Running a research centre in a modern University can be a challenging exercise but, as shown by the diverse range of activities and events reported in this newsletter, it is never dull and frequently rewarding.

So far in 2005, we have recruited three new staff members and a further PhD student, hosted a number of visitors, completed two research projects and several consultancies, and started work on five new projects. Staff and students associated with the Centre have given several presentations to industry and academic conferences, with more planned in the second half of the year. We have also maintained an active program of site visits associated with our various research projects, including locations as varied as the Pilbara, Central and Northern Queensland, the Hunter Valley, the East Kimberleys, the Western Australia Goldfields, Papua New Guinea and The Philippines.

This newsletter highlights two of these projects: a recently completed study of factors contributing to turnover amongst Aboriginal employees at a large mine in the remote north west of Queensland, and; a new study that is examining the cumulative impacts of coal mining on a community in the Upper Hunter region of New South Wales. These are quite different projects being conducted in very different parts of Australia, but they share a common focus on generating knowledge that will help mining operations to improve their social performance. We have had strong support from our industry partners on both projects and are confident that there will be good take-up of the research outcomes.

In April, we re-located to new accommodation (see our next story). Apart from delivering a major improvement in working conditions, the move has facilitated closer collaboration with the other research centres that make up the Sustainable Minerals Institute (SMI). The additional space has also made it easier to host long and short term visitors and to organise seminars and workshops. If you would like to be notified about our upcoming events, please send us an email.

Finally, I should note that the publication of this newsletter coincides with the release of our 2004 Annual Report, which provides a detailed account of our activities in the last calendar year. Copies of the report are available from the Centre or can be downloaded from our website at [www.csrm.uq.edu.au](http://www.csrm.uq.edu.au).

David Brereton
Director, CSRM

2005 Centre News

Official opening, the Sir James Foots building

On May 20th we celebrated the official opening of the new home of the Sustainable Minerals Institute (SMI), the Sir James Foots building. Officially opened by Queensland Premier Peter Beattie, the building also houses the Earth Systems Science Computational Centre (ESSCC) and the Collaborative Learning Centre (CLC).

Sir James Foots building, officially opened
20th May 2005
The SMI occupies three stories of the new building, housing five of the six Centres that make up the SMI: the Centre for Mined Land Rehabilitation (CMLR), WH Bryan Mining Research Centre BRC), the Minerals Industry Safety and Health Centre (MISHC), the Centre for Water in the Minerals Industry (CWIMI), as well as CSRM.

At the opening ceremony, the Director of SMI, Professor Don McKee, said the new building would further develop the valuable partnership between the University and the mining industry. “The defining vision for SMI is that it becomes an acknowledged centre for all issues associated with the sustainable development of mineral resources. “With this new building and its marvellous facilities we take another step closer to that goal”, he said.

For CSRM staff, a major advantage of moving to the new building (apart from the wonderful accommodation and state-of-the-art facilities), is the close proximity of our research colleagues from the other SMI research centres. This creates many more opportunities for formal and informal get togethers leading to closer collaboration between the different disciplines.

Argyle Diamonds and Sustainability

In April, SMI and the Queensland Resources Council (QRC) sponsored an industry breakfast at which Brendan Hammond, Managing Director of Argyle Mines, was the key speaker. According to Brendan, this was the first time he had been given the opportunity to speak in front of an audience that included such a wide representation from the mining industry and R&D organisations.

Brendan spoke at length on sustainability issues at Argyle. He observed that fundamental changes had occurred in the East Kimberley region over the previous four years because of the company’s investment in personal leadership, and its preparedness to look beyond the ‘bolt-on’ approach to social and environmental responsibility. In his speech Brendan described how Argyle was engaging with Traditional Owners and other key stakeholders to build a sustainable community in the region. He also discussed the implications of Argyle’s decision to move away from FIFO and focus on developing a predominantly locally-based workforce.

Argyle Diamonds Managing Director Brendan Hammond, pictured, speaking at the Brisbane Polo Club


Ok Tedi and Corporate Social Responsibility

In July we welcomed Dorke Gedare as a visiting scholar to the Centre. Dorke is a PhD student from the University of PNG. He grew up in an area of Western Province which lies within the ‘impact zone’ of Ok Tedi Mine. Dorke holds Honours and Masters Degrees from the Universities of PNG and Wollongong respectively, and has also completed a Graduate Diploma in Defence and Strategic Studies at ANU. His diverse employment history includes experience with AusAID during the Bougainville Reconstruction program and, more recently, several years working for Ok Tedi Mining Limited, where he held the position of Manager - External and Community Relations.

