Indigenous people and the Pilbara mining boom
A baseline for regional participation

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Foreword

This is the latest in what is developing into a series of CAEPR monographs stimulated by the interest of mining companies to better understand the social and economic landscape of regions within which they operate. It stems from an approach made to the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) by Jeff Wilkie of Pilbara Iron who sought to establish a detailed profile of the Pilbara population in order to assist company and public policy discussions on Indigenous engagement in the context of rapidly expanding mining activity in the Pilbara region. We acknowledge the financial and logistical support of Pilbara Iron that facilitated the undertaking of the research.

As an output, this monograph sits well within the framework of the Australia Research Council Linkage project, Indigenous Community Organisations and Miners: Partnering Sustainable Regional Development? This is a three-year research partnership between CAEPR and industry partners Rio Tinto and the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA). The project focuses on case studies of the Pilbara region of Western Australia, the Kakadu region of the Northern Territory, and the Gulf region of Queensland where major resource development agreements have been negotiated between the developers and Indigenous people and their organisations.

At the core of this project lies an examination of the conditions that might allow sustainable development for Indigenous people residing in mine hinterlands. The present study addresses this issue by detailing the socio-economic structural constraints on the supply of Indigenous labour in the Pilbara region against a background of increasing labour demand. John Taylor and Benedict Scambary’s comprehensive profile provides an invaluable baseline against which the future outcomes from mining agreements and regional initiatives might be gauged. A soon-to-be completed complementary project monograph to be published in 2006 will focus on the considerable diversity in the values and aspirations of the Indigenous people of mine hinterlands, and the fact that these are not limited to involvement in mining-related employment or business development, but may focus on other, more specifically Indigenous ‘social or community economies’.

The capacity of resource developers to realise employment and other goals, as often set out in agreements with Indigenous people, is a matter of considerable interest when considering the economic development prospects of Indigenous people in mine hinterlands. I commend Pilbara Iron for facilitating a flow of information that will ensure greater discussion of such issues.

Professor Jon Altman  
Director, CAEPR  
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A note on spellings of Aboriginal words

Aboriginal words in this document fall into the categories of language group names, names of organisations, place names, and native title claim names. There is considerable inconsistency in the orthographies used in these different categories. Examples include the language group name Yinhawanga and the Innawonga Aboriginal Corporation, and the language group Kurrama and the Eastern Guruma Agreement.

Accordingly, the spellings of organisation names are those used by the organisations themselves. Native Title claim names are reproduced as they are on the National Native Title Tribunal’s register of native title claims. Where language groups are referred to generally, spellings are consistent with the Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre website <http://www.wangkamaya.org.au/languages.htm>, and the AIATSIS ASEDA online catalogue <http://coombs.anu.edu.au/SpecialProj/ASEDA/>. Place name spellings are consistent with those specified by the Geographic Names Committee of the Western Australian Department of Land Information.

Where Aboriginal words and names are reproduced from secondary sources the spellings have not been corrected in accordance with the above, but left as they originally appeared.
Acronyms and abbreviations

ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIATSIS Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
AIGC Australian Indigenous Geographic Classification
ANU The Australian National University
ANZSIC Australia and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification
ASCO Australian Standard Classification of Occupations
ASEDA Aboriginal Studies Electronic Data Archive
ASFR age specific fertility rate
ASGC Australian Standard Geographic Classification
ATAL Aboriginal Training and Liaison (Unit, of Pilbara Iron)
ATSIC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
CAEPR Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research
CBO Community Based Order
CDEP Community Development Employment Project(s)
CEDA Committee for the Economic Development of Australia
CHINS Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey
CHIP Community Housing and Infrastructure Program
CHIPS Children’s Court and Petty Sessions
CI confidence interval
CRC Crime Research Centre
DHW Department of History and Works
DIDO drive-in-drive-out
DSC Disability Services Commission (WA)
EHNS Environmental Health Needs Survey
ERP estimated resident population
FIFO fly-in-fly-out
FTB Family Tax Benefit
GEHA Government Employees Housing Authority
GIS Geographic Information Systems
GMY Gobawarrah Minduarra Yinhawanga
HIPP Health Infrastructure Priority Projects
IA Indigenous Area
IBN Innawonga Banyjima Nyiyaparli
ICCP Indigenous Communities Coordination Project
IC9 Ninth Revision, International Classification of Diseases
IL Indigenous Location
ISO Intensive Supervision Order
KRSIS Kakadu Social Impact Study
NAHS National Aboriginal Health Strategy
NATSIS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey
NATSISS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey
NILF not in the labour force
PNTS Pilbara Native Title Service
PoE Place of enumeration
PRR Partial paternity rate
PDM population density measure
P49 Police Offence Information System
SCRGSP Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision
SD Statistical Division
SLA Statistical Local Area
SRR standardised mortality rate ratio
STEP Structured Training and Employment Program
TAFE Technical and Further Education
TES Total Employment Services
TFR total fertility rate
TOMS Total Offender Management System
VET vocational education and training
WDO Work and Development Order
WHO World Health Organisation
WMPALC Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre