



Toni Matulick  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Select Committee on Regional and Remote Aboriginal Communities  
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CANBERRA ACT 2600  
Australia

Dear Ms Matulick

**SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL AND REMOTE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES**

Further to recent communication between yourself and Mr Graham Ellis-Smith of this office, attached is the Commissions submission to the Senate Select Committee on Regional and Remote Aboriginal Communities.

The Commission considers resolution of the significant socio-economic issues faced by Aboriginal people in our Region as highly important, and appreciates the opportunity to make these issues known to the Committee. This submission is purposely brief to facilitate the process; however, please be aware they are important for the more than 3,800 Aboriginal people in our Region.

Also, in accordance with your discussion with Mr Ellis-Smith, we look forward to receiving information on the three Western Australian Senators on the Committee and the opportunity to meet with them on these issues.

Yours sincerely

**DAVID SINGE**  
Acting Chief Executive Officer

25 June 2009

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## **SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL & REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES JUNE 2009**

### **Introduction**

Wheatbelt Development Commissions'(WDC) primary focus with Wheatbelt Regional Aboriginal people is in culturally appropriate economic development, recognizing its links to mental, social and physical wellbeing and its' potential in creating a happy and sustainable lifestyle. This is reflected strongly in the Commission's indigenous economic development strategy, "*Karl-Ung-Kep: Fire with Water; Indigenous Wealth Ways in the Wheatbelt Region of Western Australia*". A summary is attached in Appendix 1. Central to the strategy is the need to address multiple aspects affecting a person or community's capacity to participate in mainstream economics. In the Wheatbelt Region, similar to groups nationwide, this interrelationship is practically expressed through the land.

WDC recognizes this interrelationship as important and has gradually increased efforts and attention over the past four years in developing land-based-activity projects with direct and indirect employment outcomes. Projects at Cataby, Moora, Northam/York and Wagin generally incorporate indigenous desires with mainstream economics through industries in tree farming, natural resource management, nature conservation and heritage management.

Most projects are new and require high facilitator attention, management and resources to bring to fruition. This has been provided in the past but WDC's work in this area is currently suspended due to lack of Government funding. On receipt of funds, WDC will increase its role. Otherwise, without funding, the Commission is reluctant to encourage project proponents to greater development efforts if WDC is unable to continue assisting.

### **Inhibiting Factors in the Current Federal and State Government Approaches.**

1. Population dispersal and demographics of the Wheatbelt Region mean lack of critical mass in most places. There are approximately 3,800 Aboriginal people spread across approximately 150,000 square kilometres; number from 7 to 700 in different communities.

2. Loss of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission also meant funding for Aboriginal organisations virtually ceased overnight, causing folding of local representative groups and loss of any capacity to operate their organisations and in turn generate opportunities. Many small town-based organisations and the Wheatbelt Aboriginal Corporation, an 'umbrella' service organisation also ceased operation in this time.

3. Needs and issues are similar to mainstream remote and urban populations, often just less obvious to general observation. Our current Mapping and Gap Analysis on indigenous service delivery is incomplete but already identifies need for greater regional focus and flexibility in service delivery. Regional decision making in service delivery is imperative if regionally specific solutions are to be developed and actually work.

4. Current service delivery models used by State and Federal Government required to deal with issues and economic development are not working.

For example, previous encounters such as:

- Northam meeting in May 2005- complete mismatch between community members economic development needs and what Indigenous Coordination Centre(ICC) had to offer. No other alternatives.
- Billinue Community attempts to access service over 4.5 years completely frustrated and almost impossible to achieve.

- Strong, competent indigenous applicant in Great Southern, 2 year 'run-a-round' by ICC for nothing.

5. Services are designed centrally; on a "one size fits all" premise. This does not allow for regional difference. Federal service funding and delivery models are often designed in Canberra and may not even suit Western Australia, let alone individual regions.

This critical point has been made recently by at least three political/community leaders in Western Australia. It was clearly expressed by Lt Gen John Sanderson, then Special Advisor to the Premier on Indigenous Issues in 2007 in his Order of Australia Annual Oration titled "*A Return To Government By The People*" when speaking of the loss of regional presence and governance;

"One thing I do understand however is that nowhere else in the world is such an absurdity compounded everyday as in Australia where we attempt to govern this vast and complex country from ministerial offices and bureaucracies in places like Canberra or Perth"(p5)

and,

"Such centralisation must be doomed to failure. Our founding fathers knew this and attempted to balance our constitutional laws so that the people and the regions in which they lived would remain actively engaged in the processes of determining their destinies"(p5).

As you probably know, General Sanderson is now Chairman of the Indigenous Implementation Board for the Western Australian Government.

