From
The Director

Dear Reader,

In the spirit of ‘better late than never’, welcome to our second newsletter for 2005, which comes to you just a few days ahead of the Christmas break.

2005 has been another rewarding - as well as challenging - year. We have finished some major projects (always a good feeling!) and continue to expand our research portfolio (see our feature project below, for the latest addition). Three more postgraduate students came on board during the year and, in a landmark for the centre, we have just had our first completed PhD. Congratulations to Deanna Kemp, whose thesis on Site-based community relations work in the Australian and New Zealand minerals industries has been accepted by the examiners without amendment.

The research activities of the centre over the next year will be focused on developing knowledge and tools that will help to:

- increase the economic involvement of Indigenous people in the industry
- strengthen the incentives for operations and companies to voluntarily improve their social and environmental performance
- enhance the contribution of mining and minerals projects to local and regional sustainability
- build human capital within the industry and in the communities in which mining companies operate.

I look forward to reporting in subsequent newsletters on the work we are doing - and planning to do - around these themes.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those companies and operations who have provided financial support and/or access to sites and data. Sincere appreciation is also due to the many community members and industry employees who have participated in our projects and given freely of their time. The continuing level of interest in, and support for, the work of the Centre has been gratifying.

Please have an enjoyable and safe Christmas and all the best for 2006.

David Brereton
Director, CSRM

New Project

Monitoring the Sustainability Impacts of New Mineral Developments

In July, we began a new project with BHP Billiton’s Ravensthorpe Nickel Operation (RNO) in the far south of Western Australia. Our brief is to set up a framework that can be used to monitor and report on the operation’s contribution to the sustainable development of local communities and the surrounding region.

RNO is a major new mine and processing plant currently being constructed near the small town of Ravensthorpe, about 150 km west of Esperance and six hours drive from Perth. The mine and plant are located in a lightly populated agricultural area that has no modern history of large-scale industrial development. Most of the workforce will live locally in the coastal town of Hopetoun, or be bussed in and out from Esperance and stay at a permanent on-site village.
The scale of RNO means that it will have a significant impact on the social and economic structure of the region. Because this is a new development, there is scope to set up some well-defined baseline measures, rather than having to assess impacts and benefits retrospectively (which is the case for most established operations). The project also provides a unique opportunity to move beyond the standard social impact mitigation approach, to a broader focus on sustainable outcomes.

Although the project will be primarily concerned with measuring the impact of RNO on the human, social and economic capital of the region, the environmental dimension is also important. Given that RNO is located in a major food producing area, it is critical that nothing be done that could impact adversely on the marketability of agricultural products. There are also good opportunities for RNO to contribute positively to the natural capital of the region, such as by promoting more sustainable land management practices and protecting/restoring environmentally sensitive areas.

RNO has an active Community Liaison Committee (CLC) that represents a broad cross-section of local stakeholders. The research team has met with the CLC on two occasions so far, to get their views on what they see as the key sustainability issues for the region. The CLC is a valuable source of local expertise and we will continue to seek its input as the project progresses.

The research project will run from mid-2005 to mid-2007. Stage one (due for completion in mid-2006) will focus on setting up a monitoring framework. In Stage two we will use this framework to produce a baseline report.

Dr Catherine Pattenden, a Perth-based researcher, is responsible for managing the project. Cath is one of the CSRM’s Research Associates (see the news item later in this newsletter).

For further information on the project, contact Cath at: cpatt@cyllene.uwa.edu.au or David Brereton at d.brereton@epsa.uq.edu.au

Project Updates

Community Engagement

The Community Engagement project is examining how large mining companies manage relations with their local communities, with the aim of contributing to improved corporate practices. The project has four company participants and involves researchers from the CSRM, UQ Business School and the School of Social Sciences. Ruth Beach of the CSRM manages the project.

In October, Ruth took time out from her holiday to California to present some of the project findings to personnel from US Borax. This was arranged through Alexis Fernandez, one of our Advisory Board members. Alexis, who is now General Manager Communications and Sustainable Development for Comalco, previously worked at US Borax.

US Borax, a Rio Tinto affiliate, has long been regarded as one of the pioneers in good community relations. The company has done a lot of innovative work in encouraging community engagement between the mine operation and the local community in Boron. For example, Borax conducted one of the earliest community needs assessments, based on a community attitudes survey back in 2000.

