



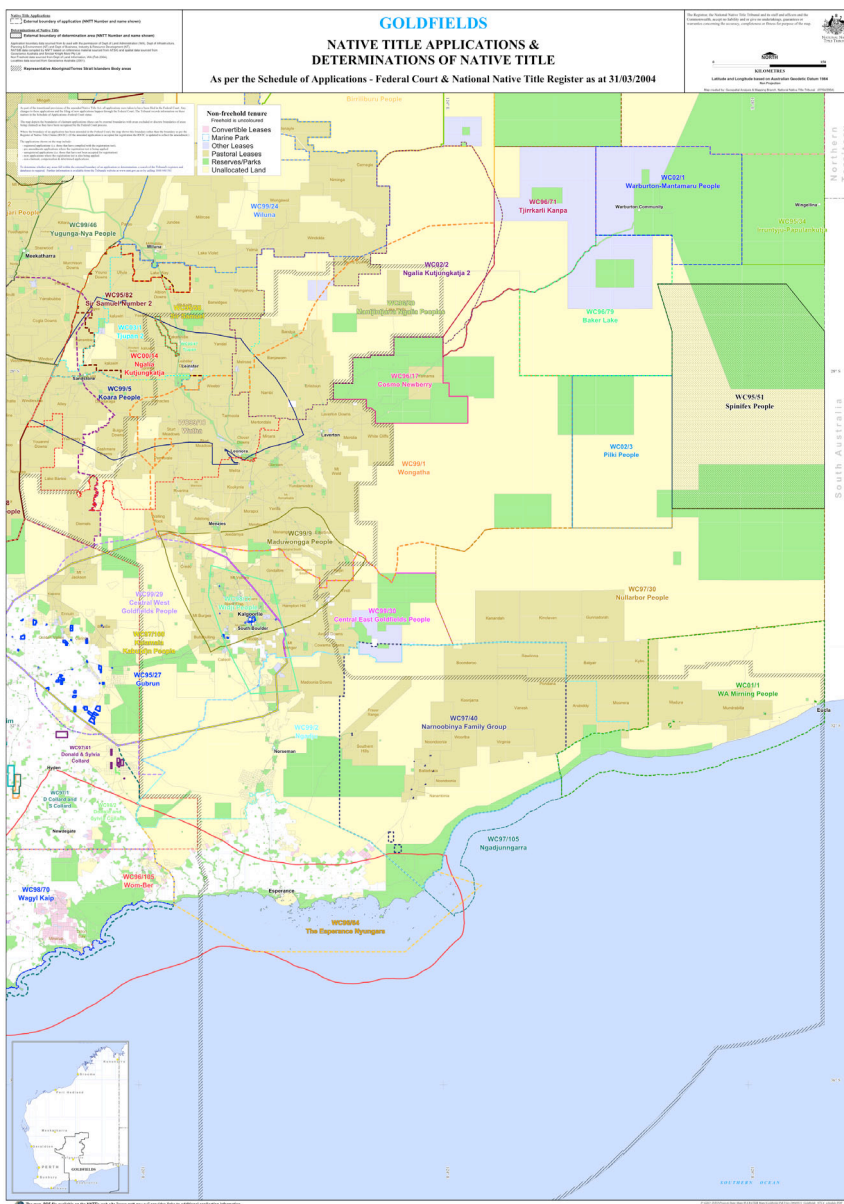
LOCAL INDIGENOUS STAKEHOLDERS



Existing Situation

There are no Native Title issues over the existing site as the operations predate Native Title. However there are a number of Native Title Claimants within the area as demonstrated by the Native Title Tribunal map below. Claimant groups include the Maduwongga people, Central East and Central West Goldfields people, Ngadju people, Widji People, Kalamaia Kabu(d)n People and the Gubrun.