Mr Ben Wyatt, MLA for Victoria Park also expressed this in 2007 through his Discussion Paper title "*Regional Development: The tale of Two Economies,*" where he says

"A regional governance structure, financially empowered and appropriately legislated, is the only way by which public policy can effectively be delivered" p1

The Hon Fred Chaney, on retiring as Deputy Chair of the Native Title Tribunal, in April 2007 also stated this in his interview with Kerry O'Brien on the ABC; where he said

"And one of the things I think we should have learned by now is that you can't solve these things by centralised bureaucrat direction. You can only educate children in a school at the place where they live. You can only give people jobs or get people into employment person by person. And I think my own view now is that the lesson we've learned is that you need local, locally based action, local resourcing, local control to really make changes."(transcript available on request)

Therefore, based on 'One Size Fits All', there is complete lack of understanding of population demographics and capacity limits. Government processes also ask indigenous people to come up with ideas when they don't know potential options. This is handballing responsibility in the guise of self determination.

6. Indigenous Business Australia(IBA) services are inadequate and dangerously under funded per tasks. For example, based on a competitive tender process, their consultants are

obliged to quote low prices (therefore less time) to win the contract. Therefore, Aboriginal people get the person who is going to give them the *least* amount of time and input. This does not promote strong relationships between community/business aspirant and the consultant; and enable the consultant to fully assess capacity to create and operate the business. There are also serious issues about consultants' capacity to deliver products that are useful for the community, beyond satisfying the needs of bureaucracies or financial institutions. This is easily verified by comparing the number of Feasibility Studies or Business Plans prepared, by IBA, with the number of successful Aboriginal businesses operating with those documents.

7. Shared Responsibility Agreements and Regional Partnership Agreements are the primary (and often only) tool on offer from Commonwealth and aren't generally possible due to demographics and lack of capacity.

8. There are significant gaps in indigenous economic development service delivery by both State and Federal Governments.

- WDC is the only State agency focussed on indigenous economic development in the Region, but is no longer funded to deliver these services.

- The Western Australian Governments' Aboriginal Economic Development unit in the Department of Commerce was providing some minor assistance, but was closed on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June by Government. It is unclear what alternative arrangements will be made for delivery of their services state-wide.

- The Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) was also given responsibility for indigenous economic development in 2007; however it is still unclear as to how and when this will be undertaken in the Wheatbelt Region.

- Other than funding CDEP centres, Commonwealth Government agencies such as DEEWR and other ICC agencies have done very little in the Region since 2004. IBA is currently assessing how they may be able to assist, but there are significant issues with those services as mentioned previously.

10. It is not that there is not enough funding allocated to Indigenous activity, just that the funding is not flexible and there is no ability of local people to design projects that they really need and to fit into the funding. That is, we are not sure more money is needed, just that a different process of administering and using the funding is needed. Again this is supported by the statements of the three leaders mentioned above.

### **WDC Approach**

WDC suggests both short and long term solutions to advance the socio-economic wellbeing of regional indigenous people.

Short term need is for Government to direct project based funding through the Commission, during the next three financial years to provide stability and continuity to the service. Using the experience, facilitation services and capacity building offered by the Commission and directing Project Specific funding through key focal groups has the following benefits:

1. Land-based activities currently identified, initiated and partly developed as key avenue for employment and economic development. Increased funding will continue development.
2. Recognises, describes and utilises a multi-faceted approach. ie Orchid Model
3. Cultural and organic in structure and implementation.

4. Deals with each group/community on its own 'ground'. (One size doesn't fit all)
5. Builds 'internal and external capacity'.
6. Identifies, develops and works with potential leaders.
7. Is Project based and Outcome focussed.
8. Strongly supported by regional indigenous people.
9. It works; is producing results now.

Through working closely with Regional Aboriginal people, WDC has identified the need to build or create useful and appropriate 'pathways' and linkages to work. The clearest example of this is in the creation of work gang/employment services (Wagin, York) that are provided by a parent company acting as a contractor in land-based-activities. This requires strong support in training and facilitation to achieve 'job readiness' in the field workers. Once the work gangs are formed they earn enough to be self supporting.

There are also significant capacity issues requiring funding resources at the company level to facilitate the long term viability of the employment structures. As previously mentioned WDC has provided this service in the past but is no longer. The 3 year funding proposal suggested here would enable WDC to continue and expand this work in preparation for hand-over to DIA.

The long term solution is for the State Government Department of Indigenous Affairs to clarify its role in indigenous economic development and develop a regional presence. If this is not going to happen, then the above solution needs to be adequately resourced.

