

Thursday 22nd July 1999

Mr Lou Lieberman
Chairman
House of Representatives Standing Committee
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Affairs
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Lieberman,

Please find attached the Northern Territory Mineral Council's (Minerals Council) considered response to the Reeves Report *Building on Land Rights for the Next Generation*. As indicated in my letter of 3rd March 1999, the submission covers four broad areas of Reeve's proposals: modifications to the mining provisions of the ALR Act; regional land councils; the Northern Territory Aboriginal Land Council; and, the Aboriginal Benefit Reserve. Following your suggestion on 4th March (*Hansard, 157*) that the Minerals Council comment more widely, its own preferences for reform in those areas are treated in the analysis. Your further request for the Mineral Council's views on what generally 'would be of benefit to the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory, regardless of the recommendations of Reeves or the present position' is not taken up here. That is a topic on which its members have a wide range of different perspectives and opinions. The Minerals Council prefers to limit itself to those matters which it identifies as vital to the industry and on which there is some broad agreement among its constituents.

A statement of the contribution which the minerals industry has made to the socio-economic development of the Northern Territory is appended to the submission (Appendix A). While it is not wholly comprehensive, it does include salient indicators such as contribution to GSP, investment, employment, exports, linkage and multiplier effects and taxation receipts over time. Details of the industry's contribution to the social well being of the Northern Territory are included also in Appendix B.

The Minerals Council would be pleased to expand further on any aspect of this submission and if you require further details, please contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,

Kezia Purick
Chief Executive Officer

NORTHERN TERRITORY MINERALS COUNCIL
(INC.)

**SUBMISSION TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING
COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT
ISLANDER AFFAIRS**

**INQUIRY INTO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REEVES
REPORT**

JUNE 1999

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As the peak organisation of mineral interests in the Northern Territory, the Northern Territory Minerals Council (Inc.) (Minerals Council) has, (under its present and former titles) long been involved in presenting its views on the condition of the local mining scene. While it does not include all industry players, it has a broad representative character. The questions of access to land and the effectiveness of the regime regulating exploration and mining activity have always been prominent concerns. Over the years the Minerals Council has participated in many inquiries and reviews and conducted extensive lobbying on those matters. Its position, particularly regarding the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) 1976 Act (ALRA), has evolved over time, but it continues to argue that the legislation, as it impacts on the minerals industry, must be refined and improved. Thus, the Minerals Council welcomed the establishment of the Reeves' Inquiry as a further opportunity to press the industry's case for reform.
- 1.2 The Reeves' report is far reaching and radical, but one which merits mature consideration. In general terms, the Minerals Council sees the orientation of Reeves' analysis and findings as challenging, but helpful. It has, however, reservations on some aspects that are set out below. The report's characterisation of the state of the minerals industry in the Northern Territory is supported by the Minerals Council. His conclusions that the area has been controversial, that the record of exploration and mining has been poor, that "just about everyone is unhappy with the existing situation" and that the provisions in the ALRA should "be recast and simplified: (Ch.24) are views shared by the Minerals Council. So also are the reasons put forward by Reeves to explain the malaise – the complexity of applicable mining law, the role of the two large land councils and "the unhappy legacy of past actions".
- 1.3 Given his summation of the problems which face the industry, Reeves' treatment of the costs and benefits of the ALRA for the minerals industry, is curious and, in the opinion of the Minerals Council, in some parts disputable. He claims that "there is no evidence that either the veto or 'negotiated royalties' have reduced the rate of exploration and mining on Aboriginal freehold" (563). The Minerals Council's experience and industry statistics strongly suggest otherwise. On the other hand, it can only agree with Reeves that "excessive transaction costs" have "undoubtedly led to a reduction in the rate of exploration and, therefore, the potential development of new mines" and that "in this sense, the costs of the Act to the mining industry appear to have outweighed its benefits"(563). The summary finding that the ALRA "has probably had negligible impact on the costs and benefits for the mining industry itself" (577) surprises the Minerals Council.