Figure 4.1 Map of Native Title Claimants Over the Goldfields Area



There are some significant divisions between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations within the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. The Goldfields Land and Sea Council Director once described Kalgoorlie-Boulder as “*The most racist town in the nation – the place reconciliation forgot*”. The City has been renowned for tension between racial groups, discriminatory acts, violence, anti social behaviour within Indigenous communities and inequitable health, housing and other services for Indigenous people. However, this is starting to change and the City has recently launched a *Community Harmony Project*. The project is successfully building bridges between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in the area. Three reports have been produced, as part of this project – a mapping and gap analysis, a needs analysis and community perception survey and a youth needs analysis to develop appropriate plans for change. (Source: Kobelke 2004)

These plans aim to improve Indigenous community life in the following key areas - early childhood development, employment, alcohol and substance abuse, family violence, school retention and building on Indigenous community and culture. (Source: Kobelke 2004)

The main area of employment and enterprise for the Indigenous population of the region continues to be in mining, pastoral stations and retail outlets. However, tourism and the arts also provide opportunities for economic involvement and development.

The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments in ANTA Courses in the Goldfields Esperance region (14.5%) is higher than the State average of 8.2%.

The number of Indigenous businesses is steadily increasing and this is supported by the Indigenous People in Mining (IPIM) Project. Indigenous business types include the provision of trained personnel, cross cultural training, mechanical services, mine site rehabilitation, industrial laundry, cleaning and catering, retail and vending operations, belt splicing, drilling and other mining support services.

Indigenous health is a serious issue in Kalgoorlie-Boulder, for example infant mortality is three times the national average. Bega Garnbirringu Health Services is the major health care provider to Indigenous people living in the Goldfields area. The NTP program also provides support to young Indigenous mothers and their children.

Actual Impacts

In the past KCGM’s relationship with local Indigenous groups was restricted to heritage clearances and land access issues. Recognition of the need for an ongoing relationship with Indigenous stakeholders is developing and the recently drafted Indigenous Relations Policy is a step in the right direction.

Recent financial and community development support has been provided to the local soup patrols, Polly Farmer Education Program and Ninga Mia.

Currently KCGM has an employment target to reach 40 Indigenous people on site and are working with CDEP to develop training programs so they can reach this target. KCGM currently employ approximately 10 Indigenous people.

Cross-cultural training was recently introduced at site and a number of employees and contractors have now completed the course.

Perceived Impacts

The Indigenous stakeholders involved in this study were from a variety of cultural backgrounds, agencies, community services, contractors and broader community members. Their contact with KCGM was also varied. Those with closer contact to KCGM tended to see them in a more positive light while those with less contact tended to be quite negative towards the company.

Across the board it was recognised that KCGM have only just started to make some inroads into improving Indigenous relations. Some overall comments from local Indigenous stakeholders included: *"They have been quite good and supported us in general things but when it comes to bigger ideas we never see them"*; *"Occasionally they throw a dart but it doesn't always hit the bullseye"*; *"On the right track but a bit late coming"*; *"It needs to go beyond window dressing"*; *"The fact that they are talking to people shows that they want to do the right thing"* and *"Not too bad, they helped the Aboriginal community with the bypass road, they let them stay on their lease"*. For some community members they felt it was a case of *"Too little, too late"* or that *"they are playing no role at all on Aboriginal issues"*.

KCGM was certainly *"not seen as a racist organisation"* or one that treated people badly. The negativity tended to stem more from lack of contact and an interpretation that *"Aboriginal people don't mean a lot to KCGM"*.

The profile of environmental issues and management was also considerably higher among the Indigenous stakeholders than those in the broader community.

Social

A lack of recognition or personal relationships really drove the negativity associated with KCGM's performance in managing Indigenous relations. Aboriginal stakeholders tended to feel that they didn't have a role in KCGM or that the company often ignored them.

Policy and Protocols

Aboriginal stakeholders in Kalgoorlie felt that KCGM didn't understand their protocols, politics or issues. They also noted the absence of a policy or recognition of Indigenous culture in the region. Comments included: *"Companies like Hamersley Iron have traditional welcomes, paintings, they get in touch with Indigenous culture. At KCGM there is no visible sign of Indigenous culture"*; *"They have no understanding of Aboriginal issues"*; *"They suppress their own understanding but in a way they have no real knowledge of the issues"*; and *"They don't have a good handle on understanding the complexities of the Aboriginal community."*

The Indigenous Policy was however seen as a major step in the right direction with *"good aspirations"*. Honesty and feedback were also seen as important components in making the policy come alive and enabling Aboriginal people to feel that KCGM were serious. This was evidenced in comments such as *"need to have honesty as part of the process – they need to be constructively critical of the policy and know what they are doing against it"*.

