

Committee Secretary
Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia



Senate Inquiry into the Regional Partnerships Program

Submission from:

Pilbara Area Consultative Committee Inc.
Suite 5/7 Morse Court
Karratha WA 6714

This Submission is in two parts (plus attachments):

- PAGE 1: PART 1 - Background on the Pilbara Area Consultative Committee and the Regional Partnerships Programme
- PAGE 3: PART 2 - Case study examples of Regional Partnerships projects in the Pilbara, with particular emphasis on the process by which projects are proposed, considered and submitted for funding
- PAGE 8: Attachment 1 – Pilbara ACC Board Members
- PAGE 9: Attachment 2 – Approved Regional Partnerships projects, Pilbara WA

PART 1: BACKGROUND

The Pilbara Area Consultative Committee is a non-profit organisation incorporated under the WA Incorporations Act 1987, and operates as part of the Australian Government's Network of Area Consultative Committees, with an annual funding contract with the Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS).

The primary role of the Committee is to provide a conduit between the region that we serve (the Pilbara Region of Western Australia) and the Australian Government. We assist the Government in the delivery of government programmes that are aimed at helping regional Australia to grow and prosper, under the framework of the Stronger Regions, A Stronger Australia policy (2001).

The chairman and the volunteer Board members (**see Attachment 1 for details of Pilbara ACC Board members**) provide advice to the Government through assessing, endorsing and making recommendations on funding applications from the region, under programmes such as Regional Partnerships Programme and, until recently, the Indigenous Employment Programme, for projects that support regional economic growth, sustainable employment and social opportunities. The Board also determines organisational policy and strategic direction, and has administrative oversight of the Pilbara ACC.

The Pilbara ACC employs three staff with annual funding from DOTARS, who assist the Board in the day-to-day delivery of its three-year Strategic Regional Plan 2004-2007 and an Annual Business Plan.

The Pilbara ACC's Vision is to Promote and encourage regional, social and environmental enterprise with business government and the community. Our Mission is to aspire to have the Pilbara Community respect, value and trust our Regional Development capabilities so much that they actively seek us out.

The Pilbara ACC supports significant projects in the region that demonstrate a planned, cooperative approach and that lead to regional economic development, employment and social opportunities. In particular, the committee gives priority to projects that address needs in four main areas:

- Priority 1:** Improve local community facilities, services or living amenity
- Priority 2:** Fostering or developing economic diversity within the region
- Priority 3:** Increasing local and indigenous employment opportunities.
- Priority 4:** Providing or improving tourism infrastructure and servicing.

This support is provided through the assistance of the Board members and staff, and through the Board's recommendations to the Australian Government for funding and support for projects from a variety of Australian Government funding programmes and services. In particular, the Pilbara ACC has been working since the introduction of Regional Partnerships on July 1, 2003, to ensure that this programme is successfully and equitably delivered in the Pilbara Region.

The Guidelines for Regional Partnerships state that the Australian Government will partner projects that focus on:

- Projects that strengthen and provide greater opportunities for economic and social participation in the community.
- Projects that, in a cost effective and sustainable way, support communities to access services.
- Projects that assist communities to identify and explore opportunities and to develop strategies for action, and
- Projects that assist specifically identified communities and regions to adjust to major economic, social or environmental change.

The Guidelines identify possible successful projects as demonstrating:

- Benefits for the community by meeting a demonstrated need or community demand for the project's outcomes; filling a market gap; adding value to existing resources, products or business, and/or
- Creating or enhancing opportunities in the community by establishing new, diversified or expanded businesses in response to demonstrated markets; creating new economic/employment opportunities, including job creation; providing infrastructure that enhances economic/social opportunities; enhancing interaction in the community that will lead to an improvement in the community as a whole; delivering diversification of skills and/or demographics in a location; or, increasing the uptake of innovation, best practice or new technologies.

Since the introduction of the Regional Partnerships Programme in 2003, the Pilbara ACC has dealt with scores of inquiries regarding the Regional Partnerships Programme, however, only a total of 45 projects proceeded to formal applications as at 31 December, 2004. The total funding requested for these projects is \$8,006,882 with the total project cost being \$33,723,533. Twelve projects have been approved as at 31 December, 2004, with \$1,615,575 from Regional Partnerships for projects worth \$9,264,698. **(See Attachment 2 for approved Pilbara WA projects)**

The Pilbara ACC Board considers all applications against the Regional Partnerships assessment criteria, and the regional priorities, as stated in our three-year Strategic Regional Plan 2004-2007.