1.4 This submission outlines the response of the Minerals Council to the Reeves' Report. It takes into account the original Minerals Council document tendered to the Inquiry and other positions on the mining provisions of the ALRA and compares them to Reeves' findings on those matters. Analyses of four specific topics, together with comments on other reactions to them, follow. They are the mining provisions, the Regional Land Councils, the Northern Territory Aboriginal Council and the Aboriginal Benefits Reserve. A conclusion sums up the Minerals Council's position.

2. The Minerals Council 's Submission (22 January 1998)

2.1 In its submission to the Reeves' inquiry, the Minerals Council addressed the terms of reference which it deemed to be "of principle interest" to the minerals industry (Items ii, iii, iv, viii and ix). The viewpoints and proposals for reform contained therein represented the preferred position of the Minerals Council in a context where the substance of the existing ALRA is preserved.

2.2 In relation to **Item ii** (costs and benefits), it is the Minerals Council's continuing belief that the ALRA has not contributed as well as it could have to the "economic development of the Aboriginal people". The legislative conditions placed on the minerals industry have limited the benefits flowing to Aborigines. Particularly significant has been the inefficiency in processing exploration licence (EL) applications.

2.3 The major part of the Minerals Council's submission was directed to **Item iii** concerning the exploration and mining provisions of the Act. While it introduced arguments against the retention of the "veto" and implied that it would favour its removal, the Minerals Council conceded that the allegiance of the Aboriginal traditional owners to the practice, the certain opposition to abrogation and "political reality" would ensure its survival.

A number of refinements, however, were advocated to improve the equity and workability of the provisions, especially given what the Minerals Council sees as the "misuse" of the "veto" in the period after the 1987 amendments to the Act. Suggested changes in the treatment of EL applications, supported by discussion, were:

- a. that there be a requirement that a meeting of traditional owners for the purposes of S.42(4) – be convened within a certain time after the receipt of an application and that consent or refusal of consent required to be given within 60 days after that meeting;
- b. that the consent or refusal to consent be given before any negotiations take place as to the contents of any agreement required under S.42; and,
- c. that, if the parties are unable to agree on the terms of the agreement there be provision for arbitration at the option of either party.

Also advocated was a set of model provisions on EL agreements to be drawn up through consultations between the Minerals Council and the land councils. From the Minerals Council's perspective, three conditions had to be met in the provisions: no requirement for further consent on mining; no compensation for the value of minerals removed as consideration for consent; and no reference to financial payments at the mining stage related to the value of minerals. Those conditions reflected the Minerals Council's opposition to "royalty-based" payments being made to landowners"

Other proposals concerned the introduction of 30-day "reconnaissance" surveys which would allow for preliminary assessment to be carried out in the period after consent had been given but before terms are negotiated, Northern Territory Government representation at meetings concerned with S.42 (5) and, conditions for the renewal of mineral leases which safeguarded mining company's positions. Finally, in the circumstance of the Minerals Council's reforms not being taken up, the submission argued that negotiation periods should only be extended with the approval of all parties.

- 2.4 Part 3 of the Minerals Council's submission treated **Item iv** (role, structure and resource needs of land councils). Although the value of land councils in the process of dealing with traditional owners was acknowledged, several problems were identified. Not the least, was the belief that very little of the income derived from exploration and mining was expended by the land councils on EL and mining interest applications. It was contended that the practice of paying for services and activities of land councils, by which prospective explorers and miners are required to meet the expenses of negotiation, is widely used and that funding attributable to mining enterprise is being diverted to other functions, including political matters.

To counter that practice, the Minerals Council suggested that the land councils' land management responsibilities be isolated from their other activities with the latter being covered by separate government subventions. Thus, mining funding would be employed solely for land administration purposes.

That proposal was based upon the land councils' retaining most, if not all, of their existing functions. But the Minerals Council also canvassed the prospect of even more fundamental change. Not only did it argue for unrestricted contacts and information between prospective miners and traditional owners, but also that the latter should be able to choose their own anthropological, legal and financial advice. The land councils should compete in a wider market as service providers. Such competition in the Minerals Council's opinion would ensure "greater responsiveness and efficiency". Moreover, although the land councils would retain certain core statutory responsibilities, there was a strong case to be made for a properly regulated devolution of functions (such as consent) to other, and more locally constituted bodies. No detailed arrangement was, however, set out.

