Monitoring the Contribution of Ravensthorpe Nickel-Nickel West to the Regional Community

PART 1: PROJECT REPORT

October 2007
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Acknowledgements

This project was conducted with the financial and in-kind support of BHP Billiton’s Stainless Steel Division and Ravensthorpe Nickel (RN). Within the company, a number of individuals have provided critical development and facilitation support for the project. In particular, Geoff Donnes, Vice-President HSEC for SSM, was instrumental in the initial project development; and Ford Murray, Manager Government Relations and Communications for Nickel West, has provided on-going strategic guidance and logistical support. Other individuals whose support has contributed to this project include Isak Buitendag, General Manager RN; Adrian Lees, former HSEC Manager, RN; and Amanda Barrett, Community Co-ordinator at RN.

Throughout the project the RN-Community Liaison Committee has provided feedback and critical evaluation at key development phases. The CSRM team has found the engagement and input of the RN-CLC to be one of the most rewarding aspects of the project and would like to extend their appreciation to the Committee’s membership. Likewise, the input received from community members during the consultation phase of the project was instrumental in identifying issues of regional priority, and our thanks is extended to all those individuals who generously shared their time and thoughts with us during this phase.

Finally, numerous individuals and organizations have assisted with provision of advice, direction and, in some instances, input in respect to baseline data. Our thanks are extended to all of these individuals and organizations.

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CSRM is a member of the Sustainable Minerals Institute.
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Executive summary

This report documents the outputs from the project “Monitoring the Contribution of Ravensthorpe Nickel to the Regional Community” and describes how it was conducted. This two year project has focused on developing a framework of indicators for tracking and monitoring change in those communities that are most closely associated with the RN development – the Shire of Ravensthorpe and the Shire of Esperance. A key objective has been to design an organizing framework and indicators that will enable the contribution of RN to regional sustainability to be tracked and assessed.

This report has been compiled in two sections:

- Part 1 details the research process undertaken by CSRM; and
- Part 2 details the Monitoring Framework and baseline data.

This structure has been adopted in order to facilitate the periodic updating of indicator and baseline data that will be required to maintain the framework’s dataset through Ravensthorpe Nickel’s operational life.

The organising framework is based on the well-known ‘five capitals’ model of sustainable development. According to this model, communities and regions require five different types of resources (‘capitals’) to sustain themselves over time. These are:

- **Economic capital**: income, financial resources and wealth generating capacity
- **Human capital**: skilled, knowledgeable, healthy and motivated people
- **Social capital**: networks and relationships that enable cooperation, mutual support and the sharing of information
- **Built capital**: physical infrastructure such as transport and communications, community facilities and housing
- **Natural capital**: access to key natural resources, such as water, land, clean air, fisheries, forests etc.

The main focus of the project was on: (a) on identifying the main ways in which RN could potentially impact – either positively or negatively – on each of these domains; and (b) developing indicators and supporting measures that could be used to monitor these impacts over time.

The resultant framework is intended to:
provide a systematic and consistent information base to assist RN report internally and externally on its social performance

facilitate the planning, implementation and evaluation of community development and engagement strategies

promote an informed dialogue with the wider community about the contribution of RN to the long term development of the region and the eventual transition to a post-mining economy.

**Project Methodology**

The project commenced in mid-2005 and concluded in mid-2007. The commencement date, and the project’s two year timeframe, was planned to coincide with the latter period of RN’s construction phase and plant commissioning which has occurred progressively throughout 2007.

This two year period marked a critical phase for both the RN operation and the community: the operation has seen the progressive escalation of the construction project which, at its height in late 2006, utilised a workforce of approximately 2,000 persons; the community, for its part, has seen the transitioning from planned and anticipated change through to the actualization of change as new housing developments have taken shape and new, residential, employees of Ravensthorpe Nickel have relocated to the region.

The project methodology comprised six main phases.

1. **Refinement of project development and design:** This included input and advice from key members of the RN-Management Team and the RN-CLC. The RN-CLC has played a key role in providing guidance and validation of outputs as each stage of the project.

2. **Community consultations:** These were conducted in the Shire of Ravensthorpe and Shire of Esperance to identify local priorities, perceptions of regional development opportunities, and ensure project outcomes align with local knowledge systems. Participants in the consultation phase comprised a range of key stakeholders such as community leaders, educators, service providers, and regional government.

3. **Framework development and identification:** Drawing on the outputs from the consultation phase, the five capital model was adapted to the local context and the associated framework was developed.
4. **Modification and review:** In consultation with key members of the RN-Management team and the RN-CLC, the framework was tested and validated to ensure relevance and applicability to the local context. This stage included the identification of a range of potential lead and lag indicators for each capital area.

5. **Refinement of Indicators and Collection of Baseline Data:** Potential data sources to be used to provide data were identified and baseline data collected where available. Data collection protocols were developed.

6. **Final report preparation:** The baseline data, where available, were captured analysed, and distilled into a regional “Snapshot 2007” (see attached).

Project milestones are illustrated in the following chart.
Framework indicators and baseline data

The indicators which comprise the monitoring framework are:

| 1. Natural Capital | 1. Environmental awareness amongst the residents of the Shire of Ravensthorpe  
|                    | 2. Spread of dieback within the Shire of Ravensthorpe |
| 2. Economic Capital | 3. Ravensthorpe Nickel Local Spend  
|                    | 4. New Business Start-Ups in the Shires of Ravensthorpe and Esperance |
|                    | 6. Depth and complexity of community networks: new groups, size of groups in the Shire of Ravensthorpe  
|                    | 7. Social cohesion and integration of new families |
|                    | 9. Quality of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people |
| 4. Human Capital | 10. Ravensthorpe Nickel’s contribution to skills development of young people in the region  
|                    | 11. Retention rates for students enrolled at Ravensthorpe District High School  
|                    | 12. Provision of employment opportunities to “locals” (i.e. not new arrivals) |
| 5. Built Capital | 13. Range of services and amenities available to the community |

Most of the indicators have been selected because of their long-term relevance to the region and the life of RN. However, there are a small number that are potentially more immediate in their focus. These have been included because of their short-term importance to regional development. For example, Indicator 5 refers to the number of new families undertaking the family induction program introduced by RN. While this is important because of its potential to influence on the integration process of new families, it is recognized that the family induction program may not necessarily continue into the longer-term life of the operation and so, therefore, may be subsumed by new and more appropriate indicators in the future. One of our project recommendations is that a periodic review of the relevance of the indicators should be undertaken as part of the ongoing implementation of this monitoring framework.

