

East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project

ARGYLE SOCIAL IMPACT GROUP (ASIG):
ISSUES FOR REVIEW

Ross, H. and Johnson, J.

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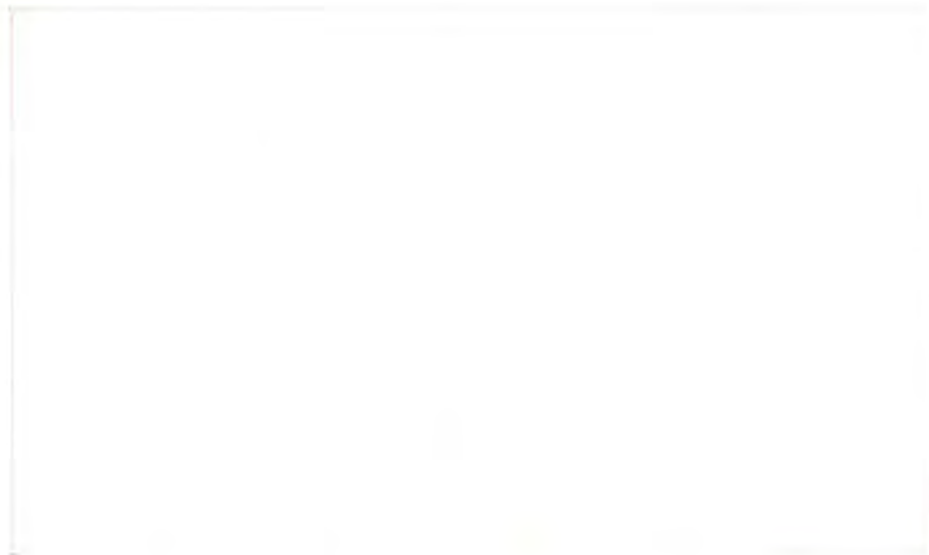
A Joint Project Of The:

Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies
Australian National University

Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies

Anthropology Department
University of Western Australia

Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia



The aims of the project are as follows:

1. To compile a comprehensive profile of the contemporary social environment of the East Kimberley region utilising both existing information sources and limited fieldwork.
2. Develop and utilise appropriate methodological approaches to social impact assessment within a multi-disciplinary framework.
3. Assess the social impact of major public and private developments of the East Kimberley region's resources (physical, mineral and environmental) on resident Aboriginal communities. Attempt to identify problems/issues which, while possibly dormant at present, are likely to have implications that will affect communities at some stage in the future.
4. Establish a framework to allow the dissemination of research results to Aboriginal communities so as to enable them to develop their own strategies for dealing with social impact issues.
5. To identify in consultation with Governments and regional interests issues and problems which may be susceptible to further research.

Views expressed in the Project's publications are the views of the authors, and are not necessarily shared by the sponsoring organisations.

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ABSTRACT

Argyle Social Impact Group (ASIG) funding, which was introduced in 1985 for a five year period, is due for review by the Western Australian government in 1989.

This paper offers a brief background to the ASIG scheme, followed by a discussion of issues for review:

- continuation of ASIG;
- increase in funding;
- who should benefit;
- the purposes for which funding may be used;
- decision making structures and responsibility for policy and funding decisions;
- management of funds and financial reporting.

Possibilities are suggested for Aboriginal people to make more effective use of the scheme if ASIG is retained in its present form.

BACKGROUND

Good Neighbour Program

ASIG was designed by the Western Australian government to extend Argyle Diamond Mines' (ADM) Good Neighbour Program (GNP). This program grew from the 'Glen Hill Agreement', signed by six of the traditional owners of the Argyle Diamond Mine site in 1980. The Agreement was signed, arguably, on the Aboriginal understanding that the development of the mine was inevitable and further protest over the destruction of the sacred barramundi site fruitless. The agreement signifies an action taken to ensure some compensation for impact beyond Aboriginal control (see Dillon and Dixon forthcoming).

Under the 'Glen Hill Agreement' the company agreed to provide the Mandangala (Glen Hill) community with \$200,000 worth of 'capital items' up front, and \$100,000 worth per year thereafter. These amounts were to be increased to keep pace with inflation, and to continue for the life of the mine.