The Minerals Council supported the re-introduction of the obligation, rather than the option, of the land councils to prepare and maintain registers of traditional owners. It was concerned that the considerable and expensive work that had been accomplished in such identification should be made available to assist both miners and owners.

2.5 Consideration of matters under **Item iv** (operation of the Aboriginal Benefits Reserve) related solely to disbursement and were linked by the Minerals Council to the manner in which it considered that the land councils should be funded. Again, it proposed that the land councils should be funded by government directly (or through ATSIC) and that a greater proportion of money derived for mining activity (a figure of 70% was put forward) should be allocated to “affected” traditional owners. A conclusion was that the traditional owners should themselves determine whether any money should be paid to land councils for services or for “a broader purpose”. While concern was expressed at other aspects of disbursement, including the 30% nominally assigned for the benefit of the wider Aboriginal community), the Minerals Council did not make concrete suggestions for change.

2.6 Nothing substantial was noted concerning **Item ix** (other matters)

3. Reeves Proposals on the Mining Provisions

3.1 Evidence on Part IV of the ALRA to the Reeves’ Inquiry was largely confined to those with an interest in exploration and mining *viz.* government, land councils and the mining industry. As expected, there was a division of opinion on the impact of the act on the Northern Territory’s mining experience; for instance, the land councils offered a much more positive view than the Northern Territory Government.

Even if there was some discussion of the removal of the veto and/or the substitution of native title procedures, the retention of the right to refuse assent was assumed. Like the Minerals Council’s, other submissions dealt primarily with the “workability” of the existing provisions. The Northern Territory Government argued that the reducing of “the transaction costs” for miners was paramount. Thus, tightening time-frames, reducing opportunities for the extension of negotiating periods, quickening access to arbitration and inducing earlier applications of veto provisions were seen as practical and advantageous changes. For their part, the Northern Land Council and Central Land Council, in virtually identical vein, advocated minor reforms; they made it clear that there was to be no alteration to the substance or overall intent of the mining provisions. Many of their points, such as the greater specification of mining conditions in exploration agreements were designed to maintain or improve the balance of interest currently favouring the traditional owners.

- 3.2 Reeves reform-package on the mining regime went far beyond amendments to Part IV. His scheme involved dramatic institutional and functional change; included were his proposals for Regional Land Councils, the Northern Territory Aboriginal Council and new arrangements for the Aboriginal Benefits Reserve. Here, only his recommendations relating particularly to Part IV are considered.
- 3.3 The salient points of Reeves' "new" approach to the exploration and mining provisions were:
- a. Retention of the Aboriginal "veto" with over-riding qualifications;
 - b. Continuance of royalty payments (including "equivalent" and "negotiated" forms);
 - c. More direct negotiation between mining companies and land owners;
 - d. Ability of a local (or regional) Aboriginal body to make binding and enforceable agreements;
 - e. Removal of strict prescriptive timetables and "all unnecessary statutory regulation and delays";
 - f. Reduction of the Northern Territory Government's involvement in process; and,
 - g. Inclusion of provisions for "reconnaissance licences" and the renewal of mining leases.

Various specific amendments to Part IV were suggested. Taken together, they amounted to a substantial rewriting of the section.

- 3.4 As initial Aboriginal groups' reaction concentrated mainly upon the broader dimensions of Reeves' scheme, little reference has been made to his Part IV amendments. ATSIC, however, opposed "reconnaissance licences" on the grounds that, because they do not require prior consent, they "represent a fundamental shift in the nature and extent of the rights of traditional owners".

From the mining industry, Normandy supported the concept of "reconnaissance licences" but saw the other changes as having "no material effect".

Government views were critical of the treatment accorded to the Northern Territory Government. Not unexpectedly the Northern Territory Government itself dissented from the largely passive role intended for it. Without official oversight, it argued, "dutch auctions" among exploration and mining companies might eventuate and orderly development of mineral resources would be impaired. The Commonwealth Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DSIR) also claimed that there was "a strong case for retaining the current arrangements which give the (NT Government) responsibility for assessing the suitability of exploration and mining companies' proposals and programs prior to their entering into negotiations..." Indeed, it also saw the need to empower the Northern Territory Government to withdraw its approval of malingering companies or to extend negotiating periods.