The indicators and baseline data identified in this report, although not fully complete due to unavailability of data, already indicate some significant trends occurring within the region. Some of these trends and achievements are directly attributable to RN, such as enhanced Aboriginal employment opportunities, and the expansion of the underlying population which will
enable the development of future services and amenities. Other evident trends, such as the increasing retention rate of school children at the Ravensthorpe District High School, while not directly attributable to the RN development, are likely to be influenced by the broader social, demographic and economic changes that are underway in the region.

The key baseline data, where available, are captured in the “Snapshot 2007” below.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made in respect to the future development and implementation of this framework and are aimed at ensuring that it is integrated into RN’s management processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Formally delegate ongoing responsibility for the maintenance and utilisation of the monitoring framework to a senior member of the RN executive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Integrate the framework as part of RN’s standardized reporting procedures, and continue implementation for the duration of mine-life with reviews and updates of data on an annual or bi-annual basis or as appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ensure follow-through on capturing the baseline indicator measurements that were unavailable or incomplete at the time of the production of this report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Every three years review the indicators for their continued relevance in capturing key performance data within the overall monitoring framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ensure that there is regular reporting to the community on key trends identified through the monitoring process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ensure that monitoring data are linked into RN’s planning processes (e.g. risk reviews, development and review of community plans).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Snapshot 2007

Natural Capital

Indicator 1: Environmental awareness amongst the residents of the Shire of Ravensthorpe
Figure 23: Visitation rates by number of vehicles at the Fitzgerald River National Park, Hamersley Drive South and North entrance points

Indicator 2: Spread of dieback within the Shire of Ravensthorpe
Figure 29: 3D Composite image of dieback investigations along Springdale Road – Lake Shaster in the Shire of Ravensthorpe

Indicator 13: Range of services and facilities available to the community in the Shire of Ravensthorpe
Figure 41: Service and facility availability within the Shire of Ravensthorpe

Built Capital

Human Capital

Indicator 12: Provision of employment opportunities to “locals” (i.e. not new arrivals)
The Shire’s June 2007 Community Survey. Sample respondents who indicated they were either employed, or a member of their household was employed, at Ravensthorpe Nickel, 18% had lived in the Shire of 5 years or longer. Of those respondents who had lived in the Shire for less than 12 months, 59% were employed, or a member of their household was employed, at Ravensthorpe Nickel.

Indicator 11: Retention rates for students enrolled at Ravensthorpe District High School
Figure 40: Ravensthorpe District High School Attraction Rates Year 7 2003-2007

Social Capital

Indicator 7: Social cohesion and the integration of new families
• Qualitative feedback received in the Shire of Ravensthorpe Community Survey (June 2007) indicates community fragmentation remains an area of significant concern amongst many in the Shire.

Indicator 8: Ravensthorpe Nickel’s contribution to Indigenous employment
Figure 38: Locality of employment of Aboriginal employees at RN

Indicator 9: Quality of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people
• Ravensthorpe Nickel is in the process of developing a Regional Indigenous Participation Strategy (RIPS) to assist the operation monitor its relations and contribution to Aboriginal people.

Social Capital - Aboriginal

Economic Capital

Indicator 3: Local Spend
• The estimated local spend, measured by the award of contracts to local suppliers, is almost $40M, or approximately 64 per cent of housing construction expenditure. This is not recurring expenditure.

Indicator 4: New business startups
Figure 33: New ABN Registrations for Post-Codes 6348 Hopetoun, 6346 Ravensthorpe, 6450 Esperance

Indicator 5: Proportion of new families participating in RN Induction program
• It can be expected that there would be a correlation between the proportion of family inductions and levels of satisfaction amongst incoming families. RN HR to track.

Indicator 6: Depth and complexity of new community networks: new groups and size of groups in the Shire of Ravensthorpe
Figure 35: Number and categorization of community groups in the Shire of Ravensthorpe at June 2007

Indicator 10: Ravensthorpe Nickel’s contribution to skills development of young people
The operation’s transition to production will see the workforce profile change to one characterized by greater stability and localization and the change in workforce profiles, the advocacy and promotion of RN traineeships and apprenticeship will not be in place until approximately 2009.
1. Introduction

This report documents the outputs from the project “Monitoring the Contribution of Ravensthorpe Nickel to the Regional Community” and describes how it was conducted. This two year project has focused on developing a framework of indicators for tracking and monitoring change in those communities that are most closely associated with the RN development – the Shire of Ravensthorpe and the Shire of Esperance. A key objective has been to design indicators that will enable the contribution of RN to regional sustainability to be tracked and assessed.

RN’s decision to utilize a predominantly locally based workforce housed at Hopetoun, Ravensthorpe, or Esperance, is a significant one for the south-east of Western Australia. With a projected operational workforce of 650 persons, many of whom will be recruited from outside of the region, RN will be the catalyst for substantial social, demographic, and economic change. The Shire of Ravensthorpe, and Hopetoun in particular, will be the focus of much of this development and change. With a lightly populated area that has no recent history of large scale mining or industrial development, the Shire is undergoing a major transition that will see its population increase significantly over the next five years (Fisher and Beare, 2007, p. 16 Table 3). It is likely that the recent decision to incorporate a fly-in-fly-out component to the operational workforce will soften the intensity of this transition phase, but the long term impacts on the region will still be significant.

Change of this scale brings major development opportunities that have the potential to promote and secure long-term regional growth through sustained expansion of the local economy and population, and broadening of the regional skill base. The challenge will be to manage the change process in a way that enables capacity building and enhancement of existing industry and resources while integrating new development and avenues of opportunity. The sustainability of the development that takes place over the life of RN, and the ability of the region to leverage off the associated growth, will be critical to the region’s capacity to transition successfully to a post-RN era.

