Indigenous Pre-Employment and Workplace Training in Macmahon Pilbara Operations

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Introduction
Macmahon is a leading construction and contract mining company that has operated for more than 45 years. An ASX/S&P 200 company, Macmahon employs more than 3,000 people throughout Australia, in New Zealand, South East Asia and Africa.

In the Pilbara, Macmahon’s long term contracts include mining services to BHP Billiton Iron Ore at its Orebody 18 and Wheelarra mines, situated within 35kms of the town of Newman, which has a population of 8,000. These contracts have been operating continuously since 2005, providing work for a Macmahon workforce of about 400 employees. On a shorter term contract basis, extensive construction projects have also been carried out by Macmahon for BHP Billiton Iron Ore in the same area during the same period of time.

Macmahon places considerable importance on being a good corporate citizen. As part of the licence to operate, Macmahon believes that its success should be shared with the communities and regions that support the operations and make them successful. In line with this belief an Indigenous Employment Policy is in place which states that:

“Macmahon will work in partnership with Indigenous people and traditional owners to make sustainable improvements for Indigenous people.

Specifically, Macmahon will endeavour to:

- Improve the understanding of each others concerns and aspirations through meaningful consultation.
- Promote employment, education and training opportunities for Indigenous people.”

Within this framework, the Indigenous Training Programme (ITP) has been developed at the Pilbara operations.

There has been increasing pressure on the organisation to engage Indigenous people in the workforce from:

1. An evolution of the expectations placed on contractors by the clients when undertaking large scale, long term, contract mining and construction projects in isolated areas. This has led to increasing pressure, through the contracts, to add value to the local communities by providing capacity building opportunities. One of the best ways to do this, for isolated communities, is through employment and training of the local population which provides improved economic, social and employment prospects.
2. The mining and construction industries have experienced, and will continue to experience, labour shortages and low retention rates. Therefore the local communities provide an excellent source of labour which is more likely to be retained as they have an interest in and connections to the region. Therefore it makes economic sense to train and employ local people in a tight employment market.

The objective of this paper is to cover the:

- History of the indigenous training program;
- Details of the Pre-employment Indigenous Mining Skills Program (IMSP);
- IMSP Participants and Their Recruitment;
- Guiding Principles for the IMSP;
- Other components of the Macmahon Indigenous Training Program;
- Key Success Factors in the overall Macmahon Indigenous Training Program;
- External Recognition of IMSP and Macmahon Indigenous Training Program; and
- Current Challenges and Future Direction of the ITP

**History of the Indigenous Training Program**

During the first 12 months of the mining contract with BHP Billiton Iron Ore in Newman, Macmahon engaged 10 Indigenous people into skilled roles such as heavy earth moving machine operators and mechanical trades and offered three trainee dump truck operator positions for local people with no experience. However, they were all found to struggle, not with the technical requirements of the job but with such things as attendance, communication and maintaining focus during the long work roster.

At the same time Macmahon opened a Community Relations Office in Newman to facilitate community engagement and to promote local employment opportunities, particularly for Indigenous people. It became apparent that many of the local Indigenous people applying for positions did not have the prerequisites required to successfully gain employment through the conventional system. The prerequisites that were lacking in the potential employees included:

- a current driver’s licence;
- work experience or exposure to the resources industry;
- adequate numeracy and literacy skills; and
- in some cases failure to pass the pre-employment drug and alcohol test.

The lack of these prerequisites combined with the experience with the three trainees strongly suggested that future Indigenous people employed on site could also struggle as they would probably have similar issues. This would be a discouragement to other local Indigenous people from applying for positions once word spread through the community.

A group of local practitioners in the field identified a solution to be the introduction of a pre-employment program that would engage, develop, support and train the local Indigenous people to satisfy the prerequisites which could lead to successful employment.
The concept was embraced by both BHP Billiton Iron Ore and Macmahon and an agreement made to jointly develop the programme to be called the Indigenous Mining Skills Programme (IMSP).