4. The Mining Provisions

- 4.1 It was noted, in 2.1 above, that the Minerals Council's position, expressed in its January 1998 submission, was predicated on the preservation of the fundamentals of the ALRA. In the treatment of Part IV, the continuation of the "veto" was assumed and certain refinements were suggested to improve "equity and workability" (2.3). Reeves' amendments are aimed primarily at the second objective. The Minerals Council now has to consider whether Reeves' approach better serves the interests of the minerals industry.
- 4.2 The Minerals Council supports the principle of more direct negotiation with traditional owners (see also 5.3 below) and the ability of local groups to make binding and enforceable agreements. Without further specification of the process, however, it has some reservations about the process of negotiation outlined by Reeves. It is intended to allow the parties wide latitude but the lack of timetables and the failure to set out permissible terms and conditions are seen as problems. Part of the Minerals Council's case (2.3) dealt with past difficulties in negotiating and made the point that compensation, at neither the exploration nor mining stage, should be tied to mineral value. Reeves' scheme does not counter the "misuse" of the veto as a bargaining weapon and he sets no limits on the form of negotiated royalties". What is more problematic is Reeves' acceptance of disjunctive agreements, a practice which the Minerals Council strongly opposes. In his justification for repealing S.45, Reeves notes that "the question whether conjunctive or disjunctive agreements are entered into will be left entirely to the parties" (537). Except perhaps for the difference in negotiating sites and process, there is little in Reeves' proposals which would address the "user-pays" practice, so common in the present regime. It is important that whatever new Aboriginal negotiating units are used, they are sufficiently resourced so the exploration and mining companies are not forced to bear most of the costs.

Finally, the Minerals Council is not persuaded that the essentially passive role that Reeves assigns to the Northern Territory Government is acceptable.

Although the greater freedom given to exploration and mining companies to enter negotiations is attractive, it is accepted that there should be, as far as possible, common regulation over all of the Northern Territory's mining jurisdiction. Moreover, the Mineral Council sees merit in the Northern Territory Government's (and the DISR's) arguments on the need to avoid "dutch auctions" and to retain general official oversight over the development of the Northern Territory's resources.

4.3 Support is extended to Reeves' recommendations on provisions to renew mining leases and on "reconnaissance licences". They were proposed in the Minerals Council's original submission. The discussion in the report on renewals (529-30) largely meets the Minerals Council's objectives but that on licences (526-7) sets out a different purpose and timing. Reeves saw them as occurring before negotiations commenced while the Minerals Council argued that they should take place between the consent and bargaining phases. Opportunities for both types of reconnaissance should be considered.

5. Regional Land Councils (RLCs)

5.1 The duopoly of two large land councils over most of the Northern Territory has been the subject of much, and often heated debate. On one hand, certain groups of Aborigines, the Northern Territory Government and, on occasions, the Minerals Council has advocated the establishment of smaller councils. On the other, the Northern Land Council and the Central Land Council have vigorously defended the *status quo* in terms of the number of councils although they have admitted the need for further regionalisation of land management responsibilities. They have established regional bodies and have proposed the delegation of not inconsiderable functions to them. Submissions to the Reeves' Inquiry largely mirrored long-held arguments.

5.2 Stemming from his analysis of the performance of the Northern and Central Land Councils and as part of his wide-ranging institutional re-configuration, Reeves proposed a system of 18 RLCs (including the two existing island councils) to be responsible for most land administration obligations. They were based on existing regional sub-divisions of the two large organisations. Moreover, a Congress of Land Councils was to play a coordinating role. Funding was to be provided by the Northern Territory Aboriginal Council. Reaction to Reeves' recommendations has been predictable and in line with expected responses. Nevertheless, the bulk of comment, coming as it has from critical sources, has been opposed to fragmentation of land councils. It should be noted that two mining companies (Normandy and Rio Tinto) have been among the detractors. Most, however, still support the case for decentralisation of the Northern and Central Land Councils.

