

STATE GOVERNMENT OF QUEENSLAND

QUEENSLAND RESOURCES COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING TO INCREASE INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT IN THE QUEENSLAND RESOURCES SECTOR AND RELATED INDIGENOUS ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Objectives

The Queensland Government and the Queensland Resources Council (QRC) – through its member companies - commit to work in partnership with each other and with relevant Indigenous stakeholders to create sustainable Indigenous economic development and employment opportunities that will contribute to building strong and sustainable Indigenous communities in Queensland.

This overriding objective will be achieved through joint efforts to overcome structural impediments and build the capacity of Indigenous Queenslanders in the following areas:

- Education and training (including work readiness);
- Employment in the resources sector; and
- Enterprise and business development.

Context

The resources sector is already the largest private sector employer of Indigenous people in Australia. As such, the resources sector has played an important role in increasing the prosperity and wellbeing of Indigenous Queenslanders by assisting them to gain relevant skills and meaningful employment.

Projections out to 2015 suggest that the resources sector in Queensland will require a further 15,000 workers in an environment of nationwide skills shortages. Indigenous Queenslanders can meet some of this rising demand for labour, especially given their physical proximity to many future mining developments. In addition, the high level of unemployment among Indigenous Queenslanders means they are available to meet this demand, once they have acquired the skills and other work readiness attributes needed.

Indigenous people living in regional and remote Queensland continue to experience an unacceptable level of disadvantage. The resources sector is uniquely placed to make a significant socio-economic contribution to the communities in which it operates and its intergenerational operations mean it can develop long-term partnerships to generate improved outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders. In many cases, Indigenous Land Use Agreements with mining companies are already providing a broad framework to deliver economic development and employment opportunities.

Despite some successful industry initiatives, Indigenous Queenslanders remain significantly under-represented in resources sector employment relative to their representation in the region's population. This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Queensland Government and the QRC aims to ensure that Indigenous people share in the prosperity being generated by the resources sector in Queensland, and to assist the resources sector meet its future demand for labour.

Both parties share the vision of skilled and prosperous Indigenous people and communities, and recognise that the Government needs to work in partnership with the State's resources sector and with Indigenous Queenslanders to contribute to sustainable regional economies and Indigenous communities.

This partnership will build on existing agreements, such as the Western Cape Communities Co-existence Agreement and the Gulf Communities Agreement.

The Queensland Government and the QRC are committed to the long term engagement required to boost Indigenous participation in the sector.

Area of impact

The MOU will be progressively implemented statewide, across mining centres, initially in the Northern Economic Triangle and subsequently in the Bowen Basin. This sequential approach will increase the MOU's likelihood of success in promoting Indigenous employment and developing Indigenous business capacity.

Northern Economic Triangle

The area of North and North West Queensland within the triangle of Mount Isa, Townsville and Bowen has the potential to become one of the world's great export zones, largely due to the region's enormous untapped minerals wealth. The Queensland Government has committed to a blueprint of infrastructure development designed to realise this region's potential as a mining and mineral processing hub.

Bowen Basin

The Bowen Basin – the region bordered by Collinsville, Theodore, Biloela and Clermont – has long been one of Queensland's most successful coal deposits. With rising international demand for Queensland coal, it is likely to remain a vibrant contributor to the State's economy.

Key focus areas

Over the next three years, the Queensland Government and the QRC – through its member companies - will work together, and with relevant Indigenous groups and organisations, to develop and implement regional resource industry employment and enterprise development projects that improve the standard of living of Indigenous Queenslanders through:

- education and training, including work readiness programs;
- increased employment of local Indigenous people; and
- Indigenous enterprise development linked to and servicing the resources sector.

Education and training, including work readiness

The parties recognise that the attainment of relevant educational and vocational qualifications is vital for Indigenous Queenslanders to access employment opportunities in the resources sector. In addition, there are a number of skills and attributes that

Indigenous Queenslanders require to successfully gain employment, beyond those acquired through the formal education and training system. The parties therefore commit to work together to develop innovative programs to improve outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders in the following areas:

- attendance, participation, achievement, retention and re-engagement in education and training, including work readiness programs;
- literacy and numeracy;
- commencement and completion of apprenticeships and traineeships related to the resources sector;
- customised training pathways that lead to employment or higher education;
- mentoring and support programs and services to assist Indigenous people to successfully complete education and training;
- parental and community involvement in education and training;
- motivation to become and remain engaged in education, training and employment; and
- standards of health and fitness required to obtain and remain in employment.

Actions will also build on existing joint ventures such as the Mining Industry Skills Centre and the Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy.

Increased employment of local Indigenous people

To build sustainable Indigenous communities, it is critical that local Indigenous people are employed. For this reason, the parties commit to work together to:

- increase the number of local Indigenous people employed in the resources sector – including related support services industries on site;
- increase the number of local Indigenous people accessing higher level jobs, through the development of career paths across the resources sector;
- support mentoring programs to assist Indigenous Queenslanders prosper in their employment;
- improve cultural awareness, appreciation and acceptance across the resources sector, for example through: professional development for mining company, Government and Indigenous organisations on Indigenous community development as it relates to resource projects; and site level strategies to attract, support and retain an Indigenous workforce;
- support for Indigenous Queenslanders to access employment near their community including via suitable transport; and
- promote good practice in Indigenous employment and enterprise.

Indigenous enterprise development linked to the resources sector

The parties recognise that major mining developments have a multiplier effect in generating other economic opportunities and indirect employment in other businesses. The development of Indigenous businesses ensures that Indigenous people share in the wider economic benefits arising from mining, and build prosperous and sustainable Indigenous communities that live on beyond the life of mining in the region. The parties therefore commit to:

- Support the establishment and ongoing viability of local Indigenous businesses;
- Support Indigenous entrepreneurs working in the resources sector to network and identify enterprise opportunities both linked to and beyond the resources sector;
- Use existing Queensland Government policies such as the *Indigenous Employment Policy for Queensland Government Building and Civil Construction Projects* and the *State Government Building and Construction Contracts Structured Training Policy* to support the employment and skills development of local Indigenous people in construction projects related to the resources sector;
- Mentor and partner with local non-Indigenous businesses; and
- Develop programs to provide Indigenous Queenslanders with the training needed to operate a business.

Implementation

Implementation of this MOU over the next three years will be overseen by a Steering Committee comprising representatives of the Queensland Government and the QRC. The Australian Government's present participation in supporting Indigenous employment and enterprise in the resources sector, in conjunction with the Minerals Council of Australia, is welcomed, and its further involvement in the achievement of the MOU's objectives will be invited.

Both parties recognise that local level implementation of programs is critical to effectively deliver positive Indigenous employment outcomes, and will work to develop "local solutions to local challenges" with traditional owners and other local Indigenous stakeholders, so that site-based strategies address the needs of individual operators and local communities.

Where appropriate, strategies could be developed as part of the Local Indigenous Partnership Agreements being negotiated with Indigenous communities and the Queensland Government.

**The Honourable Peter Beattie MP
Premier and Minister for Trade**

**Michael Roche
Chief Executive Officer
Queensland Resources Council**

**The Honourable Warren Pitt MP
Minister for Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Partnerships**

**Yarrabah
23 July 2007**