The policy was seen as lacking in broader community consultation and feedback and only as good as the results it achieves. There was some concern that the ordering of Indigenous groups was not correct and did not include all claimant and resident groups. Direct suggestions on the policy are attached as Appendix 3. Other comments relating to the policy included: *"Anybody can write it but it is the actual outcomes of it happening and staying in place that is what is important"*; *"This policy was not put out to the community for input"*; *"Are they honest intentions and outcomes or are they just going through the motions?"* *"Not strong enough without targets"*; *"Make sure it happens, they need a driving force to make it happen"* and *"It reads like a Government written paper, it is a bit empty."*

Relationships vs. Facelessness

Recognition and face-to-face contact is seen as incredibly important to Aboriginal people. KCGM in many ways were seen to be an absent player in this relationship. Comments included: *"Their people do not fully understand Aboriginal people. They are always changing over, replacing staff, their staff are only part timers to this region, we are full timers"*; *"KCGM are here to stay. It is beyond our control to fix it – at the end of the day, we just want a good relationship"*; *"If KCGM want to do the right thing in Kalgoorlie they need to be a face – start showing themselves"*; *"We're here so talk to us"* and *"I am born and bred here but I couldn't tell you of the company or the people who make them up"*.

The visibility of leaders was an important issues to local Indigenous stakeholders and comments included: *"I would like to sit down and meet with them when the new bosses come and tell them about the issues – like to assist them to get off on the right foot"*; *"The top dogs should come down and meet"*

with us”; “They need to come out on a regular basis”; “ Only person who comes out is Danielle but she can’t be everywhere”; and “They are not seen by the community, Gary and John tried hard to do their best but now they’re gone”.

The issue of recognition also came through strongly, with many people feeling KCGM could do more to take a stand in the community and recognise Aboriginal people and the importance of working together. *“They have an opportunity with NAIDOC week to take a stand”; “A statement needs to be said that they are starting to communicate with Aboriginal people, when the leaders of the community make positive statements then the community follows” and “we have to work side by side to make the difference”.*

Community Development

Community development initiatives such as the soup patrol, Polly Farmer Program and the contribution to the Christmas party at Ninga Mia were all mentioned as important positive contributions to the local Indigenous community. The Nanny Goat Hill issue was also mentioned as one that was handled well by the company. Other stakeholders commented on new opportunities the company had to make a difference through contributions to local infrastructure at Ninga Mia, in community health (such as assistance to the NTP mothers program) or in addressing alcohol issues within the community.

These varied comments also related to community development, the social and economic challenges facing Indigenous communities and the politics between dealing with certain groups over the broader community. Some of the comments included *“They put on the Christmas show – it was so good. A big light at Christmas, the kids loved it”; “They come to the party with greening, a lot of little things like rocks, tires and graders, they help us out in their small ways”; “We rely on mining companies to make the best for our people”; “We need things to help, particularly our youth”; “Our people don’t want money in our pockets, we want to really help the people in our community”; “It is not just employment and training we should be able to make our people comfortable with housing, furniture, health care” and “Support our babies and young mother – they are our future”.*

The challenges and frustrations of community development, as opposed to patronising assistance, were expressed by a number of stakeholders. One stakeholder summed it up as follows, *“You can’t tell a guy under a tree to stop drinking and move but we need help and guidance to give him a reason to get up”.*

For some Indigenous stakeholders KCGM’s profile in community assistance programs was low. Comments here included *“I am a teacher at Polly Farmer and I have not come across KCGM there”; “never heard of Polly Farmer”; “not high profile”; or “we don’t see them doing anything”.*

The Future of Ninga Mia

The community at Ninga Mia seemed concerned over the security of their community, whether the rumours were true that KCGM would move them on at some stage and health impacts of the operations. These comments regarding security included: *“We have heard that they have plans to shift us”; “We read it in the paper – they are going to shift us within five years. Then they said they didn’t know anything about it!” or “We are uncertain about the future of Ninga Mia”.* Their comments on health impacts are listed below under environment.

