average, the unemployment rate for indigenous people is considerably higher than that of non-indigenous people and their average income is significantly less (ATSIA 2003; Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press).

Factors such as lack of education, vocational training and business skills, and that a relatively large proportion of indigenous people live in regional and remote places with few opportunities for employment, (ATSIA 2003; DITR 2003b) have made it difficult for this group to make headway in the small business arena, as either employees or entrepreneurs (Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press).

Increasingly, however, Australian Governments have been encouraging economic growth in Aboriginal and regional communities through the support and development of indigenous tourism enterprises. indigenous tourism is seen as a way of reducing welfare dependency and strengthening cultural identity among Aboriginal people, especially the young, as well as being a means of positioning Australia as a culturally distinctive destination (Altman & Finlayson 2003; Eagles 2001; Pitcher et al. 1999).

The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody report identified tourism as having potential for indigenous economic development. The Commissioner drew attention to five main areas in which indigenous people could participate in the tourism industry. These were:
- Employment in tourism related organisations;
- Businesses owned by Aboriginal people that service the tourism industry;
- The manufacture and sale of artefacts;
- Aboriginal cultural tourism; and

- Aboriginal involvement in the investment and management of joint ventures (RCIADIC 1991).

Over the past fifteen years or so, many strategies have been devised that concern indigenous tourism. However, in 1997 the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Industry Strategy recognised a need for a coordinated approach involving Commonwealth and state government agencies, tourism organisations, and Aboriginal communities (ATSIC 1997). Since the release of that plan, organisations such as Aboriginal Tourism Australia, indigenous Business Australia and the indigenous Tourism Network have been formed to support, represent and encourage Aboriginal tourism development (Aboriginal Tourism Australia 2002; Aboriginal Tour Operators 2003).

Box 1: Definitions of Aboriginal tourism

Aboriginal culture is often the main focus of Aboriginal tourism and includes a wide range of experiences such as heritage and adventure tours, arts and crafts, performing arts, and nature-based experiences. However, Aboriginal tourism should not be confined to cultural tourism, as tourism also provides the opportunity for Aboriginal people to diversify into other niche travel markets, such as catering to backpackers. They should also have the opportunity to provide accommodation, boat cruises and bus tours.

Aboriginal tourism is a 'niche market' or 'special interest sector' and includes a wide range of experiences built around tourist visitations (ATC 2003).

The term 'Aboriginal tourism' is used broadly to describe the participation of Aboriginal people in tourism either directly through jobs and employment, or indirectly through ownership of business enterprises. The terms 'Aboriginal tourism' and 'indigenous tourism' are used interchangeably (WATC 2004).

An Aboriginal tourism product is one which is wholly owned and operated by Aboriginal people, or one which is conducted in partnership with non-Aboriginal people and has the ongoing consent of the appropriate Aboriginal people. A recognised Aboriginal authority, such as local Aboriginal Land Councils, local Traditional Elders Councils or local registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporations, may provide this consent (ATC 2003). An Aboriginal tourism product includes those businesses that are owned or controlled by Aboriginal people, as well as those non-Aboriginal businesses that deliver authentic Aboriginal cultural experiences (developed by way of joint ventures or collaborative marketing) (WATC 2004).

Not all forms of Aboriginal tourism can be considered 'Aboriginal tourism product'. For the purposes of strategy development, only those products that are offered to the marketplace, which result in the customer receiving an authentic Aboriginal cultural experience, and delivered by Aboriginal people (or people authorised by Traditional Owners), can be considered 'Aboriginal tourism product' (WATC 2004).

The Market for Indigenous Tourism in Australia

In 2002, there were estimated to be approximately 200 indigenous tourism operators in Australia (Tourism Queensland 2002) and, although they represent just a small portion of the Australian tourism industry (ATSIC 1997), the number of indigenous tourism enterprises has steadily increased over the past decade. Whilst mainly providing Aboriginal art, souvenirs and cultural tours, indigenous participation in the provision of visitor accommodation and service facilities is also increasing (Zeppel 2001). Additionally, there is evidence that the demand for indigenous cultural tourism products and experiences is not being fully met (DITR 2003b; Tourism Queensland 2002; Zeppel 2001).

In 2002, approximately 10% of all international visitors to Australia (more than 410 000 people) experienced Aboriginal art, craft or cultural displays and approximately 5% of international tourists visited an Aboriginal site or community (ATSIA 2003; ATC 2003; SATC 2001; Tourism Queensland 2002). Approximately 13% of visitors, or some 530 000 people, experienced either Aboriginal art, craft or cultural displays, as well as visiting Aboriginal sites and/or communities (SATC 2001; Tourism Queensland 2002).

Although the market for indigenous cultural experiences is increasing, the majority of tourists are far more inclined to purchase Aboriginal art and souvenirs or view rock art (ATC 2003; Zeppel 2001). Gross sales for Aboriginal artefacts total around $200 million per year, in comparison with the $5 million per year generated by the provision of indigenous cultural experiences (ATSIC 1997).

The bulk of the indigenous tourism market is composed of international visitors who, increasingly, are seeking to experience indigenous art and culture during their stay in Australia (Tourism Queensland 2002). At present, it is mostly tourists from westernised countries who show the highest levels of interest and involvement in indigenous tourism experiences, with Germany, other European countries, the United Kingdom, the United States and Japan (in that order) being the highest source markets (ATC 2003).

For example, a recent research paper by Tourism Queensland (2002), based on a survey of tourist visitation incorporating indigenous culture, indicates that international visitors, in particular, are increasingly wanting to

experience aspects of indigenous culture, often with the view of meeting indigenous Australians during their stay in Australia. The research found that cultural tours, which were conducted by an Aboriginal guide, were seen to have added value because indigenous guides were perceived as having more knowledge about the local environment, history and mythological stories (or sacred histories) concerning the location being visited. (See also NTTC 1994, p.9). Four further types of tourist groups were identified by this research paper as expressing particular interest in incorporating indigenous cultural experiences into their holiday experience. These groups included people interested in learning about Australian indigenous cultures, young people, adventurous people and those who were interested in the reconciliation process (Tourism Queensland 2002).

As previously noted, research indicates that the demand for indigenous tourism experiences is not being fully met. International visitors are showing definite interest in experiencing indigenous cultures but, at this time, the Australian tourism industry does not have sufficient capacity to meet this demand. Over a third of international visitors who were involved in an indigenous tourism experience said they had wished to participate in more indigenous cultural experiences – including interactions with Aboriginal people, viewing cave paintings and rock art sites, or seeing a performance – with authenticity being key to the experience (ATC 2003; Tourism Queensland 2002). Types of indigenous tourism enterprises include:

- 4WD Adventure Tours
- Accommodation (outstations, lodges, villas, resorts)
- Air tours (combined with indigenous tour)
- Art Shows/Exhibitions
- Art Centres (where art is produced)
- Art Galleries (where art is displayed)
- Art and Craft (shops)
- Art and Craft (manufactured on site)
- Art Tours (visiting various art centres)
- Bird watching Tours
- Boat Cruises
- Bush Food/Medicines Industry
- Camel Safari
- Camping/Safari camps
- Canoeing
- Ceremonies/Corroborees
- Conveniences Stores (groceries, petrol, fishing gear, clothes)
- Cultural Awareness Programs/Workshops
- Cultural Centres
- Cultural Experiences (bush skills, making weapons, throwing boomerangs, playing didgeridoo, making fire etc)
- Cultural/Interpretative Tours (bush, communities, outstations, scenic areas)
- Cultural Sites/Ceremonial Sites
- Dance Performances (traditional/contemporary)
- Day Spa (spa treatments)
- Displays of Traditional Shelters
- Dreaming Stories/Creation Stories
- Festivals
- Fishing Tours
- Guided Walks
- Historic Sites (e.g. old missions)
- Hospitality
- Keeping Places
- Museums
- National Parks
- Nature-based Tourism
- Natural Features (gorges / waterholes / rock escarpments / natural quarries)
- Paper Manufacturing (from grasses, reeds, Spinifex etc.)
- Rangers/Guides
- Research Centres (Strehlow)
- Rock Art Sites/Engravings
- Scenic Flights
- Self-guided Walking Trails
- Storytelling
- Theatre
- Vehicle Transfer Service (4WDs/buses)
- Visitors Centre
- Use of Traditional Language (interpreter)
- Wildlife Parks
- Wildlife Tours

The Benefits of Indigenous Tourism

This section of the report reviews the possible benefits of tourism for Aboriginal people, particularly those living in northern Australia. For each of the varied reasons that can be found to support the development of Aboriginal tourism enterprises, it is perhaps possible to provide counter-arguments that accentuate the negative effects of tourism. Although there are common national themes contained in the rationale behind encouraging indigenous tourism enterprises, the diversity of Aboriginal histories and cultures requires specific, local assessments of each of the following potential reasons for promoting it:

- Economic opportunities for indigenous groups;
- Promotion of self-determination;
- Cross-cultural exchange;
- Preservation of traditional cultures; and
- Natural resource management
  We shall consider each of these reasons in turn.

Economic Opportunities for Indigenous Groups

Both governments and Aboriginal people view tourism as a potential source of employment and economic growth for communities. As for minority indigenous groups in other countries, Butler and Hinch (1996, pp.4-5) maintain that a 'Western-based economic rationale underlies much of the argument to use tourism as a mechanism for finding solutions to challenges facing indigenous peoples'. Australian Government impetus for indigenous tourism dates back at least several decades (see Altman 1988 and 1993 for a history of Commonwealth Government involvement) and was partly catalysed by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, whose findings were released in 1991.[4]

Employment opportunities can be a prime motive for Aboriginal people to engage with the industry. Mapunda's (2001) research in South Australia on Aboriginal tourism enterprises recorded that the primary motivation for tourism was employment ahead of profit. Informal interviews conducted as a part of this study indicated that the quality of employment was a driving factor in the desire to form a tourism business. For example, in the community of Jumbun, located in the study area on the Murray River, work options were often little more than three days per week on the Community Development Employment Programme (CDEP)[5] or seasonal agricultural labour (e.g. banana packing or harvesting). In one instance, a Jumbun resident discussed his deep interest in visiting all of the story places (or sacred sites) which he had learnt since childhood, and then passing on that knowledge to the community. He acknowledged that cultural tours provided a means for him to achieve this goal.

In their research on tourism in the region surrounding Weipa in Far North Queensland, Felan Consulting and Event Services noted that 'any sustainable tourism strategy needs to be profitable in the medium to long term', indicating that remote areas especially need to focus more on profitability as they are areas 'where basic community infrastructure and utilities are expensive to establish and maintain, and have to be paid for in one way or another' (2004, p.15). However Altman (1993, pp.7-9) warns that the financial returns from tourism enterprises may be so low or inequitably distributed as to undermine any incentive to participate in them. Furthermore, he notes the likelihood that tourism will only provide income supplements rather than financial independence. In an area where affluent tourists are numerous and highly visible, there can be an erroneous perception that tourism translates directly into instant financial reward.

The Promotion of Self-determination

Butler and Hinch (1996) suggest that cultural tourism can promote self-determination among indigenous peoples[6]. However, this would largely depend on the extent of Aboriginal control and the success of the venture. Failed ventures could well undermine efforts to institute greater self-determination for Aboriginal groups. It is more likely that the promotion of self-determination would be limited in many cases to partial economic independence and the development of some business and governance skills.

Cross-cultural Exchanges

A convincing argument can be made for indigenous tourism on the grounds that it can promote cross-cultural awareness and understanding, and change stereotypical views of indigenous communities. This rationale depends on the type of tourism encounter, who controls it, and its cultural content. Some attempt to portray classical Aboriginal culture carries the potential to stereotype Aboriginal people as 'primitive' and 'of the past', rather than depict them as vital and viable social components of a contemporary multi-cultural Australia. Although wary of such risks, the cross-cultural exchange potential of tourism is supported by Finlayson, who writes:

> Undoubtedly there is a role for Aboriginal communities in Eastern Australia to educate the wider society about Aboriginal experiences in Australian history. The framework of cultural tourism seems eminently suited to such a purpose (1991, p.70).

While a proportion of tourists seek deeper, more intimate, levels of cross-cultural exchange, the levels of contact actually achieved need to match Aboriginal expectations of the exchange. A recent paper by Parsons (n.d.) divides the indigenous cultural tourism experience into categories based on degrees of intimacy. He explains that 'within ranges along this continuum, various types of tourism enterprises, defined by their core business, may be distinguished in terms of exhibiting low, medium and high levels of intimacy'. At the lowest level, no direct exchange takes place, such as when Aboriginal art is purchased through a broker or when Aboriginal investment equity is purchased in accommodation. A medium level of intimacy involves a face-to-face encounter, but one that emphasises commercial transactions rather than cultural exchange. At high levels of intimacy, the tourist would experience extended face-to-face encounters with opportunities for unstructured

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[4] Various recommendations covered the promotion of Aboriginal museums and cultural centres, equitable participation by Aboriginal people in major tourist projects, joint management and heritage control of national parks, and general support for Aboriginal enterprises (RCIADIC 1991, Recommendation Nos 56, 203 & 314 respectively).

[5] The Australian Government's equivalent of a work-for-the-dole scheme, CDEP has been operating in Indigenous Australian communities since the late 1970s.

[6] Another subject of numerous recommendations in the RCIADIC report (1991).

interaction, dialogue and exchange. Examples include guided tours in small groups on Aboriginal land or accommodation packages taken up in small Aboriginal outstations.

Aboriginal people's preferences for engaging in types of tourism enterprises with varying levels of personal involvement will differ considerably across social, spatial and historical divides. Altman (1988) has noted a preference amongst many Aboriginal groups and individuals for the arts and crafts industries because the income provided is generated without their having contact with tourists. Only certain personality types will cope with the intensive social interaction that is required on cultural tours such as those seeking bush foods and involving camping. '[M]any Aboriginal people are unwilling or unable to undertake' engagement in these kinds of interactions (Altman & Finlayson 1992, p.2).

The types of enterprises that cater for the higher levels of intimacy are the focus of this scoping study. Many surveys reveal that the desire for direct contact with Aboriginal people and, in particular, Aboriginal interpretations of indigenous landscapes, is high on the list of tourists' preferences, although the literature on tourism demand acknowledges that these tourists tend to belong to a niche market (NTTC 1994, p.9; Ryan & Huyton 2000). The authors note that this type of experience has the greatest potential to challenge tourists' perceptions and attitudes of indigenous cultures (see also Davies 2001).

Preservation of the Elements of Traditional Culture

The literature that reviews the effects of tourism on indigenous cultures describes a spectrum of impacts ranging from the destructive to those initiating cultural preservation and recovery[7]. Altman states that 'the weight of evidence gathered by anthropologists in overseas contexts suggests that tourism is as likely to destroy as to preserve indigenous cultures' (1988, p.33). Some of the case studies he has researched in Aboriginal Australia suggest that tourism can result in coerced cultural change within communities, although they tended to be in remote locations. He contrasts the resistance of the Mutitjulu community at Uluru in the Northern Territory to modifying their cultural practices or material culture to suit tourism requirements with other instances where people have been more willing to adapt their culture for tourists (Altman 1988, p.309).

A more general criticism in an Australian context is that the tourism industry can promote the homogenisation of Aboriginal culture at the expense of the diverse cultural forms extant across the continent. This tendency is clearly evident in much of the promotional material for indigenous cultural tourism. The question is whether current advertising trends, observable in its marketing, directly influence indigenous representations of their culture, particularly those groups seeking to enter the industry with new products. In contrast to general promotional material, regional cultural diversity is emphasised in some of the recent tourism literature (Fourmile 1996; NTTC 1994, p.14; Tourism Queensland 2004, p.5).

In a more positive light, Finlayson, who has reported on case studies of Aboriginal tourism in both remote and rural Australia, suggests that tourism can contribute to a revival of traditional cultural practices particularly where 'colonial settlement ruthlessly suppressed many forms of cultural expression' (1991, p.70). The relationship of tourism to cultural revival is evident in other countries, particularly where indigenous peoples form minorities (see Harkin 2003).

Butler and Hinch (1996, p.5) maintain, perhaps tenuously in an Australian context, that tourism contributes to cultural survival through the economic advantage that accrues from successful enterprises. The cultural benefit of profitable tourism ventures would depend on whether such funds are invested to maintain or re-establish culture. In the United States of America, the funds flowing from Native American-owned casinos have permitted substantial investment in cultural museums (Harkin 2003); however creating a museum is not necessarily a form or indication of cultural survival. At worst, surpluses of cash in a community can result in substance abuse and family violence (Memmott, Stacy, Chambers & Keys 2001).

What is clear is that the effect of tourism on a particular group will be specific rather than general: it will be determined by that group's location, contact history, contemporary cultural identity and social status, and the current state of its social and economic problems. Just as an influx of tourism may have the potential to adversely affect cultural continuity in remote locations (by accelerating the loss of indigenous knowledge and traditions), it may well serve to stimulate interest in Aboriginal history, identity and culture in rural and urban areas.

Protected Area Resource Management

An indirect benefit of cultural tourism is perhaps to be found in the potentially symbiotic relationship of Aboriginal interpretive tours with the management of indigenous landscapes. The authors suggest here that interpretive cultural tours are ideally required to depict landscapes that are managed with customary Aboriginal practices, and that tourism may be one means of encouraging such indigenous management of cultural landscapes and biodiversity. This observation is relevant to places where Aboriginal people have tenure over their country or have acquired Native Title, and also where groups have maintained a connection to protected or

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[7] This debate has developed to a stage where tourism can be seen as one of the many contemporary (and inevitable) influences on Indigenous cultures; see Adams referring to Picard, 'rather than asking the question whether a given culture has become polluted or enhanced by tourism, a more salient question is how tourism has contributed to the shaping of a given culture' (2003, p. 568).

semi-protected landscapes such as national parks and state forests. In some regions, tourism may provide the means for younger generations of Traditional Owners to visit and observe their country. This is particularly the case in those communities and rural areas where regular access to country has been limited due to either lack of transport or formal prohibitive tenures that have prevented entry.

This relationship could be further explored by examining Aboriginal peoples' motives for engaging in tourism and investigating the potential for combining the dual roles of Aboriginal tour guide and ranger (this may be a partial solution to seasonal fluctuations in tourism work, see below). It is also possible that Aboriginal methods of landscape management or 'caring for country' are potential attractions in their own right, particularly for tourism focused on biological diversity and indigenous relationships to landscapes[8] (Muloin, Zeppel & Higginbottom 2001; Parsons n.d.).

These issues are explored further in Chapter 4.

Table 2: SWOT analysis for establishing tourism initiatives

Strengths and Opportunities	Weaknesses and Threats
• Strong cultural base reinforcing product integrity • Cultural diversity provides scope for development • Domestic and international markets have been identified • Strong market place identification with product supply • NTTC commitment to cultural tourism development • Remoteness • Growing market confidence • Large tracts of pristine land • Growing Aboriginal awareness and interest in tourism • Strong market overlap between environmental and cultural tourism • International and domestic niche markets substantially untapped • Government interest and responsibility for support, training and development	• Lifestyles not generally enterprise oriented • Culturally-based, parochial mistrust between Aboriginal groups • Lack of management/marketing skills • Access (both remoteness and seasonality) • Reliance on outside agencies • Poorly developed distribution networks • Industry perceptions favouring 'traditional' over 'contemporary' • Lack of research into demand and needs of visitors • Stereotyping and negative attitudes in the domestic market • Pressure of visitor numbers affecting lifestyles • Commercialisation compromising 'authenticity'

SOURCE: NTTC & NTOAD 1994, p.28

Issues Concerning the Development of Indigenous Tourism Enterprises

Despite the aforementioned indicators of growth potential in the indigenous tourism sector and government initiatives to take advantage of it, participation by Aboriginal people in the tourism industry remains very limited (Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press; Gale 2004; Tourism Queensland 2002; Zeppel 2001). Establishing an indigenous tourism enterprise is fraught with difficulties at all stages of the development process. Key factors at the heart of these problems include:

• The complex relationships between interest in indigenous culture, the demand for indigenous tourism products and their supply (ATC 2003; Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press);
• A low tourism market profile (ATC 2003; Zeppel 2001);
• Competition from eco/nature-based tourism;
• Lack of skills, qualifications and general business knowledge (Altman & Finlayson 2003; Dyer, Aberdeen & Schuler 2003; Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press; Ivory 2003);
• Cultural factors (Altman & Finlayson 2003; Dyer, Aberdeen & Schuler 2003; Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press; Hinch 2001; Mercer, 1998);
• Lack of ownership/control (Altman & Finlayson 2003; Dyer, Aberdeen & Schuler 2003; Ivory 2003);
• The structure and administration of government programs and assistance (Altman & Finlayson 2003; Buultjens, Waller, Graham & Carson 2003; Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press; Fuller, Howard & Cummings 2003; Ivory 2003; Zeppel 2001);
• Lack of available finance (Altman & Finlayson 2003; Fuller at al. 2003; Ivory 2003; Zeppel 2001); and
• Problems relating to any small and remote business (Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press; Fuller et al. 2003; Ivory 2003).

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[8] For information on Indigenous peoples' relationship with their landscape see Ross (1996).

These issues are discussed more fully below.

The 'Real' Demand for Indigenous Tourism

The relationship between tourist interest in indigenous culture, the demand for indigenous tourism products, and their supply can be problematical, to say the least (ATC 2003; Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press; National Tourism and Heritage Taskforce 2003). While a growth of interest in environmental and indigenous issues has led to an increase in the number of environmental and cultural tourism products available at established tourist destinations, it does not necessarily correspond that increased interest in indigenous culture will lead to an increase in the overall demand for indigenous tourism experiences (National Tourism and Heritage Taskforce 2003).

It is essential that the willingness of tourists to participate in an indigenous tourism experience is considered within the 'wider context of tourist attractions, and not simply measured as a response to specific products divorced from any other activity' (Ryan & Huyton 2000, p.17). Although many international tourists have the desire to participate in an indigenous cultural experience at some stage in their visit to Australia, few are influenced by that desire when making a destination choice or planning an itinerary (ATC 2003). This supports the findings of Ryan and Huyton (1998), who found that tourists interested in indigenous tourism were also highly focused on all facets of their holiday, and to them, experiencing indigenous culture was just one component of the whole trip. It would seem that indigenous tourism products, while of some interest to international visitors, may be relatively unimportant in comparison to other trip considerations, which could explain the lower than expected participation rates in indigenous tourism that have been recorded over the past few years (National Tourism and Heritage Taskforce 2003; Ryan & Huyton 2000).

Related to the issue of demand is the need for timely and accurate market research. Until recently, much of the research data collected on indigenous tourism has been viewed in an overly optimistic manner, resulting in unrealistic projections of the demand for indigenous tourism enterprises and inflated estimates of the potential market value of indigenous tourism products (Altman & Finlayson 2003; National Tourism & Heritage Taskforce 2003; Ryan & Huyton 2000).

Another issue relevant to demand is that, although research indicates an increasing demand for indigenous tourism (ATC 2003), its market is composed primarily of international visitors to Australia (Tourism Queensland 2002). Further, it is unlikely that the domestic sector is experiencing an equivalent increase in the level of demand for indigenous tourism (Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press).

In a research report on indigenous tourism demand, the South Australian Tourism Commission (2001) found that only 30-40% of Australian residents had shown any inclination toward participating in some form of Aboriginal tourism. Another study found that many Australians feel that their knowledge of Aboriginal culture is adequate and believe that they would gain little from an indigenous tourism experience (Tourism Queensland 2002). Additionally, many thought that a 'real' indigenous experience could only be found in remote places, such as Uluru-Kata Tjuta or Kakadu National Parks, and regarded most indigenous tourism as contrived and more suitable for the international market (Tourism Queensland 2002). As almost 80% of tourism in Australia is engaged by the domestic market (DITR 2004a), the level of domestic demand has significant repercussions for the development of indigenous tourism (Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press).

Low Tourism Market Profile

Indigenous tourism suffers from a relatively low market profile (Zeppel 2001). In a recent survey, jointly funded by the Federal government and state and territory tourism organisations, it was found that one of the main reasons why visitors who were interested in experiencing Aboriginal culture failed to participate in indigenous tourism was the lack of promotional material available to provide the information needed to plan those activities(ATC 2003). Between 60 and 80% of international visitors who were interested in experiencing, or had experienced, indigenous tourism asserted that they witnessed very little advertising in regard to Aboriginal tourism whilst holidaying in Australia (ATC 2003).

Competition from Eco/Nature-Based Tourism

Research shows that female, younger and/or adventurous tourists are more likely to be interested in experiencing indigenous culture, as are those who have higher levels of education and/or are employed in professional fields (SATC 2001; Tourism Queensland 2002). These characteristics also happen to be shared by visitors who are interested in nature-based tourism and ecotourism (Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press). Also, while the demand for Aboriginal art and craft is well established, demand for an indigenous cultural experience is much lower by comparison. Visitors surveyed in a study by Ryan and Huyton (2000), who were interested in experiencing indigenous tourism, were found to be prone to viewing Aboriginal culture as just one of the defining features of outback Australia.

These factors indicate that indigenous tourism operators are in direct competition with nature-based, eco and adventure tourism operators (Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press; Ryan & Huyton 2000). It is also likely that indigenous tourism products would need to be professionally presented in order to compete effectively (Ryan &

Huyton 2000). Indigenous tourism operators could also add value to their product ranges by including nature-based and adventure activities in them (Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press).

In major tourist destinations, indigenous cultural enterprises also compete for the tourist dollar with many different types of tourism enterprises (Altman & Finlayson 2003). In such places, it could be argued that the success of indigenous businesses – such as the Tjapukai Dance Theatre in Kuranda, North Queensland – is due to their ability to attract an audience by being located at a high-flow tourist destination, as much as it is due to interest in indigenous tourism (Ryan & Huyton 2000).

Lack of Skills, Qualifications and Business Knowledge

Many indigenous people find it difficult to achieve success in the tourism industry because their skills and educational backgrounds are different to those which are normally required (Dyer, Aberdeen & Schuler 2003). Involvement in the tourism and hospitality industries requires good communication skills and a readiness to be directly involved with tourists, which some indigenous people, particularly those in more remote areas, find difficult because of cultural differences and/or their lack of fluency in English (Altman & Finlayson 2003; Dyer, Aberdeen & Schuler 2003).

Further to this, managerial appointments in the tourism industry demand high levels of literacy and good oral communication skills. The general lack of formal education within Aboriginal communities has the effect of restricting those indigenous people who have the desire to participate directly in the tourism industry to unskilled or semi-skilled employment (Altman & Finlayson 2003; RCIADIC 1991). The result is that indigenous people are generally employed only in menial, low-paid jobs within tourism enterprises (Dyer, Aberdeen & Schuler 2003). Problems related to literacy also include a lack of access to information regarding the different types of small business and employment assistance available to indigenous people (Dyer, Aberdeen & Schuler 2003; Ivory 2003).

A further impediment to the development of indigenous owned and operated tourism enterprises involves few indigenous communities having, within close proximity, the facilities required to equip themselves with the necessary commercial, trade or technical skills important to the operation of small businesses. Similarly, there are very few opportunities for indigenous people from remote communities who receive on-the-job training to concurrently undertake formal training away from work in order to enhance future employment prospects (Fuller, Howard & Cummings 2003).

Cultural Factors

Indigenous tourism development may also be inhibited by various aspects of indigenous culture (Dyer, Aberdeen & Schuler 2003). For example, certain legislation prohibits public access to certain bodies of water in which Aboriginal people are allowed to fish, both commercially and recreationally, if they notify the authorities. However, this presents the local indigenous community with a dilemma. They may wish to benefit financially from operating fishing charters but they may not want to reveal the exact locations of culturally significant sites (Mercer 1998).

There is also the concern that tourism within Aboriginal communities will destroy the integrity of the host cultures. As Hinch explains:

> Tourism is a commercial activity and to the extent that indigenous cultures are part of the attraction, these cultures will be commoditised in the process of producing an experience for the tourist (2001).

Tourism can also be quite intrusive to the everyday lives of indigenous people (Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press, Mercer 1998). Residents of indigenous communities are often subjected to an invasion of privacy by curious tourists whose conduct – exemplified by such things as taking photos of Aboriginal people without asking their consent, profuse questioning, or trespassing into sacred or forbidden areas – may cause offence (Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press; Lawrence 2000; Mercer 1998).

That the cultural values and belief systems of indigenous people differ in fundamental ways from those encapsulated in the 'western work ethic' has also been a source of conflict (Dyer, Aberdeen & Schuler 2003, p.84; Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press). In many remote locations, indigenous people have continued to abide by many traditional customs (Altman & Finlayson 2003). Accordingly, their cultural activities are often practiced on a seasonal basis or at significant stages of life (Dyer, Aberdeen & Schuler 2003). Additionally, their emphasis on consultation and negotiation increases the length of time involved in completing business transactions (Dyer, Aberdeen & Schuler 2003; Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press). Priorities such as these are at odds with the world of commerce, where much value is placed on regularity of work habits, reliability and punctuality. The dilemma is that tourists place a high value on 'authenticity' and to sustain that level of cultural integrity requires a 'degree of flexibility that does not make it very marketable' (Altman & Finlayson 2003, p.86).

Lack of Control, Ownership and Intellectual Property

The extent of Aboriginal control over the product is, of course, integral to the discussion of indigenous tourism. This control ranges from full indigenous ownership, to joint ventures, and to employment of indigenous people

as content providers. Butler and Hinch (1996, p.9) assert that control is a determining factor in the definition of indigenous tourism.

Levels of ownership will depend on the type and scale of the enterprise, its tenure and the expectations of Aboriginal participants. Expertise is frequently required that is generally not available within indigenous communities or family-run ventures, therefore, non-indigenous involvement may be essential or desirable. This study and the literature in general identify successful examples of partnerships between indigenous ventures and the mainstream tourism industry. In some cases however, Aboriginal control may be a fundamental premise of the enterprise (Finlayson 1991, p.42). Some would argue that unless indigenous people are able to exercise control over all stages of development (Dyer, Aberdeen & Schuler 2003), then it is unlikely that negative social and cultural impacts will be minimised.

Indigenous ownership in itself, however, does not ensure financial security. For example, indigenous communities that own landscapes among Australia's most popular tourist destinations, such as Uluru and Kakadu National Parks, receive very little income directly from tourism enterprises, either as owners or employees of a tourism (indigenous or otherwise) business (Altman & Finlayson 2003). Although the aforementioned communities have majority representation on the parks' boards of management as part of their joint management agreements, and have increasingly significant levels of control over tourism development within the parks, they still have little choice in regard to visitor numbers or behaviour (Altman & Finlayson 2003; Mercer 1998).

In regard to indigenous ownership of tourism enterprises, individual entrepreneurship in particular is constrained by a lack of capital. The result is that most indigenous tourism enterprises are owned by indigenous communities, with any profits being shared between the members. As individual returns would be minimal in these circumstances (Dyer, Aberdeen & Schuler 2003), there is little incentive to participate in the operation of the business in any substantial way (Altman & Finlayson 2003). On the other hand, where individuals have established a successful indigenous tourism business, considerable disparity has arisen between their income levels and that of their communities, as well as significant potential for cultural conflict within the communities (Altman & Finlayson 2003).

Additionally, indigenous cultural sustainability depends upon indigenous ownership and control over intellectual property, both tangible and intangible (Dyer, Aberdeen & Schuler 2003).

