

7 February 2006



Submission No.	89a
Date Received	6-2-07

The Secretary,  
Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs,  
House of Representatives,  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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BY: ATSLA

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Additional Information to Submission made on 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2005**

On 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2005, the Chamber made a submission to the Inquiry. The following is to update the information available at that time as well as to suggest that the higher the levels of support and co-operation between all parties the more likely we are to achieve genuine, lasting and sustainable change for Aboriginal people. At present the provision of services to Aboriginal people is considered to be fractured and consequently ineffectual.

Since the previous submission the following has occurred:

- Under the auspices of the Chamber, an information session was held on 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2005 about the best practice option for the education, training and employment of Aboriginal people in operation at Rio Tinto's Pilbara Iron. The session was presented by the company's Training Manager to an audience comprising senior management from State Government - Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST), Department of Trade and Economic Development (DTED) and Primary Industries and Resources SA (PIRSA), industry (all those companies in operation/about to go into operation) and the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement (ALRM). The meeting also noted that a Graham (Polly) Farmer Centre, sponsored by the Western Australian Foundation of the same name, would be opening in Port Augusta in the second term of 2006. The Centres (this is the 9<sup>th</sup> Centre and the first in South Australia) are designed to assist young Aboriginal people in a secure environment, after school hours, to achieve success at Year 12.

**The meeting resolved** that a) it endorse both programs as desirable for implementation across the State and b) this could best be achieved through the co-operative and co-ordinated effort of all those present, as well as input from the Federal Government.

- A group comprising PIRSA, DFEEST, DTED and the Chamber made a recommendation to State Cabinet in January 2006, that a Minerals Resources Skills Centre be established to address the skills shortages in this industry, within which a state wide strategy for Aboriginal people would be included. Research commissioned by this group indicates that demand for additional staff in the Upper Spencer Gulf and across all mining in South Australia will be of the order of about 17,000 by 2010 of whom about 4000 will require VET qualifications.

South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy Incorporated

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sacome: the peak industry association for the resources industry in south australia • influencing government policy and regulation • lobbying and advocating for resources companies • maintaining networks of influential government and community contacts • providing information of relevance to resources companies and the community • facilitating opportunities for resources companies to be consulted on matters of importance • hosting social and networking opportunities • promoting the resources industry • progressing strategies designed to achieve and maintain a safe, sustainable and profitable resources industry

ABN 62 620 804 910

- The State-wide Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) process (Negotiating Group) has attracted a grant from the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources to support a project to co-ordinate activities that will engage Aboriginal people in the resources industry.
- The ALRM has presented to the Main Table of the ILUA State-wide Negotiation Group, a strategy for identifying young Aboriginal people from within each Native Title Claim group, for selection into the opportunities available within the resources sector.
- The Chamber has been successful in obtaining grant money from the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations for 2006, to help co-ordinate and implement the above strategies as they relate to Aboriginal people.

At the meeting held in December to discuss and seek endorsement for the establishment of a Mineral Resources Skills Centre, feedback from the industry provided the following insights:

- It wants to draw an identified percentage of its workforce from the region in which it is working.
- It wants creative thinking put towards the way students are attracted into the industry and into associated education programs.
- It wants a co-ordination of effort; and a break away from what it describes as the 'fog' of training and education options.
- It wants a commitment from State and Federal Governments to improve the quality and attractiveness of science as an option to growing the intellectual capacity of the industry and the nation.
- It wants a commitment from State and Federal Governments to the provision of high quality geoscience and mining engineering programs at South Australian universities.

From the perspective of Aboriginal people, to whom we talk during the course of our negotiations, we know that there is strong demand to be in a position to share in the wealth and wellbeing of the rest of the nation.

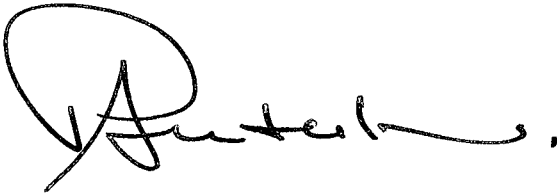
The industry recognises that it is one that has been exposed to 'boom and bust'. However, forecasts for the next decade (at least) suggest that the current growth has a level of expected endurance into the longer term than has previously been experienced. With regard to attracting and retaining Aboriginal people into the industry, it recognises its social obligations but over and above that, sees great benefit to the business in being able to employ from within local communities. And in the end, it has to be recognised, that the resources industry is the most likely large employer working in remote and regional South Australia in a position to have a positive impact on Aboriginal people.

In conclusion therefore, the greatest contribution that this Inquiry can make to the employment of Aboriginal people in this State is to:

- Support the co-ordination of effort.
- Support the resources industry in attracting and retaining young Aboriginal people through the provision of any additional resources that will ensure their successful achievement as fully involved members of our wider community. Specifically this is known to include intensive individual support through the secondary and tertiary education systems, developing strategies that will enable young people to maintain their family obligations within the workplace without penalty to industry, assisting industry with the appropriate cultural change that it may need to undertake with traditional/white employees and contractors to assist them in understanding the relevance of such factors in retaining and growing Aboriginal people in the workplace. It will probably also include the involvement of Aboriginal communities in understanding the social and economic benefits that can accrue to them in supporting their youth.

We thank the Inquiry for its consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phillip Sutherland', with a large loop at the start and a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Phillip Sutherland**  
Chief Executive