Completing the IMSP would not automatically mean a participant would be given a position, however, they would be given preference. The participants would be aware that if they progressed well through the program they would have a real opportunity of being employed.

A small team of people from both companies, who had considerable experience in dealing with the local Indigenous people, were given the responsibility of developing the program. Twelve months was taken designing every aspect of the IMSP to ensure that it successfully achieved its objectives.

In developing the program it was necessary to keep in mind the distrust amongst local Indigenous people about new programs. This distrust had developed from a long history of participation in government training programs designed for long-term unemployed Indigenous people that, with the best of intentions, had failed to deliver employment.

The specific objectives of the IMSP which were decided before the development of the program were to:

- focus on the needs of local Indigenous people who would currently not qualify for entry level employment and who had a real risk of being unsuccessful in employment without prior development;
- maximise employment opportunities and retention of Indigenous people through a training environment which was mentoring, enabling and supporting. Trainers would be provided adequate resources with appropriate communication, teaching and learning skills and operate under a best practice model;
- work collaboratively with key stakeholders to improve the co-ordination and delivery of training and employment services;
- always acknowledge the enduring cultural, social, economic and family links, as well as the diversity of the Indigenous people living in the Western Desert Region, and recognise that obligations to a particular cultural group should not serve as an impediment to access employment;
- maintain contact with the participants by the coordinators through an after hours on call approach for support with problem solving, as well as conducting structured reviews and workplace visits;
- be a flexible training program. Each time it is run it has been modified to meet the needs of the participants instead of making the participants fit the program;
• provide participants with extra assistance where needed, for example on literacy and numeracy, where time is made available to work on these skills.

• provide a safe, healthy and culturally sensitive environment for participants to develop and begin to achieve their employment goals and

• provide a suitable number of quality applicants for traineeships, apprenticeships or entry level employment positions in BHP Billiton Iron Ore and Macmahon.

Commitments to program delivery were secured from a local Registered Training Organisation (RTO), the Pilbara TAFE Newman Campus and other service providers. In addition support was obtained for participants through job network providers, Centrelink and the Community Development Enterprise Program (CDEP).

In March 2006 the Indigenous Mining Skills Program’s first pilot program was launched in Newman with 10 participants. The IMSP is due to commence its tenth session in September 2010. It was so successful that now four years later over 80 participants have successfully completed the programme (statistics are given in Appendix 1 and feedback from participants is given in Appendix 2).

Macmahon has subsequently developed a tiered structure to Indigenous employment and training which leads people through a process to full time meaningful and rewarding employment. The ITP consists of:

- The Indigenous Mining Skills Program - pre-employment training
- Traineeships – leading to the attainment of Western Australian TAFE Surface Extraction and Business Administration certificates
- Apprenticeships – Heavy Duty Mechanics, Boilermakers and Fixed Plant Mechanics
- Direct entry level employment – on the job training and up-skilling for those with previous employment
- Skilled employment – attracting skilled mining employees who are provided development and progression within Macmahon.

The IMSP and the associated traineeships have developed into key feeders for Macmahon apprenticeship and direct employment at Newman. The success of the pre-employment program has enabled a greater number of Indigenous participants to progress through the later stages of the tiered program and become successful long term employees of Macmahon.

**Details of the Pre-employment Indigenous Mining Skills Program (IMSP)**

During the 14 weeks of the program the participants spend time developing technical and enabling skills, with close supervision by specialist staff from BHP Billiton and Macmahon known as Program Coordinators. The technical skills “get their foot in the employment
door” while the enabling skills keep them employed. Both are equally important and have a direct effect on each participant’s success with the employment experience. Any qualification obtained from training is rendered of little value unless the person with the qualifications has the skills and sees the importance of fitting into basic employment requirements. For example, during these 14 weeks, the participants could develop skills to obtain a ticket to operate a loader or an excavator, but if they do not routinely turn up to work, this qualification alone will not guarantee ongoing employment.

Time is also spent on the job to allow the participants to experience the workplace and gain some insight into alternative career paths.