# KARL UNG KEP (Fire with Water)

## Indigenous Wealth Ways in the Wheatbelt Region of Western Australia

### Introduction

Various indigenous economic and social development strategies and action plans have been negotiated, consulted, written and implemented Australia wide since the Australian Government took responsibility for indigenous affairs over 30 years ago. There have been some positive achievements and yet the statistics on indigenous health, wealth, juvenile crime, domestic violence, incarceration, education, employment and life expectancy do not show acceptable improvement commensurate with the money and effort applied; and instead reflects living standards far below the national average. Various State Government policies and strategies over the same time period have not worked either. This document starts at this recognition, that

*whatever we have been doing, for all the good intent and small achievements along the way, has not worked for indigenous people in general, and certainly not for Wheatbelt Region indigenous people.*

Wheatbelt Development Commission (WDC) has invested nearly two years fieldwork in meeting with indigenous people and relevant government agency staff, facilitating local and Regional economic initiatives, and developing this document. All parties engaged strongly recognise the inadequacies of previous policies and practices to create social and economic well-being for indigenous people in the Region. Wheatbelt Development Commission (WDC) outlines in this document a holistic approach that has potential to make significant positive changes in this complex and challenging field.

### Proposed New Model

WDC suggests a new model is required, a new way of thinking about and dealing with Indigenous Economic Development (IED). The new model suggested here titled "*KARLUNG KEP: Indigenous Wealth Ways in the Wheatbelt Region of Western Australia*" incorporates indigenous and non-indigenous individuals and agencies in a cooperative mutually beneficial process. It identifies needs and facilitates progress in five factors or key aspects of *indigenous people's internal and external capacity to improve economically: Cultural-Environmental, Social-Emotional, Male Ways, Female Ways and Vocational*; and provides several other organic graphics to assist the development process. This document provides an overview of the new model.

### Title & Graphics

The title *Karl Ung Kep-Indigenous Wealth Ways* has been chosen to reflect the coming together of seemingly separate and different elements, ideas, concepts, people and agencies to create indigenous wealth. The document is therefore designed and presented in written and graphic form in a very different way, to facilitate a different mindset regarding Indigenous Economic Development and be usable for Regional Aboriginal people in their economic endeavours. The title intentionally leaves out the word '*strategy*' as it is perceived to carry a long history related to low achievement in this field. The title meanings are:

'**Karl ung Kep**' (Noongar language) means 'fire with water' and denotes combination of apparent opposite elements to create something greater than the individual elements alone;

'**Indigenous**' refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in or closely attached to the Region, regardless of their birth country origins;

'**Wealth**' has a more expansive meaning than merely financial acquisition, although this is still important. Wealth is explored as an appreciation and interrelationship with numerous aspects in life; sense of physical, mental, spiritual and emotional wellbeing, sense of belonging, physical comforts etc. It is a multifaceted concept to consider and develop;

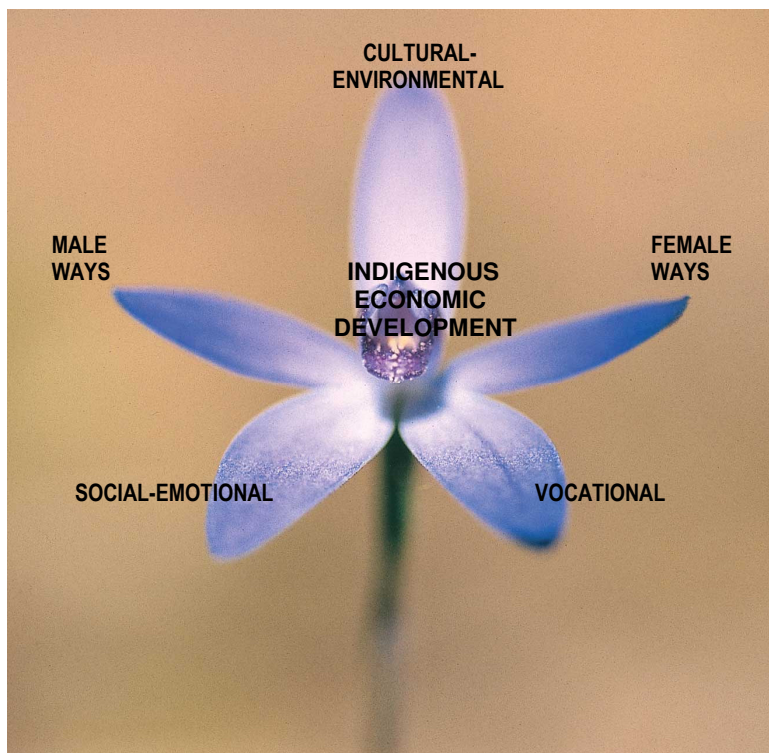
'**Ways**' describe the potential processes and pathways that can contribute to this generation of holistic wealth. Non-indigenous culture is obsessed with the need for short-term measurable outcomes; often at the expense of appropriate and necessary process and consideration of all the factors affecting IED. The term 'ways' used here implies processes that are culturally appropriate, relevant and respectful; while fulfilling the requirements of Government systems.

Generally, economic development strategies have tended to focus most attention in the *Vocational* aspect, and ignore the other four; or don't recognise their role in affecting peoples' capacity to develop economically. Usually we have been more focussed on the *functional* outcomes common to the Vocational aspect (get a job!); often paying minimal attention to the *relational* factors affecting the person, both positively and negatively, in their ability to gain employment or to participate in the Region's mainstream economy.