The Good Neighbour Program was extended to the Warmun (Turkey Creek) and Woolah (Doon Doon) communities in 1981, with Warmun receiving \$100,000 and Woolah receiving \$40,000 worth of capital items. In 1984, the year before ASIG started, the GNP provided a total of \$310,000 per annum to these communities.

There was no requirement in Western Australian legislation for the Argyle Joint Venture (AJV) to make any monetary payments or payment in kind to the traditional owners of the Argyle site. AJV was in fact under pressure from the then Western Australian government not to provide any payments to Aboriginal people. The government opposed the Glen Hill Agreement until AJV clarified that the payments were 'ex gratia', not recognizing Aboriginal rights in land. The payments were considered as a good will gesture by the company, (on the agreement that the Argyle Joint Venture be '..free to conduct exploration throughout its Argyle tenements' Dillon 1984:76).

The Argyle Joint Venture decided the structure and policies of the Good Neighbour Program and makes all financial decisions on the basis of community requests. Aboriginal people and others have criticised the program on the basis that:

- the structure is inappropriate to enable the realisation of Aboriginal aspirations;
- Aboriginal people lack control over funding and expenditure arrangements, including payments to contractors and suppliers;
- funding is restricted to capital items, defined narrowly to exclude investment;
- there is potential for duplication between government and GNP funding, resulting in cancellation or downgrading of government funds and services;
- the resulting dependence by Aboriginal communities on the GNP inhibits self-determination (Dillon 1984, Dixon et al 1984, Dixon forthcoming, Dillon & Dixon forthcoming).

Argyle Social Impact Group

The Western Australian government introduced the ASIG scheme in 1985 as a condition of its approval of development of the Argyle Diamond Mine. Aboriginal people had complained that GNP did not benefit all of the people affected by the mine and its activities, for example Kununurra people affected by the expansion of the town¹. The original intention of ASIG was to establish a group to monitor and assess the social impact of ADM on Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley, but this function did not eventuate in the formation of ASIG (see Dillon and Dixon forthcoming). ASIG was developed as a capital assistance program which allowed for more Aboriginal groups than the three communities provided for under the GNP to receive assistance, but in a form almost identical to GNP.

The Government's intention was that:

- the Good Neighbour Program was to be absorbed by ASIG.
- more communities would benefit;
- the amount of money be increased to \$1 million a year, increased each year to keep pace with inflation, and an extra \$1 million be provided in the first year. The money was to be made up of \$500,000 from the State government and \$500,000 from Argyle Diamond Mine;

¹ See Dixon (forthcoming) for a discussion of 'core' and 'wider' affected groups.

- the purposes and rules of the ASIG scheme were to be almost the same as with GNP. The main difference was that communities asking for vehicles had to contribute 10% of the price.
- decisions were to be made by a Steering Committee made up of three government and three ADM representatives. Under this committee three Aboriginal Project Committees, representing Kununurra, Wyndham and Turkey Creek areas, could decide on the submissions to be put before the Steering Committee.
- ASIG was to be administered by an Executive Officer, employed by the Mines Department.

The scheme was implemented as planned, with the exception of the absorption of the GNP. The three Aboriginal communities covered under the GNP resisted being absorbed into the ASIG scheme, because they would be disadvantaged by the ruling that communities would have to contribute 10% towards vehicles. ADM therefore agreed to continue GNP with Warmun, Woolah and Mandangala within the ASIG umbrella. The GNP moneys are counted as part of ADM's half share of the costs of ASIG, and an ADM Executive Officer continues to administer the GNP money. Warmun receives a small portion of ASIG support in addition to GNP, Mandangala and Woolah receive GNP only, and other communities are funded by ASIG.

The ASIG scheme is described in more detail under each of the headings following.

Comparison with other schemes

ASIG differs from methods used in other places for providing Aboriginal people with revenue from mining. The most common form of payments used elsewhere are royalties and negotiated agreement payments.

Royalties are a type of rental for the use of land or minerals. They are usually based on a percentage of the value of the minerals extracted or the profits of the mining company. For example, the minimum amount set in the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976 is 2.5% ad valorem and additional (negotiated) royalties are allowed above the statutory benchmark (s63 ALR(NT)Act 1976).