From a payment viewpoint, participants must be enrolled in Centrelink to obtain government benefits. In addition, they receive a daily allowance for attending the course and receive an allowance on successful completion paid for by Macmahon.

Two programs of the IMSP are run each year, timed to coordinate with the yearly intake of trainees and apprentices in the Newman area.

**Technical Skills Training**

The technical skills are developed under the auspices of the WA TAFE Resource and Infrastructure Certificate 1 course run through the Pilbara TAFE Newman Campus. This provides a framework for the program and a formal qualification to participants on successful completion of the program.

Subjects covered include:

- occupational health and safety;
- planning and organising work;
- communication in the workplace;
- controlling risk; and
- environmental work practices.

Other technical training included in the program but not included in the certificate course:

- **Certificate in Basic Computer Skills** - which is of great benefit considering the increasing use of technology in all aspects of the mining industry.

- **WA Drivers Licence** - This is probably the most important qualification to be obtained during the program. Having a drivers licence opens up many doors for employment in any industry. Private lessons are expensive and out of reach of most of our participants. Some do not have access to a suitable vehicle for lessons or family members that can assist them. If they enter the program with no license, they get to the completion of their log book stage of achieving a licence. If they come with an automatic licence they obtain a manual licence and if they already have a C Class licence, lessons are provided to gain a heavy rigid (truck) licence, which is now mandatory to operate machinery on any mine site.

- **Senior First Aid Certificate**

- **Working At Heights Certificate**
• **Forklift Driving Certificate.**

The latter three certificates were identified by site supervision as extremely valuable to people seeking entry level employment.

A purpose designed work book has been produced for participants where the structure is aligned with requirements of the Certificate I Resource and Infrastructure course. This workbook is written in plain English and laid out so participants can document their experiences and meet the requirements for successfully demonstrating completion of the requirements for the certificate.

Safety, machinery and other common workplace documents are used as examples and training aids throughout the training so participants can build their skills aligned to practical workplace requirements. This also ensures participants do not feel they are back in a school environment in which many of them did not have a positive experience.

**Enabling Skills**

Enabling skills are essential for continued employment and their absence is one of the main reasons for the non-retention of Indigenous employees.

This type of training aims to increase the capacity of the participants once successfully recruited, to become a respected part of their work team and continue to progress and develop in the workplace and the community. During the program participants are provided with personalised development training that focuses on establishing an understanding of themselves and the requirements that will be placed up on them in the work environment and how to positively navigate through these making the most of the working experience.

To develop and practice these skills Macmahon runs the training program is run with the same rules, policies and procedures within which all employees are required to operate. This provides the participants with an opportunity to test the boundaries and experience the consequences in a more “forgiving” environment.

The training includes:

- **self esteem building,**
- **conflict resolution;** confronting issues instead of turning one’s back on them,
- **communication;** knowing when to speak, how to say it and who to talk to,
- **goal setting;** the ability to commit to something and to understand that not every day may be the best and most exciting,
- **team work;** doing something for the benefit of the work group which we don’t necessarily want to do.

For many of us, these skills are learnt as a child and during our teens through family and the education system. Many of the people targeted for the program do not have these skills as they have come from a family where they may be the first or second generation to engage in
employment and possibly the first or second to attend formal education, which was not necessarily a rewarding experience.

Employers have come to expect people to have these skills when they walk through the door, but this is not necessarily the case in the targeted participants group. However it is recognised that if this deficiency can be overcome local Indigenous people will be good employees.

Other Enabling Skills taught as part of the training are:

- **Positive Money Management.** Our participants can go from a Centrelink allowance to a high wage within 12 months and require the skills to manage this money. If not the rewards for employment that we all experience are lost. In some cases they do not have mentors or parents at home that can help them. The Happy Banking Basics course was purpose designed with the assistance of BankWest through their community support program. The one day course provides information on good and bad debt, different types of credit and loans, budgeting, saving, how and when to say no to ruthless lenders, and how to positively communicate with financial institutions in good times and bad.

  It is the intention to run all future courses with people from the local branch so participants can build a rapport with local people who can assist them.