BHP Billiton’s HSEC Sustainable Development Policy (BHP Billiton, 2006) identifies sustainable development for host communities as one of the pillars of responsible business practice and integral to the company’s ongoing licence to operate. As a signatory company to the ICMM Sustainable Development principles (2005), and the Minerals Council of Australia’s Enduring Value framework (2005), BHP Billiton is committed to implementing public reporting frameworks and associated metrics against which operational or site level performance is assessed. Specifically, as a signatory the company is committed to:

- plan, design, operate and close operations in a manner that enhances sustainable development;
- contribute to community development from project development through closure in collaboration with host communities and their representatives;
• enhance social and economic development by seeking opportunities to address poverty;
• report on the company’s economic, social and environmental performance and contribution to sustainable development.

In line with BHPB policy, the RN development team made an early commitment to work in cooperation with the local community to maximize the regional development potential of the RN project. The Monitoring project evolved as part of this commitment. Initially the project was targeted solely at the development of a set of indicators and metrics. However, as it developed, the project became a vehicle for a broader dialogue on sustainable regional development and on the contribution of RN to this goal. Implementing the outputs of the Monitoring project will help to maintain this momentum and ensure that sustainable development principles remain central to company and community regional planning.

The specific benefits for RN of utilizing the Monitoring framework over the life of the operation include:

• Providing a systematic and consistent information base to assist the operation report internally and externally on its social performance, in line with BHPB requirements;
• Facilitating the targeted strategic planning of corporate community development initiatives tracking of the impact and effectiveness of these initiatives; and
• Creating a context for informed discussion and dialogue about the contribution of RN to the sustainable development of its local communities and region.

1.1 Scope of Work

The project scope of work was as follows:

1. Identify key sustainability issues for the region drawing on a consultation program with local and regional organisations and the RN-Community Liaison Committee (CLC).

2. Establish what data are currently being collected, or is planned to be collected, by RN and other organisations that could facilitate the monitoring of regional socio-economic change.

3. Undertake desk top research to identify current international best-practice in respect to the identification and implementation of indicators and community change measures.
4. With a focus on regional sustainability, develop an organising framework and identify associated indicators and measures to be used to track change across a range of regionally-specific socio-economic domains.

5. Develop an implementation strategy for the framework and indicators, including operational definitions of key measures, methodology of data collection, recommendations on the frequency of indicator updates, resourcing implications and organisational support requirements.

6. Provide an interim report at end of project year one.

7. Provide a final report detailing all project outputs, the finalised framework and indicators, recommended methodology for ongoing data collection against identified indicators, baseline data where available, and recommendations on future actions based on information arising from the initial baseline reporting where appropriate.

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1.2 The Monitoring Framework and Strategic Community Relations

In the last decade, Community Relations within the minerals industry has moved from what was once a marginal operational activity focused on public relations to one of increasing strategic importance to operational and organizational planning. Traditionally organisational incentives for companies to act responsibly in respect to the community have been framed in terms of securing access to land and the licence to operate. But the days of expediency have passed. As the industry has become increasingly dominated by a handful of large multi-national organizations, the social accountability of those organizations has expanded and the level of scrutiny to which they are subjected by government and NGOs has increased significantly.

There is increasing recognition within the industry of the broader potential of effective Community Relations as an organizational and operational strategy. New imperatives of attraction and retention of staff, protection and promotion of reputational capital, and mitigation of risk to community and organizations, have emerged as potentially positive outcomes of effective Community Relations (Department of Industry Tourism and Resources, 2006, p. 2-3). The emerging strategic value of Community Relations and the contribution it can make to these factors are particularly acute during the current period. The super-cycle currently being experienced in the industry has seen an escalation in demand for labour and resources to unprecedented levels, a demand which is predicted to be sustained for the next decade and which will see the requirement for an additional 70,000 workers if the industry is to meet its growth potential (Lowry et al., 2006, p.4). The quality of life for employees, and the ability of operations to attract and retain new skills, has become an area of critical vulnerability for the industry. This is where effective Community Relations can potentially make a direct and positive impact.

If Community Relations is to fulfill its potential in these emerging areas of organisational importance, it must become permanently integrated within mainstream business
processes across the span of an operation’s life cycle, irrespective of the peaks and troughs of commodity cycles. This requires the adoption of a strategic planning approach embracing a strong conceptual framework with links directly to other functional business streams (e.g. HR, Supply, Mine Closure Planning). Creating a set of measures and indicators which become a barometer of change and development within the organization and the community is critical to inform and guide both longer-term shifts in strategy and shorter term changes in operational CR priorities. The Monitoring framework developed for RN and the Community is intended to provide the reference point to assist in this decision making process.

1.3 Criteria for indicator selection

Ideally, indicators should be selected with the goal of providing a consistent reliable and valid data set which can be sustained over time (Black and Hughes, 2001, p. 141-144). However, in a real life operational context, where there are many competing demands on time and resources, the rigid application of such criteria can be excessively constraining. The framework presented here has therefore been developed with considerations of cost and availability firmly in mind. Rather than developing a suite of purpose-built indicators, we have sought, wherever possible, to use information that is already being collected by other agencies (e.g. Dept of Conservation data on dieback infestations) or which can easily be generated by RN organizational processes (e.g. employment data). We have also used qualitative feedback from local experts, rather than relying solely on ‘objective’ quantitative measures. Our approach, while perhaps falling short of strict scientific standards, has the great merit of being practical. By using multiple indicators for most of the nominated capital areas, we have also minimized the risk of misreading or ignoring significant trends, notwithstanding that some individual indicators may be less than ideal.

1.4 Structure of the Report

This report presents a comprehensive overview of the process and outputs undertaken for the Monitoring project, a scope of work that has spanned two years of engagement with the RN project and the RN-CLC. The report has been compiled in two sections:

- Part 1 details the research process undertaken by CSRM; and
- Part 2 details the Monitoring Framework and baseline data.

