

# PILBARA INDUSTRY'S COMMUNITY COUNCIL (PICC)

## PILBARA EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT REVIEW 2007 FINAL REPORT

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North West Shelf Venture



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The task required of the Educational Consultant was to:

- Evaluate the relative success or failure of existing supported education and training programs for Indigenous people;
- Perform a gap analysis and identify other potential areas which merit support;
- Prepare a strategic, collaborative approach and vision.

The initial focus was to be on the town of Roebourne and to then proceed to consider the situation in Port Hedland, Karratha and elsewhere in the Pilbara, providing information sufficient to allow a larger consideration of the Pilbara as a whole.

### The Initial Approach (Roebourne)

Encompassed:

1. A consideration of the literature available in regard to the Pilbara;
2. The education, training and employment options in reality for Indigenous people, in Roebourne and the Pilbara as a whole;
3. A major focus on the Indigenous populations and a consideration of successful programs elsewhere in Australia;
4. A visit to Roebourne, to meet significant individuals and groups and to observe the situation first hand;
5. Two visits to Port Hedland;
6. A visit to Onslow and Karratha;
7. Visits to Mt Tom Price and Paraburdoo townships.

### Outcomes

The industry-supported programs in the main are highly valued and regarded by the community. There remains, however, an endemic low level of education generally and specifically of literacy and numeracy within the region, the reasons for which are defined in this report.

### Gap Analysis

Three areas were initially identified during the Roebourne study as requiring special emphasis if the local situation is to be improved:

1. **Pre-Natal to School:** Education incorporating hygiene, health, nutrition and family care (including play) programs for parents and children up to commencement at school. The programs should commence when a woman is pregnant and continue through infancy and early childhood.
2. **Indigenous Knowledge Hub:** To tackle literacy and numeracy problems in adolescents and young adults within a “knowledge hub” which incorporates a larger picture emphasising pride in their culture, heritage and knowledge systems and provides incentives for attendance.

- 3. Indigenous Teacher Program:** Support to ensure that the present Aboriginal teaching assistants receive help to enable them to become professional teachers. This would need to be in cooperation with one or two universities.

Roebourne as a community has many strengths which can be utilised as the platform upon which the above may be coordinated, developed and managed.

### Port Hedland/Karratha

Subsequent to the completion of the Roebourne report and following visits to Port Hedland, Karratha, Onslow, Tom Price, Paraburdoo, Broome and La Grange, combined with information supplied by experienced educators and professionals; two further important areas for particular attention were identified. These were later shown to be just as applicable to Roebourne.

- 1. Programs for Adolescent Girls:** While career opportunities for Indigenous people generally in the Pilbara are limited, adolescent girls are clearly the most seriously affected. Immediate work needs to be done to determine attractive programs which provide them with life skills and preparation for employment.
- 2. School Year 6 to Transition into Year 7:** This is a particularly difficult time for many Indigenous students and many lose contact with education and learning at this stage as they fail to make the transition from primary to secondary schooling, mostly due to poor literacy and numeracy skills.

In addition to the above, a further six educational areas were seen to require substantial additional, focussed support from government and/or industry if the situation is to improve markedly in the years ahead.