The Workplace

Many Indigenous stakeholders felt the workplace was a barrier to employment for Aboriginal people, due to long shifts, unfamiliar environments and rosters. The pre-training for young people prior to joining the workforce was also mentioned as a key social issue for Aboriginal people. Comments included: *“Families suffer from the rosters”; “Family time is important to Aboriginal people, have to have family time”; “What is expected for training? There needs to be proper talks with them so they are not given a job they cannot handle”; “Self-esteem needs to be encouraged”; “Before young people are offered work, it is best to run through pre-work problems, help them to understand what is expected – drug tests, long hours, police clearances” and “When is their family time to do things in the community?”*

Environment

It is clear that the land and environment hold a significant place in the heart of Aboriginal people. This level of importance in the philosophy of Aboriginal people seems to create a greater scrutiny of KCGM’s

environmental management performance with more attention placed on the types of flora used for rehabilitation, disruption to land and shifts in the natural environment cycles.

Looking After Country

Heritage issues were seen to “no longer be an issue” or that “now they would be managed properly”. However questions on the broader environmental management issues generated the following types of responses: “Taking from the land but not giving back”; “It is more than just planting trees, what about the animals?” “They need more on land management after they have finished mining what are they going to do with it”; “Stop workers killing off plants and trees”. One stakeholder talked about changes from the past “where Kangaroos were everywhere and we could go where we wanted but now we would have to climb a mountain to get over there to find them”; “In the early days our people looked after their country, looked after sacred things to Aboriginal people, our people did that but it is much harder now”; “Underground water is being affected – a couple of lakes used to have bird/animals around them but not now, it is very sad for the Aboriginal people who used to go there all the time”; “If you look after the animals you have something to eat and drink and so if you look after the land the animals will be looked after as well”; “The mining industry has done some real damage, they have no appreciation of the ecology of this land” or “We accept the mining community but land is very important, we need it back because of heritage and culture”.

The importance of the land and the environment was also seen as an opportunity to increase the strength of culture within the community. One stakeholder suggested that “KCGM needs to give something to kids who get into trouble, they lose respect when they do drugs and alcohol. KCGM should get them to plant a tree and help their community, give them a certificate and help them feel proud of their land and country”.

Health and Safety Issues at Ninga Mia

The proximity of the operations and Gidji Roster to Ninga Mia raised some issues for that particular community. They commented on the dust and sulphur causing “runny eyes” and “asthma” or they mentioned “we are getting sore eyes, bad breath and it is getting worse out here” and “making everyone sick”. There was also some concern expressed at Ninga Mia on the risks of “any open shafts in the area and kids falling in”.

Economic

Generally among the local Indigenous stakeholders KCGM’s economic contribution was seen to pass them by. For example: “It affects our people in the future – KCGM contributes money and export income to the State but what do Indigenous people see? Not everybody wants to work in the mining industry. We just want to improve the community life we have” or “we are on the richest square mile in the world but we are living in third world conditions”

Employment Strategies

For those who were aware of local employment strategies, they were “pleased they are trying to employ local people. It is a start but sometimes they are moving too slowly”. Employment was seen as a way to “grow respect in our people”; “involve people at the ground level” or “all the way up the hierarchy”.

Awareness of the CDEP agreement was generally low but seen as very positive. Comments included “substantial recruitment of Indigenous people over the last three years”; “KCGM have an agreement with CDEP doing stick picking at the moment then they will move them to machinery”; “First company to give Aboriginal people a go in their own right and they need to stick with it” or “they have an Indigenous employment program and plan to get more people on”.

Seed Contracts

In contrast, the history of Jim Seeds business used in rehabilitation was well known and the Aboriginal men employed in this program were also well known to the community: “Years ago they had a tree planting program. The Aboriginal person who was in charge, I knew him but it would have been good if he employed other people other than his family members. It was a good program must be kept going”. Others felt that the seeding planting program did not go far enough to build relationships with the Indigenous community. These individuals mentioned that it was “window dressing” or “just so people

could see the black fellas". None the less these contracts were still seen as crucial to the future of Indigenous people in the area.