This structure has been adopted in order to facilitate the periodic updating of indicator and baseline data that will be required to maintain the framework’s dataset through Ravensthorpe Nickel’s operational life.

Sections 1 through 4 provide a summary of the background context, the methodological approach, and the consultation processes undertaken to identify local priority areas and to ensure that the monitoring framework resonates with a local-scale criteria (Pepperdine, 2000).

The actual content of Part 1 of the report, by chapter, is as follows:

- **Section 2**: provides an overview of the methodology utilized to conduct the Monitoring project, including a review of the project timeframe, the consultations undertaken to obtain community input and embed the framework within current local priorities, and the ongoing testing and validation of the framework that has taken place via input from the RN-CLC.

- **Section 3**: provides a brief overview of the regional contexts of the Shire of Ravensthorpe and the Shire of Esperance. The section is a synopsis of the regional statistical profiles, drawn from Census data, and tracked over the last decade. These profiles allow for a retrospective examination of change across a selected range of demographic information such as population, employment, education, and ethnicity profiles for the two Shires.

- **Section 4**: details the consultation phase of the project. This phase entailed a targeted program of consultations with key local stakeholders drawn from local government, non-government and community organizations, and a handful of prominent individuals. The qualitative outputs of these consultations were used to identify regional priority areas, perceptions of the risks and opportunities associated with the RN development, and locally relevant conceptualizations of sustainability.


Part 2 of the report contains the Monitoring Project Planning Framework organized around each of the identified five capital areas, and the baseline data that has been collected, where available, for each of the identified indicators.

The actual content of Part 2 of the report, by chapter, is as follows:

- **Section 1**: details the Monitoring Framework for each of the five capital areas. The dataset for each domain has been organized around the themes of risk and
opportunity; RN activities undertaken, planned, or potential; targets; partner organizations; and potential indicators (lead and lag).

- **Section 2**: details individual indicators including background context, baseline data where available, instructions on the frequency and method of collecting data into the future. The data collection methodology has been developed with a view to maximize the “useability” of the framework.

- **Section 3**: provides some concluding statements about the Monitoring framework including recommendations on future periodic reviews in order to ensure the ongoing relevance of the framework as the RN operation moves through its lifecycle.

Appendix 1 provides a Contact Database, a directory of key external contacts who have contributed to the data pool has been used to establish baselines for the indicators.
2 What we did: methodology

Ensuring local relevancy is critical to developing an effective monitoring framework at the operational level. This requires a participatory approach to issue identification and indicator development (Baines et al., 2003). In the case of Ravensthorpe Nickel, this input came from three sources: one-on-one and group interviews with a cross-section of community stakeholders, the RN-Community Liaison Committee (RN-CLC), and the RN management team. In addition, desk top research involving the review of relevant academic and non-academic literature was ongoing throughout the project.

2.1 Project Timeframe

This project commenced in mid-2005 and concluded in mid-2007. The commencement date, and the project’s two year timeframe, was planned to coincide with the latter period of RN’s construction phase and plant commissioning which has occurred progressively throughout 2007.

This two year period marked a critical phase for both the RN operation and the community: the operation has seen the progressive escalation of the construction project which, at its height in late 2006, utilised a workforce of approximately 2,000 persons; the community, for its part, has seen the transitioning from planned and anticipated change through to the actualization of change as new housing developments have taken shape and new, residential employees of Ravensthorpe Nickel have relocated to the region.

The timeframe for the Monitoring project was designed to enable selective and intensive input and activity spread out over an extended and critical period. This enabled the CSRM project team to observe community and RN change processes over an extended period of time and incorporate those observations into the final framework and indicators. Figure 1 below illustrates the key project milestones and the extent of the CSRM project team’s ongoing engagement with the RN-CLC.
2.2 Desk Top Research

In order to situate the Ravensthorpe Nickel Monitoring project within a broader theoretical and applied context, the relevant Australian and international literature was monitored and reviewed throughout the project. This literature review informed the project design, interpretation of results, and enabled evaluation of the project against published international best practice.

The desk top research also included a review of locally relevant documentation to support or provide further context, such as the Ravensthorpe/Esperance and Jerramugup Strategic Blueprint for the Future (SMEC, 2002). Additional reports and documentation as provided by Ravensthorpe Nickel, and demographic and other relevant data, were also reviewed as part of the literature review and are referred to as appropriate throughout this report.

2.3 Community Consultation Phase

A key pillar of the project methodology was extensive, structured, consultation with key stakeholder groups and individuals in order to identify local priorities and perceptions of regional development opportunities, and ensure project outcomes were aligned with local knowledge systems (Baines et al., 2003). The community consultation program was developed by the CSRM team in combination with RN Management and the RN-CLC, and included key stakeholders such as community groups, educators, service providers, and regional government.

The consultations consisted predominantly of one-on-one, semi-structured interviews, supplemented with a small number of focus groups and workshops. The majority of the consultations occurred between November 2005 and February 2006 in the communities of Ravensthorpe, Hopetoun/Jerdacuttup, and Esperance. Figure 2 below represents the
distribution of consultations by region. Additional meetings were held with some cross-regional representatives, such as District Education Officers.

Figure 2: Distribution of Consultation by Region

In total, thirty-five consultations took place involving fifty-seven participants. Meetings were held with representatives of:

- The Education Sector
- Residents
- Agriculture Industry
- Indigenous Groups
- Environmental Groups
- Service Providers
- Government (Local and State)
- Business Owners and Representative Groups.

Each interview transcript was analysed for key themes such as local conceptualizations of sustainability, perceived risks and opportunities associated with the RN development, and suggestions on potential indicators or metrics that might contribute to the monitoring project. These themes were then collated to identify frequencies of occurrence across all interviews, and to ascertain areas of community priority. For ethical reasons and to protect the confidentiality of participants, results have been aggregated across all consultations and have not been reported according to the industry or community sector of the respondents. The consultation outputs are discussed in detail in Section 3 of this report.
Following the initial review and analysis of the consultations, a workshop was conducted in which the data were reviewed with the RN-CLC and key RN Management. This workshop was designed to test and validate findings, obtain further inputs, and prioritise direction for the next phase of the research project.