Dorke’s PhD is investigating mining and corporate social responsibility as it is practiced at Ok Tedi. During his visit to CSRM he gave a very well attended seminar on his research. His presentation explored the complex community issues facing the mine, and discussed how management had sought to address these issues. Dorke focused particularly on the challenges posed by the anticipated closure of the mine in 2010.

Dorke Gedare at CSRM
CSRM out and about: Conference papers and presentations

IAP2 Conference
In March 2005, Ruth Beach from CSRM and Bernard McKenna from the UQ Business School gave a paper at the IAP2 Asia Pacific Conference in Sydney. The theme of the conference was Risks and Rewards in Public Participation. Ruth and Bernard’s paper, “Measuring Community Engagement through Sense of Place” reported some preliminary outcomes of the ARC Linkage Grant project, Site-level Community Engagement in the Australian Minerals Industry.

MCA Skills Week
In June, David Brereton was an invited speaker at the Skills Day forum at Minerals Week 2005, held in Canberra. David addressed the issue of workforce retention, drawing on the research that CSRM has done in this area. The Minerals Week presentations can be accessed at the Minerals Council of Australia website: http://www.minerals.org.au/corporate/events/minerals_week_2005/mw05_papers.

International Conference on Engaging Communities
The International Conference on Engaging Communities, an initiative of the United Nations and the Queensland State Government, was held in Brisbane on 14-17 August. Over 1500 delegates from community groups, academia, government agencies, corporations, and community associations attended this event.

Ruth Beach presented a paper on the Community Engagement project and David Brereton co-authored a related paper with Bruce Harvey (Chief Adviser, Aboriginal and Community Relations, Rio Tinto Australia) on “Emerging Models of Community Engagement in the Australian Minerals Industry”. Both papers will shortly be posted on the CSRM website.

Feature Project
Voluntary turnover amongst Aboriginal employees at Century mine

In September 2004, CSRM obtained funding from the Queensland Department of Employment and Training to undertake a survey of local Aboriginal people who had voluntarily ceased employment at Century Mine. Century is a large zinc mine located in the Lower Gulf region of Queensland, about 250 km northwest of Mount Isa. The mine operates on a fly-in fly-out basis. About 20 per cent of the workforce comprises local Aboriginal people.

Previous research undertaken by CSRM at the mine indicated that the high turnover rates for local Aboriginal employees were undermining efforts to increase Aboriginal representation in the mine workforce. The key objectives of this new project were to identify the factors that contribute to voluntary turnover and to collect information to assist in monitoring employment outcomes for local Aboriginals under the Gulf Communities Agreement (GCA).

Data for the project was collected via a survey which was designed by CSRM and administered by Century’s GCA liaison officers under the supervision of Tanuja Barker, a CSRM research officer. Forty six people completed the survey, representing a 63 per cent response rate.

Key findings of the study included:

1. Two-thirds of respondents thought that the skills or experience they acquired at Century helped them to find other work.
2. The majority were quite positive about their work at Century, with 80 per cent indicating that they were interested in returning to work at the mine.
3. The most commonly cited reasons for leaving Century were work-related, such as: dissatisfaction with working time arrangements, a perceived lack of support from higher management and discord in the workgroup.
4. Around half of the respondents cited personal circumstances, such as health and family considerations (including the need to be away from home for long periods) as their main reason for leaving.
5. The experience of the first six months was critical in determining whether employees were likely to remain at the mine over the longer term.
6. Forty per cent of respondents were no longer residing in the Gulf communities, suggesting that employment at Century may have increased the mobility of local people.

The project identified a number of actions that could be taken to improve retention of Aboriginal employees at the mine. These include:

- implementing more flexible working time arrangements (e.g. even time rosters, job-sharing arrangements and fixed term contracts)
- providing appropriate support and mentoring to all new recruits
- seeking out opportunities to re-hire former employees
- improving monitoring and management processes
• following up on respondents’ suggestions about how retention rates at Century could be improved.