Administration of Government Programs and Assistance

Since the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, a plethora of government assistance programs have been designed to promote the development of indigenous enterprises (Ivory 2003). Unfortunately, as previously mentioned, many indigenous people have found it difficult to access these programs (Buultjens, Waller, Graham & Carson 2003). As well as literacy-associated problems, the application process is complicated, access to business advice is limited in remote areas, and where field services are available, they have proven insufficient to meet demand (Ivory 2003).

In addition, programs such as the Community Development and Employment Program (CDEP) tend to encourage dependence on government funding (Ivory 2003; Zeppel 2001). Under this program, indigenous community leaders and local government officials 'prioritise small business projects for CDEP funding' (Fuller, Howard & Cummings 2003, p.21). For the program to be successful, indigenous community leaders are supposed to meet on a regular basis to discuss small business proposals. There is some evidence, however, that suggests such discussions take place infrequently, leaving non-indigenous Community Development Council members to make decisions that may not be in the best interests of the community (Fuller, Howard & Cummings 2003).

Indigenous tourism enterprises that are receiving government assistance are most often funded as community projects on the presumption that the residents of these communities form a single, harmonious group. In reality, indigenous communities are often divided, with opinions regarding economic development, among other things, being widely divergent. So the community representative bodies responsible for the operation of a tourism enterprise are then put in the difficult position of trying to balance the demands of government organisations with those of the community, as well as fulfilling the obligations of the business (Altman & Finlayson 2003). When an indigenous enterprise has been funded by CDEP, profits from the business must be remitted directly to the Community Government Council. If the relevant ATSIC regional office is not made aware of the details of the amounts being remitted, it is unable to approve any funding to the business. Similarly, without proof of income flows and net profits, it is doubtful that any financial institution would 'approve a loan to the enterprise for further business development' (Fuller, Howard & Cummings 2003, p.23).

Lack of Available Finance

A major obstacle to the development of indigenous tourism enterprises is the lack of access to capital funding. Obtaining the finance required to establish and/or develop indigenous tourism enterprises is a difficult and time-consuming process (Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press; Fuller, Howard & Cummings 2003; Ivory 2003; Zeppel 2001). As personal savings are the predominant source of funding for the establishment of small

businesses, indigenous people who already experience disadvantage in regard to employment and economic development are again disadvantaged as potential entrepreneurs (Fuller, Howard & Cummings 2003). Furthermore, though many indigenous communities own land, mainstream lending organisations are reluctant to finance projects using community land as security. This is because of the general perception that the 'inalienable freehold title granted under the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976 is communal in nature. Hence the term 'land-rich, money-poor'' (Ivory 2003, p.256).

Problems Relating to Any Small and Remote Business

Newly established and/or remote indigenous tourism enterprises are also plagued by the same problems that any other newly established and/or remote business would experience (Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press; Fuller, Howard & Cummings 2003). Approximately two thirds of all small businesses fail within the first five years of operation (Ivory 2003; Zeppel 2001). In addition, enterprises in remote areas may have problems accessing suppliers and skilled labour, are distant from markets and operate in a harsh physical environment (Fuller, Buultjens & Cummings in press). Invariably, difficulties such as these lead to 'increased costs of products and reduced competitiveness' (Fuller, Howard & Cummings 2003).

Indigenous Cultural Tourism and Sustainability

The relationship of the semantically nebulous term 'sustainable' to Aboriginal cultural tourism is not clear. We must be careful to differentiate between economic, environmental and cultural sustainability. Tourism itself is considered by some researchers to be an inherently unsustainable industry. Altman and Finlayson conclude that to be sustainable, indigenous tourism requires a balance between the following variables: 'commercial success, resilience of cultural integrity and social cohesion, and the maintenance of the physical environment' (1992, pp.7-8).

Considering the last of these variables first, the concept of sustainability is closely associated with the conservation of natural heritage resources and biodiversity. The role of Aboriginal people in shaping and maintaining many of the continent's ecosystems has been belatedly recognised, although the extent of their influence in different land systems is debated (Altman n.d.; Ross 1996). For example, in the Wet Tropics Aboriginal economies (World Heritage Area in tropical North Queensland), campsites, ceremonial grounds, and associated fire regimes contributed to the mosaic of vegetation types that were encountered by the first British settlers to the region in the late nineteenth century (Bowman 2000; McDonald & Lane 2000). Indeed, the entire region can be regarded as an Aboriginal 'cultural landscape' (Memmott & Long 2002). Although Aboriginal cultural attributes were not enumerated as criteria in the World Heritage listing of the Wet Tropics, 'many, if not all, of the so-called natural values of the Wet Tropics have associated [indigenous] cultural values' (Smyth & Beeron 2001, p.2). It can be argued that to exclude traditional Aboriginal resource management practices, where they remain in collective memory, in any ongoing plan for natural resource management, is to fail to conserve biodiversity.

As noted above, the effect of tourism on cultural sustainability is more contentious. Perhaps a more consistent criticism of tourism involves its potential effect on the social cohesion of local Aboriginal groups. Both the literature and the findings of the current authors reveal that social tensions can arise in communities that host tourism enterprises. Although the effect on social cohesion may depend on the structure of the venture, for example whether they are community- or family-run enterprises, both types have the potential to generate tensions and division. For community-run ventures, social friction may readily arise where there is a division of opinion on the benefits of tourism (Altman 1988 on Mutitjulu; Mapunda 2000). Where Aboriginal people have control over land tenure, one family group may want to exploit the potential tourist trade while other groups may wish to exclude tourists from their custodial lands (see Memmott & McDougall 2002 on the Aurukun Reserve). Jealousies and factional fighting over control can be further exacerbated where ventures become quite successful (Finlayson 1991, p.64), while kinship allegiance has the potential to complicate employment equity. Existing tourism enterprises, or even potential ventures, can ignite Native Title disputes between contiguous Aboriginal groups where land is an integral part of the product[9].

Finally, the issues relevant to economic sustainability are discussed elsewhere in this chapter. However, one only has to look at the number of struggling and failed mainstream ventures to see that the tourism industry is often not a means to generating large profits. Ventures require capital, business plans, managers, management structures, and reliable, articulate, and gregarious workers trained in interaction with groups of people from many different cultures. It is also a fickle industry, vulnerable to destabilising events well beyond the control of

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[9] Tourism is invariably included as an item in negotiations between Aboriginal groups and pastoralists in Native Title mediation (C. Jones, Native Title Studies Centre, James Cook University, 2004, pers. comm., 1 June), indicating the widespread, institutional acknowledgment of Indigenous cultural tourism. In many of the areas where Native Title is at issue, land is a primary resource upon which a potential Aboriginal tourism product can be based.

any one enterprise; an example being the recession during the 2002-03 tourist season in North Queensland, largely attributed to concerns about terrorism and an Asian influenza epidemic.

Measure of Success: What is a Successful Indigenous Tourism Business?

The success of an indigenous tourism enterprise is often contingent upon its commercial viability. However, such measures of success show little regard for 'social profit' and seldom take indigenous objectives into consideration (Fuller, Howard & Cummings 2003; Ivory 2003). In a 1994 study of fifty indigenous businesses it was found that 56% of indigenous enterprise operators believed that the most important goal of the enterprise was to provide community and social development, 38% rated community and commercial objectives as equally important, and just 5% believed that making a profit was the main focus of the business (Ivory 2003). To put this finding another way, success must be measured against economic, cultural and environmental sustainability.

There are many issues involved in planning for indigenous tourism development. Research has shown that indigenous communities do not always gain from such developments (Altman & Finlayson 2003). In order to benefit, indigenous people need to have sufficient control of both the tourism product and its promotion, as they affect not only the financial and social well-being of their communities, but also their cultural heritage (Hall 2000), which in turn embraces their environmental sites, landscapes and natural resources.

Chapter 3

THE MINING INDUSTRY IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the mining industry in Northern Australia, describes the changing relationship between mining companies and Aboriginal communities, and identifies some possible ways in which mining operations can provide infrastructure support for Aboriginal tourism ventures. The chapter also addresses the issue of why mining companies are now more likely than in the past to lend their support to such initiatives.

Mining in Northern Australia

Since the 1960s, there has been a rapid expansion in mining activity in northern Australia (defined here as the area to the north of the Tropic of Capricorn). Major developments have included the establishment of:

- Bauxite mines at Weipa (1961) and Gove (1972);
- A network of huge iron ore mines in the Pilbara region of Western Australia;
- The Argyle Diamond Mine (Kimberley region of WA) in 1983[10];
- Zinc mines at McArthur River (1993) in the Northern Territory, the Ernest Henry Mine near Cloncurry in Queensland, and the Century Mine in the lower Gulf (1998/1999);
- The Ranger Uranium Mine adjacent to Kakadu National Park (1981); and
- Gold mines at Pajingo and Mt Leyshon near Charters Towers in Queensland, in the Tanami Desert, and at Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory.

In addition, a host of smaller mines have opened – and in several instances closed – over this same period. Many of these mining operations are located on, or close to, Aboriginal land or communities, and near to natural pristine wilderness areas (see Map 2 following).

Map 2: General distribution of major operational mines in northern Australia (listing is not exhaustive)
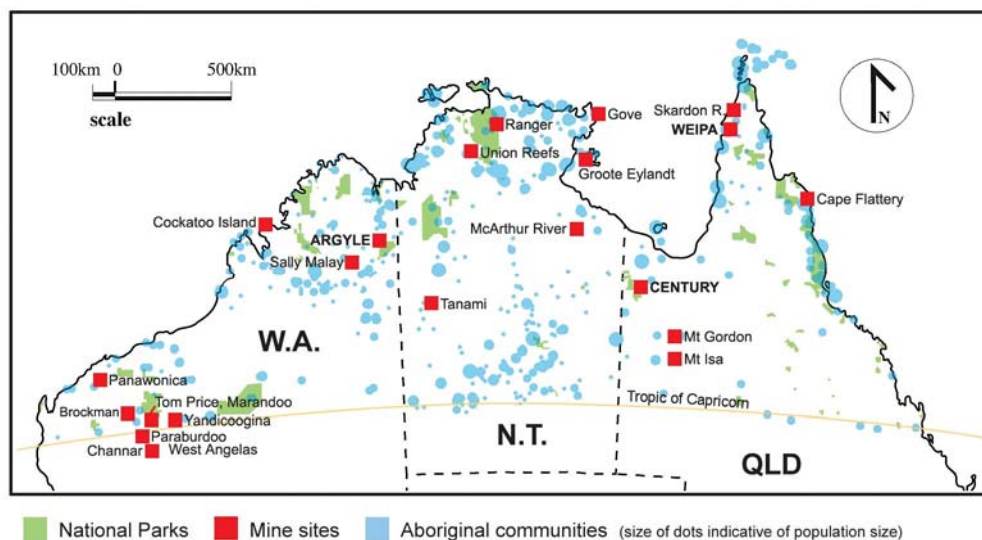
SOURCE: Prepared by Linda Thomson, AERC, and Tanuja Barker, CSRM

The most well-known illustration of this is probably the Ranger Uranium Mine, but there are numerous other examples. For instance, the Mitsubishi-owned Cape Flattery silica sand mine is located within close proximity of Hopevale, a Cape York Aboriginal community, and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park in Queensland.

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[10] The alluvial operations commenced in 1983 and mining of the main ore body in 1985 (Argyle Diamonds 2005).

Australian Mining and Indigenous Relations

This overlap of divergent worldviews and values associated with 'country' or landscapes has been at the crux of a historically antagonistic relationship between mining companies, indigenous people and environmentalists. Some examples of contentious issues or events include:

- The forced resettlement of Aboriginal people from Mapoon (Queensland) during the establishment of the Weipa bauxite mine in 1963;
- The destruction of the Barramundi Gap, a significant sacred site in the East Kimberley region (WA) during the development of the Argyle diamond mine; and
- Over a protracted period, the antagonistic relationship between the ERA (Energy Resources of Australia) Ranger Uranium Mine, members of Traditional Owner groups, and supporters of Kakadu National Park that surrounds the mining operation.

While some of the underlying values held by mining companies, indigenous people and environmentalists may be irreconcilable, most of the larger mining companies with operations in northern Australia are now formally committed to supporting development that minimises negative impacts and promotes mutually beneficial outcomes for their operations and indigenous communities (see below, for further discussion). Social Impact Assessments (SIAs) and indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) have been the two main avenues through which mining operations can promote mutually beneficial outcomes for indigenous communities.

For many new mineral resource developments, SIA is the key formal mechanism through which indigenous community impacts and concerns can be factored into the decision-making and planning process. To date, most SIAs have been seen as an exercise in compliance, undertaken to satisfy regulatory requirements, rather than as an opportunity to achieve good social outcomes and enhance the quality of the project. SIAs have been the focus of sustained criticism in the past for their scant treatment of indigenous issues (e.g. Chase 1990; O'Faircheallaigh 1999). However, if conducted properly, an SIA can provide a strong information base upon which to determine whether or not a project should proceed and, if so, under what conditions. The results of the SIA can also be used to strategically plan for militating the negative social impacts of mine closure and emphasising the positive ones.

Legal developments in Australian indigenous relations have also contributed to the improved relationship between mining operations and indigenous communities. The successful High Court claim by Eddie Mabo on behalf of the Mer Islanders, and subsequent Native Title legislation, overturned the previous legal assumption of *terra nullius* ('vacant land') and required mining companies to re-examine their relations with indigenous communities. Several developments have occurred since, including:

- The Wik Decision, which established that Native Title can coexist with pastoral leases, with the latter taking precedence when disputes arise;
- The Native Title Amendment Act 1998, which was aimed at streamlining the operation of the Act and reducing delays while also reducing the impact of the Wik decision.

These legal developments have provided a number of Aboriginal communities with leverage to negotiate directly with mining companies about mining developments. Numerous ILUAs between Native Title groups, mining companies and government authorities have been established over the last decade[11]. ILUAs are essentially voluntary, but are nonetheless legally binding agreements between negotiating parties (National Native Title Tribunal 2000). The aims of ILUAs are to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive outcomes from economic development, although their creation does not necessarily imply the successful implementation thereof (O'Faircheallaigh 2002)[12].

Indigenous Land Use Agreements can address numerous matters, including the need for mining activities to meet certain legally defined environmental standards and protect culturally significant sites on mining leases. Support of local businesses, trust payments and local employment and training initiatives often comprise their key economic components. These, combined with the potential for the development and usage of mining infrastructure to create mutually beneficial outcomes, provide the ingredients for companies to assist with the development of small-scale tourism ventures involving local indigenous people, and make use of the potential synergy between mine, natural pristine areas and Aboriginal communities.

Mining operations can be significant economic drivers in remote regions, and government authorities therefore promote mining developments by providing such incentives as their contributing to the development or upgrading of supporting infrastructure, the size and scale of which may not otherwise occur in these localities. Many remote Aboriginal communities are known to have inadequate levels of basic infrastructure, such as year-round road access, reliable power supply, and adequate housing, health, rubbish disposal and sewerage facilities (see Baillie, Siciliano, Dane, Bevan, Paradies & Carson 2002 for further detail). Government ILUA

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[11] Refer to the mining and minerals related agreements on the 'Agreement, Treaties and Negotiated Settlements Project' database accessible at http://www.atns.net.au/ for further detail.

[12] For example, due in part to numerous outstanding issues in relation to the Gulf Communities Agreement, a sit-in of local Aboriginal people occurred at the Century mine canteen in the Gulf of Carpentaria in November 2002.

commitments often relate to the improvement of such community infrastructure, sometimes in themselves, but mostly as a consequence of the development of mining infrastructure.

Some of the more recent agreements with mining companies have the potential to deliver significant economic and social benefits to the relevant communities (see Satchwell 2002). For example, the Gulf Communities Agreement, negotiated as part of the development of the Century Mine in north-west Queensland, includes comprehensive provisions relating to: education; employment and training; development of local businesses; cultural and environmental protection; transfer of pastoral properties; and compensation.

Arguably, the influence of the Native Title process has extended well beyond the specific sites covered by agreements to influence corporate practices and attitudes more generally. According to a recent review of the Australian minerals sector – prepared as part of the global Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development (MMSD) project – there has been a 'sea change' in mining industry attitudes since the 1998 amendments to the Native Title Act, 'from (at best) a good neighbour policy to one of recognising the rights of indigenous community groups' (Sheehy & Dickie 2002, p.62).

The Broader Context

The increased willingness of mining companies to engage with indigenous communities is a response not only to the impact of Native Title legislation, but also to broader changes taking place within the industry. In recent years the mining industry – both within Australia and internationally – has come under strong pressure from diverse sources to improve its environmental and social performance. In response, most of the leading companies have now formally embraced the related principles of sustainable development and corporate social responsibility. In mid 2003, the global peak association for the industry, The International Council of Mines and Metals (ICMM), formally adopted a sustainable development framework (ICMM 2003). Amongst other things, this code states that signatories will:

- Contribute to the social, economic and institutional development of the communities in which they operate;
- Contribute to community development from project development through closure in collaboration with host communities and their representatives;
- Encourage partnerships with governments and non-governmental organisations to ensure that programmes (such as community health, education, local business development) are well designed and effectively delivered;
- Enhance social and economic development by seeking opportunities to address poverty; and
- Respect the culture and heritage of local communities, including indigenous peoples. (ICMM 2003)

The recently released Australian Minerals Industry Framework for Sustainable Development, entitled *Enduring Value* and developed under the auspices of the Minerals Council of Australia (MCA), provides comprehensive guidance to companies and sites on how the ICMM principles should be implemented (MCA 2004). All member companies of the MCA, which include most of the larger mining companies active in Australia, will be required to commit to the framework. This commitment carries with it the obligation to progressively implement the ICMM Principles and to produce an annual public report on site-level performance. The guidance provided to companies on dealing with indigenous communities includes the need to:

- Recognise and respect the culture and heritage of local communities including:
  - The culture and traditions of indigenous peoples and their relationships with lands and waters;
  - Sites and objects of local, regional and national significance;
- Engage with local and indigenous communities in culturally appropriate ways, respecting their customs and beliefs;
- Work with communities to develop appropriate, cooperative strategies to protect and manage sites of special significance to those communities on lands within and adjacent to their operations;
- Where appropriate, incorporate local and traditional environmental knowledge and land management practices into company operations;
- Work with communities to develop employment, education, training and business development, and other opportunities. (MCA 2004)

More generally, *Enduring Value* states that companies should:

- Plan and operate in ways that support the sustainable social, economic and environmental development of the host country, region and local communities;
- Work to realise education and training opportunities for local people to increase their employment options;
- Identify opportunities for skill development and training and implement these in collaboration with employees to increase their employment options following mine closure;
- In conjunction with local communities, support the development and improvement of sustainable infrastructure;
- Strengthen and diversify the local and regional economy by supporting local businesses and products when this is feasible and consistent with sound business practices; and

- Engage the community in defining the intended post-mining land-use in mine closure plans. (MCA 2004)

In parallel to – or in some cases, preceding – these developments at the industry level, most of the larger mining companies have also adopted company-specific policy statements that emphasise their commitment to sustainable development principles. For example, Rio Tinto requires each of its sites to have a five-year community plan which has as one of its main aims the provision of benefits to community groups that last beyond the life of the mine. According to the company's website:

> In many remote locations and developing countries assistance with basic infrastructure is greatly valued by communities. Business enterprise and small scale community based businesses can also provide opportunities for community people to learn new technical skills along with administrative, retail or commercial management skills (Rio Tinto 2004a).

BHP Billiton has adopted detailed management standards that provide guidance to mine sites on how they should discharge their environmental, health and safety, and community responsibilities. These standards include the following requirements:

- Local and indigenous communities, and their traditional and cultural heritage values potentially affected by BHP Billiton operations, are identified, and strategies are developed to address their concerns and aspirations.
- Systems are in place to work with local communities through project development, operational and closure phases, to identify needs and prioritise support for sustainable community development initiatives.
- Where plant and equipment is installed as part of community development programs, consideration is given to the provision of appropriate technology and training in its use, and the local capacity for ongoing care and maintenance. (BHP Billiton 2002, p.12)

In summary, these broader developments in the industry, coupled with the need for companies to negotiate access to Aboriginal land, has created an environment in which mining companies are increasingly focused on how they can provide long-term economic and social benefits to Aboriginal communities affected by mining. Given the remoteness of many of these communities and their lack of natural economic advantages, supporting the development of sustainable tourism ventures may be one of the best ways of furthering this objective.

Mining Infrastructure

The term 'mining infrastructure' refers to those systems and services that a mine operation requires to work effectively. These systems and services can range from *hard* infrastructure requirements, such as power supply and mining equipment, through to *soft* infrastructure requirements, such as logistical transport support and training provisions for mining employees. Table 3 identifies the different types of infrastructure that may be associated with remote mining operations.

Table 3: Types and examples of mining infrastructure

Infrastructure type	Examples
Transportation corridors	Road / rail networks: e.g. access roads, haul roads, civil earthworks / engineering contracting services (maintenance). Airport facilities: e.g. airplanes, airstrips. Ports and marine facilities: e.g. boats, fuel storage. Airport supporting services: e.g. air freight and logistics coordination, airstrip management and maintenance.
Utility (power, water, sewerage, telecommunications)	Diesel generators, power lines, pipelines, mobile phone towers, septic tanks, telecommunications, plumbing, electrical maintenance services.
Mining equipment, machinery and vehicles	Machinery and vehicles: e.g. excavators, dozers, graders, dump trucks, haul trucks, 4WDs. Mechanical maintenance services, spare parts suppliers, equipment hire services, mining contractors, training provider services.
Plant site	Buildings, processing plant equipment: e.g. conveyers, mills, flotation cells, chemicals and fuel supplies. Construction and fabrication contracting services, IT services, training provider services.
Warehouses, workshops, laboratories	Buildings, laboratory equipment, chemicals and fuels, hardware suppliers.
Administrative, accommodation and recreational facilities	Buildings, computers, showers, toilets, laundry facilities, swimming pools, tennis courts. Catering, IT support, cleaning and recreational / entertainment services.
Landfill	Hazardous waste transfer stations, debris recycling services, composting facilities, environmental services (e.g. landfill monitoring).
Process water ponds , tailings dams	Feasibility, design and construction services of tailings dams and process water ponds. Environmental services (e.g. monitoring for licence compliance).

The infrastructure requirements of a mine are dependent upon such variables as the type, size, location and stage of a mine. For example, a mine's quantity and type of infrastructure needs will vary markedly between its exploration and construction phases. Even within an operational phase, infrastructure requirements are subject to production demand and output cycles.

There are ongoing opportunities for local communities to benefit from mining infrastructure during the operational phase of a mine. For example, communities may benefit from improved roads and access to airstrips at fly-in, fly-out (FIFO) mining operations. These present the possibility of flying in tourists. Towards the end of a mining operation, *hard* infrastructure is typically dismantled and removed. For example, mining and processing plant equipment is often sold for reuse, pipelines and power lines are dismantled for salvage. Semi-permanent 'donga' style accommodation and administrative facilities can be transported away. Septic tanks are decommissioned, landfills buried, topsoiled and revegetated. Larger scale service providers often transfer their services to other operations, while locally-based providers may transfer their services to neighbouring mines or other local industries, relocate or close down.

In recognition of the economic impacts that mine closures can have on surrounding communities, mining operations are being encouraged to adopt a 'whole of mine life' approach to mine closure. For example, the Australian and New Zealand Minerals and Energy Council & MCA *Strategic Framework for Mine Closure* advocates the communication of mine closure planning, especially when the infrastructure is retained for community use (ANZMEC & MCA 2000). For example, Granny Smith, a fully owned Placer Dome gold mine operation in the north-eastern Goldfields of Western Australia, developed a progressive decommissioning system inclusive of all infrastructure associated with its operation six to ten years prior to its expected closure. Mining operations are being encouraged to leave a positive 'post-mine legacy' to militate against the 'boom and bust cycles' experienced by the communities associated with their mines. Merlin Mine, a diamond mine located near Borroloola in the Northern Territory, arranged as part of its closure an exit agreement that included the offering of infrastructure assets to the local Traditional Owners (Fry 2004). This indicates that to some extent, various arrangements prior to the commencement of mining operations encourage operators to think about post-mining impacts. For example, SIAs require the identification of strategies to reduce negative impacts. ILUAs may also contain provisions for Native Title groups to have first right of refusal over the purchase of certain infrastructure at the termination of mining operations.

The type of infrastructure most conducive to transfer is current or future multi-use infrastructure, such as transportation corridors. For example, privately-owned access roads to a mine may be transferred to government ownership with maintenance responsibilities given to a local civil engineering company. Port facilities can also be easily converted for the distribution of other goods.

Mine Sites as Tourism Attractions

Traditionally, mining operations have not been regarded as aesthetically pleasing tourist attractions (Cole 2002; Edwards & Llurdés 1996). Mining activities and nature tourism have generally been viewed as conflicting economic activities, with the degradation of surrounding environments associated with mining thought to deter new activities from developing in these affected areas (Edwards & Llurdés 1996).

However, a growing industrial heritage tourism movement is now developing, with various mining-related tourist attractions such as museums, underground mining tours, theme parks, and gemstone and sapphire hunting tours now available (Cegielstki, Janeczko, Mules & Wells 2000; Edwards & Llurdés 1996). Given their size and scale, mine pits and the associated mining equipment, such as 1100-tonne electric rope shovels, can be tourist attractions in themselves. There also exists considerable opportunity to provide an indigenous perspective on mining and what it has meant for various regions, although it appears that to date, indigenous people have been minimally involved in mine-related tourism[13].

Further Synergy Opportunities

In summary, the clustering together of mining operations, Aboriginal communities and natural pristine areas has created potential opportunities for the development of indigenous tourism ventures. It is plausible that mining infrastructure could assist in providing the basic platform for making such initiatives viable. Many of the mining-related infrastructure requirements detailed in Table 3 overlap with broader tourism-related infrastructure requirements. For example, corridors transporting mine products and materials can also be used to transport tourists to and from their destinations. As the minerals industry is committed to providing positive outcomes from their operations for surrounding communities, amongst other sustainable development criteria, it is timely to investigate how mining infrastructure in the more remote areas of northern Australia can assist with the development of indigenous tourism ventures.

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[13] One case of Indigenous involvement in mining tourism found in the literature had Indigenous Quechua miners in Potosi, Bolivia presenting their versions of mining history to tourists at several operational mine sites that were doubling as tourism sites (Pretes 2002).

Chapter 4

CONSIDERATIONS RELATING TO PROXIMAL NATIONAL PARKS AND/OR WORLD HERITAGE AREAS

This chapter considers how the presence of a protected area might confer particular advantages upon Aboriginal tourism ventures, and why and how issues of park visitation and management are of particular relevance. The chapter canvasses the available literature on indigenous partnership arrangements and discusses the possible positive and negative environmental and psychosocial impacts of tourism initiatives on indigenous people.

The Conjunction of a National Park and/or World Heritage Area, a Significant Mine Operation, and Aboriginal Lands and Communities

An important consideration with respect to the identification of potential Aboriginal tourism possibilities is the proximity of an existing national park and/or World Heritage Area, and possible additional outdoor recreation areas, venues, or activities. Australia is one of the few countries in the world with such a dramatic, different and ancient environment, and with relatively unpopulated landscapes. It is also a unique visitor destination with respect to its living indigenous cultural heritage, stretching back a conservative 60,000 years. This is manifested in the level of international interest in contemporary Aboriginal culture and the lifestyle of communities living in remote regions of the country. Australia is the envy of the world with its hundreds of state and national parks and reserves: sixteen World Heritage Areas have been listed, five of which are found across Northern Australia: Kakadu, Purnululu, the Wet Tropics, the Great Barrier Reef, and the Riversleigh Fossil Mammal Site.

The presence of a proximate and prominent national park and/or World Heritage Area is an important and very favourable criterion to use when identifying Aboriginal tourism and mining infrastructure synergy opportunities. This is because such areas:

- Constitute an already known and promoted tourism destination and attraction;
- Ensure a modicum of infrastructure is in place for visitors;
- present multiple possibilities for communicating and presenting an indigenous perspective on protected area Land management, and for visiting and presenting a natural and cultural landscape occupied by indigenous people for many thousands of years; and
- Can take the pressure off adjacent Aboriginal communities and tribal lands with respect to an available and designated visitor camping and recreation area.

Adjacent Aboriginal communities bring in the perspective and ongoing management responsibilities of a very important stakeholder group, whose ties to the landscape in question are of considerable cultural, spiritual, legal and pragmatic management importance. The availability and involvement of such a community ensures that a comprehensive body of traditional knowledge is potentially available, with respect to flora and fauna, seasonal changes, particular topographic features and characteristics, risks and dangers. In addition, this body of knowledge, cultural context and history provides a rich store of detailed information, which can be used for interpretation and presentation of both natural and cultural heritage management (e.g. Horstman & Wrightsman 2001; Hunn, Johnson, Russell & Thornton 2003; Jacobs & Mulvihill 1995; Myers 2002; Reser, Bentrupperbaumer & Pannell 1999; Rose 1996; Wall & Arden 1990; Wang, Anderson & Jakes 2002; Williams & Baines 1993).

Where a national park is adjacent to, encompasses, or is itself a World Heritage Area, this strongly increases the attraction value and familiarity of the region and destination. It also ensures a particular public and market profile, and recognition as an international asset and outstanding natural environment and landscape. Where such a conjunction of place and opportunities exists, the local Aboriginal communities are usually important land owners and/or managers in their own right, often with a pastoral company or holding adjacent to or surrounding the mine site or protected area.

The multiple advantages which accrue to this situation for visitors are that they can see and experience a spectrum of environmental management situations and regimes, each with their own contemporary challenges. These range from World Heritage Area management in the face of steadily increasing visitor numbers and escalating regional development pressures, to the challenges of operating a world-class and environmentally responsible mining operation, to the operations of a contemporary cattle station, owned and operated by Traditional Owners. For a local indigenous tourism operation, a cultural tourism component can become an integral part of the tourism package. This enables a sensitive and appropriate interpretation of sites to be

provided by the local indigenous community, and gives visitors the chance to see and hear about the changes that have taken place in the region since European contact.

There may also be opportunities for mine sites and operations to provide additional geological and geomorphological components to such an interpretation and experience. In the case of Century Mine (Case Study 2) and Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) / Miyumba (Riversleigh), for example, the open cut of the mine, combined with the fossil record and landscape of Riversleigh, provide complementary perspectives and windows on landscape and evolutionary change over the past 30 million years. The indigenous cultural component of this presentation would provide a perspective from a culture and people that has been a part of this landscape for at least the last 60,000 years. Capturing and highlighting these parallel and interactive physical and cultural landscapes, histories and perspectives would make for a unique tourism package (e.g. Cotter, Boyd & Gardiner 2001; Ucko & Layton 1999; von Droste, Plachter & Rossler 1995).

A further attraction is that visitors would be able to see and experience a number of distinctly different forms of land management in operation. These management regimes include a multinational mining company operating one of the world's largest mines of its type, a World Heritage and/or world-class protected area management regime, and an ancient but continuous land management philosophy and regime practised by indigenous residents. In each of the three case studies (Chapters 5 to 7), there was also an opportunity of seeing a contemporary Aboriginal cattle station in operation. It is surprising that the 2003 Tourism Feasibility Study undertaken by KPMG, which focused on the Lawn Hill and Riversleigh Pastoral Holding Company, did not appear to have fully considered the larger context in which this opportunity exists (KPMG 2003).