5.3 Although the Minerals Council did not specifically address this question of RLCs in its brief to the Reeves' Inquiry, it did refer to the requirement for "properly regulated devolution... to other, and more locally constituted bodies" (see 2.4). In its short initial response, the Minerals Council indicated approval for "the devolution of decision-making responsibility to a local level, and his proposals for regional land councils" RLCs, however, they should be "properly resourced and funded" and employ the relative experience required to undertake the necessary duties and responsibilities. Consistent with the view that mining income should be used to finance land administration, much of the RLC expenses should be met from that source.

Where necessary, additional money for the RLC and the Congress would come from the Aboriginal Benefits Reserve, either from the amount retained from mining revenue (see 7.2) or from a special vote from the Commonwealth. The latter funding source is in line with the Minerals Council's proposition that government should pay directly for activities unrelated to mining (2.5).

- 5.4 The Minerals Council does not necessarily endorse the number or locations of the RLCs suggested by Reeves, but it sees smaller and more autonomous councils as beneficial both to traditional owners and to their relationship with the minerals industry. Such councils would, it is believed, be more responsive, less bureaucratic and ultimately less costly than the present duopolistic system. If, however, the RLC plan is not taken up and the present major land councils are preserved, urgent consideration must be given to ways in which the regionalism and decentralisation can be accomplished.

6 The Aboriginals Benefit Reserve (ABR)

- 6.1 Reference to the ABR was made in the Minerals Council's original submission (see 2.5) but, on the question of disbursement of monies, no specific proposals for reform were made. Some problems were identified but they were seen as matters for government and Aboriginal bodies to resolve. After considering Reeves' proposals on distribution, however, Minerals Council concluded that they are inappropriate. That view was flagged to the Standing Committee in a letter of 3rd March and in oral testimony.
- 6.2 The Minerals Council is not alone in its criticism. Reeves' recommendations have attracted considerable flak on a number of different fronts. Academic opinion (e.g. Levitus, Altman and Taylor), Aboriginal groups (eg Northern and Central Land Councils and ATSIC), other mining interests (Nabalco, DISR) and Aboriginal meetings have all expressed opposition so far in submissions and testimony to the Standing Committee. The Minerals Council's particular line of criticism, that Reeves' scheme for the centralisation of funds in the Northern Territory Aboriginal Council together with the rationale and method of allocation will act to reduce the incentives for Aboriginal land owners to accept EL applications, has been echoed in most of the responses cited above.
- 6.3 Increasing incentives, especially monetary ones, has long been a theme in the debate on reform of the ALRA (see the Productivity Commission's Report 1991 and the Wran Report 1995) and in the arguments of the Minerals Council. Such thinking lay behind the suggestion made by the Minerals Council in 1998 that 70% of the exploration and mining income (ie a conflation of the 40% for the land councils and the 30% for "affected" areas) be distributed to the latter purpose. Money should not, however, be given directly to the RLCs, as Reeves determined, but continue to be distributed to "Royalty Associations".

7. The Northern Territory Aboriginal Council (NTAC)

- 7.1 Even more than his scheme for RLCs, Reeves' recommendation of the NTAC was unexpected. Few, if any, submissions advocated such a body. Involved as it was with his comprehensive institutional re-structuring, the creation of the NTAC has also been subject to severe and sustained criticism. Aboriginal group opinion has been hostile. For example, the Northern Land Council sees that it is part of a design which "constitute(s) an unacceptable attack on Aboriginal rights (and) legal advice demonstrates that it is unconstitutional." Thus far, only the Northern Territory Government has offered cautious support: it "would likely support the (NTAC) in principle".
- 7.2 The Minerals Council does not believe that the NTAC as described and justified by Reeves is necessary. This view follows logically from the arguments earlier advanced on RLC's and the ABR. The Congress of Land Councils can act as "a strong and united political voice" (598) both on land and other matters. (The local ATSIC representation would undoubtedly also be active in the latter arena.) Moreover, the responsibilities relating to land proposed for the NTAC are better located in the Congress. As money (70%) is to be directed to "affected" bodies, there is no financial role for a NTAC to play; ABR would continue to deal with distributions of the residue.