A copy of the public report can be accessed on the CSRM website: www.csrm.uq.edu.au.

The plant at Century mine. Photo courtesy of Zinifex

New Projects 2005

Assessing the Cumulative Impacts of Coal Mining: A Hunter Valley Case Study

CSRM has been successful in attracting funds for five new projects so far this year. One of these projects is a study examining the cumulative impacts of coal mining on the community of Muswellbrook in the Upper Hunter Valley region of New South Wales. This project, which is being undertaken in conjunction with CWiMI, builds on a 2004 CSRM study entitled Monitoring the Community Impacts of Coal Mining. Both projects have been funded through the Australian Coal Association Research Program (ACARP).

The aim of the project is to develop methods and indicators for estimating and monitoring the cumulative environmental, social and economic impacts of multiple mining operations on regional communities. Muswellbrook is an ideal location to conduct such a project as there are currently five mines operating in the Shire - four open cut and one underground - with further expansion planned.

Project team members are currently collating and analysing data from all of the local mines and from other sources such as local and regional authorities, regulatory bodies, the ABS and the Hunter Valley Research Foundation. This represents a significant change in approach by the industry, as up until now the focus has been very much on collecting and reporting data on a site-specific basis.

The next phase of the project will focus on community engagement processes designed to capture the perceptions of local and regional stakeholders on the social, economic and environmental cumulative impacts of the mines on the local community.

The methodology being developed for this project should have future application well beyond the scope of this particular study. For example, it is anticipated that the outcomes of the project will assist the local mining industry in Muswellbrook to manage issues associated with the cumulative impacts of mining on their local community, and help ensure that decision-makers and the public are properly informed about these issues. The mining industry as a whole will benefit by being able to apply the methods and indicators developed in the context of this study to other regions where the issue of cumulative impacts arises.

Vineyards in the Upper Hunter Valley

CSRM Staff

We would like to introduce three new CSRM staff members who have joined the team in 2005.

Gillian McIlwain

Gillian is a forensic psychologist and holds a B.Sc (Hons) from La Trobe University and a PhD (Criminology) from Griffith University. She has a diverse background in the social and behavioural sciences, particularly in researching the effects of alcohol-related harm and public disorder on communities (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous). The focus of her work has been on engaging communities in local decision making and partnerships with authorities.

Her most recent research in the area of ethical management and professional misconduct reflects her current interest in corporate social responsibility and regulatory policy, and in the interrelationship between regulatory authorities, consumers, industry and communities.
Gillian has joined CSRM primarily to manage the Cumulative Impacts project described previously in our new projects section.

Joni Parmenter

Joni holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Anthropology from The University of Queensland and her research interests focus on Indigenous issues. Her thesis analysed the Western terms ‘cultural heritage’ and ‘natural resource management’, and showed how these two constructs are interconnected for Indigenous Australians. Joni assists CSRM with numerous research and administrative duties.

Tony Tiplady

Tony is on secondment from Rio Tinto to conduct research into Indigenous employment. Previously Regional Economic Development Manager for Comalco, Tony’s research is being conducted as part of Rio’s contribution to the Minerals Council of Australia (MCA)’s Indigenous employment strategy.

Tony’s role is to articulate and gain acceptance in the minerals industry for current good practices in Indigenous employment. He has clearly defined goals for the project:

1. Gather, research and collate relevant data to inform members of the MCA on the state of Indigenous employment
2. Identify good practice in Indigenous employment
3. Develop a website to share this best practice information with all stakeholders
4. Develop a comprehensive toolkit for the use of mining companies in developing their own Indigenous employment policies.

Tony is enthusiastic about the research model adopted in the Centre, particularly the emphasis on promoting collaboration between academic researchers and experienced industry personnel. As Tony points out, this approach “produces practical solutions to industry problems and the backing of the SMI gives credibility to the research”. Tony also notes that “the willingness of the Centre to include a person with 19 years industry experience but no formal academic background demonstrates the openness of the CSRM and the SMI to new approaches”.

Glen Corder

Our congratulations go to Glen Corder, manager of the Gladstone Regional Synergies project, who has recently been made a Fellow of the Institute of Chemical Engineers.

The CSRM team (from left): David Brereton, Robin Evans, Joni Parmenter, Tanuja Barker, Glen Corder, Tony Tiplady, Gillian McIlwain & Ruth Beach.