Communication

As mentioned above, the establishment of a profile and relationships with local Aboriginal people is crucially important. At the moment communication between KCGM and Aboriginal people is seen to be sketchy or non-existent. Face to face communication and an identifiable face for KCGM's Indigenous relationship management were two key suggestions from the community on how to improve these relationships.

Face to Face Communication

Face to face communication was seen as the most important communication tool for Aboriginal people and one that was lacking at present. Comments included: *"The fact that they are now talking to people shows they want to do the right thing"*; *"Faceless organisation, particularly without John Shipp"*; *"The top dogs should come down and meet with us"*; *"We have not had one person come in and say hello and ask can we come and have a look around – at least come and have a look at it"*; *"Never been here to sit down and see what it is all about"*; *"Tell us what they have done and who is involved"*; *"No they don't really talk to me about it – I can see it in their eyes though that they would like to know more about us"* or *"Not enough information provided, the community need to hear about what they are providing in training for Aboriginal people, who they are employing... what they are doing to improve the land after mining"*.

Stakeholder suggestions called for regular visits, using local Indigenous forums or calling the occasional community meeting to discuss issues and progress.

An Indigenous Face to KCGM

Other Indigenous stakeholders stressed the importance of having *"an Aboriginal face to KCGM"* – someone externally for the community to identify with but also internally to act as a mentor to Aboriginal people employed by KCGM. Comments included: *"put an Aboriginal face to KCGM – I think if KCGM want to do the right thing in Kalgoorlie they need to be a face – start showing themselves"*; *"They need a little working team to go out and work with Aboriginal people – they have only got one or two Aboriginal guys in there. They need a face. If they get one or two people in there to become role models than the rest can say hello. They can get out there and show that the company has done something"*.

Trust & Honesty

Many of the Indigenous stakeholders saw themselves as being around for the *"long term"*. This placed an emphasis on long-term relationships and a memory of previous conversations and commitments. In turn, this emphasis placed a great deal of importance on the whole issue of trust and honesty, evidenced by comments such as *"being honest and saying things openly is really important"* and *"we need to be honest with each other, come right out and say it"*.

Cross Cultural Training

KCGM's cross-cultural training program was seen as *"an important initiative"*, and perhaps one that should *"be provided to the whole community"*. Comments on the course included: *"It is not just about KCGM employees it's everyone, they should look at funding cultural awareness programs for businesses in Kalgoorlie"*; *"The only problem with the courses is getting their contractors to participate."*

There were a number of Aboriginal stakeholders who were concerned that an individual from *"outside the area"* was running the course. One stakeholder said, *"Now they have engaged Indigenous people to run cross-cultural training but they are from the outside. It is a bit tick box again. They also need to use local people to address local issues. This would help them get a lot more out of the whole process."* A number of others also expressed considerable interest at running the program themselves! For example, *"I am in the process of setting one up – mine sends a different message though, personal story of what it means to be Aboriginal – thoughts and values of life"*.

Opportunities for Improvement

- ❑ The launch of the Indigenous Relations Policy presents a strong opportunity to share KCGM's aims and objectives with the broader Indigenous community. Feedback on how these results were integrated into policy development is an important message about inclusion and consultation.
- ❑ A coherent plan of how to progress the policy into action should be developed to include all of the key objectives in the policy and concrete strategies and plans into the future. The plan could be developed with input from agencies such as DIA, Bega, NTP and other local Indigenous groups to start to build relationships and profile with these groups.
- ❑ A high profile and active sponsorship of something overtly Indigenous addressing some of the deep-seated issues within the community may assist to achieve the recognition and face to Indigenous initiatives.
- ❑ The opportunity to pursue Commonwealth funded scholarships through Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) Indigenous Cadetship Program and perhaps Curtin University's School of Mines would be a complementary addition to support of the Polly Farmer Program.
- ❑ Investigate options to employ an Indigenous "mentor" or relationship officer within KCGM.
- ❑ Continue with Indigenous employment and contracting strategies.