- **Healthy Life Style.** Using the resources of local government Indigenous Health Services, this training provides participants with information on what the real effects of drugs, alcohol and bad nutrition have on the body.

  The mining industry has stringent and non-negotiable policies on drugs and alcohol. During the IMSP the participants make a commitment to be drug free, and are tested regularly as if they were on the mine site. If they test positive, they are informed and retested on a daily basis to ensure levels are decreasing to a clear result before they are permitted to enter any mine site for work experience. This leniency would not be provided once employed on a mine site. They are also provided with optional confidential counselling.

  During all nine courses run to date, not one participant that has tested positive has not then provided a clear result by the time of work experience. This is encouraging and shows that the participants recognise the importance to continued employment of being drug free.

- **Resume Writing and Interview Skills.** The skills of the program coordinators, who come from a human resource background, are used to train and coach the participants in resume writing and interview techniques.

  In any interview for employment, employers are looking for specific signs and answers from people to assess their suitability for employment. Confronted with a panel of people in an office environment can be nerve racking for even the most experienced worker and it is common for the program participants to become
intimidated and “shamed” in this situation. The resulting answers to questions and actions can easily be misinterpreted as having no interest in the position. The standard questions in interviews can be hard to interpret for people that have had no past experience in interviews or talking about themselves. Program coordinators run the participants through typical interviews and coach them with regard to appropriate answers.

Similarly with resumes, the program coordinators show participants how to write a resume and what an employer is looking for. Each time participants attend computer training they are encouraged to update their resume with the training they have completed during that week so they can see it growing, which is a visual reminder of how they are progressing.

**Work Experience**

Participants complete four weeks of work experience on Macmahon mine sites, where real mining situations are experienced and the skills learnt in the training programme are applied, and is a requirement of the Certificate course. Work experience is provided in weekly blocks which commence approximately half way through the course. The participants get to enter the mine site and experience the variety of employment options available. Some of the areas they enter include: mobile equipment maintenance workshops, geology, laboratories, mobile plant, drill and blast, ore processing, train loading, light vehicle workshops, health and safety, emergency services, environmental, survey and resource evaluation. All of these areas have the ability to take on trainees or apprentices. By giving participants this exposure, they can with confidence choose their own direction and have ownership in their future career, thus ensuring future training and development is focused on their goals and ambitions.

**IMSP Participants and Their Recruitment**

The people who typically participate in the IMSP:

- want a real employment outcome.
- are male or female traditional Indigenous people.
- have connections to the east Pilbara region around Newman.
- are usually between the ages of 17 and 30 years.
- have had a minimum Year 9 education (although recently there has been a trend for applicants to have Year 11 or 12 education).
- commonly have hospitality, agricultural or labouring work experience, but generally have not held a position for any significant period of time.
- generally lack a driver’s license
- have completed short training programs usually as a requirement of Job Search with Centrelink.

The IMSP is only advertised locally in Newman and the surrounding communities which stretches from the north west coast of Western Australia to the Northern Territory border.
With the training program having been underway for four years now, there are an increasing number of applicants who are referred to the program by a member of their extended family who have completed the program.

Preference is given to people entering the program who have family connections to the Newman area. These ties include people from traditional owners or custodian groups and those who have family members living in the area. Due to the program’s success in leading to meaningful employment, there has been an increasing incidence of people who are willing to relocate to Newman specifically to undertake the program.

Applications for entrance to join the program are now received from all over Western Australia, the Northern Territory, New South Wales and Queensland.

**Guiding Principles for the IMSP**

**Capacity Building and Compliance to Standards**
During the program a focus is on the participants’ capacity to take on more complex responsibilities and analyse and address issues with less and less assistance from the coordinators. Participants are encouraged to use the skills developed during the training as situations arise during the program. When this occurs, it is acknowledged and the participant congratulated, when it doesn’t occur but should have, they are referred back to the training and asked if they believe they could have handled the situation differently and coached with ideas for how they could address it in the future.