In most parts of Australia mining royalties are paid to governments because minerals are owned by the Crown. Royalties thus cannot be paid directly to Aboriginal groups. In some States and in the Northern Territory equivalent amounts may be paid by government to Aboriginal people. This is usually done in recognition of ownership or rights in the land concerned, but not necessarily. For instance, in the Northern Territory it is not clear how much of the payments to Aborigines are by way of rental, and how much is broadly compensatory (see Altman 1985).

Compensation recognises damages suffered. In the case of mining, it is normally paid for environmental (surface) damage only. Compensation is usually based on a costing of the loss of income or extra costs a person experiences. It can include items which cannot really be represented in financial terms, including the psychological or spiritual suffering from damage to a sacred site. In these cases an amount can be guessed or negotiated.

ASIG is in a category of its own, 'impact funding'. It is broadly compensatory, in that it is said to be provided to make up for impacts people experience as a result of mining. However, the amount of funding given is not based on any estimate of what people lose or suffer as a result of the mine. ASIG is regarded by the company and government as differing from royalties in that it is not linked to ownership of the mine site (under non-Aboriginal or Aboriginal law), though Aboriginal people interpret the arrangement differently (see Dixon forthcoming). Unlike royalties, the amount provided is not based on any formula related to the value of the diamonds or the income earned by the mine.

In Western Australia there is no legal obligation for the government or mining companies to pay royalties to Aboriginal people. However, the government does pay the Aboriginal Lands Trust some money raised from mining on Aboriginal reserves, up to a limit of \$50,000 a year. The lack of a legal basis does not prevent the government redirecting some of its royalties to Aboriginal people, as it has done with the Aboriginal Lands Trust. Nor does it prevent mining companies making their own agreements with Aboriginal people, as ADM has done.

ISSUES FOR REVIEW

Continuation of ASIG

At the time ASIG was being planned one of the scheme's designers noted that, 'it should be understood that while there is an initial five-year limit it is not anticipated that the fund will stop at the conclusion of that time'. Consistent with this, the ASIG discussion paper 1988 recommended that ASIG continue for the life of the mine (in keeping with GNP) (Frewen, 1988: 41). While it is unlikely that the WA government would discontinue the scheme, it has the option of doing so after 1989, leaving only the three GNP communities with funding associated with the development of the ADM.

The review issues are :

- continuation of the ASIG scheme beyond 1989, in keeping with the original intention;
- the form in which it should be continued.

It is impossible to tell without access to detailed ASIG and government expenditure figures how much Aboriginal people have really gained from ASIG. It is likely that the Commonwealth and State governments have spent less than they would otherwise have done (not necessarily intentionally) in the areas assisted by ASIG. As so much of the ASIG support goes towards essential services such as water supplies, power and shelter, it appears that in the long run the communities may not have made a net gain from ASIG; they may merely have received the same facilities as other communities earlier. Although it has not been suggested that this is happening, it is even possible that they could make a net loss, if government funding is reduced by more than the amount received from ASIG, and also if the recurrent costs of maintaining the capital items provided under the scheme drain the communities' other resources (no recurrent funding is provided under GNP or ASIG).

Aboriginal people would be loath to lose ASIG as a source of support, but there has been substantial Aboriginal dissatisfaction with ASIG's present structure (see Dixon forthcoming, Dillon and Dixon forthcoming).

There are a number of possibilities for reforming ASIG, the equivalent most progressive being for royalty equivalents (a share of the government's royalties) to be paid on a percentage basis. This is the basis of payments made to Aborigines in respect of mining in other areas of Australia. In the NT 30%

of royalty 'equivalents' go to the areas affected by each mine. 40% goes to Land Councils, and 30% to all NT Aborigines via the Aboriginals Benefit Trust Account (ABTA). Under the South Australian Pitjantjatjara Act, one third goes to people on Pitjantjatjara lands, one third to other SA Aborigines and one third remains with government.

The WA Government's half share of ASIG appears to be paid from the government's royalty revenue now, but not on a percentage basis. Aboriginal people could either seek royalties as a different basis of payment within a reformed ASIG scheme, or as the basis of a replacement scheme.

A percentage basis would have the advantages of linking the amount of funding to the value of the mine's produce.