In the case of World Heritage Areas, and arguably for national parks, there is a clear international agreement and legal mandate and charter to 'protect, preserve and present' these places (Environment Australia 1999; ICOMOS 1999; UNESCO 1995) as well as parallel federal and state legislation (e.g. Queensland EPA 2003). While the protection and preservation of these areas includes responsible management of the impacts of visitation and use, the responsibility to present the area also means that there must be a strong communication, interpretation and ideally education component. The nature and extent of this 'presentation' responsibility varies depending upon whether an area has been listed for its natural and/or cultural heritage values, with the meaning of each of these terms having multiple and important implications (e.g. DEH 2005a; 2005b; Domicelj, Halliday & James 1992; Lennon, Egloff, Davey & Taylor 1999; Walker & Marquis-Kyle 2004). This logic applies not only to World Heritage Areas; Australia's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 also provides for 'the protection and management of the natural and cultural features of declared parks and reserves' (Environment Australia 1999; 2001, p.11). In addition, there exists a separate indigenous Protected Area Program that aims to establish a network of protected areas throughout Australia in which Aboriginal landowners are supported in the management of their lands in line with internationally recognised standards and guidelines (DEH 2005b).

Distinctions between natural and cultural heritage are themselves both interesting and problematic, as there is little or no difference between these constructs for many traditionally-oriented Aboriginal communities. In fact, most of those Australian World Heritage Areas listed for their natural attributes are also places and cultural landscapes of very strong indigenous cultural and historic significance, carrying with them perceived ownership and management responsibilities (e.g. Horsfall 2002; Reser 1994; 2001; von Droste, Plachter & Rossler 1995). All of this puts local Aboriginal communities and Traditional Owners/managers in a privileged and very important position with respect to what might or should happen with new initiatives relating to tourism, or indeed any type of visitation and use. It also makes their involvement through management partnership arrangements critical to any successful management regime.

Aboriginal Involvement

Aboriginal involvement in protected area management in Australia is no longer simply a good idea, a matter of right or justice, or an astute management or tourism strategy. It now almost universally reflects state and federal government and management agency policies, priorities, and strategies (CALM 2003; 2005a; Cochrane 2002; Environment Australia 2001; Rose 1996). This emphasis on Aboriginal involvement parallels national and state commitments to a more general community engagement and involvement (e.g. 'cooperative community participation' and 'planning partnerships'). In rural and remote Australia, the community residing in the bio-region of a national park or other protected area often has a strong proportional Aboriginal population. Aboriginal involvement in park planning and management has yet to be achieved fully or satisfactorily across Australia, but dramatic progress has been made. However, important and sometimes vexed implementation issues remain, including: the legal status of some protected areas with respect to unresolved Native Title claims; the nature, extent, and articulation of involvement and 'partnership' arrangements; and the issue of meeting minimum employment requirements with respect to literacy and education, which affects many agencies in those regions where one form of involvement is the employment of Aboriginal staff (e.g. Cape York Regional Advisory Group 1997; Woenne-Green 1994).

Aboriginal involvement in tourism ventures with respect to state and national parks and World Heritage Areas is a different consideration, but there are important areas of overlap and common ground. As with the case of management partnerships, Aboriginal communities typically have a very clear desire and aspiration to be in

control of their country and what is happening to it. The cultural worldview and assumptive world of most Aboriginal communities in Australia is that their relationship to the natural world is all about management and 'looking after country' (e.g. Ayre 2002; Benterrak, Muecke & Roe 1984; Breeden & Wright 1991; Langton, Cooke, Davies, Epworth, Leach, Mackinolty, Sinnamon, Storrs & Young 1999; Njedjie 1989; Reser 1994; Rose 1992; 1996; Williams & Baines 1993; Young, Ross, Johnson & Kesteven 1991). This includes a nested set of responsibilities that encompass looking after and being responsible for visitors to one's country. This, in turn, is understood to include the imparting of certain information about the cultural landscape, which can be very unfamiliar, dangerous and 'illegible' for non-indigenous visitors. A complicating factor is that knowledge about country and places, and the imparting of it, is an important matter of right, responsibility and prerogative in traditionally-oriented communities, in a manner not dissimilar from intellectual property rights. Hence only certain indigenous people can speak for or about particular places. A further complicating factor is that Aboriginal people with connections to country typically stand in either an 'owner' or 'manager' relationship to country. It is typically the 'managers' or 'bosses' for country, not the 'owners', who have principal authority and responsibility for making decisions about such matters as access, visitation and use, and providing information or interpretive material for a particular place.

There has been a 'sea change' in many respects in terms of government and management agency appreciation and acknowledgement of Aboriginal proprietary, cultural and spiritual rights, and links to land and landscapes in Australia (e.g. AHC 2002; DEH 2005b; Environment Australia 1999; 2002; 2003; government of Western Australia 2003; Jacobson, Giru Dala Council of Elders & Lamb 1999; Rose 1996; Sullivan 1995; Sykes 1995) and internationally (e.g. Stevens 1997). Australia's principal environmental protection legislation, the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999, explicitly recognises the role, rights, interests and knowledge of indigenous Australians in accomplishing the following objectives:

- Promoting a cooperative approach to the protection and management of the environment involving governments, the community, landholders and indigenous peoples;
- Recognising the role of indigenous people in the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of Australia's biodiversity; and
- Promoting the use of indigenous peoples' knowledge of biodiversity, with the involvement and cooperation of the owners of the knowledge. (DEH 2005b)

The involvement of indigenous 'owners' and stakeholders is now strongly emphasised in the environmental protection legislation and guidelines of all states. The use of protected areas and the presentation and interpretation of these cultural landscapes makes this legislation and these management plans and policies very germane (e.g. von Droste, Plachter & Rossler 1995). This puts the onus on all parties contemplating a cultural tourism initiative involving protected areas to be very familiar with the Department of the Environment and Heritage's and other relevant agencies' specific protected area management plans and policies, particularly with respect to indigenous rights and responsibilities as well as protocols (Refer to Appendix B for more information).

Aboriginal involvement in a tourism venture is very different from the employment of a number of local community members (or other indigenous applicants) as rangers. While both of these forms of indigenous involvement bring income, training, and vocational options into Aboriginal communities, a business enterprise such as an Aboriginal tour operation has a very different orientation and economic base than does a state or federally funded and legislated management agency. Such an operation must achieve a working relationship, not only with the respective management agency, but with the local tourism industry and other operators, as well as with transportation, accommodation and other service providers.

Both Aboriginal ranger and Aboriginal tour operator involvement can provide a number of separable and much valued components. These include:

- Guided interpretation by indigenous Australians;
- Interpretive and educational material relating to indigenous cultural heritage, as well as natural heritage, provided by an individual for whom such matters are an integral part of their knowledge base and experience; and
- Indigenous perspectives on the parallel land management philosophies and regimes operating in these protected areas and mining leases, and contemporary changes and impacts.

An indigenous ranger or operator is also far more likely to be able to act as a legitimate representative of the local or more extended Aboriginal community on matters relating to sensitive and restricted areas, and interpretive information, as well as proper protocol with respect to particular places or sites.

It is important to appreciate that the responsibilities of indigenous rangers at a national park do not necessarily include cultural tours or indigenous interpretation. Such rangers have been employed to carry out specific responsibilities, and often visitor interpretation is a luxury for many parks where human resources are stretched to the limit. At Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park, for example, Aboriginal rangers are not engaged in visitor interpretation, except occasionally over the counter at the Ranger station. This staffing shortage is even more acute at Purnululu (Bungle Bungles) National Park. This has created a situation where park management is often extremely interested in and supportive of local Aboriginal tourism initiatives, as this

aligns closely with management agency policy objectives respecting further local community and/or indigenous involvement.

Impacts

An important consideration when discussing indigenous tourism ventures is the likely impacts on these local communities. These may include that of visitation itself, as well as a spectrum of other possible positive and negative impacts relating to socio-economic issues, employment and training, social problems, displacement, and cultural maintenance considerations (e.g. AIAS 1984; Altman & Smith 1990; Bentrupperbäumer & Reser 2000; Lane & Dale 1995; O'Faircheallaigh 1999; Palmer 1985; Reser & Bentrupperbäumer 2005; Ross 1990; Supervising Scientist 1997; for international examples see Buultjens et al. 2003; Fortin & Gagnon 1999; Rao & Geisler 1990; West & Brechin 1991).

The challenge of undertaking meaningful and useful social environmental impact assessments in indigenous communities in northern Australia and the Pacific generally shares much common ground with a spectrum of similar exercises in community development, planning, psychology and involvement, as well as participation initiatives, and cultural and natural heritage management. Indeed 'community impact assessment' is a name often given to such exercises (e.g. Lane, Ross & Dale 1997; Ross 1990), acknowledging the reality that conventional understandings of 'social impact' 'often miss or trivialise what is most important about the impacts of mining, forestry, tourism or resettlement initiatives; that is, how the fabric, texture, and lives of a community, as well as their multiple environments and settings, are affected' (Reser & Bentrupperbaumer 2001).

The Partnership Literature and Experience

There is now extensive international literature on indigenous partnership arrangements in resource and protected area management, and their challenges and relative success (Beresford 2003; Berkes, George & Preston 1991; Bowman 1998; Brandon, Redford & Sanderson 1998; Brown, Mitchell & Tuxill 2003; Colchester 2004; De Lacy 1994; Kempf 1993; Stolton & Dudley 1999; West & Brechin 1991). The experience of indigenous partnership arrangements, over the past several decades, has been mixed, with clear successes and failures, as well as contested outcomes (e.g. Borrini-Feyerabend & Sandwith 2003; Howitt, Connell & Hirsch 1996; Kellert, Mehta, Ebbin & Lichtenfeld 2000; McDonald & Lane 2000; Palmer 2004; Pannell 2003; Rowse 2002; Smyth 1993; Thorley 2002; WTMA Review Steering Committee 1998; Woenne-Green 1994). In many protected areas in other parts of the developing world, indigenous peoples are resident in and dependent upon the protected area environments. It should be noted, however, that World Heritage status does not equate with ownership, which remains as it was prior to nomination, with state and local laws still applying (DEH 2005a). Many Aboriginal Native Title claims relating to protected areas are yet to be resolved. Co-management or partnership arrangements with Traditional Owners brings into sharp focus the need for a better understanding of differing cultural assumptions with respect to people-environment relationships, and a specification of context, use and meaning when addressing cultural or natural values relating to the natural environment (e.g. Reser & Bentrupperbaumer 2005). In Australia, traditional indigenous connections to country remain very strong, particularly in northern Australia. Aboriginal communities are resident in Kakadu, Purnululu, and the Wet Tropics, and continue to utilise these areas with respect to bush foods and materials, ceremonies, instruction of youth, and fundamental cosmological maintenance and management. While Australian partnership management arrangements are often profiled as international best practice, as in Kakadu for example (e.g. De Lacy 1994; De Lacy & Lawson 1997), there remain a number of areas of tension and dissatisfaction. A long-simmering issue remains unresolved with respect to uranium mining at Jabiluka (Aplin 2004; Ayre 2002; Brace 2003; Bradbury & Menkel 1997; Langton & Palmer 2003; Keen 1993; Palmer 2004; Sweeney 1997).

A template for cultural and indigenous tourism initiatives should be provided for in any comprehensive management plan for a protected area in Australia, and in particular national parks and World Heritage Areas. The current and previous management plan for Kakadu National Park and World Heritage Area, for example, makes extensive provision for the nature and role of indigenous involvement in, and co-management of, tourism within the park (Environment Australia 1998). Similarly, the current management plan and *Wet Tropics Nature Based Tourism Strategy* (WTMA 2000) for the Wet Topics World Heritage Area makes substantial reference to Aboriginal rights, interests and aspirations, notwithstanding that the Wet Topics has, to date, been listed for its natural, not cultural, heritage values (WTMA 1998). The current management plan for Purnululu does not make provision for the fact that it is now a listed World Heritage Area, and policies with respect to indigenous cultural tourism are found largely within agency guidelines, rather than in the Park management plan itself. Unfortunately the Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park and the Miyumba (Riversleigh) World Heritage Area site do not appear to have an effective or integrated management plan, ostensibly as Native Title claims are still being resolved. It would seem to be a matter of high priority for Federal and state environmental agencies and specific protected area management authorities to address the matter of local indigenous tourism initiatives

within the context of their current operational management plans, procedures and guidelines. Where this has not been done, steps should be taken to effectively communicate these policies and guidelines to indigenous communities, local councils, tourism bodies and interested corporate entities, such as mining companies.

Protected Area Management Perspectives

It is not possible to properly speak for, or fairly represent the views of, multiple government bodies and protected area management authorities in a report such as this. Nonetheless, it is important to canvas a number of considerations that are often discussed in the protected area management literature and/or which came up in the research informing this report.

A very important issue has to do with a general agency management perspective on the distinction between natural and cultural heritage and respective responsibilities relating to these differing domains. Many managers work and operate on the assumption that these are entirely different and distinct considerations, and that their primary responsibility is with respect to the protection and preservation of the flora, fauna and natural environment of the area in which they work and have responsibilities for (e.g. Lennon et al. 1999). Presentation can be seen as equally important, but tends to take second place to protection, preservation and maintenance. The management, protection, and presentation of cultural heritage are often viewed as the responsibility and prerogative of appropriate Aboriginal communities, individuals or organisations, or indeed the tourism industry. Such a perspective with regard to Aboriginal Traditional Owners is not necessarily an abnegation of responsibility on the part of management agencies. It can be viewed as a respectful and appropriate recognition of indigenous community preferences, perceived responsibilities, and appropriate knowledge base and expertise.

An important reality for management agencies is that understaffing, and overstretched facilities and resources, especially during peak visitation periods, means that many 'best practice' practices cannot typically be implemented or followed, particularly those relating to ranger presence, onsite interpretation, ranger-guided talks and tours, and the development of local area interpretation materials. Another reality for protected area management agencies is that they often work in polarised community contexts wherein indigenous traditional use of protected areas, and indigenous involvement in protected area management, is a bone of contention for some local, non-Aboriginal residents and visitors. This is a matter which must be managed with fairness and sensitivity. There can be considerable local resident displacement in the case of iconic national parks and World Heritage Areas, resulting both from local community conflicts with respect to perceived uses and rights regarding this protected public space, and from the impact of large numbers of interstate and overseas visitors attending a limited number of drawcard destinations (e.g. Bentrupperbaumer & Reser 2000; Reser & Bentrupperbaumer 2005). This is a serious problem in World Heritage Areas such as the Wet Tropics and Kakadu, for example. Another matter, of very real heritage management importance, is that *cultural* heritage of particular salience to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents relates to their rich and shared past contact history, which is evidenced and reflected in the strong place meaning and attachment relating to cattle runs, homesteads, tracks, crossings, camps, and the locations of strikes and disputes.

Ultimately the management perspective with respect to Aboriginal tourism initiatives, 'on the ground', or 'in their own patch', is one of qualified support and in principle enthusiasm. Many managers are concerned about the prospect of coping with the increased tourism numbers that might flow from a successful Aboriginal tourism venture, or an additional and demanding type of visitation and use, in the face of current staffing and budget constraints. If a proposed initiative represented local Aboriginal community interests and/or had its support, was fully negotiated with a management agency, placed few additional demands on the agency, and indeed provided high-quality interpretation and presentation of both cultural and natural heritage matters, there would be little resistance and indeed a high probability of strong support.

Management and Planning Legislation, Monitoring, Guidelines, and Best Practice

The joint considerations of mining operations, Aboriginal lands, human communities, and national parks and World Heritage areas bring together multiple environmental protection and management issues, concerns, legislative acts, federal, state, regional and local government policies, mandates, and responsibilities. These matters are typically addressed in regional planning documents and specific operational management plans, but pose some daunting challenges with respect to permissions, licenses and safety considerations, for an indigenous individual or group contemplating such an undertaking. There is a substantial body of information and expertise with respect to guidelines, protocols, regulations and opportunities. This material is readily available, and would be extremely useful in planning a successful Aboriginal community initiative involving mining company and protected area management partnerships or infrastructure (see Appendix B).

While many of these guidelines are excellent, and of particular value to any consideration of the viability and sustainability of an indigenous tourism venture in the present context, they do not and cannot address the

specific challenges and complexities involved in forging sustainable and balanced linkages with multinational mining companies and state and national protected area management agencies bound by international agreements and accords. There are multiple land use, risk management, maintenance of infrastructure facilities (equivalent in many instances to the infrastructure of a modest regional centre), and continuing cost and business case considerations, which must be taken into account.

It is noteworthy that the *State of the Environment Queensland 2003* report (Queensland EPA 2003) expresses the view that the state's cultural heritage is deteriorating as a result of inadequate protection and lack of information, and that indigenous heritage places are at most risk from pastoral and mining activity, and urban and rural development. Working partnerships between Aboriginal communities, environmental protection and management agencies, and mining companies ensure that strong links are established across larger catchment regions, including Aboriginal lands, mining reserves and designated protected areas. Such partnership arrangements could also foster a very useful exchange of information, best practice, management policies and procedures across these management areas.

Conclusion

While an Aboriginal tourism venture utilising mining infrastructure does not absolutely need an adjacent and prominent national park or World Heritage Area, such an amenity, along with a dramatic and appealing landscape as part of it, confers many advantages. These advantages include existing visitation and use, as well as anticipated increases in visitor numbers, market appeal and prominence. However, tourism also brings with it other impacts and consequences, which Aboriginal communities must realistically consider and evaluate. For example, to what extent will increased visitation and use directly impact on residential Aboriginal communities, and on their own use of and access to traditional country? Can unwanted visitation to Aboriginal communities or significant cultural sites, by free and independent travellers desiring an indigenous cultural experience, be controlled? While the congruence between such a tourism venture and the motivations and aspirations of local Aboriginal individuals and communities is an obvious and core consideration, so too is the perspective and stance of the regional park management staff and office. There are clearly many advantages that would accrue to the agency in terms of promotion, presentation and indigenous-owner partnership initiatives, but the operational impacts on an under funded and understaffed regional office could be substantial; therefore agency priorities, policies, planning and constraints must be realistically considered and addressed. Notwithstanding the challenging nature of the issues facing all parties, it is obvious that: there are many possible ways forward; the potential benefits to all stakeholders are substantial; and, there do exist dramatically underutilised synergies and common interests requiring creative and thoughtful consideration.

Chapter 5

COMALCO/WEIPA CASE STUDY

Location

The site of this case study incorporated the mining town of Weipa and the Napranum Aboriginal community, which is situated approximately ten kilometres to its south (refer to Map 3). These communities are located on the western side of Cape York Peninsula, about 900 km by road north-north-west from Cairns (580 air km) and 200 km from the 'tip' of Cape York by road (Comalco Ltd 2005). There are twelve kilometres of sealed roads that connect Weipa with Napranum, the airport and Evans Landing. In addition, there are unsealed roads that start eight kilometres out of town and run to the boundary of the Comalco lease area, north to Mapoon, south to Aurukun and west to join up with the road to Cairns. Comalco has responsibility for maintaining many of these roads. Other significant nearby Aboriginal communities, which were not visited as a part of the fieldtrip associated with this case study investigation, but from which a number of its interviewees came, include Aurukun and Mapoon.

Weipa is inaccessible by vehicle during the wet season from November to April, when roads can become impassable for months at a time. During this time, Weipa is only accessible by air or boat. Its airport is 15 km from the township and caters for, apart from other charter services, two Qantas Link flights a day to Cairns on the five working days of the week, and one flight a day on weekends. Alternatively, visitors can charter a plane with one of the commercial services available.

Map 3: The first case study area and including Weipa, Napranum and the Comalco Bauxite Mine

SOURCE: Comalco Ltd 2005

Developed in the early 1960s after Comalco was granted a mining lease from the Queensland Parliament, the township of Weipa is still managed by the company, which is now a wholly-owned subsidiary of Rio Tinto. The four main industries that operate in the town are bauxite mining, commercial fishing, tourism and live cattle export. The mine is one of the largest extracting bauxite in the world. In 2002, its operations generated earnings in excess of $360 million and, with production expected to double by 2005, earnings are likely to increase substantially in the future. The life of the mine is expected to extend for at least another 60 to 100 years.

According to an interviewee, Weipa's population is approximately 2500 and is expected to grow to around 4000 over the two to three years following 2004. Approximately 10 to 15% of the current number is indigenous. There are eleven Traditional Owner groups represented in this region, and 'as a result of successful Native Title claims and the creation of many Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT) tenures, the vast majority of the land on the northern part of Cape York Peninsula is either already under Aboriginal control or will be in the near future'

(Felan Consulting & Event Services 2004, p.8). The Comalco mining lease is currently 2500 sq. km in area (Comalco Ltd 2005).

Comalco has funded the vast majority of Weipa's infrastructure (Felan Consulting & Event Services 2004, p.8) and employs approximately 600 people. There are moves for the town to normalise and become a local government area, with a Town Commission having been established to represent residents and assist in the decision-making process. The *Weipa Tourism Needs Assessment*, produced by Felan Consulting & Event Services for Tourism Queensland, notes that '[t]ourism is a relatively small but expanding part of the town economy' (2004, p.8). The current research found that the local tourism industry is largely comprised of non-indigenous businesses. The town relies heavily on the extensive mining infrastructure including an airport, road networks, a port, power, water and sewage facilities, and housing. Much of this infrastructure is utilised by other sectors of the economy, including tourism. The airport is of a standard that can easily provide for increased tourism.

Weipa also serves as an important regional hub, providing a supermarket and assorted shops, a hospital, ambulance and police stations, an administration centre for the Western Cape College, and a range of sporting facilities. The results of a feasibility study are to be implemented over the next 20 years, and an urban design team will look at developing a 'central hub'. The town's major tourism infrastructure consists of a caravan park, two hotels and a cultural centre. In addition, there are also two hire-car firms. There is a plan to construct a combined public sports complex and swimming pool, the latter of which exists and is in need of upgrading. Currently, most of the town's accommodation is rented by Comalco staff, however, as more land becomes freehold, individuals are being encouraged to purchase their own blocks upon which to build homes.

The infrastructure supplied by Comalco has created a pleasant and comfortable environment for a town with one of the highest average incomes in the country. In 2001, Weipa recorded the third highest median weekly income of $707 for an Urban Centre (ABS 2002a). In addition, the 2001 Census recorded 21.1% (or 235) people employed as tradespersons and related workers in Weipa (ABS 2002a). Yet, despite this apparent affluence, the Aboriginal people residing in neighbouring communities have substantially lower incomes and suffer considerable economic and social disadvantage.

Aboriginal Communities

The Western Cape region consists of four Aboriginal communities, the nearest one to Weipa being Napranum. The Aurukun community is 187 km south, Mapoon is 80 km north, and New Mapoon is located 400 km north (refer to Map 3).

Napranum is a community of approximately 1000 people, governed by the Napranum Aboriginal Community Council. Some small businesses are being operated by the community under the management of Nanum Tawap Ltd, an organisation owned by the five clans of Napranum; they include a concrete block-making operation, a sand quarry, a cabinetmaker, a saw mill, an agricultural venture, and an ironing and sewing business. Nanum Tawap has recently been given approval to selectively log trees on the Comalco mining lease, mill them and prepare them for export. It is also in the process of developing a nursery that will include seed collecting, grafting and planting of Mahogany trees (Comalco Ltd 2004, p.1). The first three businesses listed above are overseen by a non-Aboriginal manager, while the agricultural venture is overseen by a non-Aboriginal share farmer. An interviewee from the community's Council reported that there had been no interest shown by the community in undertaking a tourism venture.

Although the authors were unable to visit Aurukun, many interview respondents referred to the indigenous tourism initiatives that were in place there. The community is administered by the Aurukun Shire Council and consists of approximately 1300 people. At present, a houseboat capable of sleeping approximately ten to twelve people is being built using CDEP workers, who at the time of writing had reconstructed its hull. A number of tourism proposals have been suggested for the houseboat once it becomes operational. Such plans include use as a fishing charter, an environmental cruiser for bird watchers and crocodile spotters, or in hunting safaris. Several interviewees indicated that involvement in this commercial enterprise has created a sense of pride and achievement for those indigenous workers involved, and it is hoped that the houseboat will be fully operated by indigenous people. It was suggested that Traditional Owners from Weipa could develop a similar venture to this.

Aurukun also has an Art and Crafts Centre that opened in 2001 and which functions as a work place for the master carvers and artists of the community. In the past decade or so, the community's arts and crafts have been sold to avid collectors and major galleries, and the artists have toured both nationally and internationally to exhibit their work. An interviewee noted that the Centre is supported by the Aurukun Council, has a per annum return of $12,000 and offers indigenous people the opportunity to continue practicing their traditional crafts including fibre work and the use of local plant material for dye. The Centre has proven popular, enabling the local community to develop economically and allowing them to share their unique cultures with the world (Aurukun Shire Council 2003). An interviewee indicated that a business plan is currently in place to commercialise the operation.

Mapoon has a population of 200 people and is administered by the Mapoon Aboriginal Council. A Presbyterian mission was initially established on the site in 1891, however residents were forcibly removed to the New Mapoon site and elsewhere in 1963. After a number of years of protest, the community returned and began rebuilding in the mid 1970s. In 1989, the government returned the surrounding area to the people of Mapoon. At present, there are two businesses operating in the community; a crabbing enterprise and an art studio. indigenous artists work at the art studio, displaying their work there as well as at the Albatross Hotel. [Note: New Mapoon has a population of 300 and is administered by the New Mapoon Aboriginal Council. As stated previously, the community is 400 km north of the Weipa, near the tip of the Cape York Peninsula. As it is so far from Weipa and unable to utilise the infrastructure provided by Comalco, New Mapoon is not considered in this case study.]

The Local Tourism Industry

Western Cape York has been described as one of the last pristine and remote areas of Australia, offering spectacular and vast environmentally and culturally rich areas. The region's attractiveness to tourists is based on its relative accessibility despite its remoteness. Many visitors come to explore the natural beauty of the region and experience opportunities such as fishing, hunting and adventure tours.

While mining clearly is, and will continue to be, the major driver of the regional economy, Comalco's medium to long term planning involves its diversification, which becomes even more important because of the normalisation process begun for Weipa. Economic diversification opportunities for the region are limited and tourism offers the greatest potential for expansion. At the present time, tourism is a relatively small industry in the region, but it has grown substantially in the past ten to twenty years. For example, twenty years ago Weipa may have attracted around 5000 people per annum. Today, approximately 50,000 to 60,000 tourists visit the area, namely seeking two primary attractions; fishing and the natural environment. Similarly, no charter vessels operated out of Weipa ten years ago, while today there are ten.

Weipa appeals to two market types: the land-borne market, or 4WD self-drivers and tour groups, which arrive by road; and the airborne market, such as sports fishing visitors who arrive on a 50-seater Qantas Link aircraft or on charter flights from Cairns. These fishing enthusiasts come from as far as Melbourne (Felan Consulting & Events Services 2004, p.9).

Felan Consulting & Events Services found that the busiest tourists were the 4WD self-drive market, whose members tend to occupy the campground, take advantage of the fishing operations, the mine tours and local businesses providing for road travellers' services and provisions (2004, p.9). However, it is 'unlikely that there would be a reasonable return on investment in initiating a marketing campaign to attract more of this group to visit' because of their low daily spend rates (FCES 2004, p.10). The self-drive and road-based tours market spends on average between $50 and a $150 per person per day, and they tend to stay for two to four weeks (FCES 2004, p.29). Furthermore, this market is unlikely to have a major interest in indigenous tourism (see Ryan and Huyton 2002).

The aircraft-borne market offers the best expansion opportunity for tourism in Weipa (FCES 2004, p.10), including the indigenous sector. These visitors, while price-sensitive, are willing to pay a great deal for tourism in the region. They spend on average between $500 and $1000 per person per day (FCES 2004, p.29), but spend less time in the area when compared to the self-drive market. The regions from which this market's tourists arrive are located on the east coast of Australia. Weipa is considered relatively accessible, in terms of flight frequency and flexibility. This group is likely to have a higher interest in indigenous tourism products then the self-drive group.

Accommodation

Tourist accommodation in Weipa is limited to three facilities: the Weipa caravan and campground, the Albatross Hotel/Motel, and the Heritage Resort. At present, the Weipa Multi-Purpose Facility is upgrading a number of houses within their complex that could be used for tourist accommodation in the near future. At all locations, it is essential that visitors book well in advance to ensure their accommodation needs are met, particularly during the dry season. A number of recommendations have been made to extend the accommodation facilities in Weipa and the surrounding area in order to encourage tourism, especially those that might attract mining executives and government officials who may be enticed to extend their business trip to include some recreation (FCES 2004, p.10) (these recommendations are outlined in a later section of this report entitled Opportunities for Increasing Aboriginal Involvement in Tourism). The assessment produced by Felan Consulting & Events Services indicated that '[o]nce quality tourism facilities are established in communities, independently owned small businesses can start up that service the accommodation nodes' (2004, p.11).

Fishing

According to the brochure of a local sports fishing business, Weipa is renowned for being 'Queensland's hottest fishing location', and the current authors judge that fishing is the area's major tourism industry, with visitors

coming from both interstate and overseas to fish from Albatross Bay or at one of the three major rivers surrounding the Weipa Peninsula. There are currently around ten fishing charters or tours that operate out of Weipa, charging between $600 and $4000 per day. Some fishing charters also offer tourists added experiences such as fly fishing, crocodile spotting and wildlife tours. The professional crabbing industry also began in the last ten years. An interviewee noted that there were twelve operators in 2004. It may be possible to build a tourism activity around crabbing.

Camping and Adventure Tours

Camping is a popular pastime in Weipa and the surrounding area. Permits issued by Traditional Owners are required for certain areas to allow access for recreational purposes (Comalco Ltd 2005). Four wheel driving and jet-skiing are other tourism ventures available in the Weipa region. Adventure tours offer visitors the chance to experience 'one of the last great wilderness areas of Australia' (WCRCG 2003, p.27), by exploring the remote coastline and waterways on jet-skis, motorcycles, or in 4WD vehicles. Visitors can fly into Weipa and join such a tour to the tip of Cape York. Despite the consistent high temperatures in the region and the clear inviting waters, swimming is largely prohibited due to the presence of crocodiles and stinging jellyfish.

Mine Tours

A mine tour operates from the caravan and campground and has proven popular to those visitors who have an interest in Comalco's bauxite mining operations. Tourists are taken by bus to the mine site and given a guided tour of certain allocated areas of the mine. The Western Cape Cultural Centre used to be incorporated into the mine tour; however it was recently dropped from the itinerary.

Mining Museum

The museum showcases historic mining equipment used since the first days of operation in 1963. The museum is located in Lions Park opposite Nanum Shopping Centre.

Scenic Flights

Other tours available in Weipa include scenic flights run by a number of air charters to a variety of locations. Some companies also offer 4WD experiences as part of their scenic flight tour packages.

Bush Safaris

Bush safari tours offer fly/drive and sea tours, as well as photographic safaris where tourists can experience the rugged diversity of the Cape York Peninsula while developing their art and photographic skills (WCRCG 2003, p.26).

House Boats

Houseboats are available in Weipa, operate all year round and can accommodate up to ten people. Tourists can choose whether to hire a guide, drive themselves or charter the boats.

Current Aboriginal Involvement in Local Tourism

In the Cape York Peninsula region, indigenous people outnumber non-indigenous people two to one. In addition, indigenous people have, or will have control of, most of the land on the Cape, and therefore would need to be involved, directly or indirectly, in tourism for the industry to grow in the future. At the present time there is very little indigenous tourism product available in the region. However, there was a high level of optimism expressed by a number of people, both indigenous and non-indigenous, about the opportunities for the development of this branch of the industry. Most people interviewed by the current researchers suggested that there were exceptional opportunities.