The long standing issues that have caused negative outcomes for the participants in the past are addressed. Very high standards are set at the onset of the program for: personal conduct, commitment and attitude. They become non-negotiable rules through the entire program. They are made very clear through a “Rights and Responsibility” document all participants are required to sign at the start of the program.

In past training courses and through school, the participants have often been allowed to complete training by lowering the bar or making allowances and excuses. The bar is not lowered so participants can achieve. The participants are built up to achieve the required standard. This is essential when they do get to the workplace. Although they will be provided additional support, they will be expected to operate under the same standard and policies as other employees. This is essential for safety and productivity but also that they maintain their self respect in the work group. The ability to comply in this area will enable them to progress through any business or career they may choose.

**Incremental and Achievable Goal Setting and Celebrating Success**
Many of our participants have experienced failures in the past in training and employment. In some cases, this frustration has resulted, in a personal acceptance of not completing tasks and achieving goals.
During the program, specific goals are set and each time one is reached, a celebration takes place in the group. Goals once achieved that are celebrated include: making it to the first block of work experience, completing each unit of the Certificate course or getting their drivers learners permit.

We openly congratulate each person on their separate achievements and also the achievement of the group as a whole. This creates an environment where success is common and feels good so this begins to replace the pattern of acceptance of not achieving results and the consequent low self esteem.

**Interaction with Authority and Addressing Issues**
Most participants have had dealings with people in positions of authority that have often been negative resulting in a wariness of anyone they consider to be in a position of authority. This can include government agencies, police, education providers and supervisors at work. This results in some cases where participants having a perception of low self worth and being intimidated and tending not to voice their opinions or stand up for themselves around authority.

During the program all participants are encouraged to have an opinion and to voice it. It is essential that the participants learn to address issues and positively and productively deal with situations or groups that have previously intimidated them. They are assisted to become more comfortable with some of the groups in the community they have considered negative and have avoided.

One approach is through presentations and information sessions at the beginning of each program. Company senior management come to the training and introduce themselves and speak about where they have come from, their family and what they do on the mine site. As most management live in Newman, they are encouraged to acknowledge the participants when they see them down the street to give them a sense of belonging and to portray the value they are to the business.

The local Police members are very supportive of the program and have a visual presence at some training. One way they show this support is to offer every support and encouragement in the process of driver training and licensing. They have also assisted some participants to navigate through what seems to be the complex path of paying any outstanding fines that might be preventing them from gaining a drivers licence.

**External Support for Participants**
**Family** support is very important both during the IMSP and once employment commences. There is a focus on engaging members of family and friends during the program. Therefore family barbeques are held and heaps of photographs taken so that participants can take them home. Family members are also invited to a special graduation dinner on completion of the program. Pride amongst their peers is evident in the participants once they have been accepted into the program.
Supervisor and employee support at the mine sites for participants is strongly encouraged and all attend Cultural Awareness training. This one day program ensures understanding of Indigenous culture and history. The course also provides information on the Macmahon Indigenous Employment Strategy and outcomes.

An Indigenous Mentor has recently been appointed on a full time basis on the mine sites to assist with support for both supervisors and Indigenous trainees and employees in the workplace.

Other components of the Macmahon Indigenous Training Program

Traineeships
After successful completion of the IMSP, participants are encouraged to apply for a traineeship with Macmahon. These are full time employee positions and participants receive the same benefits as all employees.

Traineeships are for 12 months duration. For the first three months the trainees are on a Monday to Friday roster instead of a full “two weeks on one week off” roster which enables them to ease into working full time.

The traineeship program has been designed to continue to provide flexibility for the Indigenous employees so they have input into the selection of their chosen career. For the first three months each trainee spends two weeks in each of six departments on the mine site including: mining production, mobile equipment maintenance, stores, drill and blast, ore processing and survey. During this time they experience the different types of employment available in the industry. They also get to build relationships with varied groups of employees. After the 12 weeks of rotations the trainees select which department they would like to spend more time in. If practical, they spend the remaining nine months permanently located in their department of choice. This has the following positive effects:

- trainees have ownership of their training and their career and therefore a genuine interest in what they are doing. This is reflected in the high rate of people completing traineeships.
- the company is developing employees who are more specialised in one area instead of ending up after 12 months with a group of employees all with basic skills and knowledge across the mine site.
- trainees are well known to the supervisors of each department who assess their suitability for permanent work in the department. The ‘job interview’ is therefore not intimidating.
- When the traineeship is completed and they apply for a permanent position, they are easily recruited and instantly productive because of their experience and training.