While such a basis would be more advantageous to the Aboriginal groups receiving ASIG, the implications of possible inequities and jealousies between Aboriginal groups according to their access to royalties and the richness of their respective mines would need to be considered. An area seriously impacted by mining could receive less than other areas with more profitable mining operations. The Northern Territory and South Australian systems try to get around this problem by splitting the funds between the areas affected and other parts of the State or Territory.

Increase of Funds

There is a widespread Aboriginal view that the amount paid out under the ASIG scheme is too low (see Dixon forthcoming). This is based on a perception of the discrepancy between ADM's income from the mine and the amounts received under the ASIG scheme, and an awareness of far greater benefits under more favourable arrangements available to Aboriginal people across the border in the Northern Territory and overseas.

In the Northern Territory, Aboriginal people are entitled to a minimum of 2.5% ad valorem for minerals, and 10% ad valorem for oil and gas. These are statutory royalties, set by legislation and calculated according to the value of the amount mined. There are also negotiated royalties, such as 'up front money' (agreement money). Negotiated royalties can be calculated on a percentage basis, or based on dollars per square kilometre as at Nabarlek. At Gove royalty is output-based, at 50 cents per tonne untreated, 40 cents per tonne treated.

The other issue concerning funding is the equity of the present allocations of assistance between the project committees. The basis for some areas (and with GNP some communities) receiving more than others is not clear, and there are large variations between the communities and Project Committees eligible when compared on a population basis (see attachment 1).

Several options could be considered by the Western Australian government and Aboriginal people to improve on the present situation. A scheme which is based on a percentage of royalties received by government would appear more equitable to Aboriginal people. Other options include increase to the flat rate of funding, with inclusion of periodic, special purpose increases to allow for new groups being admitted (see following section), or occasional reviews of the level of funding.

Who Should Benefit?

At present only incorporated communities in the Turkey Creek, Kununurra and Wyndham areas are eligible for assistance. Individuals are not, nor are the resource agencies which represent, service, and share membership with the participating communities. However at least one resource agency has received assistance through the sponsorship of a member community.

The basis on which areas and communities are included is vague. It seems to be broadly geographic, including the areas presumed to experience impacts (those near the mine or near Kununurra). There was originally some acknowledgement of traditional ownership (communities containing traditional owners, though the benefits are then spread across the whole community) and some extra communities were included on the basis of their close ties with the ones which receive funding (Wyndham, because of the ties of some of its 'town camps' with Warmun).

One result of the present basis is that traditional owners living outside the area do not benefit, and traditional owners living in the area are entitled to no more benefit than other people (though their communities may give them some favoured treatment). Something similar has happened in the NT. Justice Woodward's recommendations for the NT scheme were that people living within a 60 kilometre radius of the mine should benefit, but the Aboriginal royalty associations have chosen to emphasise traditional ownership, whether or not the owners live near the mine. This may well arise because of the emphasis on traditional ownership in the terms of the Northern Territory statute affecting those people who can negotiate non-statutory

royalties. Woodward intended that the moneys be spent on community projects, not individuals, but the royalty associations have the power to make payments to individuals and do so.

On the other hand, making the basis compensatory and geographic goes some way towards avoiding arguments as to who is or is not a traditional owner.

There are complaints that some affected groups are still omitted from ASIG. Some Aboriginal people have complained that complete newcomers to the area, with no ties to the country whatsoever, can share in the benefits. Another criticism has come from some women complaining that women receive no special consideration, and have difficulty gaining access to the community assets, despite it being a womens' site which was destroyed.

There are some inconsistencies in the areas included. For instance, Halls Creek is about as far from the mine as Wyndham, and also has traditional owners living there, as well as people who are closely related to traditional owners. Yet Wyndham is included under ASIG while Halls Creek is not. (This may have been an oversight on the part of the consultants who looked into traditional ownership when ASIG was planned). There may well be other areas which should be considered for similar reasons.

In the Northern Territory Aborigines define the communities affected by each development and hence the people who can benefit. The way in which funds are distributed is also decided by the associations themselves. East Kimberley groups could argue that they also should have this freedom to decide.

Originally only community groups which were listed as eligible at the time the scheme started were allowed funding. The possibility of new groups forming was not recognised at first. New groups are now permitted if the Project Committee in their area is willing to let them in: this means that the Project Committee's funds must be stretched further. Any review of the basis of funding should include some provision for the formation of new groups.