Current indigenous involvement in tourism is limited to the three community councils issuing and collecting fees for camping on DOGIT or Aboriginal Shire land. The Mapoon Community Council operates a campground at Cullen Point, a popular site with local and Cairns fishermen. Basic toilet facilities are provided to campers who pay $30 per vehicle and $5 per person per night. The turnover for 2002 was approximately $20,000 (FCES 2004). Temporary fishing camps are also established at Duyfken Point.

While not a tourism venture, cultural camps at Bowchat are run for 'at risk' indigenous children by Thancoupie, a local Elder and famous artist. The camp program teaches children about art and traditional culture. Bowchat is located across Albatross Bay from Weipa and the site is also used by visiting campers. There are no tourism facilities there. There are a number of other sites in the region that are popular for fishing and camping amongst residents and visitors, including the Pennefather region, a designated camping area with no infrastructure facilities. The Albatross Hotel/Motel has a room in its restaurant area that is used to display artwork by local indigenous artists who receive all the money generated through sale of their artwork.

Clearly, despite the potential and expressed optimism for the development of indigenous tourism very little indigenous product exists, for which there are a number of possible explanations. Felan Consulting & Events Services explain that 'it is the Traditional Owners… who control the access to future tourism projects and they have proven to be cautious in negotiating business arrangements that grant access to their resources' (2004, p.12). Such caution is related to a number of social, economic and cultural factors including: indigenous people 'only just beginning to re-establish themselves on country' (FCES 2004, p.12), a general lack of interest in tourism ventures, and a lack of knowledge and/or skills amongst indigenous people in relation to establishing businesses.

The most important reason for low levels of indigenous involvement in tourism is that there may be a lack of interest in pursuing such opportunities. This may be due to a number of factors. Communities may not wish to have large numbers of tourists in their townships. For example, the assessment completed by Felan Consulting & Events Services notes that the Mapoon community have expressed a strong desire to maintain a comfortable level of privacy within the township, and to retain community-only access to certain areas on their DOGIT (2004). In addition, many indigenous people are very shy and may not want to be involved in face-to-face interaction with tourists. Lack of interest may also be due to the perceived lack of importance of tourism compared to other pressing issues such as health, alcoholism, domestic violence and education. Another explanation for the low levels of interest is a lack amongst community members of the business skills appropriate to establishing and operating a tourism venture. This lack of expertise will discourage people from becoming involved in developments because they feel out of their depth and disempowered. Another important factor is the lack of successful role models. The existence of a successful indigenous tourism business may spark interest in others, as has been the case in the Hopevale community in the eastern Cape region (Bennet 2004).

Other cultural factors including kinship networks; people-land relationships and values; reciprocal relationships and responsibilities involving the exchange of goods and services; attitudes to economic development, growth, saving, investment, accumulation and acquisition; and the spiritual, ceremonial values and obligations attached to land, may work against indigenous involvement in tourism. Land tenure and political divisions within the Western Cape's indigenous communities may also prevent the development of tourism ventures. For example, a tourism venture must gain approval from all Traditional Owners whose land is utilised by the business, and it can often be a difficult task to gain unanimous agreement amongst them all.

Lack of access to finance is also an important issue for indigenous people. It was noted in the *Weipa Tourism Needs Assessment* that most indigenous communities and individuals interested in tourism have limited capital and/or collateral. The Western Cape communities have considerable advantage because the Comalco indigenous Land Use Agreement (previously the Western Cape Communities Coexistence Agreement, refer section below) trust makes some capital available now and a significant amount in 20 years time (FCES 2004, p.13). However, it is unlikely that an individual indigenous entrepreneur will be able to access start-up capital from this trust since it is a community-focused fund. It is more likely that the desire to start up a tourism venture will come from an individual rather than the community as a group (Bennet 2004).

Further factors inhibiting the growth of indigenous tourism ventures in the Western Cape, and throughout indigenous Australia, include:
- The lack of integration and limited engagement between Aboriginal tourism businesses and the mainstream tourism industry;
- Unequal relationships between members of joint partnerships resulting in the indigenous partner often receiving less return from the partnership;
- Indigenous people engaging in tourism initiatives in an *ad hoc* manner, demonstrating a paucity of information that would alleviate the lack of business acumen and help them pursue their ideas (however Balkanu now offers this assistance);
- The breakdown of Aboriginal society – lack of education, confidence and self-esteem; alcohol abuse; welfare dependence; missionary influence; and the 'lost generation'; and
- The effects of peer pressure, when employed indigenous people are discouraged from working.

Strengths and Constraints of the Regional Tourism Industry

The strengths of the tourism industry operating in the Weipa region include the following:
- A truly remote landscape experience as an existing and potential product;
- Large areas of relatively unspoilt natural landscape;
- The possibility of viewing relatively exotic wildlife, such as crocodiles, in their natural environment;
- Very good fishing and hunting opportunities;
- Relative accessibility to the major tourism gateway of Cairns;
- Regular air services into the region;
- Established infrastructure and tourism facilities;
- Existing tour and charter boat operators; and

- Opportunities for experiencing indigenous culture.
  The constraints affecting tourism growth in the region include:
- Distance from major population centres on the east coast of Australia;
- Poor road network connections, especially with the east coast, the major source of tourists;
- The cost of travel to Weipa;
- Lack of accommodation especially at the higher end of the market;
- Lack of tourism product especially indigenous;
- Reduction of tourism industry activity for the wet season;
- Limited swimming and snorkelling opportunities because of crocodiles;
- No local artefacts or souvenirs;
- Lack of infrastructure at bush campsites;
- The Alcohol Management Plans (AMP, see later report section) introduced by the Queensland State Government to Aboriginal communities; and
- Lack of shopping and banking facilities in tourism areas.

Opportunities for Increasing Aboriginal Involvement in Tourism

As noted earlier, with a few exceptions, non-indigenous people run the tourism ventures in Weipa and the surrounding area. The only examples of indigenous involvement in tourism in the region were the Western Cape Cultural Centre at Evans Landing, the Aurukun Arts and Crafts Centre, and Thancoupie's Cultural Camps (although the cultural camp is not targeted at mainstream tourists). Also, the CDEP workers at Aurukun engaged in an indirect form of tourism through the building of a houseboat.

Despite the lack of indigenous tourism product, all respondents claimed that there was enormous potential in the Weipa region and surrounding Cape York communities for Aboriginal people to engage in tourism. It was suggested that such enterprises could include bird watching; eco tours; animal conservation programs; bush tucker tours; guided nature walks; fishing; camping; operation of houseboats, caravan park or campgrounds; and the manufacture and sale of arts and crafts. Aurukun and Mapoon were mentioned consistently as ideal locations to establish Aboriginal tourism ventures. The natural beauty of these areas could be combined with local traditional knowledge to develop a range of tourism initiatives, such as guided nature walks, fishing tours, managed campgrounds, and luxury fishing lodges. South of Aurukun there exist wetlands which were described by one respondent as being better than those at Kakadu. Respondents also noted that Aurukun has a number of outstations and around seven indigenous languages are still spoken in the area, indicating that culture remains strong compared to neighbouring communities where missionary influence was stricter. Strong cultural ties combined with the natural beauty of the environment could provide countless opportunities for parties interested in starting a tourism venture.

A key issue involves the permits required to camp on traditional lands. One respondent suggested utilising the Western Cape Cultural Centre as the office where permits could be obtained. In addition, it could also conduct cultural tours, as well as having in-house artists working and selling their pieces at the Centre. At present, a number of visitors will establish camps wherever they choose, usually without obtaining permits, and it is important that these practices be stopped.

Other potential tourism ventures where indigenous people could be involved include the fishing and crabbing industries, both of which have become popular tourism activities. Approximately ten fishing charter vessels operate out of Weipa, and none currently have any indigenous operators or employees. Likewise, among the twelve professional crab fishermen operating in the region, there is no indigenous involvement. An interviewee indicated that although local indigenous youth have expressed interest in obtaining a crab fishing license, the cost is $170,000, and beyond the means of most indigenous young people.

Another area seen as having potential for indigenous tourism is the Uningan Nature Reserve. It was suggested that it could be utilised as a picnic area with an added focus on bird watching and nature walks. The area has been handed back to Traditional Owners but has not been maintained and, therefore, it is not currently useful as a recreation area. Although the Comalco website (2005) stated that there are nine kilometres of walking tracks and several footbridges constructed over creeks, a representative from the company informed the researchers that these tracks were overgrown and the area in need of maintenance. The indigenous knowledge of the flora and fauna of this area, and cultural features such as large shell middens and canoe trees, add to the potential for developing this place into a possible tourism enterprise that could be conducted by interested local Aboriginal people.

The *Weipa Tourism Needs Assessment* makes a number of recommendations about possible future indigenous tourism developments (FCES 2004). These are briefly outlined below:

- The construction of appropriate accommodation, catering and ablution facilities at the Bowchat site, although, it has been suggested that this site may not be appropriate for general tourism;

- Development of a comprehensive plan for a camping/caravan park/cabin precinct and fishing lodge for the land at Evans Landing;
- A tourism study that includes consideration of a fishing lodge must be undertaken as a priority for Duyfken Point. It has no road access, so any tourism operation would have to use Weipa as a base. It is suggested that a venture partner, an essential element of any proposal for this site, be based at Weipa;
- Consideration must be given to the construction of a seasonal tented bush camp at Bushman's Hole on Billy's Lagoon Station, as well as on the southern bank of the lagoon. It is suggested that a tented camp could tie in with a proposed Mapoon fishing lodge. It is interesting to note that Napranum Community Council called for expressions of interest for the use of Billy's Lagoon Station. One application was from a group operating game hunting tourism businesses in Africa. This group wanted to provide game hunting for visitors to Billy's Lagoon Station and as part of the expression of interest was also wanting to train local indigenous people to act a tour guides. This expression was considered a good option by the Napranum Aboriginal Community Council, but an interviewee reported that the community 'had not wanted anything to do with this option'. An agricultural option was chosen, but subsequently this project has run into problems because of environmental and planning concerns; and
- The establishment of a high-quality fishing lodge at Cullen Point near Mapoon community. In addition, it is suggested that the community consider the detailed plan of Weipa business interests for a similar venture at Ducie River, also on Mapoon DOGIT land.

The *Weipa Tourism Needs Assessment* suggests that the relevant Aboriginal communities do not have the required management and operational skills and so should negotiate a lease with lodge operators using a Memorandum of Understanding (FCES 2004). The lease should probably be for 15-20 years and the operators would need the appropriate experience to advertise their products to a specific segment of the market. The operators would then pay a flat rent or rent plus percentages of turnover to the indigenous owners (FCES 2004). It is also suggested that the Memorandum of Understanding should allow for independent indigenous small businesses to supply the lodge with various services such as boat tours, bus transfers, the provision of seafood and other foods, entertainment, and arts and crafts (FCES 2004, p.39).

Nanum Tawap and Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation Pty Ltd

Two local organisations that are positioned well to assist Aboriginal people in developing tourism initiatives are Nanum Tawap and Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation Pty Ltd. Nanum Tawap is an Aboriginal-run organisation situated at Napranum. As mentioned earlier, it is involved in a number of local industries including a laundry, sawmill, brick plant and forest regeneration program. The organisation was set up by Traditional Owners to facilitate regional development initiatives for both the community and Comalco. Although Nanum Tawap is not presently involved in any tourism businesses some respondents have suggested that it could also focus on tourism ventures, whether directly or indirectly. The organisation, however, is currently experiencing difficulty in providing a consistent and reliable workforce to keep its present industries operating efficiently.

Balkanu (formerly known as the Cape York Community Development Centre) was initially established by ATSIC to fulfil the role of supporting the establishment of Land and Natural Resource Management Centres in the communities of Cape York. It facilitates negotiations between different stakeholders – including governments, Traditional Owner groups, industry groups, research organisations and Cape York land holders – in order to provide the best available expertise, services, resources and experience for their clients' projects. In addition, Balkanu assists the above organisations and groups by providing appropriate information concerning the needs and aspirations of Cape York indigenous people (Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation 2003). The organisation is well-positioned to assist Aboriginal people with tourism ideas, and provide professional knowledge and technical expertise from the concept stage through to the operation of a business. They receive suggestions on a regular basis and have been involved in providing advice to local Aboriginal people concerning how to go about setting up a business.

Balkanu's aim is to improve the social, economic and cultural standing of indigenous communities within the region. To achieve this, they operate with 'open-door' policy, working co-operatively with other organisations who share their objectives (Memmott & McDougall 2002, p.33). Westpac is one such organisation that has contributed specialist assistance to projects undertaken by Balkanu. It has provided Balkanu with 25 experienced personnel a year over four-week periods to assist indigenous businesses that require technical expertise in various areas. These periods involve intensive problem-solving. Balkanu provides assistance to the people of Cape York in a number of specific areas including:

- Management and economic development of Aboriginal-owned land;
- Development of indigenous business enterprises (professional encouragement and support, networking, feasibility studies, business plans, identification of relevant services and resources required);
- Resourcing of outstations and homeland centres;
- Development of regional infrastructure networks; and

- Development of improved service delivery to Cape York people. (Memmott & McDougall 2002, p.33)

Memmott and McDougall state that:

> There is a clear complementarity between the Land Council's core functions of getting land back for people, and Balkanu's role in the management and economic development of land, such that the two organisations regularly work together on projects that combine Native Title with future management and development aspects. In this way the organisations are able to take a long term view which incorporates not only the determination of Native Title, but also how people may use and enjoy the land as a basis for their future economic and social development. (2004, p.33.)

Importantly, interviewees noted that Balkanu recognises the need to provide encouragement and support to indigenous persons or groups who wish to initiate a business or project. Such support takes into account their lack of confidence and knowledge in relation to business skills and resources, things which are not generally recognised by mainstream services. Before any tourism initiative is to be developed, and if it is to be successful, Balkanu suggests that a proper feasibility study be carried out and a mentoring system put in place. The Corporation emphasises that the projects and businesses that work well are those that are initiated by indigenous peoples themselves.

Comalco's Approach to Local Tourism

As stated previously, Comalco is keen to facilitate the diversification of the local economy and as a consequence is very supportive of the local tourism industry. The company is content for the mine tour to continue as long as it does not interfere with mining operations. As long as there is no compromise of mine business, Comalco is keen to support the local industry by allowing access to appropriate mining infrastructure. At the present time, the tourism industry is heavily reliant on mining infrastructure such as the airport, roads, power, water and sewage.

Comalco is also particularly enthusiastic about indigenous involvement in any part of the regional economy. As part of the Comalco ILUA, the company will try to ensure that 30% of its workforce is indigenous by 2010. The company is having difficulty meeting this target because of an inability to attract potential indigenous employees. Consequently, it has provided a number of training and educational programs to assist indigenous people in obtaining skills. For example, the company has held workshops focused on indigenous business enterprises. Young people interested in attending this workshop were brought in from all over the Cape. There are places for 20 indigenous people per year to undertake training and education programs in the areas of horticulture, trades and administration. The indigenous participants must be Traditional Owners of the region and attend the two-year full-time course. The participants are rotated between the different types of work in order to gain experience and decide which area they most enjoy or have an aptitude for. Those who complete the course are usually offered a full-time position in their field of expertise.

Despite its enthusiasm for indigenous tourism and its openness to suggestions from the indigenous community regarding the development of tourism initiatives, Comalco does not see itself as having direct involvement in developing the industry through the provision of training and/or funding of indigenous enterprises. Rather, it sees itself as a 'facilitator' of business development. Comalco believes the ILUA trust and Balkanu are better placed to provide the necessary know-how, finance and skills training for any indigenous business development in the region. Notwithstanding Comalco's views on its role in indigenous tourism development, some members of the indigenous community believe there is a definite part for the company to play in providing support (financial, technical, infrastructure and transport) for indigenous tourism initiatives.

Comalco Indigenous Land Use Agreement (previously the Western Cape Communities Coexistence Agreement)

The Western Cape Communities Coexistence Agreement (WCCCA) was initiated in 1997 and signed on the 14 March 2001 by Comalco, eleven Traditional Owner groups, the Councils of Aurukun, Mapoon, Napranum and New Mapoon, the Cape York Land Council and the Queensland Government. The agreement was registered as an indigenous Land Use Agreement under the provisions of the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth) (the NTA) in August 2001 and is now known as the Comalco ILUA. It is a commitment by all parties to focus on issues relevant to the Aboriginal economy, education, employment, culture and training (Comalco Ltd 2005). The WCCCA newsletter described the Agreement as:

> … one of the largest most complex indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUA) in Australia.… It recognises Traditional Ownership of the Comalco Mining Lease areas, rights, culture, provides a range of benefits and initiatives for the communities, and provides support for Comalco's mining and other activities. (2003)

The Agreement is managed by a Co-ordinating Committee and four Trusts – Northern, Central, Southern and Main – which oversee the management of community projects and funds. The Main Trust is a charitable one set up to manage the funds and annual contributions made by Comalco and the Queensland Government, approximately $4 million and $2 million respectively. The majority of these funds, approximately 60% of annual

contributions, are placed in long-term secure investments. The remaining 40% is distributed to the three remaining regional trusts: Southern (Aurukun), Central (Napranum) and Northern (Mapoon, including New Mapoon). These divided amounts are to be distributed to Traditional Owners and the relevant communities. The trusts are charitable and meant for community, not individual, benefit purposes.

The Comalco ILUA could provide a number of positive outcomes for the eleven Traditional Owner groups involved, which revolve around its key aspects and include:

- Annual payments to fund investment and development initiatives;
- Comalco commitment to Aboriginal employment and training;
- Establishment of a Trust to administer funds;
- Relinquishment of parts of the Comalco lease no longer required for mining for return to Traditional Owners;
- Formation of a Coordinating Committee to manage the everyday aspects of the Agreement;
- Support for Traditional Owner groups and their claims for Native Title; and
- Cultural heritage protection and cultural awareness training for all staff and principal contractors in Weipa.

The WCCCA Newsletter (2003, p.2) outlines some of the benefits communities can expect to receive from the funding:

- Outstation development;
- Water and power supplies;
- Toilet blocks;
- Tourist facilities;
- Employment generating businesses
- Community education and training;
- Community/school buses;
- Community halls; and
- Sports and recreation facilities.

Weipa Multi-Purpose Facility

The Weipa Multi-Purpose Facility is a good example of how mining infrastructure can be used for tourism. It has been developed from infrastructure built in the early 1970s to house Comalco's single employees by the Malaruch Aboriginal Corporation, with the technical and financial support of Balkanu (refer above). Comalco's single persons quarters consist of 39 low-set buildings, each containing three to six bedrooms; two double-storied buildings, each containing 16 rooms; a training building containing two rooms, a conference room and office space; and a large kitchen and dining room. The Malaruch Corporation is responsible for developing six of the low-set buildings (refer to Plate 1 following). The development of the facility requires approximately $9m in capital works and one-off costs to become fully operational. Implementation will occur in three stages over approximately two to three years. When completed, the facility will consist of four 'mini-businesses' that are complementary and interdependent. These will be:

- A secondary school hostel;
- A centre for coordination of training in the western Cape;
- General accommodation; and
- A catering company.

The secondary school hostel will accommodate young indigenous people from the Cape region attending secondary school at the Western Cape College. In the future it is planned that the facility will also provide accommodation for tourists. This will also be used as a training facility for hospitality students attending the College, who will gain experience and training in providing a variety of hospitality services, such as housekeeping and front-desk assistance. There is potential for the accommodation and catering part of the facility to be economically self-sustaining in the longer term.

Plate 1: Buildings used as training facilities/future tourist accommodation, Weipa Multi-purpose Facility

SOURCE: Photograph taken by Linda Thomson, AERC, August 2004

The Cape York Cultural Centre

The Cape York Cultural Centre, located at Evan's Landing and ten minutes from the Weipa Town Centre, was started by Comalco and is now managed by a non-indigenous operator called the Western Cape Regional Consultative Group (refer to Plate 2 following). The Centre is under threat of closure due to a lack of funds. It currently opens between 10 am and 1 pm. A Natural Heritage Trust grant was used to restore the building and to develop the displays. Despite the risk of closure, the *Western Cape York Visitor Guide* states that '[t]he Cultural Centre in Weipa is looking at starting bush tucker and cultural awareness tours in the near future' (WCRCG 2003, p.12).

Plate 2: Entrance to the Western Cape Cultural Centre at Evan's Landing near Weipa

Source: Photograph taken by Linda Thomson, AERC, August 2004

At present, the Centre houses ten thematic wall panels documenting the indigenous and European history of the Western Cape York region, and its cultures and environments, through use of text and photographs. Models and artefacts are also featured. 'Many of the photographs and heritage items have not been displayed in public before' (WCRCG 2003). The famous local indigenous artist, Thancoupie, designed and created the large ceramic wall mural that illustrates the totems, places and rivers of the eleven Traditional Owners groups of the region.

The Cultural Centre requires vast improvements in its marketing strategy to help it become a viable business. The Felan Consulting & Events Services tourism needs assessment indicates that only 3000 visitors visited the Centre in 2003 (2004, p.63). Lack of indigenous input and employment at the Centre, lack of additional tourist facilities such as an adjoining book shop and café, and lack of local indigenous souvenirs are some of the deficiencies. Tourists expect such things at local Cultural Centres. It was also suggested that the Centre could develop tour packages for visitors, such as trips to the mine, Mapoon and Stone Crossing (FCES 2004, p.64). An interviewee noted that markets are held in the vicinity of the Cultural Centre once a month and are visited by both residents and tourists.

The fieldwork conducted in Weipa and Napranum revealed to the current researchers that there were no indigenous cultural tourism ventures or products available for tourists to visit or experience, despite indigenous peoples representing a significant proportion of the local population and there being enormous potential in the region as stated by all respondents. The Cultural Centre is possibly the only outlet offering an insight into the unique indigenous cultures of the area.

Sculthorpe indicates that cultural centres arise 'in part from the desire of local communities to take advantage of increased tourism and to educate the wider community about Aboriginal history and culture' (2000, p.395). Furthermore, 'such centres are a means of encouraging pride in local cultural history, and a way of developing economic enterprises in indigenous communities' (2000, p.395). As the only existing form of indigenous cultural tourism evident in Weipa, it would be a retrograde step if the Centre was closed down.

Issues Surrounding the Alcohol Management Plan

Views concerning the Alcohol Management Plan and its impact on tourism in the Western Cape York region varied between those respondents who believed the alcohol ban has had no real impact on tourist numbers (as appears evident from fully booked accommodation at both hotel/motels and caravan park), and those who believed that visitor numbers have reduced since the plan's implementation (as appears evident from an apparent decline in business). The alcohol bans apply to all people within the restricted areas – including residents, visitors and tourists passing through. The penalties are severe for being in possession of liquor in a public place within the restricted area, the maximum fines being: $37,000 for a first offence, $52,500 or six months imprisonment for a second one, and $75,000 or 18 months imprisonment for a third (Queensland Government

n.d.). The Plan has become a politically sensitive issue throughout the communities of Western Cape York and its impact on tourism is heavily debated. Although one local interviewee reported there have been rumours that 50% of the tourism trade has been lost, others note that there are still many tourists coming into the area.

In Weipa there is a critical shortage of accommodation at the present time. This is evident in both hotels and motels in Weipa, and the caravan and campground being fully booked for much of the dry season. Comalco is currently undergoing a major refurbishment scheme on their houses, therefore it is hard to determine whether tourism numbers have dropped or not, as Comalco employees and contractors have had to resort to taking up residence at the hotels, motels and Caravan Park. For those who believe that the Alcohol Management Plan will, or has directly affected tourist numbers, Felan Consulting & Events Services indicate that:

> The success of all accommodation options … will depend on Residential Liquor Licences being granted to those entities. There is no known way to make a success of a remote lodge-style tourism operation without alcohol services. If Alcohol Management Plans are not amended to permit Residential Liquor Licenses to be issued to bona fide lodges and fishing camps there is no prospect of a viable tourism industry developing in the region. (2004, p.11)

Tourism and associated leisure activities are a main priority for many holidaymakers who visit the Cape. They want to be able to relax and have a good time, which may involve consuming alcohol. It should be recognised that such visitors may consequently choose to avoid such areas that have alcohol bans, thus depriving these areas of potential tourism expenditure. As is the case in Aurukun, visitors are opting to stay out on their boats rather than coming ashore and staying in the community.

Napranum, Aurukun and Mapoon have Alcohol Management Plans placed upon them, which involve strict regulations as to where and in what quantities alcohol can be purchased. Weipa does not have such a plan in place, and as a result, people from the surrounding communities are coming there to buy their alcohol and then drinking on the outskirts of their communities. Some young children and youth are reported to have resorted to petrol sniffing and drug use, as a substitute to drinking, and people are experimenting with home brew kits, with disastrous physical consequences. Because alcohol purchase has been limited to certain hours of the day, people have taken to 'power or binge drinking', that is, drinking as much as they can within the permitted hours.

Conclusion

The Comalco bauxite mine at Weipa will continue operation for possibly another century, and will remain the region's major economic force during this time. As part of its plans for the future diversification of the area, Comalco and the Queensland Government are moving to make Weipa a local government area and explore other economic opportunities for the area. Tourism has been determined to be the most promising industry, given the appeal of the Cape's pristine environment. The current industry, while still small, has expanded substantially in the past ten to twenty years and the case study indicates that there is much local enthusiasm for it to continue growing, in particular with relation to indigenous involvement. The higher-spending airborne market presents the best expansion opportunity for tourism in Weipa. While a number of small ventures involving the local indigenous communities have been initiated, there exist a number of obstacles to the future chances of success of any enterprise. These include issues involving the area's remoteness and the condition or extent of its infrastructure, as well as the desires and motivations of the indigenous people involved, many of whom are establishing themselves on country after protracted battles to have the right to do so and retain few managerial or business skills. It is notable the large majority of the land in this region is, or will be, owned by Aboriginal people. A number of key organisations exist that may assist local Aboriginal people develop their plans, especially Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation, which may present a model for other areas where tourism enterprises are planned. Comalco has shown itself to be amenable to a range of infrastructure exchanges. It has provided buildings for use by a range of tourism-related businesses and is eager to fulfil its ILUA obligations and provide training to potential indigenous staff. It could consider expanding its mine tour and ensuring Aboriginal content and participation, in a similar way to the efforts made by Argyle Diamond Mine in case study 3 (Chapter 7).

Table 4: Profile of the Weipa Mine

PROFILE ELEMENTS	WEIPA MINE DETAILS
Location	West Coast of Cape York Peninsula
Latitude/Longitude	12.667°S / 141.873°E
Commodity	Bauxite (Bx)
Company	Comalco Ltd
Mine Life	Mining operations began in 1963. The life of the mine is expected to extend for least another 60 to 100 years.
Operations	Include mine and processing facility.
Type of Operation	Open pit

Size of Operation	Large, employing approx. 600 people.
Commuting Type	Residential
Mine Infrastructure	Comalco owns many of the town's facilities including: airstrip, sports facilities and sports fields, pool and accommodation complexes.
Current Aboriginal Agreement	Comalco indigenous Land Use Agreement (Comalco ILUA) previously known as the Western Cape Communities Co-existence Agreement (2001). The Comalco ILUA is a comprehensive regional agreement which includes the Traditional Owners and other indigenous people with historical connections. The Agreement links present and future bauxite mine development in the Weipa region with regional development and employment opportunities, as well as training, community assistance and financial advice (AIS 2004). Signed by: 11 TO groups, the councils of Aurukun, Mapoon, Napranum and New Mapoon, the Cape York Land Council, the Queensland government and Comalco. [Note: the Weipa mine is on Aboriginal land.]
Key Features of Agreement	Key aspects of the agreement include: • Establishment of a Trust to administer funds. • Comalco has agreed to pay a minimum of $250 000/yr to the Western Cape Communities Trust (this figure may increase on the basis of production and aluminium prices). • Comalco has agreed to spend $50 000/yr on employment, training and youth education programmes endorsed by the Western Cape Communities. • The Queensland government has agreed to contribute around $1.5 million/yr. • Relinquishment of parts of the Comalco lease no longer required for mining for return to TOs. • Formation of a Coordinating Committee to manage the day-to-day aspects of the Agreement. • Support for TO Groups and their claims for Native Title. • Cultural heritage protection and cultural awareness training for all staff and principal contractors at Weipa. • Extensive support will be provided for community development and indigenous business enterprises. In addition: • Outstations established on suitable areas of the mining lease. • 1325sq km Sudley pastoral property will be transferred to the Iunthan TOs.
Does Mine have a Tourism Enterprise in Place?	Comalco operates tours of the mining operations.
Company Website	http://www.comalco.com/freedom.aspx
Local Government Website	Note: The Weipa township is formally managed by Comalco, but a Town Commission has been established to represent its residents and to assist in the decision-making process (Comalco Ltd 2005).

Table 5: Aboriginal community details for the Weipa mine locale

COMMUNITY ELEMENTS	WEIPA LOCALE DETAILS
Traditional Owners	11 Traditional Owner groups: Alngith, Anathangayth, Ankamuthi, Peppan, Taepadhighi, Thanikwithi, Tjungundji, Warranggu, Wathayn, Wik and Wik-Way and Yupungathi peoples.
Communities	Aurukun, Napranum, Mapoon, New Mapoon and Weipa.
Indigenous Population at Closest Townships	Napranum (>500) Aurukun (>500) Weipa (100-500) Old Mapoon (100-500) New Mapoon (100-500) (Indigenous population sizes from ATSIC 1999a)
Proximity of Nearest Communities to Mine (by road)	Approx. distances: Napranum 10 km south, Aurukun 187 km south, Mapoon 80 km north, New Mapoon 400 km north.
Relevant Land Council	Cape York Land Council
Mining/Community Engagement Activities	See details of ILUA in the above table.

Size of Pool of Aboriginal Labour for Enterprise	Estimated at 200 people.
Potential for Small-scale Tourism	Good potential for small tours.
Potential for Large-scale Tourism	A growing tourist destination.
Community Experiences in Tourism	Local Aboriginal rangers employed with the Western Cape York Turtle Eco Tours/Turtle Rescue Program.
Degree of Motivation and Commitment within Community to Engage in Tourism	There was a high level of optimism expressed by a number of people, both indigenous and non-indigenous, about the opportunities for the development of this branch of the industry. Most people interviewed suggested that there were exceptional opportunities.

Table 6: Tourism details for the Weipa mine locale

TOURISM ELEMENTS	WEIPA LOCALE DETAILS
Australian Heritage Sites	Western Cape York is not listed as an official Australian Heritage Site; however, Cape York Peninsula is renowned for being outstanding on a global scale for its biodiversity and the integrity of the natural environment (ACF 2005).
Tourist Attractions	Rich and unique Aboriginal heritage including rock art site tours and the Western Cape Cultural Centre. World-renowned fishing destination. Mining Museum.
Environmental Features	Hey River, waterholes, beaches, Pennefather River, False Pera Head, Uningan Nature Reserve, Lake Patricia, Lake McLeod.
Tourism Associations	Tourism Tropical North Queensland, Cape York Peninsula Development Association and FNQ Tour Operators Association Inc.
Current Tourism Operators	Snappy Tours
Tourist Activities in the Region	Fishing, boating, sailing, bush camping, swimming, mangrove walk, bushwalking, Aboriginal cultural heritage. Western Cape York Turtle Eco Tours/Turtle Rescue Program (departs from Weipa).
Cultural Features	Shell middens
Existing Aboriginal Tourism Enterprise	Currently non-existent
Local Infrastructure to Support Tourism	Airport, shopping centre, campground, sports facilities. Single Persons Quarters being refurbished at time of research with potential to be utilised as tourist accommodation. Graded dirt roads beyond Weipa.
Cultural/Environmental Considerations	Need to control activities of tourists and fishers on Wik land which lies under the Comalco lease. The Wik people are affected in the following areas: economic production (hunting, fishing, gathering), recreational and social activities, maintenance of cultural heritage, theft and destruction of equipment from outstations, damage to outstation facilities (e.g. airstrip by 4WDs), occupation of prime camping and fishing locations by tourists and Weipa residents.