Apprenticeships
After traineeships Indigenous people can progress into formal apprenticeships both within the heavy duty mechanics or fixed plant mechanics trades and can progress quickly through an apprenticeship, as at least nine months of the traineeship is counted in the apprenticeship.
Due to the complexities of the mathematics components of the training in apprenticeships and the probable lack of interest at school, Macmahon has provided additional training to support Indigenous people in this area.

People who commence an apprenticeship after a traineeship, are paid second year wages which acknowledges and rewards the hard work put into training.

Training organisations have been approached and assisted to identify problem areas within the delivery approach of the conventional apprenticeship training. They are keen to change the delivery method so that it better suites Indigenous apprentices learning style while not lowering the standard. For example more hands on assessments and visual examples are more effective.

Progressing trainees into mechanical fields assists the company with labour shortages. Macmahon currently has approximately 100 apprentices around Australia with over 10% being Western Australian Indigenous people.

Key Success Factors in the overall Macmahon Indigenous Training Program

The reasons for the success of Macmahon Indigenous Training Program can be categorised into five broad areas:

- **Addressing Special Barriers and Building Capacity Through Staged Training**
  By identifying barriers preventing Indigenous people gaining employment, Macmahon has been able to design and implement a staged entry into the workforce. From the pre-employment program IMSP there is an emphasis on providing skills in a staged manner that suites Indigenous people before employment is offered. This builds on the their capacity in the local communities. By building confidence and self esteem through positive interactions and training outcomes success is achieved.

- **Taking the Time to Build Relationships and Special Support**
  By forming relationships with participants before they are full time employees, both parties can take the time to feel comfortable with each other within the broad framework of employment but without the pressures of the work place. The relationships that are formed are based on respect and win-win outcomes for both the participant and the employer. The relationships that are formed between the participants during the program also provide positive peer support. When they enter the workforce with the same group of people who were in the IMSP, they provide each other support and friendship. The IMSP coordinators also assist trainees and apprentices on the mine sites so this relationship continues and matures over what can be a four year journey. The participants feel they have a mentor who can readily be approached if difficulties arise in the workplace.

  The full time Indigenous mentor greatly assists in continuing to build this relationship on the job.
• **Real Employment Outcomes**
Having employment outcomes available on completion of each pre-employment program, (ie traineeships), provides a structured and uninterrupted pathway for Indigenous people to follow to continue building on their training and career in a supportive environment. Employment is not promised but is achievable through the IMSP. The traineeship programme facilitates the completion of significant work experience in a preferred and probably permanent work area. This limits the stress of starting a new job as the participants have already worked in the area and have formed a relationship with the supervisor. All skills learned during the traineeship can be quickly applied as the program has been aligned to the workplace environment.

• **Relevant and Flexible Training**
The program has been designed to simulate the work environment and provide participants with everyday skills needed to become a successful member of a work group. As they go through the staged program, an increasing amount of time is spent in the workplace under a normal supervised situation. The input from industry is imperative in these programs to ensure relevance to the workplace. The training, that is provided has an equal focus on providing enabling and technical skills and job familiarisation. More advanced technical skills are provided in traineeships and apprenticeships. The program adjusts to the needs of each participant by allowing them to have input into their training. Participants with greater needs are provided with extra support and those that progress quickly can be provided with more challenges and responsibilities. With such a flexible program, a group of people with varied levels of skills can be accommodated at the same time.

• **Support for program from all levels of management and employees**
The support from management and employees is absolutely critical to the success of training. The Macmahon Indigenous Training Program has support right from the CEO to the employees on the shop floor and has been designed so the company controls and is accountable for the training and the outcomes. Close mentoring relationships are maintained with individuals from commencement of the IMSP to full participation as a valuable employee. It has been observed on many occasions that employees who are responsible for passing on their knowledge to Indigenous trainees do so with care and pride, which is essential to any workplace focused training.