Consultation outputs were quantified in order to obtain a ranked order of regional priority areas (see Section 3). It is important to note that while the quantification of frequencies in this manner is useful for synthesizing complex information, it can have the effect of diluting, or over-looking, issues of importance to community development simply because these issues were not priority areas during the period in which the consultation occurred. As such, a simple frequencies analysis on its own has the potential to overlook issues which, in the bigger social or organisational context, may nevertheless need to be drawn out.

An example of this would be issues associated with the local Aboriginal and Indigenous people who have, in recent history, had exceptionally low population representation in the Shire of Ravensthorpe\textsuperscript{1}. The RN development has the potential to facilitate an increase in local Aboriginal population numbers through its Indigenous Employment Initiatives, and is likely to influence subsequent changes to ancillary employment conditions through the flow-on effects to the broader region. The issue of regional Aboriginal relations was not a topic that was, generally speaking, raised spontaneously by interview participants, possibly because of the currently low background population numbers of Aboriginal people. Nevertheless, issues associated with Aboriginal people and Aboriginal employment have been included in the overall Monitoring framework as a priority area. This is in light of larger societal and industry contexts which are likely to influence, over time, the frequency and quality of relations between Aboriginal people and the broader regional population.

\section{Framework Development and Identification of Indicators}

The organising framework is based on the well-known ‘five capitals’ model of sustainable development (see “Sustainability Research” text box below). According to this model, communities and regions require five different types of resources (‘capitals’) to sustain themselves over time. These are:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Economic capital}: income, financial resources and wealth generating capacity
  \item \textit{Human capital}: skilled, knowledgeable, healthy and motivated people
  \item \textit{Social capital}: networks and relationships that enable cooperation, mutual support and the sharing of information
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{1} At the 2001 Census, Aboriginal and Indigenous representation within the Shire of Ravensthorpe was one percent ABS (2002) Indigenous Profile, Ravensthorpe LGA. Canberra, Commonwealth of Australia.
- **Built capital**: physical infrastructure such as transport and communications, community facilities and housing

- **Natural capital**: access to key natural resources, such as water, land, clean air, fisheries, forests etc.

The main focus of the project was on: (a) identifying the main ways in which RN could potentially impact – either positively or negatively – on each of these domains; and (b) developing indicators and supporting measures that could be used to monitor these impacts over time (see Figure 3).

The resultant framework is intended to:

- provide a systematic and consistent information base to assist RN report internally and externally on its social performance
- facilitate the planning, implementation and evaluation of community development and engagement strategies
- promote an informed dialogue with the wider community about the contribution of RN to the long term development of the region and the eventual transition to a post-mining economy.
Sustainability Research: the background context

*We can’t steer accurately, if we don’t know where we are (Meadows, 1998, p.3)*

The organising framework is based on the ‘five capitals’ model of sustainable development. Capital refers to “a stock of anything that has the capacity to generate a flow of benefits which are valued by humans” (Porritt, 2005, P. 112). Traditionally, capital has been thought of primarily in financial or economic terms, but the ‘five capital’ model emphasises that communities need access to a diverse array of resources if they are to survive and flourish. As argued by Porritt, these five forms of capital “judiciously combined … are the essential ingredients of modern industrial productivity” (Porritt, 2005, p. 114).

The genesis of the ‘five capitals’ model can be traced back to the mid-1990s and the work of organisations such as the World Bank and the Balaton Group (Meadows, 1998). Some variants of the approach refer to four, rather than five, types of capital, and the individual forms of capital have sometimes been categorised differently (for example, some approaches treat institutional capital as a separate category; others refer to manufactured capital, rather than economic and built capital). However, there is general agreement on the core assumptions.
A fundamental precept of the model is that it is not acceptable to run down some stocks in order to build up others. In particular, economic growth should not be at the expense of depleting key non-renewable natural resources or destroying the social capital of the community, since by definition growth cannot be sustained under these conditions. However some substitutability within capital categories is considered acceptable, provided the net impact is positive (or at least neutral). For example, in relation to social capital disruption caused to existing social networks by an influx of ‘mining people’ into a community may be balanced out by the re-invigoration of community organisations and the creation of new social networks (e.g. around schools).

The ‘five capitals’ model has been applied in this project because:

- It has a strong intellectual pedigree and is increasingly influential in the literature on regional and community development.

- The model requires that attention is given to the full range of potential project impacts, rather than the focus being mainly on economic environmental impacts, which has traditionally been the approach taken in Australia. Specifically, the model focuses attention on overall “health” and interconnectedness of a system, instead of just on a couple of components.

- It encourages companies to think more broadly about the potential contribution they can make to the development of a community and/or region (for example, by highlighting the importance of human capital).

- The model facilitates a structured dialogue about what kinds of substitutions and trade-offs are, and are not, acceptable. Lastly, it provides a reference point for the development of metrics, by highlighting the need to think creatively about how to measure trends in different forms of capital and how to assess net impacts within and across capital domains.

The framework situates indicators for each domain in a broader context, by linking them to key risks and opportunities (as identified in the consultations), suggested targets for RN, and current and possible future management responses.
2.5 **Lead and Lag Indicators**

The framework draws an explicit distinction between ‘lead’ and ‘lag’ indicators. Building community and regional sustainability is a long term process where the impact of some interventions may not be known for years or even decades. For this reason, it is important to have the capacity to track both the effort which an operation is putting into achieving desired outcomes (the function of ‘lead’ indicators) and the impact, or effectiveness, of these efforts (the realm of ‘lag’ indicators). Well-designed ‘lead’ indicators allow an operation to monitor whether it is ‘on track’ in the implementation of its strategies, whereas ‘lag’ indicators provide feedback about whether these strategies are delivering the desired outcomes. Both types of information are critical for the effective management of a sustainability strategy.

2.6 **RN Management**

The framework design and development of progress measures for RN’s regional contribution have been conducted with ongoing input from key members of the RN management team. In addition, an internal RN workshop was conducted in early 2006 to identify and populate the framework with data drawing on the full scope of the RN management divisions. The outputs from this workshop were factored into the development of the indicator framework.

