

# 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

**GMV** Gobawarra 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