Clearly, there is a need to seek a clearer basis of eligibility. It is advisable that this be undertaken through consultation with the East Kimberley communities, allowing them to decide on the most appropriate basis for eligibility. The main questions are:

- retention or variation of the present broadly geographic basis of eligibility
- the inclusion of Halls Creek,
- the inclusion of newly formed communities, and the extension of funds to allow for the additional communities,
- the eligibility of resource agencies as funding recipients in their own right.

Purposes

Like GNP, ASIG limits funding to 'capital improvements or items which will materially benefit Aboriginal people in the region, community or incorporated group...'. This has been interpreted as meaning 'fixed capital items' and vehicles, rather than financial investment.

The ability to apply for fixed items such as housing or a water supply is limited by land tenure. However, communities without land tenure have been allowed to carry over funds from year to year while seeking tenure, and expenditure has sometimes been allowed when land tenure is nearly finalised.

ASIG funding cannot be used for projects of a non-material nature, for example paying salaries or buying fuel, but provision can now be made for Aboriginal labour to be used in the construction of a capital project. A community must contribute at least 10% to the cost of a vehicle.

As communities obtain more and more buildings and vehicles, they have to find more funds from elsewhere to run them - the end result being communities comparatively rich in assets but with cash flow problems.

The tight 'capital' criterion seriously limits the ways in which communities can use the funds. As almost all of the spending possible under ASIG requires land tenure, those without land tenure can only buy vehicles or allow the funds to accumulate while they wait for tenure. As a result, large amounts remain unspent by these groups, particularly in the Kununurra area.

ASIG's interpretation of the 'capital' criterion did not originally include investment, for example purchasing a business, or investing in shares. However, some relaxation in

practice has made it possible for a community to buy a capital item and use it to produce cash income, such as Yarrunga's purchase of a caravan which they rented out. Opening of the Steering Committee's interpretation of 'capital' to incorporate all forms of investment would encourage Aboriginal groups to use the funds in a sustainable way, providing a stream of income or accumulating assets for the present and future, and thus enhancing their financial independence and negotiating power within the region. The investment approach adopted by the Gagadju Association in the NT (O'Faircheallaigh, 1986) is an example.

Recipient groups are perplexed by the Steering Committee's decision criteria. Some communities have been confused when advised by the ASIG Executive Officer to reframe their requests to be more sure of meeting the Steering Committee's criteria for project approval. Their opinion is that their ideas should not need to be tailored to fit formula they see as arbitrary.

The issues for review include the adequacy of the present purposes and funding criteria, whether they should be expanded and made more flexible, or whether they should be abandoned altogether.

The NT Aboriginals Benefit Trust Account model provides a useful comparison:

- half of the money is paid into an investment fund.
- for the remaining half, project committees decide on funding purposes each year, and provide an annual breakdown and guidelines, for example 20% each for vehicles, enterprises, cultural centres, education and housing.
- communities present submissions.
- community projects are funded on the basis of specified criteria.

It is in Aboriginal interests that the decision-making power in regard to expenditure guidelines be vested in the Project Committees administering ASIG, under more flexible criteria with emphasis on investment for the future.

Decision-making

There are currently three Project Committees, comprising representatives of each eligible community within the Kununurra, Wyndham and Turkey Creek areas, which examine and make recommendations to the Steering Committee on community requests. The Project Committees work within indexed financial allocations set originally by the Steering Committee. This Committee, representing the WA government and ADM, formulates the rules which govern ASIG and makes all of the final decisions.

Policy decisions and interpretations of the guidelines are made by the Steering Committee. Funding decisions are effectively made by both the Project Committees and the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee, however, has the ultimate power to accept or overturn the recommendations or decisions of the Project Committees.

There is no Aboriginal representation on the Steering Committee apart from the local Member of Parliament and former Minister, who is primarily a government representative and chairs the Steering Committee.

Because GNP has been continued from within the ASIG allocations, an anomaly has arisen in that ADM contributes just over a quarter of the ASIG money itself (the funds distributed to the communities additional to the original GNP recipients), yet continues to have half of the membership and thereby decision-making capacity on the Steering Committee. It appears that for many years ADM's ideas prevailed in Steering Committee policy and funding decisions.