The final monitoring framework will require continued RN management support for full and ongoing implementation.

2.7 **RN-Community Liaison Committee**

Throughout the project, the RN-Community Liaison Committee\(^2\) (RN-CLC) has played a key role in providing information, feedback and validation of project direction and outputs, with members of the CSRM project team regularly attending RN-CLC meetings (see Project Milestones, Figure 1 above). Comprising representatives of the local community, NGOs and local government, the RN-CLC was initiated by the company in early 2002, prior to the commencement of construction. The committee acts as a conduit between the company and community on issues affecting or concerning the community. In the five years since its inception, the RN-CLC has evolved to become a group of well-informed individuals with a highly developed grasp of the steps and processes undertaken to bring the Ravensthorpe Nickel project to fruition. As such, they have been ideally positioned to provide the CSRM-project team with on-going feedback throughout

\(^2\) A sister group to the RN-CLC is the Jerdacuttup-RN Working Group (JRWG). The composition of the JRWG is, for the most part, made up of RN’s fenceline neighbours, and the focus of the group’s activities has been predominantly issues of health and environmental monitoring.
the development phase of this project and it is envisaged they will continue to play a key partnership role in the future direction and implementation of this monitoring framework.

### 2.8 Ethics

This project has been conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Behavioural & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee at The University of Queensland. Approval to conduct the research was obtained in 2005.

Prior to the commencement of interviews and consultations, all participants were informed of the voluntary and confidential nature of the project, and assurances were given that nothing would be reported that would identify them as individuals. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to the commencement of interviews. In order to protect the confidentiality of individuals, all consultation data has been aggregated and not reported against the industry or community sector of the participants.

It is a requirement of The University of Queensland that participants be provided with feedback on the outcomes of research projects. Because of the long duration of this project, no formal participant feedback has been provided to date, although informal feedback has occurred where participants have requested. At project conclusion, formal community feedback will take place in a format to be decided upon in consultation with relevant RN Management and the RN-CLC.
3 The Regional Context

This section provides a statistical overview of the Shire of Ravensthorpe and the Shire of Esperance, drawing on current and past census data to illustrate shifts across a range of key demographic data. Where appropriate, this data is also compared to the equivalent, broader Western Australian data. This analysis makes an important contribution to the indicator framework as it helps identify broader issues and opportunities within the two Shires, defines additional baselines, and illustrates retrospective shifts in the regional profile.

The analysis presents census data across a 10 year period from 1996 to 2006, thereby allowing retrospective, longitudinal comparisons and trend analysis. The areas covered are:

1. Basic Regional Demography
2. Employment by Industry
3. Regional Education Levels

It is recommended that the charts in this section be periodically updated as new census data becomes available and that a 10-15 year rolling analysis be maintained.

3.1 Basic Regional Demography

The following charts represent population trends in the two Shires over a 10 year period from 1996 to 2006. Analysing the data in this way illustrates proportional shifts in the spread of the population across age cohorts.

Shire of Ravensthorpe

- The most distinctive characteristic of Ravensthorpe’s population trend is the rapid rise in overall population numbers, from 1,473 in 2001 to 1,951 in 2006, a 32%
increase (Figure 4). The State wide population increase over the same period was 7.2%.

- Males form the majority of the population increase in the Shire of Ravensthorpe, with the female population having only a moderate increase. Male population increased from 788 in 2001 to 1173 in 2006 representing a 49% increase; during the same period females increased from 685 to 778 representing a 14% increase (Figure 4).

- The 2006 census indicates a 65% increase in the 20-29 year age group compared to the 2001 census (from 163 in 2001 to 269 in 2006) (Figure 6). This would no doubt be linked to the RN development and the influx of younger workers into the Shire. This increase compares to a 9% decrease in the equivalent age group in the Shire of Esperance (Figure 7), and a 4% increase State wide (Figure 8).

- During the period 2001 to 2006, the population of Hopetoun increased from 330 to 499, reflecting a 51% increase.

- At the younger end of the spectrum, across all three census periods reported, there is a consistent dip between the 0-9 age group and the 10-19 age group in the Shire of Ravensthorpe. This would reflect the number of young people leaving the area to pursue educational opportunities outside of the Shire (see Indicator 11 baseline data below).

- Across the age groups from 30-39, 40-49, and 50-59 there is a consistent significant jump in census numbers between 2001 and 2006.

**Shire of Esperance**

- Overall the Shire’s population increased from 12,650 in 2001 to 12,964 in 2006, reflecting a 2% increase. On the other hand, the Shire of Esperance experienced a significant increase in population between the 1996 and 2001 census periods (Figure 5).

- In the 5 years from 2001 to 2006, the Shire of Esperance experienced a more rapid increase in female residents over male, resulting in an equalization of gender ratios in the Shire.

- Across all three census periods, but particularly in the 2006 census, there has been a sustained drop in the number of 20-29 year olds in the Shire. This would suggest there is a consistent trend towards an outflow of this age group from the Shire. This characteristic is not reflected in either the Shire of Ravensthorpe (Figure 6) or the State wide population demographics (Figure 8).
Figure 4: Shire of Ravensthorpe Population Trends by Sex, 1991-2006

Figure 5: Shire of Esperance Population Trends by Sex, 1991-2006
Figure 6: Shire of Ravensthorpe - Population by Age, 1996 to 2006

Figure 7: Shire of Esperance - Population by Age, 1996 to 2006
3.2 Employment by Industry

Note: 2006 census data on employment were not available at the time of report preparation.

Shire of Ravensthorpe

- Although Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing clearly remains the principal industry for employment in the Shire of Ravensthorpe, employment in this sector declined over the 10 year period from 1991 to 2001.
- Of the other industries, retail trade, health & community services, transport, and property / business services are showing a steady increase.
- Mining has shown a significant increase, particularly between 1996 and 2001. This could be expected to continue.