Chapter 6

CENTURY MINE CASE STUDY

Location and Century Overview

Century is an open-pit zinc and lead mine in the southern Gulf of Carpentaria in North West Queensland. It is located about 250 km north-west from Mt Isa, 120 km from the coast and 860 km from Townsville (refer to Map 4 following). Based on zinc production, it is the second largest zinc mine in the world (Zinifex Ltd 2005). The ore is mined and processed at the Lawn Hill site, and zinc and lead concentrates are then transported via a 304 km underground pipeline to the mining operation's port and dewatering facility at Karumba. On occasion lead may also be transported via road train to this location. In 2004, the mine produced 126 788 tonnes of zinc concentrate and 27 087 tonnes of lead concentrate (Zinifex Ltd 2004, p.6).

Map 4: Second case study area, including Century mine and some relevant communities
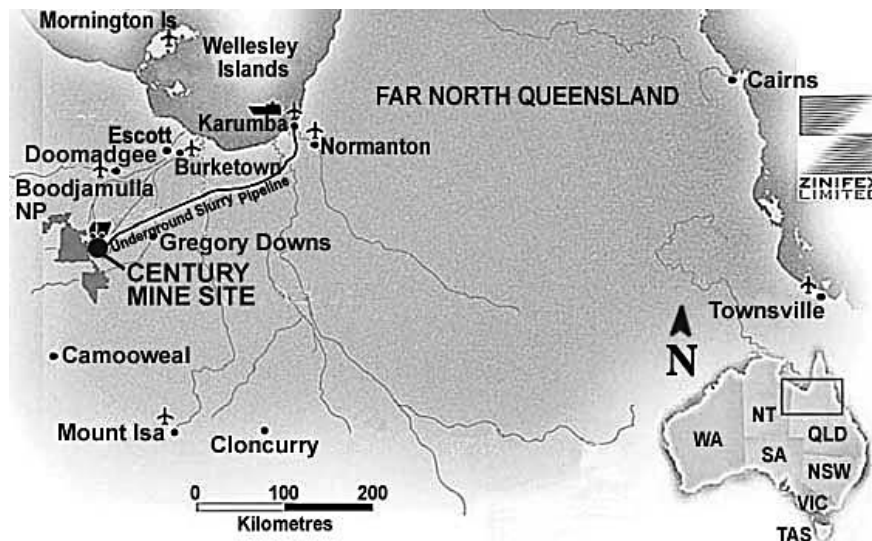
SOURCE: Map prepared by Linda Thomson, AERC, based on map supplied by Zinifex Century mine, September 2005

The Century deposit was discovered in 1990 by CRA (now Rio Tinto) and was purchased by Pasminco in 1997 (Zinifex Ltd 2005). Construction of the mine occurred during 1998 and 1999, with the first ore being extracted in October 1999. The mine is expected to remain operational until 2018 unless current exploration reveals further significant deposits. Pasminco was re-launched on the stock exchange as Zinifex in March 2004.

As at February 2005, Century had an estimated workforce of 843 people, including 189 company employees (including trainees and apprentices) and 654 contractors. It is essentially a fly-in, fly-out operation, with light planes connecting the mine to the Gulf communities route between Doomadgee, Gununa (Mornington Island), Moungibi (Burketown, also spelt Mungabayi), Normanton and the regional centre of Mt Isa. A Fokker F100 jet services the mine-to-Townsville route. People at the port operations usually reside locally at either Karumba or Normanton and commute daily to work by car.

Aboriginal Communities

The southern Gulf region contains significant Aboriginal populations. The nearest Aboriginal outstation to the mine site is Bidunggu, located on the outskirts of Gregory Downs about 75 km or a 45 minute drive east of the mine. Other major Aboriginal communities or communities containing significant Aboriginal populations include Doomadgee, governed by the Doomadgee Aboriginal Community Council and Moungibi (Burketown) in Burke Shire. Gununa is the biggest town on Mornington Island and is governed by Mornington Shire.

Karumba is about 72 km north-west of Normanton in the Carpentaria Shire. Both Karumba and Normanton have relatively good road infrastructure in comparison to the other Gulf communities. The road between the two centres is reputed to be the only sealed stretch to the coast in the lower Gulf. The two centres are well-networked by mostly sealed roads, via the Matilda and Overlander's Highways from the south and via the Savannah Way to

Cairns in the east. The construction of the Century mine led to the upgrade of the road from the mine to the Burke and Wills Roadhouse, but there are only gravel roads from Gregory to Doomadgee and Moungibi (Burketown).

Century and Aboriginal Relations

The development of the Century mine and continued community acceptance of its operations could be described as somewhat contentious. The issues are too great to consider in detail here (refer to the Reference List and Appendix C for further detail). However, a brief synopsis of the events follows. The mine's development was marked by vocal opposition from some sections of the Gulf Aboriginal communities, which led to delays as well as threats by both the Queensland and Federal governments to pass enabling legislation. CRA/Rio Tinto, the then owners of the mine, opted to pursue Native Title negotiations with the Traditional Owners through the right to negotiate process, and the Gulf Communities Agreement (GCA) was eventually endorsed by members of three Native Title groups – the Waanyi, Mingginda and Gkuthaarn/Kukatj peoples – Century mine and the Queensland Government in 1997. The GCA contains numerous provisions, including those related to:

- Employment and training;
- Local business development,
- Cultural and environmental protection;
- Transfer of pastoral properties; and
- Compensation.

Zinifex, the current mine owner, recognises that its right to operate is based upon its recognition of the Native Title groups of the area (Zinifex Ltd 2004). In 2002, a five-year review of the Agreement was undertaken and a draft report released. Due in part to numerous outstanding issues in relation to the Agreement, a sit-in, in which over 40 local Aboriginal people participated, was held at the mine canteen in November 2002. Sit-in resolutions included, amongst others, an extension of the GCA review process.

The Local Tourist Industry

Limited visitation data is available for the lower Gulf region[14]. The *Post Mine Economy of the Southern Gulf of Carpentaria* report refers to an estimate of around 80-100,000 tourists a year by the Gulf Regional Planning Advisory Committee (Miles, Cavaye & Donaghy 2005). The Carpentaria Shire alone is estimated to have up to 25 000 overnight visitors a year, based on the extrapolation of survey findings from 510 travel parties staying at commercial accommodation in Karumba and Normanton during the 2002/03 financial year (Greiner, Mayocchi, Larson, Stoeckl & Schweigert 2004). The people interviewed for this report estimated that between 20 000 and 25 000 visitors came to Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park (a major tourist drawcard in the region) last year, which represents about double the amount of visitors coming nearly a decade ago (Pearcey 1995).

Again, no detailed tourist profiles are available for the southern Gulf. Day-trippers and short-stayers can visit the Gulf through packaged coach or light plane tours. For example, Savannah Aviation and Macair Airlines operate commuter services to and scenic flights within the Gulf region. However, it appears that the tourist market predominantly consists of independent travellers who drive their own vehicles (such as 4WDs and caravans) during the dry season (April to November), when roads are passable. Findings from the Normanton and Karumba tourism study indicate that 'grey nomads' dominate the tourist market in these towns (Greiner et al. 2004). They stay for long periods of time, come to fish, are highly self-sufficient, but also add 'a further 25-30% demand for infrastructure and services on top of that generated by the resident population' (Greiner et al. 2004, p.2).

Self-drive tourism is likely to increase in the future given that the Savannah Way, a 3700 km 'themed tourism adventure drive' linking Cairns to Broome, is proving to be a major tourism attraction and is being promoted heavily (e.g. Invest Australia 2003; Queensland EPA 1999; Queensland Government 2004a; 2004b; 2004c; 2004d). The Savannah Way passes within close proximity to several Gulf communities, including Doomadgee. Gulf attractions such as Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) and Miyumba (Riversleigh) feature prominently on actual and virtual tourist 'maps'. The Savannah Way is also used by many travellers initiating their journeys on the Matilda Highway and the Burke Development Road. The report by Greiner et al. makes the following prediction:

> More demand on outback roads will lead to increased maintenance costs and more roads will be sealed. Towns such as Burketown, which are currently 'protected' from the gravel-road-adverse travellers, will become

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14 The regional Queensland tourism summary reports produced by Tourism Queensland exclude the Gulf of Carpentaria. While the Tropical North Queensland regional definition includes the local government areas (LGAs) of Burke, Carpentaria, Mornington and 'Unincorporated' Islands, the visitation data is based on the ABS definition of this region which excludes the Gulf LGAs. A further breakdown according to individual LGAs in the Gulf was not possible given the small sample size and data reliability issues.

mainstream destinations. The fish stocks in adjacent rivers will be attracting the tourist anglers that are now becoming frustrated with declining catch in the waters accessible from Karumba. (2004, p.52)

Attractions

Travelling through the landscapes of the southern Gulf of Carpentaria is an integral part of the visitor experience. Pastoral leases, five of which were purchased by Century and are being transferred to the appropriate Native Title groups, surround the mine (refer Plate 3). The landscape undergoes dramatic seasonal changes, from being dominated by dry golden savannah grass plains during the dry season, to green plains and wetlands along the coast, during the monsoonal wet from December to March. Current tourist activities are essentially concentrated along the watercourses. For example, Leichhardt Falls, located within the vicinity of the slurry pipeline connecting the Lawn Hill mine site to Karumba, is often incorporated into packaged tours of the Gulf. The Albert River at Moungibi (Burketown) provides the venue for annual barramundi fishing championships, and the waterways between the Wellesley Island Group and the mainland are renowned fishing spots.

Plate 3: Cattle mustering at Lawn Hill / Riversleigh Pastoral Station

SOURCE: Photograph taken by Tanuja Barker, CSRM, October 2004

At the port end of the Century operation, Karumba and Normanton have numerous tourist features and linkages such as the 'Purple Pub' and the 'Gulflander' train journey to Croydon, but they are also best known as fishing destinations. According to a recent newspaper article, the Carpentaria Shire Council is releasing an 18-block subdivision on the old Pasminco site in Karumba in response to recreational angler demands for holiday homes (Ketchell 2004).

There are also unique tourist attractions within the vicinity of the mine pit itself, including culturally and environmentally significant sites. Two of the most well known are Boodjamulla and Miyumba, and these will be described in more detail. Boodjamulla (formerly known as Lawn Hill) National Park is only about 25 km or a 15-20 minute drive on a gravel road north-west of the mine. It was incorporated as a National Park in 1984 and encompasses 388,334 hectares. Prior to this it was part of Lawn Hill Station, a very substantial cattle-grazing property. Boodjamulla is an integral part of Waanyi country and has particular spiritual significance as sacred Rainbow Serpent country. Significant rock art and artefact sites are found throughout this area, with some of these having been interpreted by Waanyi people in the past (Smith, Morgan & van der Meer 2003). The park also features spectacular gorge country, sandstone ranges and a predominant limestone plateau.

Miyumba (Riversleigh) World Heritage Area (WHA) is the world's richest mammal fossil site, and is located in the south-eastern section of Boodjamulla National Park, about 25 km from the mine. It received World Heritage listing in 1994 and is relatively undeveloped with respect to tourism. The area open to the public contains an information shelter and offers a 'self-guided interpretive walk'. In recognition of the importance of the Riversleigh area to the Waanyi people, the Queensland Government, as part of its Gulf Communities Agreement commitments, has stated that it will expedite a proposal for a tourist centre on Riversleigh Station and the participation of Waanyi therein, if interest is shown.

Also associated with Miyumba is the Riversleigh Fossil Centre located at the 'Outback at Isa' complex in Mt Isa. The centre is seen, and now largely serves, as the principal presentation and interpretation centre for mining, the Miyumba WHA, Boodjamulla National Park and the Kalkadoon indigenous community. It incorporates amongst others: the Hard Times Mine, the Riversleigh Fossils Centre and Laboratory (sponsored by Century), and the adjacent Kalkadoon Tribal Centre and Cultural Keeping Place. While Mt Isa is a major gateway to the Gulf and the 'Outback at Isa' complex is likely to stimulate passing tourists' interest in the Gulf, some of those interviewed for this project expressed concern that the Waanyi Aboriginal character of Boodjamulla and Miyumba could easily be mistaken for Kalkadoon, given the positioning of the Riversleigh Fossil Centre next to

the Kalkadoon Tribal Centre. One interviewee also expressed concern about the storage of artefacts at the Riversleigh Fossil Centre.

Boodjamulla is approximately 405 km northwest of Mount Isa and 220 km southwest of Moungibi (Burketown); unsealed roads feature over the last 287 km from Mount Isa and the entire distance from Moungibi. The journey from Mount Isa takes approximately four-and-a-half to five hours. Roads can become impassable for extended periods following rain and travel by 4WD is recommended. The park can also be accessed through Gregory Downs via Cloncurry, with the highway sealed all of the way to Gregory Downs, leaving 100 km of unsealed dirt road. This route is typically passable for conventional vehicles, though 4WD is recommended. This journey takes six to seven hours from Cloncurry. The description of park access to Boodjamulla on the EPA website states the following:

> Road conditions can vary on unsealed and sealed roads. The traveller must expect to encounter bull dust, corrugation, exposed rocks, creek crossings, wildlife and cattle and oncoming vehicles. The traveller needs to ensure that their vehicle is in good working order and take any necessary precautions for emergencies. Road closures may apply during certain times of the year. (Queensland EPA 2004)

It is noteworthy that the publication *The Gulf Savannah* features full-page sections on Boodjamulla National Park, Miyumba, and 'The Century Project' respectively. All have a prominent place and linked destinies in this major regional tourism promotion publication (Queensland Government 2004a).

Accommodation

Boodjamulla's camping facilities are very modest. Camping is permitted at only two sites, one at Boodjamulla Gorge itself, adjacent to the current ranger station and parks office, and one at the Miyumba bush camp, situated on the Gregory Resource Reserve adjacent to the Gregory River and three-and-a-half kilometres from Riversleigh's D site (located within the Australian fossil mammal site). The capacity and facilities of both campgrounds are very limited, with the Miyumba bush camp having only six sites.

The main type of tourist accommodation available within the vicinity of Century mine is Adel's Grove, a multi-purpose camping and caravan park on a 34 sq. km block of freehold land, just outside the Boodjamulla entrance and about 50 km from Miyumba (refer to Plate 4). The campground offers 60 camping and van sites. The proprietors run half-day tours to Miyumba three days a week at a cost of $40 per person. The tour includes some local history, an interpretive walk around the D site fossil bed, and morning tea beside the Gregory River. Visitor activities advertised in the Adel's Grove brochure include bird watching, walking, swimming, canoeing and interpretive tours.

Plate 4: Campgrounds, Adel's Grove

SOURCE: Photograph taken by Tanuja Barker, CSRM, October 2004

Scattered throughout the Gulf are various lodges, campgrounds, roadhouses and farmstays, such as the Kingfisher lodge campground on the Nicholson River. There are also numerous fishing lodges, including the Sweers Island Resort (part of the Wellesley Islands group) and the Birri Fishing Lodge on the north-eastern side of Mornington Island. Many of these have their own small, private airstrips. Normanton and Karumba, being larger towns, offer a comparatively wider range of accommodation including motels, hotels and caravan parks, although an interviewee did note that Normanton experiences chronic accommodation shortages during the tourist and fishing seasons.

Current Aboriginal Involvement in Local Tourism

Despite the significant Aboriginal population living in the lower Gulf, few Aboriginal people were identified as having direct involvement in local tourism. The Woomera dance troupe from Mornington Island is world renowned and has performed throughout Australia and internationally. They have apparently been contracted at

least once in recent years to perform a dance at Escott Lodge for a bus party of tourists. The Woomera Aboriginal Corporation on Mornington Island also runs the Muyinda Aboriginal Corporation Art and Handicraft Store. There is potential to fly dancers to Adel's Grove at the Lawn Hill entrance (via Century) for performances or for tourists to fly to Gununa from Century for a dance performance.

Harry Burgen runs Yididi Aboriginal Guided Tours, a business he bought with the help of the Aboriginal Development Benefits Trust from Campbell Tours and Travel, a Mount Isa-based travel operator. Mr Burgen operates the bus component of a two-and-a-half day tour from Mount Isa to Boodjamulla and Miyumba. Food stops are provided at the Seymour and Gregory Rivers on the way and accommodation is found at the Adel's Grove campground. The tours normally run between April and October and can cater for up to fourteen people.

Opportunities for Increasing Aboriginal Involvement in Tourism

Most of the tourism brochures and product descriptions on offer in the lower Gulf refer to the environmental attributes of the region, its recreational pursuits or describe significant sites and events from settlers' perspectives[15]. For example, the Burke and Wills Campsite #119 is portrayed in glowing, pioneering terms. Notably absent is the continued Aboriginal significance of the region and Aboriginal historical perspectives. At best, a brief mention of the presence of Aboriginal communities may be made in passing. A critical gap in the portrayal of the Aboriginal character of the lower Gulf region in most of the tourism products on offer is therefore obvious. This niche is best filled by knowledgeable, local Aboriginal people living on country who can provide a standalone product or enrich current tours.

All Aboriginal participants that the current researchers spoke to indicated enthusiasm for further involvement in the local tourism industry. Various Aboriginal organisations and interviewees have already considered tourism possibilities. For example, the Lawn Hill Riversleigh Pastoral Holding Company (a company set up in partnership with Century under the GCA) commissioned a KPMG tourism feasibility study in 2003[16].

Both interviewees and the KPMG report (2003) suggested that interested indigenous parties could provide the following tourist activities:

- Tours (bush tucker, horse riding, boating, canoeing, fishing, school camps, nature and cultural walks, helicopter flights, pastoral/cattle branding and mustering, mine, Boodjamulla and Miyumba);
- Accommodation and dining experiences (campsite, damper tasting, billy tea, bush tucker);
- Cultural performances and demonstrations (dance performances, singing and storytelling, didgeridoo playing and boomerang throwing); and
- Arts and craft production and retail.

Despite the high level of interest, few have 'run with the ball'. There are several constraints to the development of tourism in the Gulf that need to be considered. General ones include:

- Distance from major markets and travel costs;
- Poor road infrastructure in parts of the Gulf;
- Seasonal weather extremes leading to accessibility problems and marked downturn in visitor numbers during the wet season (December to March);
- Sensitive environment (for example, in 2004 Burke Shire banned the parking of caravans and motor-homes along the banks of the Gregory River in response to growing concerns about the deterioration of the river);
- The sense by park management that there is a real ceiling at Boodjamulla with respect to the cultural and environmental impacts of visitors, and that more visitors will simply translate into more impacts.
- Lack of sufficient tourism support services (e.g. vehicle breakdown services); and
- High rates of small business failures in the tourism industry in general.

Constraints more specific to the development of Aboriginal tourism ventures may include:

- Lack of business and administrative skills: as described by one interviewee: 'they've got the cultural knowledge, ambition and drive, but may lack on the financial and administration side';
- Sensitive cultural environment: degradation of the 'physical' environment, such as described in the Gregory River example above, also implies the degradation of the attached cultural values. In addition, several interviewees and reports have noted the need to manage tourist numbers and restrict access to certain Aboriginal significant sites. As one interviewee said, 'We shouldn't overload them, like people on a cattle truck';
- Local politics: the acceptance of tourist providers by local communities and organisations;

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[15] For example, an undated information sheet on Adel's Grove States the following: 'Virtually unknown sites exist here encompassing sites of major significance in archaeology, paleontology and geology (impact structure) as well as botany, bird watching and exploring new locations previously untrodden by modern man'. Also view the descriptions available on the Australian Tourism Net website (2003), the Fairfax Australian Walkabout Travel Guide website (2004), and Queensland Heritage Trails website (Queensland Government 2005).

[16] A consultancy report was commissioned by Century mine to consider a more limited Aboriginal tourism venture specific to the Lawn Hill and Riversleigh Pastoral Holding Company. This 2003 study undertaken by KPMG was considered useful, but perhaps too focused by Century management for either immediate implementation or for the scope of the current research project.

- Inadequate infrastructure in the communities: such as environmental health and waste management issues and competing demands for mine infrastructure to service these needs; and
- A questionable level of demand for Aboriginal tourism products or services from 'grey nomads', the current dominant segment of the tourism market.

Alcohol Management Plans

The researchers did not discuss the effects that the Queensland Government's Alcohol Management Plans have had or will have on tourism with interviewees. Doomadgee and Gununa (Mornington Island) both had these plans installed in 2003. The section of the Savannah Way that passes through Doomadgee is excluded from alcohol restrictions. Within the Mornington Shire, the Birri Fishing Lodge is able to serve a full range of alcohol to its in-house guests and the Lelka Murrin Tavern is able to sell a certain selection of beers, but alcohol is prohibited in all other public places and internal waterways, except for Sweers Island (where there is another fishing resort) and the Bountiful Islands, both of which lie outside of the Shire boundaries. This is likely to mean that the alcohol needs of tourists have been catered for and restrictions are unlikely to restrain tourist numbers. However, a growth in tourism is likely to make the differential treatment of alcohol provisions more prominent and could lead to the concentration and intensification of drinking in certain areas. For example, it was alleged that tourists (including some mine personnel) on fishing expeditions to Sweers Island had used this opportunity to engage in binge drinking. This in turn poses a greater tourism health and safety risk.

Century and Aboriginal Tourism

Century mine is supportive of the development of local Aboriginal tourism enterprises and views them as part of a range of possible strategies for leaving a positive post-mine legacy (Miles, Cavaye & Donaghy 2005). In general, Century and other parties to the Gulf Communities Agreement (given the possibility of mine closure within fourteen years), are placing greater emphasis on supporting local business opportunities and building local capacity. For example, in 2004 the Institute for Sustainable Regional Development conducted a consultation and planning forum for mining and regional development in the southern Gulf on behalf of the Department of State Development and Innovation.

Tourism-related initiatives have and can be further supported through relevant structures that have been established under the Gulf Communities Agreement. These include the Employment & Training Committee, the Gulf Aboriginal Development Company and the Lawn Hill and Riversleigh Pastoral Holding Company. There are also voluntary site-based initiatives that have developed, such as the Business Development Committee (an onsite ideas forum for developing local business opportunities).

Promoting an Aboriginal Tourism Venture

Under the guidance of Century's contract management department and the Zinifex Business Development Committee, Century is in the process of facilitating the development of an Aboriginal tour venture that will involve making ten seats available on the Friday inbound and Monday outbound chartered flights going to and from Townsville. This coincides with perceived low levels of demand for flights among on-site personnel. Century has an all-weather airstrip, so flying in tourists is likely to prolong the tourist season during the wet season and can cater for the short-term, higher-spending end of the tourist market, thereby helping to diversify the current tourism market in the Gulf. It is envisaged that the tour will include a visit to the mine, dining and accommodation at Adel's Grove and a tour of Boodjamulla National Park. Five initial expressions of interest have been lodged, but delays in assigning the contract have occurred for the following reasons:

- The need for the tour to be run by a person from or acceptable to the Waanyi Traditional Owners and their representative organisations;
- Service reliability issues with the possibility of seats being 'bumped off' due to changes in site demand, for example during shutdowns;
- Economic viability concerns given the reliance on a handful of tourists a week; and
- Predetermined tourism networks (such as travel agents) established by Century, which may not align with potential tourism operator desires.

The company currently aims to conduct a feasibility study on the tour operation before the start of the next tourist season. Century views itself more as a facilitator than a joint venture partner in this initiative. Company interviewees indicated that the tourism operations would benefit from any mentoring or business advice that Century might be able to offer, but also emphasised that they 'are a mining company, not a tourism operation'.

In order for the mine tour component to proceed, Century staff have acknowledged the need to upgrade the viewing platform at the pit lookout. Commercial mine tours are not currently conducted at the mine, although it is done on an ad hoc basis by mine staff for local schools, and to a certain degree for new trainees, employees and VIP visitors to the site. The mine is in itself a tourist attraction. Relatively few people know about the history or have witnessed the scale and magnitude of the operation and the mining equipment, such as the 240-

tonne haul trucks. The Adel's Grove operators noted that visitors have expressed interest in the Century mine operation and are able to see the mine overburden and the lights of the mine at night during tours down to Miyumba (Riversleigh).

The provision of a mine tour by Aboriginal operators and the inclusion of elements of the mine's lifecycle as they occur – for example tree plantation during the rehabilitation phase – or appropriate protected culturally significant sites around the mine would provide tourists with valuable and informative perspectives. Further investment by the mine in a visitor centre and the provision of food and refreshments, such as described in the Argyle mine case study, are likely to add value to the experience.

Century also has the chance to promote the mining and Boodjamulla tour components of the venture amongst its own employees and their families. For example, learning about local Aboriginal relationships to country and people's history of living on country as part of cultural awareness training or a refresher course, is likely to reinforce the importance of cross-cultural awareness and environmental management to non-local Aboriginal employees. Full consultation with the appropriate Aboriginal groups and management of such tours are required to avoid damage to culturally and environmentally sensitive areas.

As mentioned previously, pastoral leases, five of which were purchased by Century and are in the process of being transferred to the appropriate Native Title groups, surround the mine. Interviewees have suggested the possibility of including pastoral properties as part of the proposed tour or as part of a separate one. A tourism feasibility study has been conducted for the Riversleigh and Lawn Hill pastoral leases (KPMG 2003). Another interviewee suggested that the proposed tour should be expanded to include the port operations at Karumba and further networking opportunities with existing tourism attractions at Normanton, such as the 'Gulflander' train journey.

Local Contracts and Business Support

Under the Gulf Communities Agreement (GCA), Century is required to support the development of local Aboriginal businesses. The advantage of providing business support, such as mentoring, and advice on technical and commercial know-how, is that the industry's seasonality allows more effort to be concentrated on these efforts during the low season. Currently there are several local Aboriginal businesses and contracts that have been established to support the mine operation, but which also indirectly support tourism in the Gulf or can help to promote the maintenance of certain infrastructure in the future. For example, Hookey's Contracting is a local civil engineering and road works company that helps to maintain the gravel road from the mine to Gregory, and, thereby partially, the tourist trail from Gregory to Boodjamulla National Park. The laundry and office cleaning services provided by Bonds Laundry and Willetts onsite, and by Gkuthaarn at the port, are also easily transferable to a tourism context. The new limestone crushing joint venture between Northern Project Contracting and Waanyi Nation is expected to last beyond the current life of the main pit and could possibly become part of a tourism feature in the future as an active mining component, when the current pit could be incorporated as a historical mine feature.

Century mine is also in the process of setting up a waste management contract with North Queensland Resource Recovery Proprietary Limited (TransPacific Industry). This will include the segregation, processing and transportation of wet and dry waste at the operation in order to reduce the amount of landfill on-site. The long-term plans are for a local Aboriginal company to take over the waste management contract and also to service the communities within the vicinity of the mine, such as Doomadgee and Moungibi (Burketown).

There already exist a number of working arrangements between Zinifex Century Mine and the Queensland Park and Wildlife Service (QPWS) with respect to Boodjamulla. The most recent of these is a Memorandum of Understanding, through which all waste products and recyclable materials generated by the management and visitors to the National Park would be transferred to the Century mine's waste management facility on the mine lease. A similar memorandum has been signed between the mine and Adel's Grove campground.

Employment and Training in Tourism-related Occupations

The provision of employment and training for local Aboriginal people is also part of Century's GCA requirements. Those within hospitality-related areas of the mine are most conducive to building quality service delivery capacity. Eurest Support Services (ESS) manages the kitchen, bar, shop, village cleaning and airport check-in services at Century. It currently employs twelve local Aboriginal people, has four apprentices (with two chefs having recently graduated) and one trainee. Century staff were positively inclined towards further support in this area, if the demand and identified job opportunities existed. Century has also supported trainee rangers at Boodjamulla in the past.

Further opportunities exist to develop the managerial and technical capacity of capable local Aboriginal candidates. For example, there are currently four local Aboriginal people employed as Logistics Support Officers who primarily deal with airport ground operations and maintenance. The tasks performed include aircraft refuelling, inspections of the airport and checking of the perimeter fence to ensure that the airport is safe to operate. The officers thereby gain familiarity with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) rules and regulations. However, further tasks such as checking and repairing emergency generators, tarmac and runways

will help build the human capacity in the Gulf to maintain the airport, should this be considered a viable post-mine option.

Airport

Century has an all-weather airstrip capable of taking passenger jets. Several interviewees noted that the quality of the airstrip is the best in the Gulf. Because it is fitted with night navigational equipment, the Royal Doctor Flying service frequently uses the Century airstrip during night excursions. The army and navy also use it as a fuel stop between Brisbane and Darwin. Different views were expressed as to the viability of maintaining the airstrip for post-mine purposes. One interviewee commented that the airstrip was 'too far away from anywhere' and 'too costly to maintain'. Another interviewee proposed that the airstrip could become the main 'hub' for the Gulf.

Accommodation Facilities

The mine accommodates its staff and contractors onsite at the mine's Darimah village, located approximately one to two kilometres from the mining operation. It is able to accommodate 660 people in air-conditioned motel-style single and double rooms, or dongas. Shared laundry facilities are available for all rooms and shared bathroom facilities for the donga complexes. Darimah village also has a dining hall and associated kitchen and bar, as well as a shop, swimming pool and tennis courts. Recent landscape beautification and construction of trails has been undertaken.

Interviewees indicated that current accommodation demand for mine operation purposes is likely to mean that tourists cannot be accommodated at Darimah village in the short-term. Furthermore, the accommodation units are leased and likely to be demobilised upon mine closure, therefore limiting the possibility of post-mine utilisation of these facilities for tourism purposes. The establishment of a camp on the outskirts of the mine lease, which can be excised, was suggested during interviews as another possibility.

Conclusion

The interviewees noted a range of opportunities through which the mine can support Aboriginal tourism ventures, and it appears that the mine has been supportive by spearheading the 'empty seats on flights' tour initiative. This is also likely to influence and diversify the type of tourists that visit the Gulf, including tourists that demand cultural tours. However, there are also real obstacles that need to be overcome, including the short- and long-term economic viability of the tourism venture itself, and the impact of local politics.

The case study suggests that tourism is seen as a double-edge sword, with some interviewees fearing that the protected area attractions are already reaching their full tourism capacity. Concerns beyond the mine thereby also need to be incorporated into any deliberation of indigenous tourism prospects. It appears that tourism to the Gulf will increase, and planning to ensure that local benefits can be leveraged off this and negative impacts minimised is essential. It is within this broader regional management framework that some decisions about the best use of mine infrastructure are possible. For example, Century mine might be able to lend broader tourism support in the form of soft infrastructure, such as employment, training and business support to identified tourism needs.