*In this way, strategies often reflect non-indigenous ways of thinking that tends to neglect the importance of spiritual, social, cultural and environmental factors, relationships and expressions in creating wealth.*

In contrast, the model and associated graphics used here are *relational*, natural and organic; reflecting the importance of relationship with the natural environment in the creation of wealth for indigenous people. It is the 'asset base' that each person and clan may know from ancestral linkages and contemporary use; managing and recreating the land through physical and spiritual activities and relationships. This model suggests that an underlying philosophy of *'interconnection, flow and co-relationship'* is therefore needed; that expresses in the processes and practices used to develop indigenous wealth.

This is reflected in the primary Karl-Ung-Kep model below, the 'Orchid Model', that suggests five key aspects affect a persons capacity to fully engage in their own economic development: *Cultural-Environmental, Socio-Emotional, Vocational, Male Ways and Female Ways*.



**Graphic 1 - The 'Orchid Model' - Shy Blue Orchid and Five Significant Aspects of Indigenous - Economic Development**

### **Five Key Aspects**

#### **Cultural-Environmental**

Relationship to land is still innately important; the cultural links of 40,000 years to the vast range of country, species and geology of the Region is still expressed in visiting bush, hunting, camping and gathering. Noongar people also express strong desire to work on the land in some way; or to be able to use areas for socio-cultural purposes, and for educating their young people about the positive aspects of culture.

#### **Social-Emotional**

Ongoing effects of cultural dislocation; loss of land, language, family, lore, law etc.; symptoms of this are shown in current very negative health, education, employment, housing and correctional statistics. *There is a need to recognise and explore culturally appropriate means of dealing with ongoing effects, and strengthen internal capacity.* It is proposed in this model that if this "petal" is lacking, then, regardless of the amount of money or effort put into the vocational 'petal', the real, long term positive results to this Region's indigenous population will be minimal.

#### **Vocational**

All the services, employment and enterprise, education, training etc. associated with sustainable and satisfying employment.

#### **Male Ways**

Men's way of seeing and doing things, of understanding; 'hunting' together, going out to get; more individually orientated; men's law, lore, land and business.



## Female Ways

Women's ways of seeing and doing things, of understanding, 'gathering' together, drawing in what's needed; more community orientated, women's law, lore, land and business.

**Each aspect is inextricably linked with each other, and require attention and facilitation, in a balanced way, where requested.**

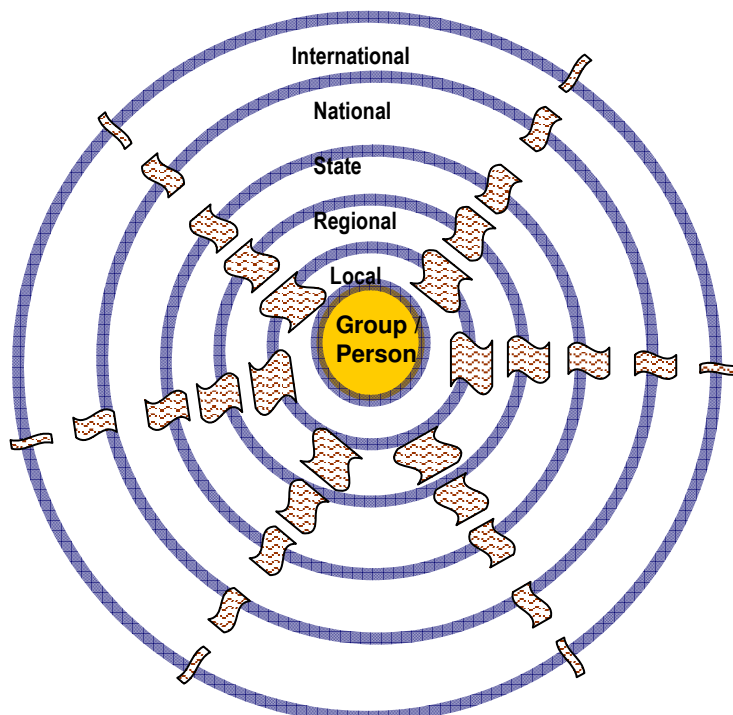
The graphic used to represent these five aspects is the form of a particular flower, the Shy Blue Orchid (*Cyanicula amplexans*). One of the '5 petal' orchids common to the southwest, it has special meaning in traditional Noongar healing. Its particular qualities are central to the development and fruition of this different way for indigenous people to prosper:

"To 'break through', to become free to move forward. The focus of spiritual energies that will consistently break up negative oppressive forces in the environment. The essence to give a sense of protection and dynamism where powerlessness previously prevailed" (Barnao. 1997)

This is important both symbolically and practically as many people have expressed a strong sense of hopelessness and helplessness to create anything different for themselves and/or their people. Many people also say the land has the healing and strengthening for this negative mindset and situation that can otherwise inhibit people's *internal capacity to stand in their own strength and take responsibility for their own economic wellbeing*.