PART 2: CASE STUDY EXAMPLES

This section provides four examples of Regional Partnerships Programme projects, showing the process undertaken by the Pilbara ACC.

In particular, it addresses the Inquiry's Terms of Reference 1, 1 (a), 1 (b) and 1 (f).

Case study 1: Gumala Lore Grounds

Applicant: Gumala Aboriginal Corp

Funding approved: \$96, 107

Project cost: \$272,213

Gumala is the corporate body for four language groups (Bunjima, Innawonga, Wakathuni, Nyiarparli) in the wider Tom Price region of Western Australia. Gumala operates many small businesses that employ and train indigenous people in work from administration to catering, mining and labouring. A board comprised of indigenous elders and local business identities guides Gumala. These people oversee that all profits of the corporation are sown back into the Indigenous language groups through further business investment, training or social improvement.

One such idea was the construction of simple shade, toilet and messing facilities as well as a potable water bore sunk at the four main lore grounds, of Bellary, Wakathuni, Cane River, and Youngaleena. Aboriginal lore continues to be practiced within the indigenous people of the Pilbara. It is a healthy activity of ongoing celebration, meetings, marriage and rites of passage for these people working within a religion that is at least five times older than the birth of Christ. The facilities to be built at each lore ground would allow people to sleep, cook, eat, and ablute in a measure of comfort. Along with the building of these structures, traditional bush tucker and bush medicine trees and shrubs were planted to not only provide food, but would also assist in the teaching of traditional ways.

Larry Softley, Gumala's CEO approached the Pilbara ACC seeking funding to assist in the project. Gumala was to provide \$70,000 cash and the unskilled labour for the project. Larry had organised several other bodies to provide either cash or in kind support. Rio Tinto, a large mining company located in Tom Price, offered plant and equipment and operators for the project. The WA government through the Pilbara Development Commission (\$45, 000) and LotteryWest (\$70,000) was also a cash contributor. Other in kind support came from groups such as the Indigenous Community Volunteer program providing a Builder, while Conservation Volunteers Australia provided skilled trade labour.

All four facilities have been completed allowing these people to practice their culture & tradition in peace, and now, in comfort.

This outcome has only been possible because of the tenacity of community champions, like Larry Softley, and a unique funding programme like Regional Partnerships.

Case study 2: Pilbara Sustainable Living Project

Applicant: Town of Port Hedland

Funding approved: \$110,000

Project cost: \$690,800

The Pilbara is one of the harshest environments to live in Australia. Summer daytime temperatures hover between 38-45 degrees, rainfall is delivered by infrequent cyclonic conditions, while winter night temperatures will often fall below zero. To call the Pilbara a land of extremes is not understated.

The Pilbara Sustainable Living Project is the idea of Kelly Howlett, the environmental officer working for the Town of Port Hedland. Kelly recognised that the housing in the region was constructed for living in cooler, less severe climates than that offered by the Pilbara. Consequently, the average 3 bedroom house would spend between \$600-\$800 a month on electricity. Other costs such as water were equally unsustainable to the region. Therefore, Kelly developed a project that would see the construction of an Eco House built to showcase the best of breed technologies for passive cool and warmth, water management and power generation. The house was to be built to withstand a category 5 cyclone, and would be a modern comfortable living amenity for a working family.

Kelly sought funding through the *Regional Partnerships Programme* along with other funding agencies. The Town of Port Hedland purchased the land for the house; The WA Government through LotteryWest contributed funds, while the Department of Housing and Works provided in kind support such as drafting. Many construction businesses provided labour and products to be showcased in the house.

The house is in process of construction, but when completed will be an excellent example of how people can live in a harsh environment such as the Pilbara and still maintain a small ecological footprint. Combined with this is the direct reduction of large costs such as electricity and water that impact so many people in the region.

This outcome has only been possible because of the tenacity of community champions, like Kelly Howlett, and a unique funding programme like Regional Partnerships.