Table 7: Profile of the Century mine

PROFILE ELEMENTS	CENTURY MINE DETAILS
Location	NW Qld - Gulf of Carpentaria
Latitude/Longitude	18.741°S / 138.625°E
Commodity	Zinc, lead and silver
Company	Zinifex
Mine Life	2018, with further exploration currently being undertaken.
Operations	Mine and processing facility, port at Karumba.
Type of Operation	Open cut
Size of Operation	Large: 800 to 900 employees.
Commuting Type	FIFO, some drive-in, drive out from surrounding communities.
Mine Infrastructure	Airstrip, mine camp (Darimah Village), power from Mica Creek Power Station (Mt Isa) & telecommunications.
Current Aboriginal Agreement	Gulf Communities Agreement 1997.

Key Features of Agreement	Key aspects of the agreement include: • Education, employment and training for local Aboriginal people • Business opportunities and ongoing assistance in the establishment and operation of those businesses. • Cultural and environmental protection. • Transfer of five neighbouring pastoral leases to local Aboriginal ownership. • Continued consultation and communication with local Aboriginal communities.
Does the Mine have a Tourism Enterprise in Place?	At the time of this study, Century was facilitating the development of an Aboriginal tour venture.
Company Website	Zinifex: http://www.zinifex.com/
Local Government Website	Burke Shire Council: http://www.burkeshirecouncil.com/ Carpentaria Shire Council: http://www.carpentaria.qld.gov.au/ Doomadgee Aboriginal Community Council: http://www.accq.org.au/comm/doom.htm

Table 8: Aboriginal community details for the Century mine locale

COMMUNITY ELEMENTS	CENTURY LOCALE DETAILS
Traditional Owners	Waanyi, Mingginda, Gkuthaarn and Kukatj peoples.
Communities	Bidunggu, Doomadgee, Karumba, Moungibi (Burketown), Normanton, Mornington Island.
Indigenous Population of Region	8492 North West Statistical Division (ABS 2002b)
Indigenous Population at Closest Townships	Doomadgee (> 500), Mt Isa (> 500), Cloncurry (> 500), Normanton (> 500), Gununa (Mornington Is) (> 500), Camooweal (100-500), Dajarra (100-500), Boulia (100-500), Old Doomadgee (< 100), Moungibi (Burketown) (< 100), Sweers Is (< 100), Urandangi (< 100). (Indigenous population sizes from ATSIC 1999b.)
Proximity of Nearest Communities to Mine (by Road)	Approx. distances: Bidunggu & Gregory Downs 75 km, Moungibi (Burketown) 120 km, Doomadgee 200 km, Normanton 450 km and Karumba 520 km.
Relevant Land Council	Carpentaria Land Council
Mining / Community Engagement Activities	See features of the Agreement in the above table.
Size of Pool of Aboriginal Labour for Enterprise	105 local Aboriginal people (as at the 31 August 2005)
Potential for Small-scale Intimate Tourism	Good potential for small tours.
Potential for Large-scale Tourism	A growing tourist destination.
Community Experience with Tourism	Limited.
Degree of Motivation and Commitment Within Community to Engage in Tourism	All Aboriginal participants were enthusiastic about further involvement in the local tourism industry. Various Aboriginal organisations and interviewees have already considered tourism possibilities.

Table 9: Tourism details for the Century mine locale

TOURISM ELEMENTS	CENTURY LOCALE DETAILS
Australian Heritage Sites	Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park, Miyumba (Riversleigh) World Heritage Area.
Tourist Attractions	Boodjamulla National Park, Adel's Grove, Miyumba World Heritage Area, Gulflander and Purple Pub.
Environmental Features	Waterholes, Boodjamulla Gorge & National Park, fossils, extensive flora and fauna, fishing grounds, natural spa and sandstone cliffs.
Tourism Associations	Gulf Savannah Tourism and Karumba Tourism.
Current Tourism Operators	Savannah Guides, 4WD adventure tours, Discover Australia Holidays and Yididi Aboriginal guided tours.

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Tourist Activities in the Region	Fishing, camping, hiking, swimming, bird watching, canoeing, scenic day flights, camel and horse riding, and local and regional tours.
Cultural Features	Waanyi rock art, engravings, rock shelters, Dreaming Sites, Aboriginal middens and tool factories, Woomera dance troupe, Muyinda Aboriginal Corporation Art and Handicraft store.
Existing Aboriginal Tourism Enterprise	Yididi Aboriginal guided tours.
Is Existing Tourism Enterprise on Aboriginal Land?	Tours are conducted out of Mt Isa onto traditional land at Boodjamulla and Miyumba.
Local Infrastructure to Support Tourism	• Airstrip at Adel's Grove and Century Mine • Roads – check weather conditions • Shops • Campground
Cultural/Environmental Considerations	Impact on physical and cultural environment due to high visitation.

Chapter 7

ARGYLE DIAMOND MINE CASE STUDY

Location

Argyle Diamond Mine (Argyle) is located about 170 km south by road from the regional centre of Kununurra, in the north-eastern Kimberley region of Western Australia (refer to Map 5). Kununurra is a town of around 4000 people, and was originally built in the 1960s to service the nearby Ord Dam and irrigation project. The nearest Aboriginal communities to Argyle are the small settlements of Warmun (Turkey Creek), some 50 km south, and Doom Doom, about 70 km north. The town of Hall's Creek (population 1400) is approximately 200 km south of the mine.

Argyle is situated in an area featuring some spectacular natural (and man-made) attractions. The turnoff to the World Heritage-listed Purnululu National Park (previously known as the Bungle Bungles) is about one-and-a-half hours' drive south of the mine. The proposed Boyd-Carr Range National Park is north of the mine, although it cannot be accessed by road from its lease. Lake Argyle, which was formed by the Ord Dam, is about 20 km west of the Argyle camp.

Map 5: The third case study area and including Argyle and Kununurra
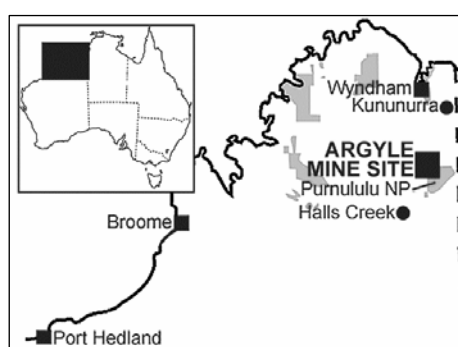
SOURCE: Map prepared by Linda Thomson, AERC, September 2005

Overview of Argyle

Argyle, a business unit of Rio Tinto, is the world's largest supplier of diamonds, producing approximately 30 million carats each year (Argyle Diamonds 2005a). The mine commenced in 1985 as an open-pit operation and its current lease is 60 000 hectares, of which about 3600 has been disturbed by open-pit mining and alluvial operations. The mine was established as a fly-in, fly-out operation, with most employees and contractors commuting from Perth. There is an airstrip at the mine site that can take 737 jet aircraft, plus two permanent camps with full facilities (see below). Locally-based workers drive or are bussed to the mine site, and stay in one of the camps for the duration of their roster.

Open-cut mining operations are scheduled to cease in 2008, with processing of ore to continue until 2009. In late 2005, Rio Tinto approved the development of an underground extension, with the result that the predicted life of the mine will be extended to 2024.

Argyle is an important employer in the region and makes a significant contribution to the local economy. This contribution has increased significantly in recent years, as a consequence of Argyle making a strong commitment to a policy of 'localisation'. For example, in 2004 the mine's expenditure on Kimberley-based goods and services was $27.3m, with local wage and salary payments amounting to another $16.3m (Argyle Diamonds 2004, p.44-45). Had the mine had to close in 2008, as was originally planned, it would have an extremely negative impact on the local economy. There would also have been major impacts on the Indian diamond cutting industry, as it is estimated that up to 220,000 Indian workers are engaged in processing diamonds sourced from Argyle (Argyle Diamonds 2005a).

In 2004, Argyle employed 674 people at the mine site, plus around 50 contractors. The underground extension will involve temporary increases in the workforce associated with new construction; thereafter the

operational workforce will decline steadily to around 500 equivalent full-time positions by 2014 (URS 2005, p.2.2).

Policies and Commitments

All Rio Tinto operations are required to prepare rolling Five Year Community Plans which are submitted to their corporate division for review and guidance. The process of developing a plan involves three stages: baseline studies and community surveys, consultation, and program development. The Rio Tinto website describes this third stage in the following terms:

> Building on the findings of the baseline study and through the consultation, programmes and initiatives are undertaken. These aim to provide benefits to community groups that last beyond the life of the mine. For example, providing training or apprenticeships in essential trades can be of considerable benefit to both the individual and the community. Where communities' priorities point towards development initiatives for which the operation may not have skills (agricultural or education projects, for example), operations are encouraged to partner with organisations who have local expertise. (Rio Tinto 2004b)

The Argyle plan has a strong focus on regional development and Aboriginal employment and training. Around 2001, it formally adopted a 'localisation' policy aimed at creating a predominantly locally-based workforce. In line with this policy, the proportion of East Kimberley-based employees grew from 11% in 2000 to 42% in 2004 (Argyle Diamonds 2004). The current target is to have 80% of the total workforce locally based by 2007. In 2004, 22% of the site workforce was Aboriginal – up from 5% in 2000) – although not all of these employees came from the local area (Argyle Diamonds 2004). The target for levels of Aboriginal employment is a 40% proponent of the workforce by 2007. There is also a strong commitment to providing training opportunities for local Aboriginal people. In 2003, Argyle entered into a partnership with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations to employ 150 trainees and apprentices over the following five years. Preferential access to these programs will be given to Aboriginal and East Kimberley residents (Argyle Diamonds 2003, p.47).

Since 2003, Argyle has employed a Manager of Regional Development, whose role includes identifying and assisting with the development of local business initiatives and partnering with local businesses and government bodies to improve training opportunities (Argyle Diamonds 2003, p.49). Much of the focus of this position is on indigenous business development and support. An important recent initiative was the finalisation of the Argyle Participation Agreement in the latter part of 2004 (see below), which is a comprehensive 'goodwill agreement' between Argyle and the Traditional Owners of the area.

One clear manifestation of the improving relationship between Argyle and Traditional Owners was an 'increase ceremony' held recently at the mine site to bring the diamonds closer to the surface for easier mining. This suggests an unprecedented and very positive working relationship with the local Aboriginal community, especially given the trajectory of the underground tunnel and the location of the Barramundi site, the destruction of which was one significant objection raised by Traditional Owners when the mine was first planned. The death of an Aboriginal worker at the pit, and subsequent emphasis on the smoking ceremony as part of the orientation for new mine employees, also highlights the local Aboriginal community's strong feelings of responsibility for 'looking after' non-Aboriginal people working on their country.

Aboriginal Communities

In 2001, the indigenous population of the northern East Kimberley Region was estimated at 4317, representing 46.5% of the region's estimated total residential population of almost 10 000 (Taylor 2003, p.10). Kununurra is the only community where Aboriginal people are in the minority, accounting for 25.7% of the town's population. By comparison, nearly 80% of the Halls Creek population is of indigenous origin. According to Taylor's estimates, the Aboriginal population of the region is to grow by around 35% between 2001 and 2016, equating to an additional 2098 people (2003, p.20).

The estimated size of the Aboriginal labour force in the region in 2001 was 1339. This represented about half of the adult population, which is well below the equivalent rate for the non-indigenous population of the region. Most of those classified as being in the workforce (779) were employed in a Community Development Employment Project; only 428 were in mainstream employment (Taylor 2003, p.25).

Relations between the Argyle and Aboriginal Communities

The Traditional Owners of the land on which the Argyle mine is located belong to two main language groups: the Miriuwung to the north, and the Gija to the south.

When development of Argyle was first mooted in the late 1970s, there was strong opposition from the Traditional Owners. One of the grounds for objection was that an important sacred site (Barramundi Gap) would be destroyed by mining. There were also strong concerns about the social impacts of a large resource development on the region's Aboriginal population. Eventually, a series of agreements of limited scope were entered into with Traditional Owner groups, but in the ensuing years there continued to be a good deal of

controversy about the mine and the circumstances under which it was established (see Howitt 2001 for a useful historical review).

In 2001, Argyle commenced a process of formally reviewing its relations with Traditional Owners (Argyle Diamonds 2003, p.48). At around the same time, a pre-feasibility study into the viability of developing underground resources below the open pit was launched. In 2003, agreement was obtained from the Traditional Owners to commence a full-scale feasibility study for this underground project (Argyle Diamonds 2003, p.33).

In the latter part of 2004, following lengthy negotiations conducted under the auspices of the Kimberley Land Council, Argyle finalised a comprehensive 'goodwill agreement' with the Traditional Owners of the area. It comprises an indigenous Land Use Agreement and a suite of management plans; the issues it addresses include:

- Consent to the mine's current and future operations;
- Benefits for Traditional Owners;
- Employment and training;
- Business development;
- Aboriginal site protection;
- Cross-cultural training;
- Land management; and
- Governance arrangements (Argyle Diamonds 2005b).

The Agreement provides for the distribution of funds between three trusts: one for the families on whose country the mine is located, one for Traditional Owner groups more generally, and one to provide for regional benefits.

The Agreement is not specific about whether the mine camp and related infrastructure will be handed over to the Traditional Owners at or before closure; all that it contains is a provision requiring Argyle to 'consult' with the Traditional Owners before disposing of any infrastructure. However, according to representatives of both Argyle and the Kimberley Land Council, it is 'common knowledge' that this is Argyle's preferred option. The Agreement requires that there be full disclosure about all costs and potential liabilities, including maintenance, associated with the transfer of infrastructure.

According to one interviewee, the Traditional Owners still feel a good deal of bitterness about their past treatment by Argyle: 'it doesn't matter what Argyle does now, it won't make up for this'. However, this same person said that everyone – including the Traditional Owners – was aware of the economic importance of the mine and wanted the underground extension to go ahead.

Tourism in the East Kimberley Region

Attractions

According to the most recent visitation data provided by Tourism Western Australia, in 2003/2004 there were 104,400 overnight visitors to the Wyndham/East Kimberley Region, of whom 20,900 were international visitors (TWA 2004, p.1). Tourism in the region is based largely on attractions such as Lake Argyle, Purnululu, Keep River National Park and the general wilderness experience that the area provides. Many tourists take bus, 4WD or plane tours as a way of seeing the region. There is also a large do-it-yourself market of independent travellers who operate their own 4WDs.

Argyle itself has been quite successfully marketed as a tourist attraction, with around 8-10,000 tourists a year taking a guided tour of the operation. Management has capped visitor numbers to limit disruption to mining activities, so they could potentially be much greater. The tours are run by private operators, mostly based in Kununurra. Some are conducted by bus, others by air. The air tours often incorporate a flight over the Bungle Bungle Range (part of Purnululu National Park).

Argyle has built a visitor centre and a viewing platform, and provides a lunch for visitors, but beyond this there is no involvement of Argyle personnel in the conduct of tours. Argyle charges a fee of $30 per visitor to cover basic costs, but it is not designed as a money-making activity. According to a former tour operator, the tours are quite a lucrative business. At the time of the site visit in late 2004, there was no Aboriginal person employed by any of the tour companies, although Argyle is taking steps to redress this situation (see below).

Another indirect contribution Argyle has made to the local tourism industry has been its significant year-round use of accommodation facilities in Kununurra. Tourism in the area is highly seasonal, so the business generated by Argyle helps to sustain these businesses during the off-season. Additionally, Argyle is a major source of passengers for AirNorth, which also contributes to the viability of the industry.

Purnululu National Park/World Heritage Area

Purnululu is quickly becoming an icon status national park and now World Heritage Area (see Plate 5). The Bungle Bungle Range is a remarkable landscape of sandstone hills and gorges rising up to 578 metres above sea level and encompassing an area of 45,000 hectares. The Park as a whole is around 240,000 hectares in size, and is surrounded by a buffer zone of around 80,000 hectares.

Plate 5: View of Purnululu National Park

SOURCE: Photograph taken by David Brereton, CSRM, August 2004

The turn-off to the park is 250 km south of Kununurra and 109 km north of Halls Creek. Travelling time to the park ranger station is five hours from Kununurra and four from Halls Creek. The park's access road is accessible only to 4WD vehicles. An airstrip exists in the park close to the Walardi campsite, one of two basic campgrounds available. Partly because of its location and climate, the park is open only between April and December if the weather permits (CALM 1997).

Purnululu has been a national park since 1987, and in 2003 became the fifteenth area in Australia to be inscribed on the World Heritage List. Few non-Aboriginal Australians were aware of this spectacular landscape prior to the 1980s. The Bungle Bungle Range has been increasingly promoted by the tourism industry and the West Australian Government in recent years, with many tour operators now including Purnululu on their cross-country wilderness treks, and with scenic flights over the Range proving a particularly popular visitor option.

Purnululu attracts about 22,000 ground-based visitors each year, nearly all of whom camp for at least one night. Most of these visits occur in the June to August period. People arrive either by road or aircraft into a basic airstrip that is located in the south of the park. An estimated 80-90 000 people fly over the park annually.

The website of the Western Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) provides a modest amount of information about Purnululu, describing infrastructure that is very basic and not particularly inviting. There is no accommodation other than the two campgrounds, Walardi and Kurrajong, and visitors must carry in all food and water. Most camp for several days and must therefore come well-equipped (CALM 1997). Very little additional information about Purnululu is available from the Kimberley Regional Office of CALM. Indeed, the availability of substantive interpretive or other local history information about the park exists in stark contrast with the nature of the media promotion of it.

The current staff levels at Purnululu are astonishingly low for such a park. It is essentially covered by two rangers working a ten days on, four days off roster, being occupied daily by one onsite ranger. There are several other seasonal employees. An individual has been appointed as the World Heritage officer and representative, and will have an office in Kununurra in the CALM facility there. All operational decisions regarding the park go through the Park's Council, which includes the new World Heritage Officer, the CALM rangers, and Traditional Owners. The future development of Purnululu is being planned, but apparently moving slowly. Park management is currently working on the old, pre-World Heritage listing management plan.

The *Steps to Sustainable Tourism* initiative has laid out a framework and timetable for the Park's future planning. The Commonwealth and state governments and the Western Australian Department of the Environment and Heritage have engaged CALM, in conjunction with the Purnululu Aboriginal Corporation, to develop and implement this process:

> This project is part of a broader program to model a best practice approach for the long-term planning of tourism at key heritage places in Australia, particularly those where developing visions with indigenous communities and joint managers are required. (CALM 2005a)

A northern access road is envisioned to be constructed over the next several years. There are two small Aboriginal communities on the northern side of the park, at Date Palm and Frog Hole, and they may potentially be joined by a road from and to Lake Argyle itself. There is considerable infrastructure development and improvement underway, including 42 new toilets, a new ranger station, and upgrade of existing car parks and shelters. The stated planning criterion is for a wilderness experience where everything is kept as natural as possible. At the time of writing, this philosophy extended to the access road, with the plan being to keep it as it is while the internal roads within the park are upgraded. While no Aboriginal rangers are currently on staff at Purnululu, the training and incorporation of Aboriginal rangers into the management of parks such as Purnululu is a policy priority. An Aboriginal training officer has been based in Broome.

There are currently two tour operators with 'A class' licenses, each of which will be using vehicles with a carrying capacity of 60 clients. Therefore, each day up to 120 visitors are brought into the park and catered for through these two operators alone. CALM licenses commercial activities on any of its conservation estate under Section 101 of the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984 (CALM 2005b).

The existence and proximity of Purnululu National Park to Argyle, Lake Argyle and Kununurra, as well as to the intersection of two Heritage Highways – the Great Northern Highway and the Savannah Way – makes it a particularly attractive tourist destination, notwithstanding the challenge of the access road. This recent packaging of landscape, adventure and heritage highways, Australian wilderness, and World Heritage and national park landscapes, substantially lifts the profile of places like Purnululu, such that it is now 'on the map' literally, figuratively and virtually (as evidenced by the large number of website hits obtained using a search engine).

Infrastructure

There are several campgrounds in Kununurra, as well as hotels/motels of variable standards. Accommodation outside Kununurra is generally basic, with the exception of El Questro Station and a couple of smaller facilities, for example, Parrys Creek farm near Wyndham. The El Questro resort is located about one-and-a-half hours' drive south-west from Kununurra, and provides a range of accommodation options, from five-star luxury rooms in the homestead through to self-contained cabins and campsites. There is a National Park campground and some small privately operated campgrounds at Purnululu, and a campground/caravan park attached to the Turkey Creek roadhouse. There is also a resort on Lake Argyle, but it is in need of redevelopment. According to a recent analysis of the Kimberley Region completed by the Western Australian Tourism Commission:

> There is a growing demand for more wilderness-based accommodation to meet the needs of increasing numbers of people seeking nature based experiences. There is a rising demand for budget accommodation to suit the growing self-drive market and the backpackers who often arrive by coach. (WATC 2003, p.5)

A private company, Australian Pacific Touring (APT), has built a new million-dollar Bungle Bungle Wilderness Camp in Purnululu, featuring tented cabins with private facilities, flush toilets and hot showers, as well as cabins with shared facilities. They have an agreement with the Wunan Foundation[17] and CALM, and will be the only operator to have three wilderness camps on Aboriginal-owned land and reserves in the Kimberley region. This initiative is in keeping with a regional emphasis in the Kimberley on the high-end tourism market, with El Questro not far away, and luxury outback tours using and seeking exceptional venues and accommodation for their clients along extensive corridors such as the one on the Uluru to Broome route.

The Kununurra airport is serviced by daily flights from Darwin and Perth (via Broome). As previously noted, there is an airstrip on the Argyle lease that is capable of taking jets. It is not available for general use, but some charters are allowed to use the airport with prior approval (e.g. Belray Tours and SlingAir). There are also small strips that can take light planes at Warmun and within Purnululu National Park.

All of the towns in the region are connected by sealed main roads, but access to many of the scenic areas, such as Purnululu, is by 4WD only.

Tourism Potential

Various studies have identified the East Kimberley region as having considerable potential for further tourism development (see, for example, the WAPC's Kununurra-Wyndham Development Strategy 2000). Most people interviewed for this study were similarly optimistic about the prospects for the long-term growth of tourism in the area. The constraints on the development of the local 'mainstream' tourism industry that were identified by this study include:

- The distance from major population centres;
- The cost of air travel;
- The limited array of accommodation options, particularly at the higher end of the market (although, as noted above, there is increasing demand for accommodation at the lower end as well);
- The short tourist season (mainly from June to August) and difficult access during the wet season; and
- The difficulty of accessing 'icon' destinations such as Purnululu.

As discussed below, there are additional obstacles to developing viable Aboriginal tourism ventures.

Current Aboriginal Involvement in Local Tourism

There is currently very little direct involvement of Aboriginal people in the local tourism industry. Most of the tour operators do not employ any Aboriginal people and there are very few Aboriginal-owned or -operated enterprises. There are currently few Aboriginal-run tour initiatives in the region, although low-key, individual or family-run enterprises appear to come and go. One such operating venture is Luridgii Aboriginal Eco-cultural tours, run by Ted Hall, booked through the Kununurra Visitors Centre, and operating from Mandangala, an Aboriginal community 140 km southwest of Kununurra. Some of the tour goes on to the Argyle lease, but there

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17 Wunan Foundation was established in 1997 by the ATSIC Wunan Regional Council. ATSIC Commissioner Ian Trust was the Founding Chairperson of Wunan Foundation. The key objective of the Foundation is to alleviate poverty amongst Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley by supporting long-term Aboriginal community development. The Foundation seeks to achieve this by raising funds directly and by making investments that will generate long-term economic and employment benefits for Aboriginal people in the region (ISX 2004).

is no support from or interaction with the company. Another local Aboriginal person, Colin Morgan, has relocated to Broome and runs a successful business that operates tours along Gibb River Road.

The Aboriginal-owned Wunan Foundation has a business interest in Kimberley Wilderness Adventures (KWA). KWA has a camp at Purnululu and at three locations that are accessed from Gibb River Road. At one stage, Wunan owned 100% of this business, but its holding has now been reduced to 40%, and APT (a large, well-established tour company mentioned earlier) has become the majority shareholder. The KWA workforce is mainly non-indigenous, although a member of the Gija tribe does some guide work at Purnululu. The researchers were advised that the company is now seeking opportunities to train Aboriginal tour guides, but that up until the present time the main focus has been on making KWA a viable business.

One important area of Aboriginal engagement with the tourist sector has been through the Arts centres that have been established in some communities. The Warmun Centre has been extremely successful and generates an annual income well in excess of $1 million from the sale of paintings. Most of this money is paid directly to the artists, with the balance being used to cover the centre's costs. It regularly exhibits in galleries in the major cities, but there are also a substantial number of direct sales made. Both individual travellers and tours form a steady flow of visitors through the centre. Some Darwin-based tour operators run specialist art tours in which clients are flown to Warmun and other communities for the sole purpose of purchasing paintings.

Some Aboriginal communities – most notably Warmun and Doon Doon – also obtain an indirect benefit from tourism through the ownership of roadhouses, the construction of which was funded by Argyle. These facilities generate some income for the communities, but only a small number of Aboriginal people are employed at them.

Increasing Aboriginal Involvement in Tourism in the East Kimberley Region: Opportunities and Obstacles

Several people who were interviewed for this study considered that the tourism market would respond favourably to increased involvement by Aboriginal people, in particular for tours and activities that provide an Aboriginal perspective on the landscape. According to a Tourism Western Australia representative, their surveys highlight that a common complaint from tourists visiting the region is that there is no indigenous component in the tours. 'When people go on a tour they hear lots about Aboriginal people and see lots of them, but no one ever gets to meet them. People ask: why is this white tour guide talking about Aboriginal people'.

The Warmun community has expressed an interest in having some involvement with tourism. One suggestion put forward was to establish a caravan park on the road into Purnululu National Park. Additionally, in 2004, as part of the *Steps to Sustainable Tourism Program*, representatives from the initiative's partners spent five days 'on country' with Traditional Owner groups from Warmun to discuss the community's aspirations in relation to involvement in tourism in the Park, and to explain what is involved in running a successful tourism operation. This appears to have been a positive exercise, but apparently has not yet translated into any concrete initiatives.

Various obstacles to increasing Aboriginal involvement in tourism were identified by interviewees. Several people attributed the low rate of Aboriginal participation in the local tourism industry to a lack of interest on the part of local Aboriginal people. However, others said that the issue was more one of reluctance on the part of Aboriginal people to push themselves forward. It was also suggested by several interviewees that local tour operators had been too quick to dismiss Aboriginal people as disinterested or 'not up to it'. One ex-operator said that she had tried unsuccessfully to get an Aboriginal community to provide a stop-off point for a tour. 'There were lots of phone calls and expressions of interest, but too many missed meetings … I just couldn't afford the risk of turning up with a bunch of tourists to find there was nobody there'. Another interviewee involved in the tourism industry commented as follows:

> 'The biggest obstacle is a lack of business experience or an appreciation of what is involved. What happens when there is a bus of German tourists arriving at the same time as there is a funeral in the community? You only need one busload of stranded tourists and that's the end of the show. I don't think that the community has been able to work this one through yet.'

There are some entrepreneurs in the local Aboriginal community who have expressed interest in developing tourism businesses, however, as indicated, the lack of business experience and skills is an issue and, in the past, has contributed to the failure of several ventures. One interviewee observed that Aboriginal people were not good at marketing and that small operations needed to concentrate their efforts on actually delivering the product. It was suggested that a centralised booking and promotional facility would give them more time to do this. Several people also suggested that a process of mentoring needed to be put in place, particularly during the early stages when ventures are being established.

A further, more generalised concern that was raised by interviewees related to ongoing conflicts and disagreements between Aboriginal groups and communities. These were seen to make it difficult to build support for new ventures, particularly where a number of groups were involved.

Several Aboriginal individuals mentioned that an important, if not overriding, issue for the Aboriginal community and Traditional Owners with respect to tourism development, and indeed current visitation and use, involved looking after visitors as well as country. Their comments suggested that the local Aboriginal community had a deep sense of obligation to ensure that 'bad things' did not happen to visitors in what they perceived as an often dangerous and powerful country. Prevention of trouble and a duty of care regarding visitor protection appeared to translate into the communication of some basic information about the country and its origins, history and dangers; the need for sensitivity and respect; and some basic orientation with respect to where a visitor should and should not go. It was clear that being accompanied by an Aboriginal person was viewed as the ideal arrangement. The smoking ceremony currently used in the orientation/induction of new Argyle staff and visitors appears to be, in part, a response to this felt responsibility.

Potential tourism ventures and partnership arrangements that take into account Purnululu and other protected areas, and Aboriginal lands generally, will need to be guided by policies, protocols and advice with respect to such initiatives and arrangements. CALM policy documents addressing these matters include the 2001 revised draft policy statement, *Aboriginal Involvement in Nature Conservation and Land Management* (CALM 2001), and the 2003 discussion paper, *indigenous Ownership and Joint Management of Conservation Lands in Western Australia* (CALM 2003). It is noteworthy that these documents place equal emphasis on recognition of the importance of land to Aboriginal cultural heritage and the promotion of economic, social and environmentally sustainable outcomes. The management and development of national parks also features very strongly in these policy and planning documents. While they auger well for the development of culture and community-based tourism ventures, which might include mine sites, pastoral properties and adjacent protected areas, they clearly assume, promote and indeed mandate the very direct involvement and control of local land-owning groups. Implicit in these documents is the idea that such initiatives and ventures must either come from within the community, reflecting their wishes, aspirations and regional vision, or at least be strongly supported by local communities. It is not at all clear that this situation pertains to the Argyle and Purnululu region of the Kimberley.

Argyle and Aboriginal Tourism

Argyle sees the tourism industry as a potentially significant employer of Aboriginal people, and as one of the key elements of the post-mining economy of the East Kimberleys. The company's immediate priority is to ensure that, in the future, there is Aboriginal involvement in the tours that are conducted at the mine. To this end, Argyle has recently re-negotiated its contracts with local tour operators and has made it clear that in the future it will only do business with those operators that are committed to employing Aboriginal people. Argyle has also indicated that any local Aboriginal tourism business that wants to run tours to the mine will be provided with access 'as a matter of course'. Involving Aboriginal people in the mine tours will not only create additional employment but, just as importantly, it will provide Traditional Owners with the opportunity to inform visitors about the importance of the Argyle site from a cultural and historical perspective, and to discuss what the mine means to local Aboriginal people. Inclusion of such an indigenous perspective would add depth to the mine site tour experience, as well as introducing a valuable educational element to it.

Argyle has also indicated that it is committed to providing training to Aboriginal people to enhance their capacity to work in, and ultimately run, tourism businesses. One way of furthering this objective is to provide Aboriginal people with training and work experience in hospitality-related occupations, which would facilitate their employment in the mainstream tourism industry, at facilities such as resorts and hotels. Argyle operates two large camps (see below) that employ substantial numbers of people in occupations such as cleaning, cooking, bar work and administration. Both camps are managed by Minesite Catering. Argyle's contract encourages this company to employ Aboriginal people, but at present only one Aboriginal person works at the camps, in a front desk role. It was suggested to the authors that one of the barriers to increasing employment in this area involved the camps operating on a three weeks on/one week off basis, which was not attractive to local Aboriginal people. Outside of the mine, Argyle has sponsored two traineeships at the Doon Doon roadhouse, where two local women are receiving training as cooks and kitchen assistants. These trainees also spend some time on-site, working in the camp.

Another way in which Argyle could make a contribution to improving local Aboriginal people's prospects of employment in the tourism industry, is by providing general management skills and training to Aboriginal people who have been identified as having an aptitude in this area. This would not only facilitate their employment in the mainstream tourism industry, but would also help to build the skills base necessary to establish viable Aboriginal tourism ventures. At this stage, most of Argyle's training efforts are still focused on non-managerial occupations, but it is understood that managerial training will become a higher priority in the future.