Shire of Esperance

- Similarly to the Shire of Ravensthorpe, the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing sector remains the primary, but declining, source of employment.
- Consistent with its status as a regional centre, the Shire of Esperance has a more evenly distributed workforce profile, with retail trade offering consistent employment opportunities.
- There has been an increase in mining but this is small relative to the increase experienced in the Shire of Ravensthorpe.
Figure 9: Shire of Ravensthorpe - Employment by Industry (Top Ten Industry Categories plus Mining), 1991 to 2001*

* Note: ABS Categories “Not Stated” and “Non-Classifiable” not included.

Figure 10: Shire of Esperance - Employment by Industry (Top Ten Industry Categories plus Mining), 1991 to 2001*

* Note: ABS Categories “Not Stated” and “Non-Classifiable” not included.
3.3 Regional Education Levels

Note: 2006 census data was not available at the time of report preparation.

Shire of Ravensthorpe

- Over the 10 year period, there has been a steady increase in Cert III and Bachelor Degree qualifications (Figure 11).
- Generally speaking, Ravensthorpe’s educational levels compares favourably with State trends (Figure 13). The only area where there is a noticeable difference is in the percentage of persons holding Bachelor degrees which at 4.5% (2001), is considerably below the equivalent State percentage of 7.3%.

Shire of Esperance

- Education levels in the Shire of Esperance show a very similar pattern to that of Shire of Ravensthorpe (Figure 12).
- It will be interesting to observe whether the 2006 census figures reflect increasing post-school qualification levels, particularly in the Shire of Ravensthorpe, associated with the increased numbers of resource sector employees.

Figure 11: Shire of Ravensthorpe – Regional Post-School Educational Levels as a percentage of background population, 1991 to 2001*

* Note: ABS Categories “Not Stated” and “Not Applicable” not included.
Figure 12: Shire of Esperance – Regional Post-School Educational Levels as a percentage of background population, 1991 to 2001*

* Note: ABS Categories “Not Stated” and “Not Applicable” not included.

Figure 13: Western Australia – Regional Post-School Educational Levels as a percentage of background population, 1991 to 2001*

* Note: ABS Categories “Not Stated” and “Not Applicable” not included.
3.4 *Ethnic and Indigenous Profiles*

3.4.1 *Population by Country of Origin and Language Spoken at Home*

Comparisons of country of origin and language spoken at home provide an indication of the cultural and ethnic diversity of the region.

- Between 2001 and 2006, the percentage of non-Australian born persons in the Shire of Ravensthorpe increased significantly from 13% to 20% (Figure 14). This may reflect the diversity of RN employees and contractors taking up residence in recent years. The Shire of Esperance and the broader State of Western Australia also saw increases in the number of non-Australian born persons, however these increases were modest compared to the Shire of Ravensthorpe.

- At both the Shire and State levels, the United Kingdom and New Zealand account for the largest proportion of non-Australian born residents.

- Between 2001 and 2006, the percentage of homes in the Shire of Ravensthorpe in which a language other than English is spoken showed an increase from 2.2% to 5.3% (Figure 15), a significantly higher increase than in either the Shire of Esperance or the broader State.

- The generally low percentage of households in the Shires of Ravensthorpe and Esperance in which a language other than English is spoken could indicate generally low levels of diversity in the South-West, compared to the State as a whole.

*Figure 14: Place of birth outside Australia by % of population- Ravensthorpe, Esperance, Western Australia - 1996 to 2006*
3.4.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population

- The Shire of Esperance has a consistently higher percentage of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders than both the Shire of Ravensthorpe and the broader State (Figure 16).
- Both the Shire of Ravensthorpe and the Shire of Esperance have seen steady increases in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.
Summary

This review of the changing demographic profiles of the Shire of Ravensthorpe and the Shire of Esperance has pointed to some significant population trends. These trends are most pronounced in the Shire of Ravensthorpe which has seen considerable expansion in its overall population numbers, increases in the proportion of males to females, and greater diversity of the community. This is clearly influenced by the RN development and the shifts in the population taking place at the time of the 2006 census. It could be expected that the Shire’s population will stabilize over the next few years; however, given that the RN workforce will comprise a significant number of residential employees, it is likely that the Shire will continue to undergo sustained growth in the medium to long-term.
4 Consultations: what stakeholders told us

The consultation outcomes as reported in this section were presented in the Monitoring project’s interim report, issued in September 2006.

The consultation process undertaken for this project was intended to gather community input into three key areas:

- perceptions of regional development, particularly the major sustainability opportunities and challenges in respect to the RN;
- possible mechanisms for measuring, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the impacts of RN on the socio-economic diversity of the region; and
- areas of potential opportunity for community engagement which could leverage the contribution of RN to the region to maximize the benefits of that contribution.

The issues discussed below highlight the key issues identified by the project participants focusing on social, economic and environmental factors.

4.1 Priority issues: visions and challenges for the future

Feedback from the consultations has been analysed and presented from two perspectives:

1. Priority issues: responses across all consultations
2. Priority issues: responses by category of analysis.

4.1.1 Responses across all consultations

For the first round of analysis, priority issues have been ranked in terms of the proportion of all issues raised during consultation.

These responses, while informed by current experience and attitudes to RN, nevertheless point towards longer term themes which may become regionally significant and therefore relevant to evaluations of the long-term regional contribution of RN. For example, the highest ranked priority area concerned the recreational use of the natural environment and a stated anticipated pressure that will come from increased base population demographics and tourism. This priority area poses an opportunity for RN, in partnership with, or in support of, other community or government organizations, to enable better management of the interface between people and the natural environment.
4.1.2 Priority Areas by Category

In order to further categorize and refine the priority areas, a second stage of analysis was conducted in which four major categories or themes were established. The four categories of analysis were:

- Natural environment;
- Labour supply and business;
- Services and amenities;
- Social.

Participant responses were then categories and ranked by frequency within each category, leading to a prioritization of issues within each category.

For the remainder of this section, each of the category areas will be discussed separately.