The "symmetry" of this orchid is also part of the reason it was chosen for this model. It has 5 equal petals, signifying that for Regional indigenous people to improve their "wealth" each of these five areas needs to be in balance. If one, or more, of them are not in balance, this gives us an indication on where we might best apply efforts to assist people towards economic development. That is, this provides a process to assess where to put the effort into a community to get most benefit for all concerned.

The model can be use individually or for group projects as an assessment tool to see where the strengths and needs are in relation to the Orchid Model's five aspects. For example, cultural relationship and expression within the natural environment may be an important part of identity that is missing and requires attention in an individual. This need may be identified through various self evaluation, peer group and elders' assessments, and then attention and services are given to the areas of need. *Strengthening the person's internal and external capacity* becomes a cooperative process involving many people and agencies, with individual focus as shown below in Graphic 2.



**Graphic 2 - Circles of Influence & Interaction**

*Strengthening internal and external capacity* may therefore include identification, facilitation and integration of services, agencies, employees and employers (current and potential) individuals and organizations relevant to fulfilment of the Five Key Aspects for the person or group.



These influences and interactions exist in five convenient geographical categories as Local, Regional, State, National and International, and are shown *graphically* above in the form of water (*kep*) ripples produced by a dropped stone, or the waves of heat from a fire (*karl*). Both fire and water also have properties and concepts relevant to successful IED.

**Relevant Concepts/Properties of ‘Karl Ung Kep’(fire-with-water)**

**Key Concept 1:** Seemingly opposite elements combine continuously to create new life. Much of our electricity is generated by the combination of both elements ie. through coal-fired turbines.

**Key Concept 2:** Those closest to the person or group are potentially the greatest influence and interaction, and decreasing the further out the association exists.

**Kep**

*Water drop a pebble in water, waves created, greatest effect closest to the source.*

*Water carries memory.*

*Water waves will reach a point away from their source and then return. Other energy waves do the same. Our conscious intent is such a wave form. Singularly strong, but combined with others of same intent exponentially more powerful.*

*Water is passion, receptive.*

**Karl**

*Fire radiates heat waves, greatest effect closest to the source.*

*Fire is cleansing.*

*Fire is transforming.*

*Fire is creating.*

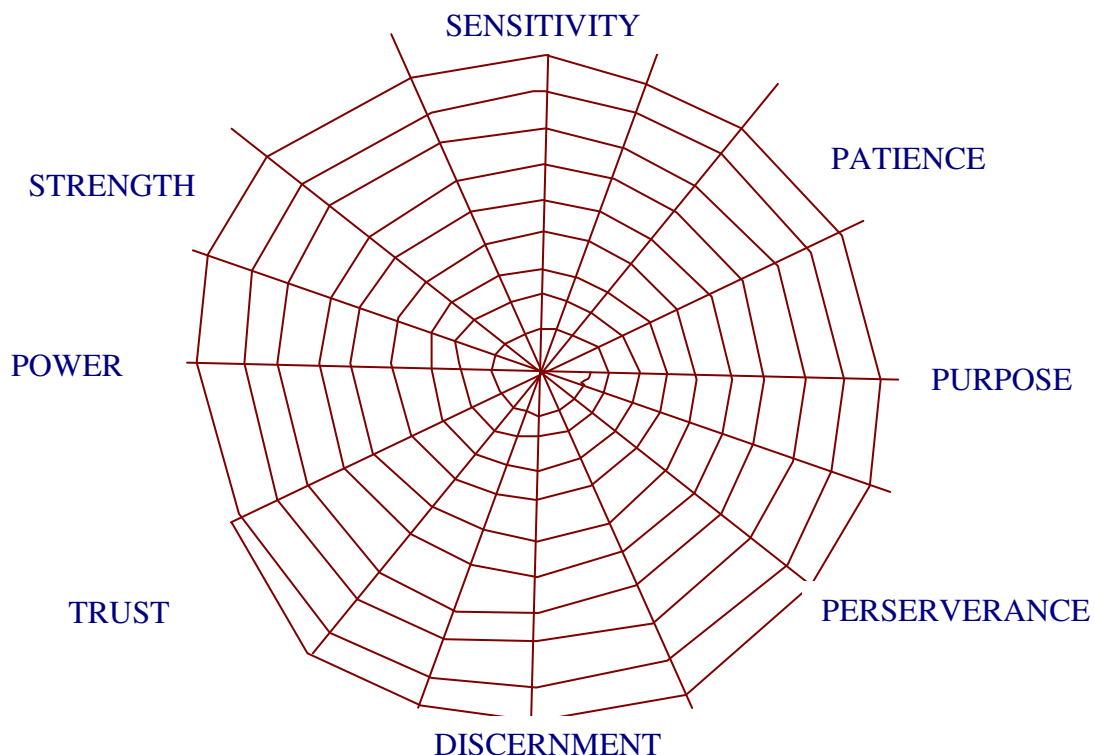
*Fire is action; projective.*

*Fire is attractive.*

*Fire is positive (constructive) and negative (destructive).*

Graphic 2 shows influence and interaction in two main ways. Each Circle has *Contributors*; that is, individuals, ‘relations’, agencies, markets, employers and potential employers, funding bodies, employees, potential employees etc. These are identified at each level and a matrix developed showing the extent and potential development requirements at each level. There are interconnections through the various levels that can also be identified, developed and activated where necessary.