A further training opportunity involves Argyle partnering with CALM to train Aboriginal rangers to work in Purnululu and other parks in the area (such as Mirima National Park adjacent to Kununurra). This option is currently being explored by Argyle.

Utilisation of the Camp and Associated Infrastructure

A longer-term, 'big picture' opportunity currently being considered by Argyle, involves the conversion of the main camp into a tourist resort once it is no longer required for Argyle employees. From the company's perspective, this option is only worth pursuing if it leads to significant Aboriginal participation in the actual operation of the facility. Ideally, the resort would be managed by Aboriginal people, but it is understood that this would probably not be achievable in the short to medium term and that an experienced resort operator would need to be included as a partner. The perceived benefits of establishing such a resort include:

- Providing Aboriginal people with direct employment in hospitality and related occupations at the resort itself;
- Stimulating ancillary businesses associated with the resort (e.g. tours from the resort, cultural performances, and the sale of paintings and artefacts);
- Providing a context and structure in which Aboriginal people could welcome people to country and share their knowledge of the area, thereby reinforcing the connection of Aboriginal people with the land; and
- Bringing high-spending tourists into the area who may then spend money and access tourist services in surrounding communities (e.g. Warmun).

  The basis for marketing the resort would include:

- The physical aspect of the camp itself (see below);
- The location of Argyle mid-way between Kununurra and Purnululu National Park;
- Proximity to a high-quality airstrip;
- Access to Lake Argyle;
- The recreational activities in the surrounding area (e.g. horse rides and walks); and
- As a stop in a Darwin/Kimberelys/Broome tour package.

  One suggestion is that the resort should aim for the upper end of the market – or people who are prepared to pay $300 or more per night – however, this requires further investigation to ascertain whether there would be sufficient demand. The focus would probably be on pre-sold packages rather than 'walk-ins', as it is too difficult to manage a resort (especially one in a remote location) when numbers are unpredictable. Another option would be to provide multiple levels of accommodation (following the El Questro model) and utilise the Wandarrie Hill campsite for budget accommodation. This would not be feasible while the mine was still operational.

  With the underground extension now proceeding, the main camp could become available by about 2013, which is when the workforce associated with the new operation will have peaked and it should be possible to accommodate the entire mine workforce at Wandarrie Hill.

  Under this scenario, the camp would be transferred while the mining operation was still running. This would defer the need to deal with some infrastructure issues such as the airport, water supply and wastewater treatment (see below) and give the business more time to become established. There would also be more time for the regional infrastructure to be developed. The main disadvantages of a 2013 or beyond handover are that:

- The infrastructure will have aged further by then, which is likely to mean increased maintenance and replacement costs unless Argyle undertakes refurbishment prior to hand over; and
- There will be more opportunities for other businesses to start-up and fill the niche that the Argyle development is likely to be aiming for (e.g. the redevelopment of the Lake Argyle resort).

The Camps

There are two residential camps servicing the Argyle mine: Wandarrie Hill, which is mainly used to accommodate contractors, and the main camp, which is about 20 minutes drive away (refer Plate 6 following). The main camp, which primarily houses Argyle employees, was built in the 1980s. The central buildings – including the dining room and bar – are of resort standard with good recreational facilities, including a full-sized swimming pool, tennis court, gym and squash court. The camp is situated on the side of a hill and provides excellent views over the surrounding area. Accommodation is in basic, motel-style units that have en suites and small kitchenettes. There are views from the units, but little has been done to take advantage of this in their design. There is a small concrete area in front of each unit where people could potentially sit outside, but this is not an attractive space at present. The rooms are small and in need of refurbishment and there is no landscaping around them. It was originally intended that the mine would close in 2002, so spending on maintenance ceased some time prior to this.

  Argyle personnel acknowledge that, if the camp was to be converted into a tourist facility, the rooms would need to be enlarged and redesigned (e.g. by adding a deck). The cost of this has not been calculated, but at the very least would require an investment of several million dollars. One of the factors that will impact on refurbishment costs is whether the resort is pitched at the upper or middle ends of the market.

Plate 6: Accommodation quarters at the main Argyle camp
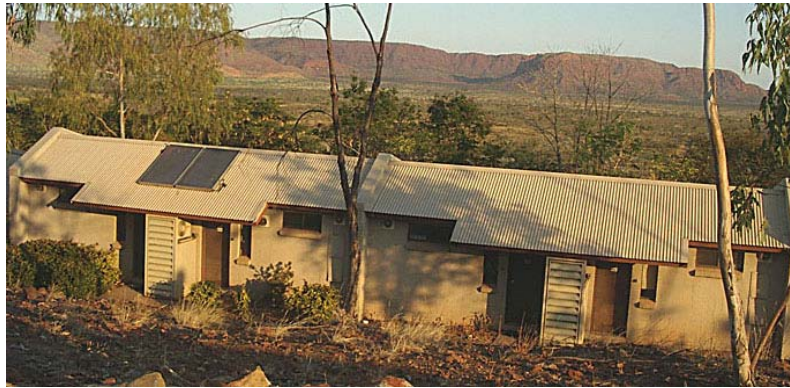
SOURCE: Photograph taken by David Brereton, CSRM, August 2004

The Wandarrie Hill facility mainly consists of demountables and provides a very basic standard of accommodation. Many of the rooms do not have en suites. There is a good sized swimming pool, tennis court, gym and indoor cricket court. Landscaping is good, with extensive grassy areas. As indicated, the core buildings of this facility could possibly be used as the basis for a budget tourist facility offering camping and cabin-style accommodation (although many of the units are probably too basic even for budget travellers). At this stage, there are no plans to utilise the camp in this way.

Roads

There are good, sealed roads on the lease between the camps, the airport and the mine site. There is a 12 kilometre unsealed road between the mine gate and the Great Northern Highway. This is in good condition and is regularly graded. The road is designed to be all-weather, but there are a few days each year when it is impassable. Argyle currently bears the cost of maintenance, but the road is not on the lease. Responsibility for maintenance would presumably revert to the Shire upon closure of the mine. An issue with the road is that hire-car companies do not insure two-wheel drive cars for travel on unsealed roads; this could be a deterrent to some tourists driving in to the site.

There is an unsealed road from the mine to the lake (distance of about 25 km) but this access route is currently closed. The road is passable by a two-wheel vehicle in the dry season but requires a 4WD in the wet. Access to the lake would add substantially to the marketability of the proposed resort; however, because the southern end of the Lake has been designated as a Ramsar site[18], obtaining approval from CALM for access to this area could be difficult.

Access to Purnululu

Advice from CALM is that the department is planning to leave the existing road into Purnululu National Park essentially as it is, but to 'modestly' upgrade other roads within the park. It is likely that CALM will also set a load limit on buses to reduce the wear rate on the road. This is likely to make access more difficult in the future, particularly as there is also a proposal to put a cap on the number of overnight visitors. However, a longer-term option being considered is to develop a new road into the north of the park through Texas Downs. This would provide a major advantage to a resort based at Argyle, as it would become feasible for those staying at the resort to access the park for day visits.

The Airport

The airport is able to take passenger jets. Currently, Argyle uses F100s, but has used 737s in the past. It has the navigation equipment required to support night landings. The airport facility includes an air-conditioned terminal. The overall standard of the facility is considerably above that of Kununurra.

Under Argyle's agreement with the state government, the airport is to revert to the state upon closure. However, at this stage it is unclear whether the state would be interested in taking over the facility. If it did not

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18 'The Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971 (more commonly known as the Ramsar Convention) is an intergovernmental treaty dedicated to the conservation and 'wise use' of wetlands. The Convention's mission is: 'the conservation and wise use of wetlands by national action and international cooperation as a means to achieving sustainable development throughout the world... The Convention encourages the designation of sites containing representative, rare or unique wetland types, or that are important for conserving biological diversity to the List of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites). These sites need to be managed to ensure their special ecological values are maintained or improved... Australia was one of the first countries to become a Contracting Party to the Convention and designated the world's first Wetland of International Importance, Cobourg Peninsula Aboriginal Land and Wildlife Sanctuary, in 1974... Australia currently has 64 Wetlands of International Importance which cover a total of approximately 7.3 million hectares. Australia seeks to protect these wetlands through a range of activities including appropriate legislation and policy frameworks, development and implementation of site management plans, and community education and awareness programs' (DEH 2004a).

want it, the facility would have to be removed unless some other interested party could be found to operate it. Most interviewees considered that a resort on the Argyle site would not be a viable option unless the airport was retained. It would enable quick access from other regional centres such as Kununurra and Broome, and possibly international entry ports such as Darwin and Perth. In addition, it could provide a base for scenic flights over the adjoining area.

Future operating costs for the airport would depend on the level to which it is licensed. If it were to be used only for smaller planes and restricted to daytime landings, the costs would be considerably lower. There would be substantial ongoing maintenance costs (e.g. surface sealing and perimeter fencing) to cover but these would be reduced if lighter planes were used.

The airport is located several kilometres from the main camp, so if guests were to be flown in, it would be necessary to have buses or other land transport to move them around.

Other Infrastructure

Power is provided to the site from an overland power line from the Ord River Dam Hydro Scheme. Construction of this power station was funded by Argyle. There are also large diesel-powered generators on-site to provide back-up power. If a resort was to be established, it would eventually need to construct its own back-up facility, as the current generators will be removed at the closure of the mine. It would also be necessary to relocate the substation, as it is currently situated at the mine site and would also be dismantled.

Water is supplied through a pipeline from Lake Argyle. The great bulk of the water that is brought to the mine is used in the processing plant rather than by the villages. It is possible that these pipes are over-engineered for a resort, as they are designed to carry much larger volumes than it would require.

There is an existing water treatment plant, and also an on-site sewerage processing plant. No information was obtained about the current state of these facilities and the likely future maintenance and replacement costs they would generate. However, advice from Argyle logistics personnel was that it would probably be necessary to employ a couple of engineers to keep the power and water running at the resort.

Also, once the mine is closed, a separate dangerous goods storage facility would have to be established for the chemicals used in the treatment plant, as these materials are currently stored at the mine.

The Pit and Surrounds

At the conclusion of mine operations, the pit and surrounding rock dumps will be stabilised and fenced off. A resort would bring a lot more people into the area than would otherwise be there, particularly if road access off the highway was provided. This would increase the risk of people getting into the mine area and exposing themselves to danger. Hence, maintaining effective perimeter security will be crucial. If a resort was established while the mine was still operating, this would present further security and safety issues, given the use of explosives and heavy equipment during mining and the substantial amount of general traffic generated by a large mining operation.

Summary of Issues

Although the concept of converting the Argyle camp into a tourist resort has initial substantial appeal, there are a number of practical issues that need to be addressed to enable the opportunity to be realised. Firstly, although much of the required infrastructure is already in place, there would be very substantial costs (in the millions of dollars) involved in modifying and upgrading the buildings and support infrastructure. There would also be significant ongoing maintenance and operating costs involved, not only of the plant and buildings, but also of the airport and roads. Secondly, it is not clear whether a large-scale resort at this location would attract sufficient visitor numbers to make it economically viable, particularly given the constraints of distance and the shortness of the tourist season. Even those who are optimistic about the proposal acknowledge that such an operation is unlikely to be very profitable and would need some underwriting to break even. If it could be shown that the resort would generate substantial social and economic benefits for local Aboriginal people, such as increased employment and a heightened demand for art and cultural 'products', a case could be made for the government to subsidise the project. However, this in turn raises a number of complex policy issues that require further exploration. Thirdly, the level of interest of Aboriginal people themselves in being involved in such an enterprise – particularly as active participants – is yet to be determined. Issues about the future use of the mine site and associated infrastructure received some consideration in negotiations around the Participation Agreement, but as yet there has not been any detailed exploration of this option. A further complication here is that, under the state agreement that established Argyle, all infrastructure technically reverts to the state, so government approval would be required before Argyle could transfer it to the Traditional Owners. Finally, the viability of the proposed resort may also be affected by decisions that are made about the future management of Purnululu National Park, the major attraction in the area, and the southern end of Lake Argyle.

Conclusion

In summary, there are a range of opportunities at Argyle to assist both Aboriginal tourism ventures and Aboriginal involvement in the mainstream tourism industry. The opportunity that can be realised most easily in the short-term is to ensure that there is Aboriginal involvement in the tours that are currently conducted of the mine. There are also good opportunities for Argyle to support training in tourism-related occupations and to partner with CALM in the training of Aboriginal rangers. In the longer-term, there is some potential to utilise the mine camp and its associated infrastructure to establish a tourist resort, with Aboriginal participation in owning and operating it. However, there are significant obstacles that need to be addressed in order to give practical effect to this concept.

Table 10: Profile of the Argyle mine

PROFILE ELEMENTS	ARGYLE MINE DETAILS
Location	East Kimberley Region: 110 km South of Kununurra
Latitude/Longitude	16.714°S / 128.384°E
Commodity	Diamonds
Company	Rio Tinto
Mine Life	2024.
Operations	Mine and processing facility.
Type of Operation	Open cut
Size of Operation	Large: 800 employees
Commuting Type	Fly in fly out; increasing amount of drive-in drive out from Kununurra.
Mine Infrastructure	Airstrip, mine camp, Wandarrie contractors camp.
Current Aboriginal agreement	Argyle Participation Agreement 2005.
Key Features of Agreement	Key aspects of the agreement include: • Provide preferential training and preferential employment for Traditional Owners, with the aim of increasing the proportion of indigenous employees at the mine to 40%. • Provide business development support and preferential contracting with Traditional Owners and require all business tenders for Argyle contracts over $250,000 to indicate how they will benefit Traditional Owners. • Require all employees and contractors to attend cross-cultural training. • Provide financial benefits to Traditional Owners and local communities. • Transfer the grazing lease to Traditional Owners and support conversion to freehold after the cessation of mining. • Consult with Traditional Owners on land management. • Give Traditional Owners access to the mine lease area. • Consult with Traditional Owners on a decommissioning plan for the mine. If a suitable business case can be made, mine assets (for example, the airstrip, or Argyle Village) will be transferred from Argyle to Traditional Owners (subject to agreement by the state government).
Does the Mine have a Tourism Enterprise in Place?	The mine allows tours of the site; these are conducted by approved private operators.
Company Website	Argyle: http://www.argylediamonds.com.au/
Local Government Website	Shire of Wyndham: http://www.thelastfrontier.com.au/index.html

Table 11: Aboriginal community details for the Argyle mine locale

COMMUNITY ELEMENTS	ARGYLE LOCALE DETAILS
Traditional Owners	Gidga, Mirriuwung, Malgnin, and Woolah peoples.
Communities	Warmun, Doom Doom, Glen Hill, Lissadell, Kununurra, Halls Creek.
Indigenous Population of Region	5201 (2001 Census results for Ord SSD Region, which includes Halls Creek, ABS 2002c).
Indigenous Population at Closest Townships	Kununurra (>500), Wyndham (>500), Halls Creek (>500), Warmun (100-500), Ningbingi Ningguwung (100-500), Oombulgurri (100–500), Marralum (<100), Woolah (<100), Mabel Downs (<100), Mandangala (<100), Lumboo Creek (<100), Lundja (<100) & Bow River (<100). (Indigenous populations taken from ATSIC 1999c).
Proximity of Nearest Communities to Mine (by road)	Approx. distances: Warmun 50 km, Doom Doom 70 km, Kununurra 170 km, Halls Creek 200 km.
Relevant Land Council	Kimberley Land Council
Mining / Community Engagement Activities	• Argyle has set up education, employment and training and business development programs in conjunction with local Aboriginal communities. • A new Agreement with Traditional Owners has recently been finalised (see above).
Size of Pool of Aboriginal Labour for Enterprise	Estimated at 1400 in 2001 (Taylor 2003).
Potential for Small-scale indigenous Tourism	Good potential for small tours, etc.
Potential for Large-scale indigenous Tourism	Some potential to use the main Argyle Camp as the basis for a tourist centre upon closure of the mine.
Community Experiences with Tourism	Extremely limited.
Degree of Motivation and Commitment within Community to Engage in Tourism	Uncertain, although some individuals have indicated interest.

Table 12: Tourism details for the Argyle mine locale

TOURISM ELEMENTS	ARGYLE LOCALE DETAILS
Australian Heritage Sites	Purnululu (Bungle Bungles) National Park.
Tourist Attractions	Lake Argyle, Argyle Diamond Mine.
Environmental Features	Scenic landscapes and formations, National Parks, wildlife and birdlife, agriculture, Lake Argyle, Bungle Bungles, Cathedral Gorge, King George Falls, Mitchell Falls, Piccaninny Creek, Ord River, Mitchell Plateau.
Tourism Associations	Western Australia Tourism Commission.
Current Tourism Operators (as of August 2004)	Belray Diamond Tours, Alligator Airways, Slingair Heliwork, Kimberley Dreams, Arnie's Fishing Adventure, Desert Inn 4WD Adventure, Argyle Expeditions, Ultimate Adventures, Lake Argyle Cruises, Red Rock Art, Triple J Tours, Kimberley Wilderness Adventures. Bungle Bungle Adventures, East Kimberley Tours, Luridgii Aboriginal Eco-Cultural tours, El Questro Resort.
Tourist Activities in the Region	Lake Argyle Tourist Village, mine tours, canoeing, hiking, bird watching, wildlife safaris, river cruises, scenic flights, fishing trips/safaris, diving, Aboriginal heritage/cultural tours, day and camping tours, 4WD tours, Aboriginal missions (Kalumburu), historic sites (Drysdale Station, Durack Homestead), Aboriginal art gallery, rock art, canoe safaris, abseiling, sailing, kayaking, water skiing.
Cultural Features	More than 106 Aboriginal Sites of Significance identified in Lake Argyle area.
Existing Aboriginal Tourism Enterprise	Luridgii Aboriginal Eco-Cultural tours.
Is Existing Tourism Enterprise on Aboriginal Land?	Tours are conducted out of Kununurra but go on to traditional lands.
Local Infrastructure to Support Tourism	There are a range of accommodation facilities and tourist services in Kununurra.

Cultural / Environmental Considerations	• Purnululu requires low-impact tourism/visitation due to fragile nature of sandstone formations and increasing numbers of tourists to the area (currently 22,000/annum). • Certain areas contain burials and rock art. • Impact on surrounding environment (vegetation and water) from increasing visitation and traffic, introduced plant and animal species, uncontrolled stock, waste and pollution.
Other Information	• Lake Argyle currently attractions 50,000 visitors/yr, most arrive from bus tours or self-drive market. • Majority of tours visit during dry season (May-Oct).

Chapter 8

FINAL DISCUSSION: REVISITING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The aim of this report was to conduct an initial exploration of the opportunities available to mining companies and Aboriginal communities interested in utilising mine infrastructure to support indigenous tourism ventures in northern Australia. Chapters 2 to 4 described the history of indigenous tourism in Australia and the key points around which debate has focused in regards to its potential impact on communities, as well as the current position of the mining industry in relation to facilitating indigenous tourism ventures. These chapters also discussed the various ways in which mining infrastructure can be used to assist indigenous tourism ventures, and considered the interrelationship between mining interests, indigenous people and protected areas. These leading chapters have collectively outlined many of the issues involved in encouraging a sustainable relationship between indigenous enterprise and mining within the tourism economy. The subsequent three chapters documented the three case studies that were undertaken, detailing their unique features as well as the common attributes.

The discussion that follows in this chapter will be structured around addressing the seven key research questions listed in the report's Introduction. This format allows for a comparative examination of the case studies and provides a framework for developing recommendations for future action. These are listed at the end of the chapter according to the audience they are intended to assist.

What natural and cultural sites/activities exist in mining areas that could attract tourism?

The study has described a number of cultural and natural sites and activities that would attract a range of different types of tourists to mining areas in northern Australia. A considerable number of mining operations established during the post-1960s expansion of the industry are on, or close to, Aboriginal land or communities as well as natural pristine wilderness (some of which are national parks or World Heritage Areas). Each of the case studies adheres to this pattern. Weipa Bauxite Mine (Case Study 1) is situated on the western part of Cape York Peninsula, near to such Aboriginal communities as Napranum, Aurukun and Mapoon, and in the centre of an area described as one of Australia's last pristine and remote wildernesses and as being rich in indigenous cultural heritage. The region in which the Century Mine (Case Study 2) is located, in North West Queensland near to the Gulf of Carpentaria coast, supports a number of significant Aboriginal populations centred at Bidungu Outstation, Doomadgee, Mungabayi (Burketown) and Gununa on Mornington Island. The Gulf's most notable tourist attractions include Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park and Miyumba (Riversleigh) World Heritage Area. Also, the region is bisected by the Savannah Way, a 'themed tourism adventure drive' linking Cairns to Broome. And finally, Argyle Diamond Mine (Case Study 3), in the Northern East Kimberley Region of Western Australia, is situated in an area featuring some spectacular natural and man-made attractions, including the World Heritage-listed Purnululu National Park (previously the Bungle Bungles) and Lake Argyle.

There are multiple potential advantages in establishing an indigenous tourism initiative near a mining operation and a prominent national park and/or World Heritage Area. For instance, there is clear value in being near an attraction that is already known and promoted and, in most cases provides some existing infrastructure for visitors. The situation also presents opportunities for indigenous perspectives on land and sea management to be presented, and takes the pressure off Aboriginal land with regard to tourist accommodation and recreation areas. However, Case Study 2 (Century Mine) revealed the tensions that can arise when protected areas are themselves poorly funded and local park officials are wary of increased visitor numbers stretching their resources.

Where mines, indigenous communities and protected areas are proximate to each other, the local Traditional Owners communities are often important land owners and/or managers in their own right, often with a pastoral company or holding adjacent to or surrounding the mine site or protected area. This presents a unique opportunity for visitors to experience a spectrum of environmental management regimes: ranging from protected area management in the face of steadily increasing visitor numbers; to the challenges of operating a world class and environmentally responsible mining operation; to the operations of a contemporary cattle station, owned and operated by its Traditional Owners. Local indigenous tourism operations could potentially incorporate a number of cultural tourism components as an integral part of any tourism package devised for the area, further providing visitors with a rich and integrated interpretation of the natural and cultural heritage of the areas being visited.

The study has also confirmed that a growing industrial heritage tourism movement exists, featuring attractions such as museums, theme parks and gemstone hunting tours. There also exists considerable opportunity to provide an indigenous perspective on mining and what it has meant for various regions. While mining activities and nature tourism have generally been viewed as conflicting economic activities, there is scope to change this in a way that would appeal to nature tourists, with the mining operation providing additional geological and geomorphological components to the tourist experience of the landscape. In the case of the Century Mine (Case Study 2), for example, the open cut mine provides such a complementary perspective on the unique fossil record and landscape of Riversleigh, while an indigenous cultural component would provide the perspective of a culture present in the area for the last 60 000 years. Such a combination could feasibly be made part of an enormously appealing and internationally unique tourism package.

All indigenous tourism ventures, even small-scale ones, must be viewed within the wider context of a particular region's tourism market and its products. Also, their potential to contribute some unique quality to the larger package being offered by current tourism operators must be carefully examined. For example, indigenous perspectives on post-contact history could be presented to some tourists and thereby embellish the general public's conception of living cultures that have been present in Australia for a great span of time.

How has mining infrastructure been used and in what other ways can it be used by indigenous communities for tourism activities?

The answer to these questions (and also the next, which considers cooperation between the indigenous and mining sectors) must be prefaced by a brief summary of how the relationship between mining operations and Aboriginal communities has developed since the 1960s, and what is meant by the term 'mining infrastructure'. Most of the larger mining companies with operations in northern Australia are now formally committed to development that minimises negative impacts and promotes outcomes mutually beneficial to their operations and indigenous communities. The increased willingness of mining companies to engage with Aboriginal communities is a response not only to the impact of legal developments in Australian indigenous relations, such as Native Title legislation, but also to broader philosophical changes taking place within the industry and society.

Mining companies have recently come under strong pressure from diverse sources to improve their environmental and social performance. In recognition of the economic impacts that mine closures can have on surrounding communities, mining operations are being pushed to adopt a 'whole of mine life' approach to mine closure. They are also being encouraged to leave a positive 'post-mine legacy' to militate against the 'boom and bust cycles' experienced by the surrounding community economies. Illustrative of this point was the adoption in mid-2003 of a sustainable development framework by the global peak industry association, the International Council of Mines and Metals (ICMM). All member companies of Australia's peak mining body, the MCA will be required to commit to this framework. In parallel to – or, in some cases, preceding – these developments at the industry level, most of the larger mining companies have also adopted company-specific policy statements that emphasise their commitment to sustainable development principles.

These developments have created an environment in which mining concerns are increasingly focusing on how they can provide long term economic and social benefits to Aboriginal communities affected by their business. Given the remoteness of many of these communities and their lack of natural economic advantages, supporting the development of sustainable tourism ventures may be one of the best ways of doing this. Successful mining operations are significant economic drivers in remote regions, which is why governments promote their contribution to the development or upgrade of supporting regional infrastructure, the size and scale of which may not otherwise be realised in these localities.

Some Aboriginal communities have been able to negotiate directly with mining companies about mining developments through indigenous Land Use Agreements. These are vehicles through which Aboriginal lands and cultural sites can be legally protected and a range of economic schemes can be established to assist local indigenous people. Case Study 2 (Century Mine) and the Gulf Communities Agreement negotiated as part of its development provides an example of how such a mechanism can work. However, to date these agreements have generally not focused specifically on the provision of support for indigenous tourism ventures.

The term 'mining infrastructure' refers to those systems and services that a mine operation requires to work effectively: from power and water supply and mining equipment through to *soft* infrastructure requirements, such as logistical transport support and training provisions for mining employees. There are ongoing opportunities for local communities to benefit from mining infrastructure during the operational phase of a mine. In this sense, mining infrastructure can assist in providing the basic platform upon which to make Aboriginal tourism initiatives viable. This study found a clear overlap between mining-related and tourism-related infrastructure requirements (refer to Chapter 3 and Table 3). While transfer of *hard* infrastructure types can be more complicated, provision of *soft* infrastructure such as training and business support during the life of a mine

is a significant arena in which mining operations can contribute to indigenous tourism ventures, particularly as shortfalls in these capacities are often what makes it so difficult for such enterprises to get started and succeed.

The case studies revealed different possibilities in relation to whether the mines in question could provide either hard or soft infrastructure support to potential ventures. Century Mine (Case Study 2) was found to be supportive of the development of local Aboriginal tourism enterprises, placing greater emphasis on supporting local business opportunities and building local capacity as the mine may close within twelve years. One scheme that was being developed provided an instructive example. Century was facilitating the development of an Aboriginal tour venture involving seats being made available on certain chartered flights to and from Townsville. It was hoped this would prolong the tourist season during the wet season and help diversify the Gulf's current tourism market by catering for its short-term, higher spending end. Improvements to the tour facilities at the mine would likely add value to the visitor experience. Century was found to view itself more as a facilitator than a joint venture partner in this initiative. The provision of employment and training for local Aboriginal people was part of Century's GCA requirements. Employment and training within hospitality-related areas of the mine were viewed as most conducive to building quality service delivery capacity.

Argyle Diamond Mine (Case Study 3) offered a wider range of hard infrastructure possibilities to local Aboriginal individuals and groups interested in developing tourism enterprises. With regards to *soft* infrastructure, Argyle had taken concrete steps to ensure a commitment to employing Aboriginal people was demonstrated during a recent contract negotiation process undertaken with companies operating its mine tours. The company also indicated that it was committed to training Aboriginal people to enhance their capacity to engage in tourism businesses by providing work in its large employee camps. In terms of hard infrastructure, a 'goodwill agreement' between Argyle and the area's Traditional Owners was entered into in 2004 requiring the company to consult them before disposing of any infrastructure. This linked into a longer term option being considered within Argyle to convert its main camp to a tourist resort when no longer required to house mine employees. However, a number of practical issues would have to be addressed before such a plan could be realised. These include the size of the capital investment required to modify and upgrade existing infrastructure, as well as maintain these facilities in the future; the economic viability of such a venture, and the level of interest and capacity existing within local Aboriginal communities. A further complicating issue is the effect of future management decisions regarding Purnululu National Park, the area's major wilderness attraction.

The Weipa Multi-Purpose Facility (Case Study 1), which was developed from mine employee accommodation built in the early 1970s, provides an instructive example of how hard infrastructure exchanges can occur between indigenous tourism ventures and mining companies. This process was being conducted by the Malaruch Aboriginal Corporation with the technical and financial support of Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation P/L. When completed, at a cost of nine million dollars, the facility will house four complementary mini businesses: a secondary school hostel, a training coordination centre, a general accommodation unit and a catering business. In the future, tourists would be accommodated and service to them would provide training for Western Cape College students.

In summary, the study found that while the use of hard infrastructure presents numerous exciting possibilities for tourism schemes, the transfer of such things as training and relevant employment experience to members of the local indigenous communities are also vital to increasing the capacity of these communities to engage in such endeavours.

Are indigenous communities and mining companies willing to co-operate on such projects?

Historically, the antagonistic relationship between mining companies, indigenous people and environmentalists has derived from divergent values associated with 'country' or landscapes. This was exemplified in such protracted disagreements as the one between Energy Resources of Australia's Ranger uranium mine, members of Traditional Owner groups and supporters of Kakadu National Park, which surrounds the mining operation. As discussed in the previous section this situation has changed somewhat, particularly as the attitudes and practices of mining companies have evolved. Negative impacts can be avoided or reduced and positive ones planned for through Social Impact Assessments (SIAs) and indigenous Land Use Agreements. Unfortunately, SIAs have often been conducted only to satisfy regulations and may have lacked any concrete commitment to providing positive outcomes for indigenous people.

This study clearly shows that some large mining operations in northern Australia were keen to see indigenous tourism succeed using their assistance. Case Study No. 3 (Argyle Diamond mine) provided a good example of how even very strained relations can be improved over time and with effort. In the late 1970s, when the development of the mine was first suggested, Traditional Owners were strongly opposed. Their objections were founded in a number of concerns; first the likely destruction of an important sacred site, and second how a large resource development might impact on the region's Aboriginal population. A series of agreements of limited scope were made with Traditional Owner groups, but the mine's operations and the circumstances under which it

was established have continued to be controversial. Argyle began reviewing its relations with Traditional Owners in 2001 and finalised a comprehensive 'goodwill agreement' with them in 2004. All Rio Tinto operations were required to prepare rolling Five Year Community Plans and Argyle's had a strong focus on regional development and Aboriginal employment and training. In terms of employment, Argyle has set specific targets for the Aboriginal component of its workforce, however there are still few local Aboriginal people employed there. Argyle made similar commitments to training. An 'increase ceremony' recently held to bring the diamonds closer to the surface, manifested the improving relationship between Argyle and Traditional Owners and suggested an unprecedented and very positive working relationship with the local Aboriginal community.

The development of Century Mine (Case Study 2) was also contentious, being initially met with vocal opposition from significant segments of the Gulf's Aboriginal communities. The owners of the mine opted to pursue Native Title negotiations with the relevant Traditional Owners and the resulting Gulf Communities Agreement (GCA) was eventually endorsed in 1997. Evidence that relations remained strained between parties was provided by a sit-in held at the mine site in November 2002 by over 40 local Aboriginal people. However, more recently there was enthusiasm on both sides for starting a tourism venture, although few Aboriginal people had made any substantive moves.