4.1.3 Natural Environment

As mentioned above, within the category of Natural Environment, the issue of highest priority raised in the consultations was the impact of increased population numbers, both residential and tourist, and the management of the interface between people and the environment. Of particular concern was degradation of coastal sand dunes, and the spread of dieback (*Phytophthora cinnamomoi*) within a region characterised by its significant biodiversity. The Fitzgerald River National Park, in particular, is highly valued by the local
community and while its potential as a tourist attraction was recognized, so was its vulnerability to ecological degradation.

Other priority areas in respect to the natural environment include environmental impacts of RN on nearby farms, general air emissions, and the impact on air-quality, and the lack of appreciation of the environment by incoming workers (see Figure 18).

**Figure 18: Priority Areas: Natural Environment**
4.1.4 Economic: Labour Supply and Business

The regional agricultural and business sectors are currently experiencing significant labour supply shortages. While it was recognized that labour supply issues are to some extent symptomatic of national economic conditions, nevertheless RN was identified as posing a particular set of challenges to both current and future regional labour supply. On the one hand the influx of new residents and accompanying family members will increase the numbers and diversity of the labour pool in the region. On the other hand, RN was seen as potentially having a long-term competitive advantage over other regional businesses when accessing local labour and that local conditions will tend to be overwhelmed by bigger company pressures such as increased wages and conditions, consistency of employment (mining is ongoing, agriculture is seasonal) and an ability to demand the best resources.

Similarly, while RN brings the opportunity for regional economic expansion through the introduction of new business and the sharing of resources across industry sectors, local business capacity to respond to these opportunities will potentially be constrained by labour supply issues.

The responsiveness of local business to the opportunities associated with RN was also raised in the context of flexibility and a willingness to change long-standing business practices to align with growing and diversifying economic and demographic conditions. This was raised in particular in respect to service provision such as cafes and restaurants and a perception that some local business had not embraced the opportunities posed by RN.
4.1.5 Infrastructure: Services and Amenities

For infrastructure, the most frequently raised issue concerned access to, and the affordability of, housing, in particular for lower income individuals and families. Similarly there was a view that the capacity of local business and services to respond to regional growth was constrained by limited access to housing, affordable or otherwise. Some participants did acknowledge that the current housing conditions are associated with sudden growth and are likely to ease over time. Nevertheless, there remained concerns that current housing pressures are indicative of more long-term stresses that may have demographic or social implications. There was also a view that, over time, the regional center would shift towards Hopetoun rather than Ravensthorpe.

For services and amenities, the most frequently raised issue revolved around the availability of medical services, particularly in a context of a changing population base that is likely to see an increase in the number of families with young children.

Declining volunteerism was also a high priority. Although declining volunteerism was acknowledged as a widespread problem and not unique to the Ravensthorpe district, there remained a concern that, if this trend continues, the competing demands of a growing population with a declining volunteer base will put excessive pressure on existing key services such as St John’s Ambulance. Similarly, while the growing population associated with RN will increase the pool of potential volunteers, questions were raised as to what mechanisms could be used to attract newcomers to service organizations, thereby ensuring the long-term sustainability of such services.
4.1.6 Social Issues

In respect to long-term social issues facing the region, the most frequently raised priority area involved the possibility of community fragmentation that may arise between the mining and non-mining sectors of the population. Much of this issue was associated with the expectation that there will remain a significant income differential between mining workers and workers from other industries or service providers. Conversely, there was recognition that the region’s changing demographic and industrial profile will have many positive social benefits, such as diversifying social networks and providing local youth with a broader range of post-school alternatives to which they may aspire. This could have the added benefit of reducing the perceived out-migration of the region’s youth to larger regional or urban centres.

Other issues raised included the rate of change in the region and the implications this has had for the community’s identity; limited understanding of RN in sectors of the community; and the capacity of RN workers on some shift patterns to participate in community life.
Figure 21: Priority Areas: Social capital

4.1.7 Indigenous relations

RN offers a unique opportunity to have a positive impact on relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in the region. Although the current Aboriginal population of the Ravensthorpe Local Government Area is very low (approximately one percent of the population at the 2001 census\(^5\), the indications from consultation suggest that the number of Aboriginal persons with a connection to the region may be more numerous than reported.

The Aboriginal groups consulted as part of this project included the South West Land and Sea Council, the Esperance Aboriginal Corporation, and the Bay of Isles Aboriginal Community.

The key issues emerging from this consultation in respect to Aboriginal people include a desire for acknowledgement of the history of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations in the region. In terms of the economic or social benefits of RN, there was an expressed emphasis on developing employment and business opportunities, and providing financial planning assistance to aid those individuals and family groups who may be experiencing an increasing level of income as they move into employment within the mining sector. There was also a desire to see culture awareness widely promoted amongst the RN workforce in order to enhance the successful inclusion of Aboriginal workers into the mining workforce, and facilitate improved relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

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\(^5\) Australian Bureau of Statistics Basic Community Profile Ravensthorpe (S) (LGA 57420) Catalogue 2001.0 Chart B.01
4.2 Community Liaison Committee: Project Inputs

In March 2006, a workshop was held with the CLC at which the outcomes of the consultation process were presented. An exercise was conducted in which the top 10 priority issues identified during community consultation were listed at random. Each member of the CLC was asked to indicate which, from this list, they regarded as the highest priority issues. Additional issues could be added if required. The outcomes of this process are illustrated in Figure 22 below.

Figure 22: Top regional priority areas: Community and CLC (March 2006)

Significantly, both the CLC and the community nominated environmental impacts as the major priority issue. Correlations in response rates can also be seen in respect to labour supply issues and access to medical services.

The inverse weightings given by the community and the CLC to the issues of “Community fragmentation” and “Diversification of social networks” can be viewed as alternative interpretations of similar sets of social issues. That is, while the community viewed population diversity with some anxiety, hence expressing concerns around community fragmentation, the CLC seems less concerned with fragmentation but instead focused on the benefits of a diversifying population base. This difference in perspective may be related to the CLC members’ advanced knowledge of planning issues associated with the RNP development and some of the programs underway intended to ameliorate potential social fragmentation, such as welcome packs for newcomers. Differing perceptions over issues associated with housing supply and accessibility to locals could be similarly influenced.
5 References