**External Recognition of IMSP and Macmahon Indigenous Training Program**
The Indigenous Mining Skill Program has been recognised by the following awards:
• 2009 – Finalist in WA State Training Awards
• 2007 – Finalist WA State Training Awards

The Macmahon Indigenous Training Program which includes traineeships and apprenticeships has been recognised with the following awards:
Current Challenges and Future Direction of the ITP

The level of education of younger people entering the IMSP is increasing due to government requirement to stay at school longer. This is very positive and allows some of the issues addressed in the IMSP, such as improving numeracy and literacy to be already addressed at school.

The next challenge to be experienced with the program will be:

- lack of participants due to the limited number of appropriate Indigenous people interested in enrolling in the local area.
  - to widen the group of participants, more flexible training may need to be developed which matches the participants abilities to attend training.
  - more culturally and family friendly rosters for participants that have responsibilities in the communities in which they live may be needed.
- The availability and cost of accommodation in the Pilbara continues to be a major barrier for access to training. People staying with family members, often in crowded houses, have a lower chance of success in completing the IMSP and a traineeship.
  - focus on purpose built training accommodation needs continued development

The current emphasis by Macmahon on the development of the Indigenous training program is to use this successful model in other regions of Australia. This will expand the opportunities for Indigenous people to be employed. It is anticipated that within the next 12 months this type of training will be running in two more centres in Western Australia namely the Kimberley and Perth regions.
Conclusions

- The staged Indigenous Training Program including the IMSP has become an integral part of Macmahon operations in the Pilbara region. It provides training and employment opportunities which are key to building capacity in the local community.
- The 14 week IMSP develops the basic Technical and Enabling Skills required for entry level employment. It also provides knowledge of the workplace and potential career paths by allowing the participants to experience alternative job options on site.
- Through Enabling Skills training, issues that have prevented successful recruitment and retention in employment in the past are addressed in a caring environment before entry into a real workplace.
- The 12 month traineeship systems linked to successful completion of the IMSP mean Indigenous people can continue to train in their career of choice and gain technical skills in a supportive environment.
- The real potential for meaningful employment at the end of training is a strong incentive to gain commitment to participate in the training.
- The continued and consistent support from the program co-ordinators extending into employment and the work of the Indigenous mentor means that any issues can be promptly identified and consistently addressed.
- Support from all levels of management, supervisors and shop floor employees has been critical to the success of the program. By having contact with participants from pre-employment into employment, supervisors and employees feel a greater sense of ownership over the outcomes of the program and strive harder to provide support, mentoring and encouragement to the participants.
- People progressing into full time employment positions in an area where skilled labour shortages are experienced assist the company in building a stable and productive workforce. They also have a bond with the local community and are more likely to be retained.
- Going forward, Macmahon will continue to build on the success of the IMSP in the Pilbara and also aims to extend this model to other projects around Australia.
Appendix 1 Quantitative and Qualitative IMSP Program Outcome Statistics

Quantitative results

Indigenous Mining Skills Program

- Total Participants enrolled in the IMSP: 74* 82 **
- Completion Rate: 77% *
- Entered Employment on completion: 70% *
- Entered Employment with BHPBIO: 63% * 25 People
- Entered Employment with Macmahon: 33% * 13 People
- Entered Employment with other: 5% * 2 People

Traineeship and Apprenticeship Program

- Number if Trainees Employed: 22
- Number of Trainees from the IMSP: 13
- Number of Trainee from other: 9
- Total Number Completed: 16 = 72%
- Total number of Indigenous Apprentices Employed: 10
- Total number came from Traineeships: 8
- Total from IMSP to Traineeships to Apprenticeships: 4
- **Total Indigenous people engaged in training**: 27

*Completion rate and employment rate does not include IMSP 9 which is still being finalised

**Includes 9 IMSP courses each with on average 8 participants
Qualitative Results

A questionnaire survey was carried out with the successful applicants in IMSP#7 with the following results obtained. From the 12 original participants that started the course, 10 people successfully completed.