The Borax Mine is similar to many Australian mining operations in that, since the 1970s, there has been a gradual shift in where the mine workforce lives. Originally everyone lived in Boron, which is about eight kilometres from the mine site. Today, only one third of the workforce lives in the town, with the rest commuting from surrounding districts.

US Borax Visitors Centre, Mojave Desert, California

Ruth gave two presentations, one to managers at the corporate head office in Valencia, California and the other to site managers based at Boron. Attendees were particularly interested in what the research has to say about the critical role that employees play in the community engagement process.

Ruth’s message was that mining operations cannot afford to regard managing external relations with local community as a separate issue from internal relations with their workforce. The support given to community initiatives has the effect of boosting involvement and morale in the workforce, just as motivated employees are likely to report more positive views of their workplace to their local communities.

US Borax Community Relations personnel: Robin Pendarvis and Nancy Lamoureux, outside their favourite Mexican Restaurant in Boron, California
Enabling Tools and Technologies for Capturing Regional Synergies

In addition to managing the Gladstone Regional Synergies Project, CSRM, in collaboration with Curtin University’s Centre of Excellence in Cleaner Production (CECP), is involved in the “Enabling Tools and Technologies for Capturing Regional Synergies” project. The aims of the project are to find ways of recycling waste and enabling by-product exchanges in intensive resource processing regions, such as Gladstone in Queensland and Kwinana in Western Australia.

In June, the project team released a comprehensive regional synergies status report, covering current synergy applications, eco-efficiency tools and indicators, and relevant technology developments. CECP has developed a prototype of the regional eco-efficiency opportunity assessment methodology and a trial of this tool is planned for early next year. For further details on this project contact Glen Corder g.corder@smi.uq.edu.au or visit www.csrp.com.au.

Centre News

CSRM Research Associates

Research Associates are independent researchers who collaborate with the CSRM in areas of shared interest. Our current Associates are Dr Catherine Pattenden and Associate Professor Craig Jones.

Craig is the Director of the Native Title Studies Centre at James Cook University and has worked in the area of negotiation with Indigenous peoples for over 15 years. He is an expert in cross-cultural negotiation and dispute resolution and has extensive networks throughout the Indigenous community, and with industry and government.

Catherine is based in Perth and is helping to manage the Ravensthorpe Sustainability Indicators Project. She recently completed a PhD in Anthropology from The University of Western Australia. Her research interests include community and social affiliation, workforce issues, organisational interactions, and the social implications of change management. Much of her research has focused on mining communities and employment issues affecting the resources sector.

CSRM out and about: Conference papers and presentations

CSRM staff members have undertaken an active program of conference presentations, seminars and workshops in recent months.

MCA 2005 SD Conference

The CSRM contributed three papers to the recent Minerals Council of Australia (MCA) Sustainable Development Conference in Alice Springs.

David Brereton provided an overview of emerging findings from the Community Engagement Project, Tanuja Barker delivered a paper on ‘Mining Project Infrastructure and Indigenous Tourism’ and Bull Yanner, Century Mine’s Gulf Communities Agreement Superintendent, presented findings from the CSRM survey of Aboriginal former employees from Century.

Details of these presentations can be obtained from the MCA by accessing: http://www.minerals.org.au/corporate/events/2005_sustainable_development_conference/conference_proceedings

Chemeca 2005 Conference

The Chemeca 2005 Conference was held in Brisbane from 25th-28th September. As part of the Centre for Sustainable Resource Processing workshop at the conference, Glen Corder presented a paper connected with the work he is currently undertaking on the Gladstone Regional Synergies project.


MTEC Lecturers Workshop

David Brereton and David Mulligan (Director of UQ’s Centre for Mined Land Rehabilitation) recently helped to facilitate a two-day workshop organised by the Minerals Tertiary Education Council (MTEC). The workshop, which was held at Cadia Mine near Orange in New South Wales, was attended by University lecturers from around Australia who teach in mining-related programs.

The role of the ‘two Davids’ was to promote discussion about broader sustainability themes, such as resource use, management of surrounding lands, and community issues associated with mining. Attendees were encouraged to think about how they could incorporate some of these themes into their own courses.