The establishment of Weipa's Bauxite Mine (Case Study 1) initiated the negotiation and signing of the Comalco ILUA in 1997 between Comalco, eleven Traditional Owner groups, four Councils from surrounding Aboriginal communities, the Cape York Land Council and the Queensland Government. It committed all parties to improving Aboriginal economic opportunities through training, education and employment, as well as supporting cultural continuity. A Coordinating Committee and four Trusts managed the Agreement. This study found that Comalco was enthusiastic about the local economy diversifying to ensure its life after the mine, and it was particularly interested in encouraging indigenous involvement in local tourism, as long as any initiative using mine infrastructure did not interrupt mine work.

A serious consideration with regard to how motivated and interested Aboriginal individuals and groups are to cooperate with mining companies in tourism ventures has to be the level of motivation across indigenous communities to become involved in such ventures. In the three case study areas few Aboriginal people or groups were directly involved in the relevant tourism industries or operated related businesses, notwithstanding that Aboriginal people represent a greater proportion of the general population than in other parts of Australia, and own, or will own, significant amounts of land. However, this apparent lack of motivation and interest may well reflect a widespread perception that such an undertaking involves innumerable problems, that it would take a substantial amount of start-up capital, and that the negotiations with multiple indigenous communities, agencies, and other stakeholders required by such an exercise are simply not worth the effort. Clearly the enlightened solution would be to adopt a community development approach and assess whether there is a genuine desire and commitment within the relevant Aboriginal communities to embark on such an undertaking.

How might the potential for local or regional tourism develop in such a partnership?

Chapter 4 discusses protected areas and the complexities involved in partnerships between indigenous tourism enterprises, mining companies, and national park and World Heritage area management agencies. Such joint undertakings bring together multiple environmental protection and management issues, concerns, legislative acts, as well as federal, state, regional and local government policies, mandates and responsibilities. Working partnerships between all these players can ensure that strong land management links are established across larger catchments, including Aboriginal lands, mining reserves, and designated protected areas. Such partnership arrangements also foster a very useful exchange of information, best practice, and management policies and procedures across these management areas. Responding accordingly to these elements is essential but also a daunting prospect. A substantial body of information and expertise in the form of guidelines and protocols is readily available (See Appendix B). However, these guidelines do not and cannot address the specific challenges and complexities involved in the case of more modest indigenous tourism initiatives.

How developed is the existing tourism industry, market and infrastructure in remote regions?

The answer to this question has direct bearing on the potential for success of any indigenous tourism venture. The case studies revealed that remoteness plays a key part in any difficulties experienced by tourism operations, but coupled with a unique setting, it is also part of what attracts tourists to northern Australia. Surveys have shown that increasing numbers of people are seeking nature-based holiday experiences, and it is really only over the last ten to twenty years that such trends have begun to gather strength.

Of the three case studies, the operation located within the most established tourism industry precinct was the Argyle Diamond Mine (Case Study 3). Its region is already a vital tourist destination featuring attractions such as Lake Argyle, the Purnululu and Keep River National Parks and the general wilderness experience. The mine conducted well-attended guided tours of its operations, for which a larger market existed than the company was willing to allow on-site, due to concerns about disruption to work. A varied market, ranging from independent travellers with their own 4WDs to members of luxury package tours, was interested in the region. The mine was close to the substantial tourism centre of Kununurra, where most of the region's accommodation was centred. Sealed main roads connected all of the towns in the region but access to many of the scenic areas, such as Purnululu, was by 4WD only. Nearby was the juncture of two 'Heritage Highways', the Savannah Way and Great Northern Highway. Kununurra has an airstrip, which was important as there were a significant number of tourists flying in. These situational factors would seem to augur well for a successful indigenous tourism venture.

Available demographic data indicate that very similar numbers of people holiday in the Wyndham/East Kimberley region as is the case in the Gulf of Carpentaria, where the Century Mine case study was located. A range of activities attracted these tourists, in particular fishing and the opportunity to visit a number of unique protected areas. Some package tours provided for short-stay or day-trippers arriving by coach or light plane, however most visitors drove their own vehicles during the dry season when roads were passable. The tourist market dominating the towns of this region comprised 'grey nomads' who stayed for extended periods and increased the demand for infrastructure and services by 25 to 30%. The landscape of the region changed dramatically through the seasons and between the interior highlands and the coast, and travelling through it was considered to be an integral part of the visitor experience. Proximate to the Century Mine, the main tourist accommodation was provided by a multi-purpose camping and caravan park on a large block of freehold land. Also scattered throughout the Gulf were various lodges, campsites, roadhouses and farmstays. There were also several fishing lodges on various islands of the Wellesley Group, which had their own small, private airstrips. Normanton and Karumba, being larger towns, offered comparatively a wider range of accommodation such as motels, hotels and caravan parks.

Of the three case studies, Weipa Mine was located within the least developed regional tourist industry context but in some ways it was judged to have the most potential for expansion to the direct benefit of Aboriginal people in the area. There were no proximate protected areas – its environmental attractions being on land very largely controlled by Aboriginal people and their communities, or soon to be so – and these communities controlled who visited. Many of the region's visitors came to experience its natural beauty and engage in fishing, hunting and adventure tours. Slightly fewer numbers visited this area yearly than did the preceding case study regions. The busiest tourist market for the mine and its vicinity was self-driven 4WDers, however, they spent little on a daily basis and were judged to have little interest in indigenous tourism. The air-borne market stayed for less time but spent more daily and were considered to be a more enthusiastic market for the kinds of ventures offered by indigenous tourism. The study identified a need for more tourist accommodation in Weipa, without which small businesses could not be established.

Both Case Studies 2 and 3 revealed that the relevant national parks and World Heritage Areas were under-resourced with regard to accommodation, service infrastructure and staff. All relevant interviewees were cautious about the prospect of increasing visitor numbers. For example, notwithstanding intensifying promotion by the tourism industry and the West Australian Government in recent years, Purnululu has very limited facilities. Despite there being considerable infrastructure development and improvement underway, the government's aims were very selective with regard to numbers entering the precinct.

As noted above, all the case studies revealed that there was very little direct involvement of Aboriginal people in local tourism businesses. Most of the tour operators did not employ any Aboriginal people and there were very few Aboriginal owned or operated enterprises. Nevertheless low key, individual or family-run enterprises did appear to have operated and then gone out of business in some of the study areas. One important area of constant Aboriginal engagement with the tourist sector was through the arts centres that have been established in some communities.

Is there sufficient demand for the type of tourism product to be offered by indigenous communities?

The term indigenous tourism can encompass a range of things, from ownership of a business catering to tourists, to the production of goods for sale to tourists and joint ventures involving any of the above elements, as well as the simple employment of indigenous people in the industry. Overall, the number of indigenous tourism enterprises had steadily increased over the past decade. It also found evidence that the demand for indigenous cultural tourism products and experiences was not being fully met. Largely the indigenous tourism market was composed of international visitors from Western countries who wished to experience indigenous art and culture while in Australia, in particular by meeting indigenous Australians. Over a third of international visitors who had

an indigenous tourism experience reported that they would have preferred more indigenous cultural experiences, including interaction with Aboriginal people, the viewing of cave paintings and rock art sites, or seeing a cultural performance. Authenticity was rated an important part of the experience. In recognition of this level of demand the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Industry Strategy* was outlined in 1997 to guide a coordinated approach. Since its release, organisations such as Aboriginal Tourism Australia, indigenous Business Australia and the indigenous Tourism Network have been formed to support, represent and encourage Aboriginal tourism development.

There has been considerable discussion of 'cultural tourism' over the past decade, both in Australia and internationally (McKercher & du Cros 2002; Robinson 2004; Uzzell & Ballantyne 1998; Walle 1998), as well as a more modest but parallel discussion of indigenous tourism initiatives with a focus on indigenous cultural content or venues. There is, however, a deal of confusion over what is meant and intended by 'indigenous tourism' and 'cultural tourism' in Australia. There is, as well, a parallel and often overlapping confounding of ecotourism and outback experiences with 'natural' and 'cultural' heritage considerations and discussions, and the emergent 'cultural landscapes' discourse (e.g. Lennon et al. 1999; Reser 2002). This reflects, in part, some fundamental ambiguities and confusions with respect to what is 'natural' as distinct from 'cultural' heritage, and how these should be presented, interpreted, protected and otherwise managed. There are very substantial differences in how management agencies, the tourism industry, Aboriginal communities, and the public, use and understand these terms. All of these confusions and ambiguities were very apparent in discussions with individual participants in this research.

A core consideration for this study is whether a proposed tourism initiative is, or is represented to be, a generic tourism operation with no indigenous content, albeit managed and delivered by indigenous individuals and/or an indigenous community or body; or whether such an initiative is focused on indigenous culture and heritage and involves the presentation of Aboriginal lands, sites or communities, again managed and delivered by an indigenous group. These distinctions need not be mutually exclusive in the context of a particular operation or structured tourism package, but for the sake of analytic clarity need to be outlined. It was clear, in discussions with mining companies and tourism agencies, that what was often meant by 'cultural tourism' was an amalgam of the conventional and the indigenous, with a strong focus on the latter and embellished by an indigenous operator or guide. All of this is particularly important when the proposed tourism package includes visitation to, and interpretation of, a mine operation, as well as a national park or World Heritage Area, and possibly a working cattle property, all of which may be on Aboriginal land. Such a package may incorporate both meanings of 'cultural tourism'.

Additional considerations have to do with the possible negative impacts of visitation on indigenous communities, sacred sites, fragile ecosystems, and natural and cultural heritage generally. Clearly an indigenous culture and heritage-focused tourism initiative involves a very different kind of impact assessment, may well be of a different scale and nature, and may well involve very different arrangements and negotiations with protected area management authorities, and Traditional Owners and managers. A final caveat stems from a widespread tendency within Australia for 'cultural tourism' to be viewed as a responsibility that ideally should be shouldered by the tourism industry, thereby freeing up overburdened management agencies from this obligation. There are, however, very cogent arguments against such unqualified 'partnerships' between park and World Heritage management agencies (e.g. Reser 2004) as 'cultural heritage' responsibilities and mandates have particular responsibility and impact considerations for traditionally-oriented indigenous communities in Australia, particularly those living adjacent to mining operations and national parks.

What is required to ensure that communities have the capacity to provide the tourism product?

This report has outlined five potential benefits of indigenous tourism. The first is economic opportunity, the key elements of which are employment, training and financial gain, with research suggesting that indigenous people value the first two over the last. The second benefit is the promotion of self-determination, which would depend on the extent of Aboriginal control or ownership, and the success of the venture. It was found that the most likely benefits would be partial economic independence and the development of some business and management skills. The third benefit involves the promotion of cross-cultural awareness and understanding, and the realignment of stereotypical views about indigenous communities. Different tourists will desire varying kinds of interaction with indigenous people and their communities, who will also have preferences about the level at which they interact. A high priority, regularly revealed in tourist surveys, is for direct contact with Aboriginal people, in particular with regard to interpretation of the natural and cultural landscape. The fourth benefit involves preserving elements of traditional culture. The literature that reviews the effects of tourism on indigenous cultures describes a spectrum of impacts, which are discussed in Chapter 2. Particularly in the Australian context, there is a risk that the tourism industry can promote the homogenisation of Aboriginal culture at the expense of the diversity of forms it can assume. It is important to note that the effect of tourism on a

particular group will be specific rather than general: it will be determined by that group's location, contact history, contemporary cultural identity and social status, and the current state of social and economic problems. The fifth and last benefit is the encouragement given to systems of indigenous management of cultural landscapes and biodiversity. This is relevant to places where Aboriginal people have tenure over their country or have acquired Native Title rights, and to groups that have maintained a connection to protected or semi-protected landscapes such as national parks, increasingly as formal management partners. It must be reiterated that Aboriginal methods of landscape management or 'caring for country' are potential tourist attractions in their own right.

The degree to which indigenous communities are able to take advantage of the potential benefits, or protect themselves from the harmful impacts, of tourism ventures with which they are directly involved is influenced, to a great extent, by a number factors related to the construct of capacity. This covers such things as levels of education and training, which relate to how skilled and knowledgeable people are to engage in various tasks related to participating in a tourism business. It is widely understood that indigenous people fail to attain the educational and training qualifications that would equip them for involvement in small business at a disproportionately higher rate than the general Australian population. Access to such opportunities in rural or remote locations is greatly lacking. Without such skills indigenous people are unlikely to participate in the industry at anything more than a menial level.

The term capacity must also encompass access to finance. Under normal circumstances, obtaining the finance required to develop an indigenous tourism enterprise is a difficult and time-consuming process. It is complicated for many remote or rural indigenous communities by concerns held by lending institutions about the inalienable nature of the title held over land granted to Aboriginal communities under state and territory land rights acts, which precludes the conventional financial mechanism of mortgage securities.

And finally the capacity of an indigenous community to engage in tourism ventures involves various cultural factors, including various aspects of indigenous culture that may inhibit indigenous tourism development. For example, indigenous people living in more traditional settings, those of interest to tourists seeking cultural exchange experiences, have different priorities with regards to employment and their commitment to its demands. Additionally, their emphasis on consultation and negotiation increases the length of time involved in completing business transactions. Such values are at odds with the world of commerce, which relies on regularity, reliability and punctuality. A further example of cultural factors, which are potentially destructive to efforts to develop a tourism venture, is the inter-clan or inter-family tension that can arise within communities. The research for this project has revealed that social tensions can develop in communities which host tourism enterprises for a range of reasons, particularly as these industries are seen to rely on commonly held cultural practices and places. Different perspectives, internal to the community, involving what kind of subjects the tourism venture can touch on, or where tourists may be taken, may also generate conflict. The issue of how a potential tourism venture might exacerbate or simply intrude on indigenous communities suffering under disproportionately high rates of social problems such as excessive alcohol consumption and violence, also relates to the question of capacity.

Another element of capacity is the administration of government assistance programs, of which there are many designed to promote the development of indigenous enterprises. indigenous people still find it difficult to access their benefits because of literacy problems and flaws continue in the way these programs are delivered, particularly to people in remote locations. Such programs often assume that the community in which a certain project is being funded is a socially harmonious one, whereas this is frequently not the case. Community representative bodies responsible for the operation of the tourism enterprise are then put in the difficult position of trying to balance the demands of government agencies with those of the community, as well as fulfilling the obligations of the business.

Case Study 1 (Weipa mine) provided two models by which support for indigenous tourism ventures could be managed effectively between communities and mining companies. The first was Nanum Tawap, an Aboriginal organisation situated at Napranum that was established by Traditional Owners to facilitate regional development initiatives for both the community and Comalco. While currently involved in a number of other local industries, including a laundry and a forest regeneration program, Nanum Tawap has the potential to assist with tourism enterprises. Understanding the difficulties that the organisation was seen to be experiencing with regard to ensuring a reliable workforce for its industries could be instructive for any attempts related to tourism. The second potential model was Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation Pty Ltd, which was initially established by ATSIC to support the establishment of Land and Natural Resource Management Centres in Cape York Aboriginal communities. Balkanu facilitated negotiations between different stakeholders in order to match the best available expertise, services, and resources to their clients' projects, as well as provide appropriate information concerning the needs and aspirations of Cape York's people. This study determined that the organisation was positioned well to assist Aboriginal people with tourism ideas, providing professional knowledge and technical expertise during the phases of business establishment. Balkanu suggested that to be successful any tourism initiative would need a proper feasibility study and a mentoring system put in place.

Recommendations for Future Action

To the Mining Industry

1. As a way of giving practical effect to their commitment to promoting sustainable community development, mining companies with operations in northern Australia should undertake an assessment of the potential for these operations to facilitate greater Aboriginal involvement in the tourism sector. Factors that should be considered in this assessment include the:
   - Current level of tourism-related activity in the area;
   - Current and future 'marketability' of the area as a tourist destination;
   - Level of interest amongst local Aboriginal people in initiating, or participating in, tourism ventures;
   - Type of support required to facilitate these ventures and the capacity of the mining operation and other organisations to contribute such support; and
   - Potential risks, including the risk of business failure, environmental impacts and unintended adverse social impacts on local Aboriginal communities.
2. In conducting this assessment, mining companies should seek input from relevant state and Commonwealth bodies, industry associations, and other organisations that have expertise in the area, as well as consulting with local Aboriginal communities.
3. Mining operations should take a broad view of the options open to them for facilitating indigenous involvement in tourism. The menu of possible strategies should include the provision of *soft* infrastructure support (training, mentoring, partnership facilitation etc.) as well as the use of *hard* infrastructure, such as buildings and transport facilities.
4. Mining operations should be aware that the issue of indigenous ownership and control is vital to how a tourism initiative will be perceived within the relevant communities. Operations therefore need to ensure that there is full and frank engagement with communities around these issues.
5. Where a mine permits public tours of its operations, companies should consider requiring tour operators to employ local Aboriginal people. Management should also encourage operators to incorporate an indigenous perspective on the history and impact of the mine.
6. In designing new mining operations, companies should have regard to the potential for facilities such as airstrips and accommodation camps to be used for tourism-related purposes, both while the mine is still operational and following closure.
7. As part of the closure planning process, existing mining operations should assess the potential for converting *hard* infrastructure (such as accommodation camps) into tourist facilities once mining ceases. Factors that should be considered in making this assessment include the:
   - Provisions, if any, in land use agreements and state government agreements relating to the post-closure use of mine infrastructure;
   - Age of the infrastructure and likely maintenance costs;
   - Costs of adapting and upgrading infrastructure for tourism purposes; and
   - Level of interest amongst Aboriginal groups and other organisations (e.g. tour operators) in utilising the infrastructure on a long term basis.
8. Wherever practical, mining companies should seek to partner with other organisations and agencies in investigating and developing opportunities to support Aboriginal tourism ventures.

To Protected Area Management Bodies

1. Protected area management agencies and authorities need to be attuned to the perceptions and judgements of key stakeholders and management partners in their respective regions and catchment areas with respect both to:
   - Dealing with ongoing environmental management issues (protection, preservation, presentation);
   - Understanding and addressing the perceived needs and aspirations of local residents (including Aboriginal communities), tour operators, corporate neighbours, and regional planning authorities.
2. Protected area management agencies and authorities should be prepared to consider more innovative management or presentation partnership arrangements, particularly for protected areas close to mining operations. This can include:
   - Making a more sustained effort to develop working partnership arrangements with those Aboriginal groups who retain strong connection with, and in many cases ownership of, the land under management
   - Actively explore opportunities for partnership arrangements and/or infrastructure sharing possibilities with mining companies operating near protected areas
   - Recognising the conservation and presentation possibilities which can arise from proximity to a well known and world class mining operation; for example in comparing differing management regimes, the historical impacts of different land uses, and the conservation and mitigation policies and procedures which are in place.

3. Notwithstanding unresolved Native Title matters, and the complexities of joint state and World Heritage Authority responsibilities, it is very desirable that park management have working management plans, policies, and procedures which can address and facilitate the perceived needs and aspirations of local Aboriginal communities to be involved in meaningful ways in the presentation and interpretation of these protected areas, and in the overall management of, and direct involvement with, visitation and use to these areas.

To Government

1. State governments should be encouraged to support genuine Traditional Owner involvement in natural and cultural heritage tourism (Queensland is notably lacking in this regard) as their support will be critical to the success of any project undertaken.
2. Partnerships between indigenous communities, environmental protection and management agencies, and mining companies can provide positive outcomes for all concerned. The ability of small-scale ventures to engage in these broad partnership structures must be enhanced. Stronger channels through which information can flow will only improve local and regional tourism prospects as success in this industry is predicated on accurate information about how the tourist market operates.
3. The efforts already embarked upon by mining companies should be encouraged and taken into consideration when governments make any moves in the direction of supporting indigenous enterprise. The role of capacity-building, or the transfer of *soft* infrastructure should not be underestimated. Agreements that require mining companies and indigenous communities to cooperate to improve the economic prospects of the latter should take a long view of the tourism enterprises they might support. Improving capacity is a prerequisite to the establishment of indigenous owned or driven tourism ventures.

To Indigenous Organisations, Groups and Individuals

1. Careful as well as creative planning and design of indigenous tourism ventures which hope to incorporate mining infrastructure, must consider the nature of the existing local industry, and value the unique qualities that indigenous land and sea management regimes, sites and cultural knowledge have as tourism products in their own right[19].
2. Regional Aboriginal organisations, as the generators of many tourism enterprises, should consider establishing a Balkanu-style business hub through which to provide support to entrepreneurial individuals or groups.
3. Aboriginal organisations should look for opportunities to leverage support for tourism-related initiatives when negotiating land use and other sorts of agreements with mining companies.
4. Regional Aboriginal organisations, having identified interested individuals, families or clans in local communities, should consider partnership approaches to building indigenous tourism ventures involving both mining companies, protected area authorities and other sectors of government involved in promoting tourism and indigenous enterprises. Mentors should be identified within the partner organisations.
5. In implementing an indigenous tourism venture, throughout all planning and operational phases, it will be necessary to forecast and evaluate both the positive and negative impacts on local Aboriginal populations and to strategically respond to them. Capacity-building with partners also needs to incorporate goals aimed at maximising benefits and minimising negative impacts, including those relating to cultural impacts and capacities.

For Further Research

1. Further detailed study of tourist demand for indigenous cultural tourism products should be undertaken, with particular emphasis on the potential for facilitating partnerships between mining operations, indigenous communities, and wilderness and protected areas managers.
2. Timely and accurate market research needs to be conducted into the real level of demand for, and possible earnings from, tourism ventures that could potentially be of interest to indigenous communities and individuals.
3. The Sustainable Tourism CRC should consider funding an action research project to explore, and demonstrate the potential for, utilising *soft* and *hard* mining project infrastructure to support the development of an indigenous tourism venture.

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[19] The publication *Aboriginal and Indigenous Australia, An Owner's Manual: A Guide to Australia's New Aboriginal and Indigenous Owned and Operated Tourism* would be useful in any such exercise as it catalogues all Indigenous tourism ventures in operation around Australia (Crawshaw 2005).

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW CHECKLISTS

Contacts and Information Collected on Field Trips

Mining Organisations

Who to Speak to:
- Aboriginal / Community Relations Staff
- Physical Infrastructure Manager
- Regional Sustainable Development Manager
- Contract Management Officer
- Training and Human Resources Manager
- General Manager

Information Sought:
- Current levels and types of support being provided to Aboriginal and non-aboriginal tourism ventures.
- Potential availability, quality & lifespan of physical infrastructure (accommodation, other buildings, airstrips, roads etc) during mining operation and post closure.
- Possible barriers to allowing tourism ventures (aboriginal and non-aboriginal) to utilise this infrastructure (e.g. liability, maintenance, health and safety issues).
- Identify relevant NTA / ILUA obligations
- Types of positions Aboriginal people are currently filling at the mine, especially in occupations that have relevance to tourism (e.g. hospitality, maintenance, clerical).
- Potential to provide 'soft' infrastructure support for tourism ventures e.g. training and mentoring strategies to equip Aboriginal people with business management skills; advice and assistance on running businesses.
- Availability of start-up funds, loans etc for tourism ventures.
- Closure plans and strategies for developing post-mining economy in the region (mainly relevant to Argyle & Century).
- Has the mine had any approaches from/discussions with Aboriginal groups to support tourism-related ventures? What was the outcome? Has the mine tried to initiate anything itself in this area? Have any feasibility studies etc been commissioned?
- What potential does mine management see to link support for tourism ventures to sustainable development strategies?
- Mine tours – does the site have them? How are these organised at present? Size and number of tours. Current levels of aboriginal involvement and opportunities to increase this. Any issues about conducting tours (e.g. health and safety, interruption of operations).
- Generally, what do site-based personnel perceive as the opportunities and obstacles in this area.

Indigenous Organisations

Who to Speak to:
- Land Councils
- Local Aboriginal Councils
- Any relevant committees established under NTAs (e.g. Century Employment and Training Committee)
- indigenous Development Groups (e.g. Balkanu)
- Existing Aboriginal tourism businesses

Information Sought:
- Current levels of Aboriginal participation in tourism related businesses and activities.
- Levels of interest in the communities in developing tourism ventures.
- Perceived opportunities (short and long term).
- What is needed to develop these opportunities? How could the mine, government and other agencies help?
- Perceived obstacles to developing opportunities.
- Cultural considerations that might impact on the establishment and management of tourism ventures.

Aboriginal Tourism Operations:
- What have been their experiences?
- What are the opportunities for/obstacles to expansion?
- What assistance have they received from the mine? How could the mine support them?

Other Organisations

Who to Speak to:
- Local regional tourism bodies
- Protected area management agencies (e.g. NPWS)
- Other government agencies involved in tourism (e.g. DPI)
- Local government

Information Sought:
- Tourism flows.
- Existing strategies for developing/managing tourism and for involving Aboriginal people.
- Scope for new tourism ventures that involve Aboriginal people.
- What's been tried and what were the outcomes.
- Perceived obstacles to developing opportunities.
- Current infrastructure and significant gaps.
- How could the mine help?

Information Sought from Protected Area Management Agencies:
- Land access issues.
- Extent of Aboriginal involvement in management.
- Current infrastructure.
- Cultural sites.
- Indigenous agreements / claims in place and potential implications.

Location Inspections

Onsite:
- Accommodation facilities.
- Other buildings and services.
- Mine tours.

Offsite:
- Nearby National parks.
- Cultural centre/s etc.
- Nearby communities.

APPENDIX B: FURTHER READING ON PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENTS

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APPENDIX D: SELECTED GUIDELINES AND BEST PRACTICE RESOURCES

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Further Resources for the Minerals Industry

There are numerous sources available to assist the minerals industry in their support of the development of tourism initiatives involving indigenous people. A selection of Australian sources is listed below. Note that the information was current at the time of publication. We suggest that mining operations seek advice from their head office as well as relevant Government organisations in their state or territory in the first instance.

Federal Government Agencies and Programs

Business Ready Program for Indigenous Tourism: AusIndustry

- This program encourages indigenous participation in the tourism industry by funding selected business mentors to develop and work with indigenous tourism ventures in their region.
- Phone: AusIndustry hotline on 13 28 46
- Email: hotline@ausindustry.gov.au
- Web: http://www.ausindustry.gov.au

Indigenous Business Australia (within Department of Employment and Workplace Relations)

- Indigenous Business Australia aims to promote business participation amongst indigenous people. The organisation delivers the 'Indigenous Business Development Programme' and sponsors 'First Australians Business'.
- Phone: 1800 804 754
- Web: http://www.iba.gov.au

Indigenous Partnership Program (within Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources)

- This program aims to promote partnerships between the mining industry and indigenous communities.
- Phone: 02 6213 7227
- Email: info.partnership@industry.gov.au
- Web: http://www.industry.gov.au/indigenouspartnerships

Indigenous Tourism Australia: Tourism Australia

- Indigenous Tourism Australia (ITA) focuses on the development and implementation of policies and programmes to encourage indigenous tourism ventures.
- Phone: 02 9360 1111
- Web: http://www.tourism.australia.com/Markets.asp?lang=EN&sub=0338&al=1943

Indigenous Land Corporation

- The Indigenous Land Corporation functions include enterprise and regional development.
- Phone: 1800 818 490
- Email: ilcinfo@ilc.gov.au
- Web: http://www.ilc.gov.au/

Steps to Sustainable Tourism (within Department of the Environment and Heritage)

- This report outlines a 10-step planning process to guide the development of sustainable tourism which considers the natural and cultural features of a region as core values. A tailored report for indigenous communities titled '*Stepping Stones to Tourism*' is also being developed.
- The full report can be downloaded from the following website: http://www.deh.gov.au/heritage/publications/sustainable-tourism/

State and Territory Tourism Organisations in Northern Australia

Northern Territory Tourist Commission

- Phone: 1800 808 666
- Email: nttc@nt.gov.au
- Web: http://www.nttc.com.au

Tourism Queensland

- Glen Miller - Manager Market Development
- Phone: 07 3535 5455
- Email: glen.miller@tq.com.au
- Web: http://www.tq.com.au/indigenous

Tourism Western Australia

- Industry Development
- Phone: 08 9262 1760
- Web: http://www.westernaustralia.com/en/Industry/

Indigenous Tourism Associations

Aboriginal Tourism Australia

- Phone: 03 9654 3811
- Email: ata@aboriginaltourism.com.au
- Web: http://www.aboriginaltourism.com.au

Western Australia Indigenous Tourism Operators Committee (WAITOC)

- Phone: 08 9262 1746
- Email: waitoc@westernaustralia.com
- Web: http://www.waitoc.com

Regional Tourism Network

Australian Regional Tourism Network

- Phone: 02 6620 3505
- Email: artn@scu.edu.au
- Web: http://www.regionaltourism.com.au/artn/

Indigenous Tourism Enterprises

Aboriginal Tour Operators

- http://www.aboriginaltouroperators.com.au

Research Organisations

Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism

- Phone: 07 5552 8172
- Email: info@crctourism.com.au
- Web: http://www.crctourism.com.au

Tourism Research Australia

- Phone: 02 6213 6940
- Email: tra@tourism.australia.com
- Web: http://www.tra.australia.com

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ACRONYMS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACF	Australian Conservation Foundation
AHC	Australian Heritage Commission
AIAS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies
AIS	Australian Indigenous Studies
ANZMEC	Australian and New Zealand Minerals and Energy Council
ATC	Australian Tourist Commission
ATSIA	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Association
ATSIC	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Commission
CALM	Western Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management
DEH	Department of the Environment and Heritage (also known as Environment Australia)
DITR	Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FCES	Felan Consulting & Event Services
ICMM	International Council of Mines and Metals
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
ISRD	Institute for Sustainable Regional Development
ISX	Indigenous Stock Exchange
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
MCA	Minerals Council of Australia
NTOAD	Northern Territory Office of Aboriginal Development
NTTC	Northern Territory Tourist Commission
RCIADIC	Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody
SATC	South Australian Tourism Commission
TO	Tourism Organisation
TWA	Tourism Western Australia
WAPC	Western Australian Planning Commission
WATC	Western Australian Tourism Commission
WCRCG	Western Cape Regional Consultative Group
WCCCA	Western Cape Communities Coexistence Agreement
WTMA	Wet Tropics Management Authority

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The Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC) is established under the Australian Government's Cooperative Research Centres Program. STCRC is the world's leading scientific institution delivering research to support the sustainability of travel and tourism - one of the world's largest and fastest growing industries.

Research Programs

Tourism is a dynamic industry comprising many sectors from accommodation to hospitality, transportation to retail and many more. STCRC's research program addresses the challenges faced by small and large operators, tourism destinations and natural resource managers.

Areas of Research Expertise: Research teams in five discipline areas - modelling, environmental science, engineering & architecture, information & communication technology and tourism management, focus on three research programs:

Sustainable Resources: Natural and cultural heritage sites serve as a foundation for tourism in Australia. These sites exist in rural and remote Australia and are environmentally sensitive requiring specialist infrastructure, technologies and management.

Sustainable Enterprises: Enterprises that adhere to best practices, innovate, and harness the latest technologies will be more likely to prosper.

Sustainable Destinations: Infrastructural, economic, social and environmental aspects of tourism development are examined simultaneously.

Postgraduate Students: STCRC's Education Program recruits high quality postgraduate students and provides scholarships, capacity building, research training and professional development opportunities.

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STCRC uses its research network, spin-off companies and partnerships to extend knowledge and deliver innovation to the tourism industry. STCRC endeavours to secure investment in the development of its research into new services, technologies and commercial operations.

Australia's CRC Program

The Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Program brings together researchers and research users. The program maximises the benefits of research through an enhanced process of utilisation, commercialisation and technology transfer. It also has a strong education component producing graduates with skills relevant to industry needs.

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