CSRM Visitors

Patrick Wheeler

In April, we were pleased to welcome Patrick Wheeler as a visitor to the Centre. Patrick is a Community Liaison Officer for Century mine and is based in Normanton. Patrick was in charge of the data collection for Normanton for this month’s feature project, the turnover study at Century mine, and came down to Brisbane to assist with the analysis.

Patrick Wheeler (left) with Tanuja Barker and David Brereton from CSRM

Bull Yanner

In June, Bull Yanner, who also contributed to the Century project, visited CSRM. Bull is a Gangalidda man and the GCA Superintendent for Century mine.

In his role as GCA Superintendent Bull has been heavily involved in implementing the Gulf Communities Agreement for the last three years and is a representative on the GCA Century Employment & Training Committee. During his visit to Brisbane, Bull was an active participant in a special half day seminar that we organised on Indigenous employment in the mining industry.
Upcoming Events

MCA 2005 Sustainable Development Conference
31 Oct-4 Nov 2005
Alice Springs Convention Centre
Alice Springs, Australia

The 2005 Sustainable Development Conference is regarded internationally as a leading forum for advancing the business case for sustainable development and its practical execution through partnerships with industry, government and community. For information on the program, visit the conference website http://www.minerals.org.au/corporate/upcoming_events/2005_sustainable_development_conference

New South Wales Environment and Community Conference
11 - 13 Sept 2005
Mudgee, New South Wales
For information on the program, visit the Minerals Council of NSW website at www.nswmin.com.au.

Educational Activities

Funding for new education program

SMI, led by CSRM, has secured internal funding from UQ to develop an integrated web-based hub for all SMI Postgraduate courses, and for CSRM to develop a foundation postgraduate on-line course on “Sustainable Development and Minerals”. In conjunction with our existing course, ‘Community Aspects of Mineral Resource Development’, this will provide a strong foundation for developing a Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Development and Mining.

CSRM Postgraduate Students

Deanna Kemp

Congratulations to Deanna, whose paper on social auditing, co-authored with Richard Boele, has recently been published in the Journal of Corporate Citizenship. The paper discusses Richard and Deanna’s social audit experience with two organisations that are using social auditing to improve their corporate social responsibility. Details of the paper are:


Richard Parsons

In July, Richard Parsons presented a paper at the 4th International Critical Management Studies Conference in Cambridge, UK. The title of Richard’s paper was: The social responsibility of business is to challenge its assumptions. Richards PhD is focusing on community engagement processes in the Australian minerals industry.

Petrina Schiavi

Our congratulations to Petrina Schiavi and her husband Marcello on the arrival of their son, Addison Baxter, born in February. Petrina and Baxter are pictured, left.

Jacqueline Medvecka

Our newest PhD student is Jacqueline Medvecka, who commenced her studies in June. Jacqueline’s scholarship is being jointly funded by the SMI, Hatch Engineering and the Centre for Sustainable Resource Processing. Her research topic is ‘How to adopt sustainability as a core dimension of decision making in projects for the mining and metallurgical industries’. Supervision is being provided by David Brereton and Professor David Radcliffe of the UQ School of Engineering.

Melissa Lovell

Melissa Lovell, who was awarded the CSRM Summer Scholarship for 2005, was recently accepted into the Australian National Internships Program at ANU. During her time at the CSRM, Melissa worked with Ruth Beach on the Community Engagement project.
In April 2005 Hilary Chapman, a founding member of the CSRM Advisory Board, resigned as a consequence of moving to a new position in Melbourne. We thank Hilary very much for her valuable contribution to the CSRM and wish her every success in her new role.

Research and Consulting Services

The CSRM offers a wide range of research and consulting services, including:

- advising on community and stakeholder engagement strategies
- designing social performance indicators and monitoring and reporting systems
- constructing socio-demographic profiles of communities
- designing and evaluating corporate-community programs
- survey design and analysis
- assisting sites to review and improve their sustainability performance
- research on workforce management issues (e.g. employee surveys, analysis of recruitment and retention data)
- developing tailored training courses and materials for the industry.

For further information about any of these services, contact David Brereton on (+61) 7 3346 4043, or at d.brereton@smi.uq.edu.au