Indigenous Enterprise Initiative

Prospectus
ABOUT SMI
The Sustainable Minerals Institute at the University of Queensland (UQ) a world leading research institute dedicated to finding knowledge-based solutions to the sustainability challenges of the global minerals industry.

UQ has one of the more unique training grounds for mining students in Australia. In 1951, a former silver and lead mine situated in the Brisbane suburb of Indooroopilly was acquired by UQ and is now part of one of the largest research centres within SMI. This experimental mine is maintained as a registered mine and is used by UQ mining engineering students as part of their course work.

UQ’s 60-year practical mining history provides a wealth of knowledge, expertise and real experience for SMI to develop practical solutions to the challenges of operating sustainably in the resources sector.

The Institute has a unique inter-disciplinary approach including expertise in engineering, science and the social sciences.

SMI’s work covers all facets of the life of mine from geology, to minerals extraction, water management issues, minerals processing, workplace health and safety, mine rehabilitation and community engagement.

Its projects focus on strategies and practical processes for sustainability. We have a team focusing on technologies for reducing energy in the most energy consuming areas of mining; SMI has a team dedicated to minimising impacts of water extraction, use and release; a team for efficient
blasting and approaches to ore sorting. SMI’s work is leading to significant changes in mineral processing efficiency.

SMI’s community relations specialists have produced industry benchmarks and guidelines for productive relations with indigenous communities and local employment strategies amongst a host of applications.

The Institute has created global teaching and implementation materials for improved effectiveness in risk management and safety performance. We also continue to work with industry and government on improving land rehabilitation and mine closure standards.

ABOUT CSRM

SMI was established in 2001 and brought together a collection of centres, one of which is the Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining (CSRM). CSRM focuses on the social, economic and political challenges that occur when change is brought about by resource extraction and development.

CSRM works with companies, communities and governments in mining regions all over the world to improve social performance and deliver better outcomes for companies and communities. Since 2001, CSRM has contributed significantly to industry change through our research, teaching and consulting. The bottom line: CSRM helps build capacity to manage change in more effective ways.

CSRM is a multi-disciplinary group of anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, economists, engineers, development, technical and natural resource specialists. CSRM has in-depth knowledge of the minerals industry, both at corporate and operational levels, built from years of practical experience and engagement.

THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

The overarching goal of the United Nations University is to contribute to global sustainable development that will enable present generations to live a decent life in peace, in freedom, in safety, and in good health without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same. In pursuit of this ideal, the UN University employs a systems-oriented, interdisciplinary, problem-
solving approach that integrates the methodological rigour of the natural and physical sciences with the insights of the social sciences and humanities. The history of the United Nations University began in 1969, with a proposal by United Nations Secretary-General U Thant for “the establishment of a United Nations university, truly international and devoted to the Charter objectives of peace and progress”.

The UNU Institute of Advanced Studies (Yokohama, Japan) seeks to advance knowledge and promote learning for policy making to meet the challenges of environmentally sustainable development. Under this Institute, the Traditional Knowledge Initiative seeks to build greater understanding and facilitate awareness of traditional knowledge (TK) to inform action by indigenous peoples, local communities and domestic and international policy makers. Key outputs include research activities, policy studies, capacity development and online learning and dissemination. The initiative is in the process of establishing a Traditional Knowledge Institute (TK Institute) in Australia and has agreed to partner with the University of Queensland with regard to cobranding this initiative within their mandate based on our common goals in using traditional knowledge to enhance indigenous capacity for development.

**OVERVIEW**

This is a proposal to establish an Indigenous Enterprise Initiative (with a focus on building Indigenous economic and employment opportunities) at the Sustainable Minerals Institute (SMI), The University of Queensland.

Mining has a strong presence in the more remote regions of Australia and is now the largest private sector employer of Indigenous people. While there have been notable gains over the last decade, there is still more that can be done to increase Indigenous economic participation in and beyond the resources sector.
There are success stories but these are relatively isolated and the pool of full-time employees is also relatively small.

The challenge is to build diversified and well managed businesses that also generate a social dividend back to communities and regions; and, an expanded labour pool with initiatives that focus on enabling greater skill development and employability rather than just getting a job.

Research has an important role to play in supporting this development agenda. Specific areas where there is both an opportunity and need for more work include:

- Studying supply chains and procurement practices to identify concrete opportunities for Indigenous and local businesses;
- Preparing case studies of successful Indigenous businesses;
- Undertaking detailed analysis of local economies, demographic trends and labour market dynamics;
- Trialling innovative approaches to the recruitment, training and career advancement for Indigenous employees;
- Addressing business governance challenges;
- Analysing of policy settings that may inhibit – or enable – greater Indigenous participation in the resources sector; and
- Building and servicing a “community of practice”.

To grow this program of work, we are working to fund an initiative, with an appropriate level of research assistance and infrastructure support.

Due to the broader community and business nature of the proposed research, we envisage working with the Business, Economics and Law Faculty and other parts of the University of Queensland.
PROPOSED STRUCTURE

It is proposed that the initiative and associated infrastructure be located within the Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining (CSRM) at SMI.

The rationale for this is that CSRM:

- has a very good working knowledge of the resources sector and an extensive network of connections;
- has worked successfully with Indigenous groups in Queensland and other parts of Australia and has good links with Indigenous organizations;
- has a strong track record of applied research in Indigenous employment and more recently, local procurement;
- is already involved in related industry and government initiatives in NW Queensland and the Bowen Basin; and
- is well connected internationally, with a strong reputation.

The proposed professorial position would build upon existing strengths within CSRM in the area of employment and business development and bring additional capability in financial analysis and corporate governance.

We are seeking funding to establish a senior professorial chair for five years to develop and implement a program of applied research in this important area. The appointee will also be responsible for securing additional external funding to support the work of the unit and ensure its long-term sustainability.

“This is an opportunity to make a real difference in addressing some of the most important challenges facing Australian society today”

The University of Queensland has assisted in identifying the campaign quantum required to establish and support this professorial position and associated infrastructure for five years and recommends that initially we need to raise a total of $1M, to support costs for 2-3 years to ensure that there is sufficient time for this initiative to gain traction.
The per annum costs cover:

- Senior Professorial Chair
- Senior Research Assistant
- Research Assistant
- Plus administrative infrastructure on costs

This is an opportunity to make a real difference in addressing some of the most important challenges facing Australian society today: reducing Indigenous economic and social disadvantage and ensuring that people in remote and regional Australia share in the benefits of the resources boom.

**CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

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