The success of the workshop owed much to Greg Morris, Environment Manager for Cadia and Nedra Burns, Cadia’s Community Relations Superintendent. Greg and Nedra were
very generous with their time and spoke frankly with the group about the challenges involved in operating a large mining operation in a settled area.

Discussing community issues at the site of a Cadia-sponsored Land Care initiative.

Hazardous Waste Act Technical Group Seminar Series
In October Glen Corder presented on the Gladstone Regional Synergies project to the Hazardous Waste Act Technical Group Seminar Series in Canberra. This was the inaugural presentation in the series. The Technical Group, which is chaired by UQ’s Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor, Paul Greenfield, advises the Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage on the implementation of the Hazardous Waste Act.


New Resources on Managing Community Impacts Available
Two new resources are now available for downloading from the CSRM website: A Sourcebook of Community Impact Monitoring Measures for the Australian Coal Mining Industry and Developing a Community Impacts Monitoring and Management Strategy: A Guidance Document for Australian Coal Mining Operations.

The Sourcebook and Guidance Document are both outputs from a project funded by the Australian Association Coal Research Program (ACARP). The aim of this project was to develop strategies to assist Australian coal mining operations to monitor, manage and report on the impact of their activities on local communities.

Although the two documents were prepared for the coal sector, they address themes that are of broad applicability to the Australian mining industry. We encourage industry personnel and researchers to make use of these resources and would welcome any feedback about how they might be enhanced.

Both documents can be accessed by going to http://www.csrm.uq.edu.au/ and clicking on ‘publications’ and ‘resources’.

Survey of Minerals Industry Professionals
During December CSRM, in conjunction with the UQ Social Research Centre, is conducting a web-based survey of members of The Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy (AusIMM). The survey, which is being funded by Macquarie Securities, ask members about their personal experience of working in the industry and seeks their views about factors that could impact on the profitability and future growth of the industry. Findings from the survey will be released in the first half of 2006.

Upcoming Events

JKMRC International Student Conference II
7th-8th March 2006
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre
Brisbane, Australia

The JKMRC International Student Conference is open to all early career research students in mining/minerals looking to present their work to a global audience for the first time. Exposure to Australian and international senior company personnel at this conference is high, providing participants with an opportunity to be seen and heard by potential industry employers.

For information on the program, visit the conference website: http://www.jkconferences.com

People

Ian Williams
Ian Williams, Chairman of the CSRM Advisory Board, has been re-appointed as an Adjunct Professor at The University of Queensland. Ian’s appointment recognises the significant contribution that he has made to the Australian minerals industry over the years, and the support that he has provided to CSRM in particular.

Postgraduate Students

Our newest PhD student is Peta Ashworth. Peta’s thesis title is: Community engagement: Understanding and influencing processes of engagement with organisational and public stakeholders on climate change and low emission technologies. She will be supervised jointly by Dr Anne Pisarski, School of Business, UQ, Prof David Brereton, CSRM, Dr Janet Grice, School of Social Sciences, UQ and Prof Linda Rosenman, Faculty of Social and Behavioural sciences, UQ.
Ramola Yardi has commenced a Research Masters addressing the topic of Technical and policy options for stewarding Australia’s uranium resources for a sustainable future. Ramola is being supervised by Glen Corder of the CSRM and Anna Littleboy from CSIRO’s Division of Exploration and Mining.

Congratulations to Deanna Kemp, who recently submitted her PhD thesis for examination and passed with flying colours. Showing an impeccable sense of timing, Deanna completed the thesis in the final weeks of her pregnancy. Deanna and Hayden are now the proud parents of a beautiful daughter, Georgia, who arrived on 28th October.

International Visitors

Julie-Anne Braithwaite, an Associate Program Director for ICMM visited CSRM in September to talk about her role, which includes responsibility for a range of social and environmental programs. Julie-Anne was in Brisbane for the ICEC conference.

In November, we hosted a visit from Richard Garner, Divisional Coordinator, Environment, Anglo Coal Environmental Services, South Africa.

Don Tolia, the Permanent Secretary of Solomon Islands Department of Mines and Ellson Habu, the Department’s Deputy Director, visited in August to discuss possible research collaborations.

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.

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