In practice, the Steering Committee runs a fine line between paternalism and self-determination. It is paternalistic when explaining why requests are not funded (when they fail to meet the criteria set down by that committee, without Aboriginal consultation), yet uses self-determination as an explanation against criticism of the ways in which funds are sometimes spent.

The composition of Project Committees, emphasising small group membership rather than the larger groups to which the small groups also belong, at first encouraged fragmentation of resources and competition for funds, where co-operation and pooling of resources would have been to long and short-term Aboriginal benefit. This situation has improved.

The question of Aboriginal involvement in policy and financial decision-making must be addressed. The decision-making structure of the ABTA scheme in the NT is the reverse of the ASIG one: its highest committee, responsible for policy and the ultimate financial decisions, is Aboriginal. (Below this is a sub-committee with representatives from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, ABTA and the Land Councils, which reviews submissions, ranking them according to the Aboriginal committee's criteria).

In reviewing and possibly restructuring the ASIG scheme there are two main sets of options to consider. One avenue would be to work within the present structure. The representation on the Steering Committee could be altered to allow Aboriginal representation and possibly reduce ADM membership. Another option within the existing structure is to change the roles of the Project and Steering Committees, allowing policy and funding decisions to be made by Project Committees while the Steering Committee's role is limited to assessment of impacts and overall review of the program.

The second avenue is to change the structure of ASIG. An option here is to abolish the Steering Committee as it exists, replacing it with a policy-making body representing the Project Committees (with or without government representation also). The Minister could then broadly oversee the program.

In adopting either avenue it seems appropriate to vest more decision-making power in Aboriginal representatives in keeping with the aspirations of East Kimberley Aborigines (see Dixon forthcoming).

Management

The bulk of responsibility for the management of funds and financial reporting in ASIG presently lies with an Executive Officer, employed by the WA Mines Department on behalf of the WA government and ADM. The Executive Officer originally handled all purchasing, although in recent years he has delegated some of the purchasing to Aboriginal organisations. Nevertheless the level of consultation over purchasing and Aboriginal involvement is left to the Executive Officer's discretion.

Aboriginal communities and the public do not have regular access to financial statements. Communities do not have automatic access to records of expenditure on particular items, how their allocations have been spent or how much remains, let alone figures which will enable them to make comparisons

between groups and between project committees. This has long been a complaint of the participating communities of both ASIG and the GNP. Repeated requests sometimes have to be made for financial information, and when received it is often verbal and incomplete. Information on ASIG expenditure should be reported regularly to receiving communities and made publicly available, especially as public funds are involved. In the Northern Territory, each organisation receiving and spending royalty funding must make this information publicly available. Communities are unanimous in seeking regular, written statements. An annual report should also be considered to inform Parliament, the participating communities and the public of ASIG operations.

The main advantage of ASIG has been stated by the communities to be the speed with which goods can be acquired, in comparison with the delays experienced with Commonwealth and State government funding. Another is that funds can be carried over from year to year. Partly because approval and expenditure are so much faster, most communities have used their allocations on urgent purposes such as water supplies, power and shelter, which would ordinarily have been provided by government agencies. Indeed, there is a Commonwealth - WA government financial program designed to accelerate the provision of essential services in WA Aboriginal communities. ADM's original intention for GNP was that its funds should provide communities with facilities beyond those ordinarily available through government, certainly not to substitute for government expenditure; the failure of this intention is a disappointment to the Company.

Communities complain that they do not have enough involvement in market research and choosing technologies such as methods of power supply, brands, designs or suppliers - at best they choose from a shortlist made by the Executive Officer. They cannot supervise the work of contractors directly, nor complain directly to suppliers if goods or work standards are faulty.

All communities are experienced in handling their own expenditure, as this has been Commonwealth policy and practice since 1973. They all have access to management assistance, the smaller communities through their resource agencies and the larger ones through their own administrative staff. They are used to shopping around for products and prices, dealing with suppliers, and bookkeeping.

All of the communities participating in ASIG would prefer to do their own purchasing. Should this be permitted, funds could either be provided according to exact quotes on items requested, or approximations could be given. Many communities would prefer the latter as they would receive the benefits of

choosing carefully and negotiating favourable prices. One Aboriginal person has pointed out that Aboriginal people are unfairly blamed by unsympathetic non-Aborigines for the amount spent (and by implication wasted) on them, when they would make more careful choices if in control of the expenditure, and currently have no incentive to insist on economies as 'someone else is paying'.