Natural geometry means this model quickly transforms into a ‘Kara Mia’ Model (spider web) which describes eight useful concepts or properties of the spider (*kara*) and web (*mia*) that can enhance the person’s capacity to create a positive economic future:



**Graphic 3 - ‘Kara-Mia’ Model**

### Eight 'Legs' or Concepts/Properties of the Spider and Web:

Sensitivity- *Kara* knows every contact and vibration in the *Mia*.

Discernment- *Kara* knows whether something landing in the *Mia* is valuable or not and acts accordingly.

Patience- Having prepared the *Mia* well; *Kara* waits patiently and sensitively at the centre and monitors what happens.

Trust- *Kara* trusts that when the *Mia* is strong it will fulfil its purpose.

Purpose- *Kara* has a purpose in building the *Mia* i.e. catch food-provide economy.

Power- the *Mia* gives the power to create life when combined with effort and inspiration from *Kara*.

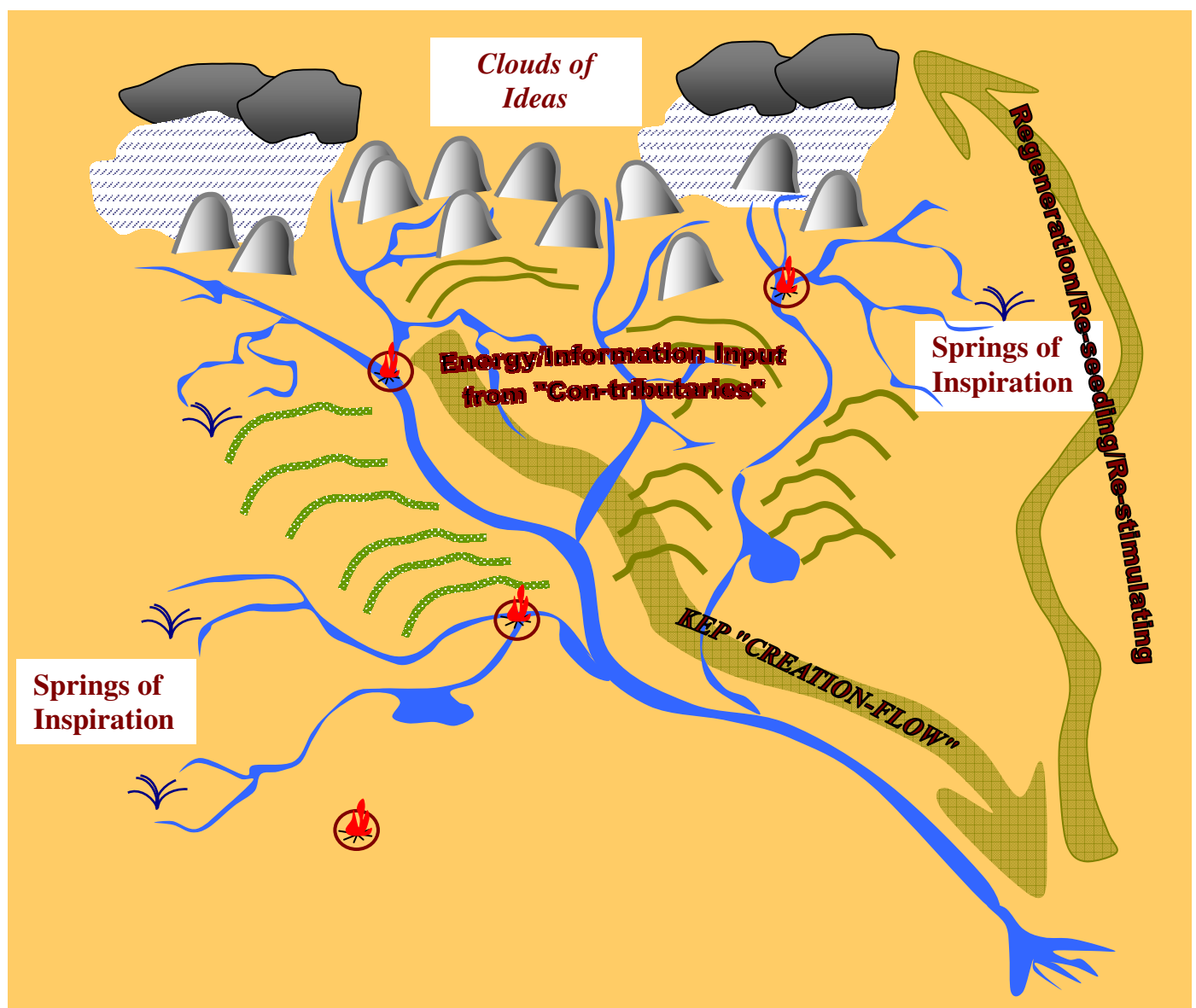
Perseverance- *Kara* 'hangs' in there even when the storm wind blows and times are tough; trusts in the *Mia*'s strength.