Case study 3: Wangka Maya Indigenous Language Centre

Applicant: Wangka Maya Inc

Funding approved: \$495,000

Project cost: \$1,500,000

Wangka Maya is the Indigenous Language centre for the Pilbara. There are approximately 35 languages in the Pilbara region, and many are listed as endangered. Wangka Maya has recorded tapes and books in these languages so that, while they may never be spoken again, the richness of these people will not be lost. Wangka Maya is guided by an indigenous chair and committee taken from elders of the communities.

Along with these languages Wangka Maya also teaches the three main Pilbara languages of Martu, Injibarndi and Nyangamarta in schools and TAFE. Combined with this is the provision of regional interpreters for mining companies, conducting cultural awareness courses and general promotion of the Indigenous people in the region. Wangka Maya also facilitates meetings held between different language group elders to discuss issues and challenges that face their people.

To maintain this activity the centre employs full time four university trained and five indigenous linguists. One individual speaks eight languages and is able to converse in several others.

The centre has outgrown its current office accommodation and now needs to establish a purpose built language centre.

Fran Haintz, the coordinator of Wangka Maya sought funding of \$1.5M to construct this facility. She approached several bodies to part fund the construction. Wangka Maya provided a direct contribution of \$150,000 cash and \$150,000 in kind support. ATSIIS contributed \$250,000 in cash, with the remainder split between BHP-Billiton, the Pilbara Development Commission and the Town of Port Hedland.

The centre will commence construction in early 2005, and will provide a much needed niche social industry between the indigenous people, mining industry, and wider community of the Pilbara

This outcome has only been possible because of the tenacity of community champions, like Fran Haintz, and a unique funding programme like Regional Partnerships.

Case study 4: Tambrey Sports and Recreation Centre

Applicant: Lambton Property Trust

Funding approved: \$119,000

Project cost: \$3,200,000

The Tambrey Centre is a sports and recreation facility built by Woodside in the 1980's. Allowed to run down over the years by a series of owners it was bought in late 2003 by Lambton Property Trust Pty Ltd. Attached to the building are tennis and squash courts, sports oval and small swimming pool. In the building is a large amphitheatre, conference rooms, bar, bistro and outdoor dining area. Most of these facilities were in poor repair and under serviced. Consequently, the centre employed only three staff, with a turnover to match.

Terry Leo, chairperson of Lambton approached the Pilbara ACC seeking cash contribution for the restoration and recovery of certain parts of the building. Lampton was prepared to fund the majority of the project however sought financial assistance for improvements to the kitchen, bistro, and outdoor dining area.

Terry believed that once the improvements were made to the centre, he expected to increase employment by another ten positions. The Pilbara ACC saw this a wonderful opportunity to create new jobs for young Australians who wish to work in an industry not related to the mining or gas industry. Terry Leo has a history of creating employment in Karratha, and was seen as a low risk proponent.

Twelve months later, with the works completed the Tambrey has increased its workforce by thirty-six new employees. Three cooks are working from the kitchen using the improvements funded through the *Regional Partnerships Programme*. Hospitality staff are employed in the bistro and outdoor dining area.

This project has seen the reinvigoration of a local icon for the towns of Karratha and Dampier. Sports clubs, individuals and families are now common frequenters of the centre. The creation of new jobs for the town is a real outcome and justifies the funding from the *Regional Partnerships Programme*

This outcome has only been possible because of the tenacity of community champions, like Terry Leo, and a unique funding programme like Regional Partnerships.

CONCLUSION

These four case studies are representative of the Regional Partnerships Programme approvals in the Pilbara of WA. All the projects approved to date, whether from community or business organisations, businesses or local government, demonstrate that Regional Partnerships facilitates a "bottom up" process in regional development with communities seeking their own solutions to issues. Community champions (like the ones in these examples) are the key ingredient in these successful projects, and need to be supported.

(Submission prepared by: Cameron Simpkins, Executive Officer, Pilbara Area Consultative Committee Inc, phone (08) 9144 0651; email pacceo@pacc.pilbara.net; PO Box 1404, Karratha, WA, 6714.

Submission endorsed by: Tony Ford, chairman; Rhys Edwards, Gloria Jacob, Allen Cooper, Executive Committee).