If Project Committees and communities are successful in gaining more responsibility for decision-making and administration, the Executive Officer's position and role would need to be reconsidered. There will be inevitable changes to the officer's role and reductions in workload if Aboriginal people are given more autonomy in decision-making and expenditure. The role of Executive Officer could be reoriented to servicing the Aboriginal decision-making structure in an advisory capacity, especially in relation to investment, or to concentrate on the assessment of impacts. Should the communities be given discretion to handle their own funds, it may be more equitable and practicable to divide the funds currently used to employ an Executive Officer among the Project Committees to offset their administrative overheads. A precedent here is the 20% additional funding provided under the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) towards materials and administrative overheads.

Another question to be considered is the most appropriate body to employ the Executive Officer. At present there is potential conflict of interest involved in the Executive Officer being employed by the Department of Mines, especially when required from time to time to undertake other Aboriginal liaison work on behalf of the Mines Department. An alternative when the Chairman of the Steering Committee was Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, would have been to place the position within the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority. A preferable option now might be to place it in the service of the Aboriginal Project Committees.

Possibilities Under the Existing Scheme

In the event of the ASIG scheme being retained without changes or with only minor changes, Aboriginal communities and organisations would be advised to consider what can be achieved within the existing rules and structures. Two avenues which could be explored are:

- Pooling some community funds within each Project Committee area towards collective projects, rather than splitting all of the funds among small groups. An example is the new language and cultural centre for Kununurra.

- Finding ways of investing funds within the existing ASIG guidelines, particularly for those communities without secure land tenure whose funds are currently carried over from year to year (apparently with ASIG, rather than the Project Committees or communities concerned, retaining the interest).

Conclusion

The intention of this working paper is to raise issues which the authors feel should be considered in any review of the ASIG scheme. It was conceived as a discussion paper, to highlight aspects of the scheme and outline options, not to prescribe courses of action. It has not been possible, as we once hoped, to provide our own comprehensive review of ASIG, owing to lack of access to the necessary financial information. A more complete and desirably independent review, based on both financial performance information and Aboriginal viewpoints, would be in the interests of Aboriginal people and the Western Australian Government.

Any changes to ASIG should be based on thorough consultation with the Aboriginal communities concerned, and reflect their opinions and aspirations. Many of the Aboriginal views are well known: a round of consultation preparatory to review of ASIG was carried out by the Executive Officer late in 1988, and Aboriginal views presented to East Kimberley researchers over several years are also reflected in this paper. Aboriginal people need, however, to consider the options available in the context of the government's willingness to consider changes, and to press for those which will enhance their aspirations for community development and autonomy.

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ATTACHMENT 1

EAST KIMBERLEY WORKING PAPERS 1985-89

- 1985/1 East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project: Project Description and Feasibility Study.
East Kimberley Working Paper No.1
ISBN 0 86740 181 8
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1985/2 The East Kimberley Region: Research Guide and Select References.
M.C. Dillon
East Kimberley Working Paper No.2
ISBN 0 86740 182 6
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1985/3 Aborigines and the Argyle Diamond Project.
Submission to the Aboriginal Land Inquiry.
Dr W. Christensen
East Kimberley Working Paper No.3
ISBN - 86740 202 4
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1985/4 Pastoral Resource Use in the Kimberley : A Critical Overview.
East Kimberley Working Paper No.4
ISBN 0 86740 183 4
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1985/5 Preliminary Report : Ethnobotany in the Bungles.
Dr Deborah Bird Rose
East Kimberley Working Paper No.5
ISBN 0 86740 186 9
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1985/6 A Preliminary Account of the Ethnobotany of the Kije People of Bungle Bungle Outcamp.
N.H. Scarlett
East Kimberley Working Paper No.6
ISBN 0 86740 205 9
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1985/7 An Aboriginal Economic Base: Strategies for Remote Communities.
Extracts from *Report of the Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs.*
East Kimberley Working Paper No.7
ISBN 0 86740 190 7
ISSN 0816-6323

- 1985/8 A Preliminary Indication of some Effects of the Argyle Diamond Mine on Aboriginal Communities in the Region: A Report to the Kimberley Land Council and the National Aboriginal Conference.
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