**Key:**  5 Strongly Agree, 4 Agree, 3 Neither Agree nor Disagree, 2 Disagree, 1 Strongly Disagree

**Statements:**

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<th>Statement</th>
<th>Average response</th>
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<td>The IMSP was an interesting course</td>
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<tr>
<td>The TAFE component was worthwhile</td>
<td>4.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Work experience component was worthwhile</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The IMSP exceeded my expectations</td>
<td>4.1</td>
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<td>The IMSP has changed my attitude to self/future goals</td>
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<td>Pilbara TAFE</td>
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<td>I am more employable now I have completed the IMSP</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend the IMSP to other Indigenous people</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, the IMSP has made me feel good about myself</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The periodic reviews during the course were helpful and informative</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you rate the IMSP Presentation and Graduation Night</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Typical Feedback from Participants at the End of the Program

‘Every day I see the difference of improvement in my life and it is because of IMSP as well as myself, and the team I do the course with.’

‘The IMSP course has been a great experience for me I have made new friends and have learnt a lot from them. Being here has not only opened my eyes to some of the very serious accidents and incidents but has also made me realise that the mining industry is only unsafe if you make it unsafe. Overall my experience here has been fantastic because we don’t only have tolerant lecturers but a great team.’

‘Everyday I learn different things and it is good for me so I can teach other people what I have learnt from you fellas.’

‘The IMSP course has taught me heaps of things I wanted to know about the mining industry. And one day when I get older I want to run a course like this one.’

‘I would recommend the IMSP. I would let everyone know who is having trouble (getting employment) only because I was shame when I started this course and now I don’t really want to leave!!’

‘Overall I found the IMSP a great rewarding experience. Its sad to admit but yea, I have made some great friends......and gained some vital life experiences’

‘I feel I was treated good and (BHPBilliton Iron Ore and Macmahon) really looked after me and my fellow students’

‘Thanks for letting me be part of the IMSP course. It gives you a chance to become drug free’

‘It seems more possible to set and achieve goals eg travel, buy a car and property. Yes, it makes you more employable and you have more real world life experiences and a better understanding of what happens on (the mine) site’

‘This program was fun and the Macmahon and BHPBilliton Iron Ore co-ordinators make it better because they tried their hardest to organise such a difficult task. They were really nice to our group. Taught me there is opportunities out there other then staying home – more to life’.

‘I really enjoyed this experience and I hope I will get a traineeship out of this all. I’m very happy that I made it as I thought I wouldn’t so I’m proud of myself.’

‘IMSP has given me a positive attitude towards working in the mining industry and gave me the ideas to make big goals and the positive attitude to achieve it.’
Appendix 3: Employment and training experiences after completing the IMSP for 4 participants

Participant 1

- Completed the IMSP Pilot program 2006
- Commenced a Business Traineeship with Macmahon in July 2006
- Obtained a position in the Newman Macmahon Community Relations Office as an Administrator
- Completed further training in Advanced Diploma of Business – Human Resource Management
- In 2010 promoted to a Community Relations Officer responsible for running the IMSP

Participant 2

- Completed IMSP #2 in 2006
- Completed Cert. II Metalliferous – Open Cut Mining with BHP Billiton Iron Ore
- Gained full time employment with a mining contractor
- In 2009 was employed by Macmahon as an All Rounder Operator

Participant 3

- Completed IMSP # 5 in 2008
- Completed a Cert II Metalliferous Mining Traineeship based in Ore Processing with Macmahon in 2008
- Commenced an apprenticeship with Macmahon in Fixed Plant Mechanics in 2009

IMSP Participant 4

- Completed IMSP #7 in 2009
- Completed Cert II Metalliferous mining traineeship with Macmahon in 2010
- Commence full time employment with Macmahon in her area of choice, Drill and Blast
- Currently working to gain a shot firers ticket.