Strength- *Kara-Mia*, weight for weight, is the strongest material in the world.

Because the web's structure rotates around and through the centre, *Kara* always knows when part of it isn't working properly and therefore needs attention, repairs etc. *Kara* also knows when something lands in the web that is not food, i.e. not purposeful, and doesn't waste energy trying to do something about it.

### Keeping the 'Flow' Going

The integration of energy, information and other resources by "Contributors"(now 'Contributories') and appropriate attention on all aspects affecting IED leads to the next model; the "Kep" Creation-Flow Model.



Graphic 4 - KEP "CREATION-FLOW" MODEL

### Concepts and Properties:-

- *Kep* doesn't struggle; goes with the flow
- Gets there eventually
- *Kep* exists in several forms, solid, liquid, gas, vibration

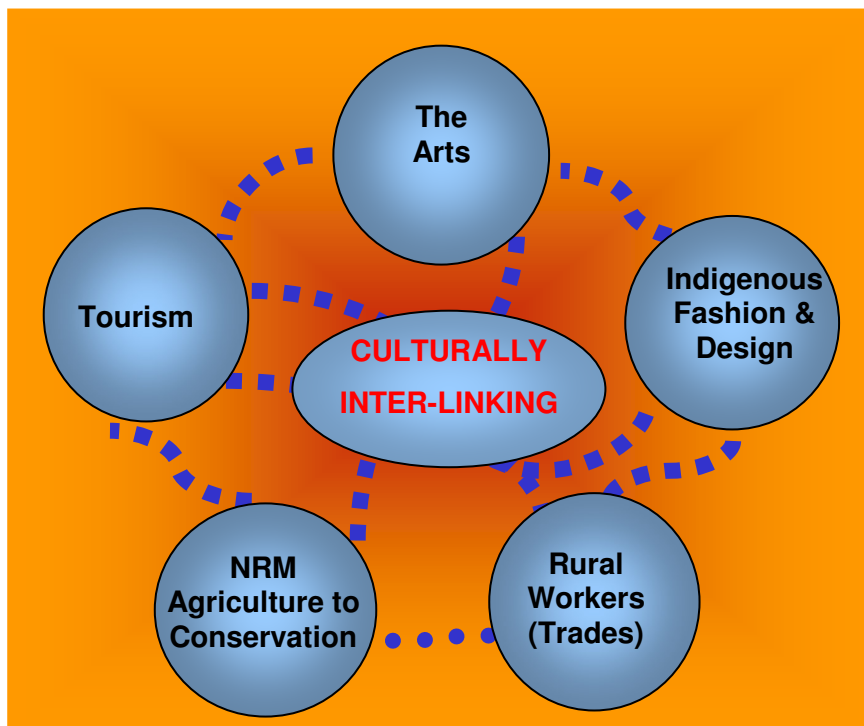
- Carries Life, Energy and “Information”
- Continual connection; cyclic nature
- Stagnates when it stops flowing
- Each tributary brings new life, energy and information
- “Springs” can connect underground
- Blockages can occur and disappear
- Junctions of tributaries have increased energy and potential
- When it reaches the ‘great ocean of goodness’ it returns to the land as rain to begin new life.

Graphic 4 describes a flow process that begins as an idea and gets nurtured into reality. The obvious metaphor with a rain cycle is very applicable to indigenous ways of ‘being the land’, and the importance of *kep* (water) in culture. It is also about the Regional indigenous community regenerating itself with *karl* (fire) in partnership with each other and the non-indigenous communities and service deliverers.

Following the model from the top, an idea starts as a ‘spring of inspiration’ within, or as a suggestion from someone else. This creates a small stream of energy for a person, who meets another person or agent that shares the idea and joins together, thereby *increasing their individual and collective capacity*. This continues to build until the ‘stream’ has become a ‘tributary’ that now meets another ‘contributory’; a resourcing agency. At this point, with the *karl* or ‘fire’ of ideas, culture and passion from the people meeting the ‘fuel from the re-source provider’ (i.e. funds, advice, facilitation etc.), there is capacity to create new ventures, new ways of ‘doing business’. Once a person or group has created some stronger sense of economic stability that is benefiting them and their community, they then share their ‘resources’, experience and knowledge with those just starting out; regenerating, restimulating and reseeding new growth possibilities in the community. In this way the community begins to economically sustain itself and provide options for the younger generations.