ATTACHMENT 1

Pilbara ACC Board of Management

Mr Tony Ford (Interim Chairman) Port Hedland

A long-time resident of the Pilbara Region, businessman and property developer Tony is a strong advocate for the region's economic development.

Mr Rhys Edwards (Treasurer) Karratha

An accountant, Rhys owns a local accountancy business that spans many communities of the Pilbara. A long time resident, Rhys sits on many not for profit boards in the region.

Mr Allen Cooper (Secretary) Newman

Allen is the CEO of the Shire of East Pilbara. The largest shire in the world, Allen's region includes several smaller towns and aboriginal desert communities.

Ms Gloria Jacob (Executive Member) Port Hedland

The owner of Hedland Home Hardware, Gloria is a long time resident of Port Hedland. Heavily involved in sports, arts, and community groups, Gloria is also a mother of two boys.

Mr Alan Scott

Alan is the director of Pundalmurra TAFE, for indigenous students.

Mr Cedric Wyatt

A former DG for the WA Govt Dept of Indigenous Affairs, Cedric is currently the CEO of Jigalong Aboriginal Community in the Great Sandy Desert.

Ms Fiona Grierson

Fiona is the regional coordinator for the WA Govt Dept of Education and Training. A strong advocate of indigenous youth.

Ms Kathy Barrett-Lennard

A member of an old Pilbara family, Kathy has two masters' degrees in science and business. Kathy has worked with Woodside on the North West Gas project, and BGC on other expansion projects.

Mr Louis Warren

The manager for BHP Billiton Indigenous Affairs department. Louis has a master's degree in Anthropology.

Mr Mark Simpson

Mark is the manager of Aboriginal training and liaison for Rio Tinto.

Ms Phoebe Gilbert

Phoebe is the manager for Centrelink in the Pilbara.

Mr Mark Hewitt

Mark is the regional manager for the Department of Indigenous Affairs. Mark has an eclectic background including diamond selling in Belgium, owner operator of an emerald mine in Cue WA, a Buddhist monk for seven years, and was the Australian White water Kayak champion for two years in the 1970's.

Mr Steve Shilkin

Steve has a background in property development and construction. He currently works as the CEO of Purrngurr community.

Mr David Barton

David owns Mundabullanganah station. A large cattle property located East of Karratha; David's family has owned this property for three generations.

ATTACHMENT 2**APPROVED REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS PROJECTS, PILBARA WA, AS AT DECEMBER 2004**

<i>ACC Reviewed</i>	<i>Project Owner</i>	<i>Short Description</i>	<i>\$ Regional Partnerships Funding</i>	<i>Total Project Funding</i>
Jun-04	Aqua Carotene Limited	Export Aquaculture business for health & nutritional materials	\$170,181.00	\$460,700.00
Apr-04	Children's Services Support Unit	Upgrade to Bulgarra Daycare Centre	\$50,000.00	\$220,000.00
Mar-04	Charles Van Herk	Cove Caravan Park Construction, Point Samson	\$250,000.00	\$1,150,000.00
Jan-04	Cossack Café	Improvements to heritage listed Café	\$32,000.00	\$64,000.00
Jan-04	Gumala Corporation	Improvements to lore grounds	\$96,107.00	\$272,213.00
Dec-03	Wangka Maya Inc	Purpose built Indigenous Language Centre	\$495,000.00	\$1,500,000.00
Dec-03	Town Of Port Hedland	Sustainable House Living Project	\$110,000.00	\$690,800.00
Dec-03	North West Dive Safari	Regional Dive and Tourist Business	\$12,924.00	\$40,772.00
Dec-03	Shire of Roebourne	Construction of Roebourne Youth Precinct	\$197,927.00	\$1,465,087.00
Dec-03	Tambrey Development Trust	Improvements to the Tambrey Community Centre	\$119,000.00	\$3,200,000.00
Dec-03	Shire of East Pilbara	Marble Bar Heritage Trail Walk	\$60,000.00	\$171,490.00
Nov-03	Town of Port Hedland	South Hedland Play group outdoor shaded play equipment	\$22,436.00	\$39,636.00
Totals			\$1,615,575.00	\$9,264,698.00