All through the process the organic models presented here are graphic guides and reminders of the socio-economic journey that we are on, where we want to be going, and what we want for our ‘grandchildren’. I say ‘we’ because inevitably we are all in this together. Regional Aboriginal people who have read the draft of this report have expressed gratitude and some surprise that a Government agency is prepared to do things differently. Generally they have seen a lot of policies and programs recycled under different names and not produce positive sustainable change for their communities.

The ideas, inspirations and desires that people have expressed so far, and that have high potential for economic returns, will be aligned with one or more of the Action Areas below.



**Graphic 5 OUR ACTION AREAS**

## **Our Action Areas**

The following five action areas have been identified and will be co-developed between local indigenous people, WDC and other "Contributories" as appropriate.

The Arts- includes visual, performing and other genres. There are many very talented indigenous artists in the Region including painters, musicians, designers, actors, writers, dancers and singers. Several projects are underway and more planned to facilitate these artists in creating more socio-economic benefits from their skills and talents.

Tourism- there is very strong interest by Regional Noongars in providing tourism experiences for visitors to 'country'. Important progress has been made already and the future looks very promising. Partnerships and alliances between communities are encouraged to provide extra support, programs, cost sharing etc. New products will be provided to the local, national and international marketplaces showcasing the Regions' cultural unity, strength and diversity. Other 'Contributories' will be encouraged to participate in this positive approach to Regional indigenous tourism.

Natural Resource Management (NRM)- Noongar people have consistently requested opportunities to work on the land in NRM type activities including agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture and conservation management. Both before European arrival and now, the natural relationship between Noongar people and their land, is basic to what it means to be Noongar. To live 'Noongar Way' is about relationship to country (including the plants and animals) and the people. This relationship traditionally meant stewardship and management of the land. Several strong opportunities exist and more will be developed on both public and private land as Karl-Ung-Kep is implemented.

Rural Workers (Trades)-the Region is currently experiencing a building and construction boom, however most Noongars are not participating in the economic development opportunities available. Many of the required tradespeople are unavailable in the Region. Many Noongars have been trained in building and construction skills, but some require further training and accreditation. Teams will either naturally form, or will be encouraged to create "trades groups", enterprise bodies that can quote on and provide building and construction services. Current and predicted future demand and supply trends suggest this has strong financial wealth generation capacity in the short, medium and long term.

Indigenous Fashion And Design (IFD)- People in several towns show strong interest in IFD, and opportunities to expand this in conjunction with The Arts will be developed, and done separately where necessary. Strong demand for indigenous design in fashion, particularly in Asia, provides many opportunities at various levels for artists and clothing designers and manufacturers. However, demand far exceeds supply and this is an opportunity to build a unique 'signature' industry in the Region in a cooperative and collaborative way.

***As shown on the diagram, many of these areas culturally interlink with each other and provide 'cross over' opportunities that will be developed.***

## **Key Performance Indicators**

As mentioned in the introduction, the Australian national statistics around indigenous health, housing, education, employment and justice issues, demonstrate that the desired outcomes for Aboriginal people are not being achieved through current or past efforts. A conservative estimate of \$60billion has been spent over approximately 30 years and very little has improved for Aboriginal people as a result.

*This alone suggests that a radical change in mindset is required to facilitate significant improvement in indigenous people's economic, physical, social, mental and spiritual well-being. At some stage the question needs to be asked as to the accountability and merit of continuing to spend public funds and effort on initiatives and actions which clearly don't lead to the desired outcomes.*

*Karl-Ung-Kep* is a new way of approaching and engaging in indigenous economic development. While it is based on many years of experience, it is as yet 'untested' as a whole model. WDC has therefore designed Key Performance Indicators to measure the outcomes from 'doing business' this way, and will be monitored by the Institute for Regional Development at University of Western Australia. Changes and adjustments can then be made as necessary.

## **Conclusion**

Wheatbelt Development Commission strongly contends that *Karl-Ung-Kep: Indigenous Wealth Ways in the Wheatbelt Region of Western Australia* offers opportunities for all parties involved in indigenous peoples well being in the Region to do business differently and therefore co-create economic well being for all involved. Some people have asked why the WDC is engaged in IED this way. Simply answered, at the writing of this document (late 2005) the Region is going through a 'boom' period. As part of its Regional Development Strategy "Shaping the Future", the WDC is committed to the social and economic well-being of all people in the Region. It is very clear however that indigenous people in the Region are not well placed to take advantage of these times and are in risk of being worse off when the boom finishes in 5 or 10 years. *Karl-Ung-Kep* is an attempt to create sustainable IED that has positive long term benefits for indigenous people and the wider community.