8. Conclusion

Overall, the Minerals Council considers the Reeves' report is like a "curate's egg" – good in parts. On questions relating to access to land and the mining regime, Reeves has come up with several sensible proposals that should be implemented. They include devolution of land matters and aspects of the exploration and mining provisions. On the other hand, from a minerals industry perspective, the comprehensive re-working of the purposes of the ALRA and the elaborate institutional re-structuring which Reeves advocates has consequences which the Minerals Council see as detrimental to the industry and to Aboriginal land owners who, currently and potentially, derive income from mining.

Thus, the Minerals Council has identified problems with his recommendations concerning the RLCs, the NTAC and the ABR.

Reform of the ALRA, as it affects the minerals industry, is imperative and overdue. The exploration and mining regime must be made less restrictive and more effective. The case presented by the Minerals Council, both in its submission to the Reeves' Inquiry and in this response, will achieve both those objectives.

APPENDIX A

THE MINERALS INDUSTRY'S ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION TO THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Mineral Exploration Expenditure in the NT

Petroleum Exploration Expenditure in the NT

Value of Mining Production in the NT

Value of Metallic Mineral Production in the NT

Value of Energy Minerals Production in the NT

Value of Non-Metallic Mineral Production in the NT

Northern Territory Gross State Product

Mining Contribution to NT Gross State Product

Relative Contribution of NT Mining to Australian Mining

NT Mining Gross State Product Relative to Gross Value of Production

Relative Contribution of Salaries and Wages to Mining GSP in the NT

Mining Rent Paid for Exploration Licences and Mining tenements

NT Royalties Paid by the Mining Industry

Mining Employment in the NT

Petroleum Employment in the NT

Estimated Export of Mining Commodities from the NT

Multiplier Effect of the Mining Industry

APPENDIX B

THE MINERALS INDUSTRY'S SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

The minerals industry is responsible for the establishment of many of the Northern Territory's towns and communities both historically and currently. Towns such as, Pine Creek, Tennant Creek, Batchelor, Jabiru, Nhulunbuy and Alyangula on Groote Eylandt, all owe their existence to minerals industry developments. Over the years, other towns have substantially benefited from exploration and mining such as, Katherine from the Mt Todd Gold Mine (Pegasus and General Gold Resources), Borroloola from the McArthur River Silver Lead Zinc Mine and Alice Springs from the gold mines in the Tanami region and oil and gas operations at Palm Valley and Mereenie.

With the development of mining projects in remote parts of the Northern Territory, the industry has substantially added to regional development by way of roads, ports, airfields, power and water supplies and assisted in the expansion of services such as postal, health, air services and government agencies and introduced recreational and community and facilities to an area or township.

Through the minerals industry's operations and infrastructure developments, many parts of the Northern Territory have been opened up to other industry developments namely tourism, recreational fishing and to a lesser extent agriculture and horticulture.

The minerals industry is part of the Northern Territory's history, culture and life style and as such, takes its social responsibility seriously. While not conclusive, the following data does provide salient indicators as to the industry's social contribution which is in addition to royalties, rents and other government and Aboriginal monies paid by the minerals industry.

A sample of six exploration and mining companies currently operating in the Northern Territory, with two having been operating since the mid 1960s, provided the following details.

Recreation Facilities

- Construction of ovals, club houses, swimming pools, courts and boat ramps including free power and water where applicable.
- Apprentice labour and materials for a range of building and maintenance projects for club houses and recreational venues.
- Maintenance of roads and tracks into recreational areas.
- Restoration work a local beach (\$30000 project).

- Annual sponsorship of recreational and cultural events such as, Barunga-Manyulluluk, Ramingining Cultural and Music Festival and Yothu Yindi Foundation's Garma Festival of Traditional Culture
- St Patrick Day Races
- Support for the Warrumungu Dance Group
- Support of community art awards and Aboriginal art awards

Sporting Events

- Funds for travel assistance
- Sponsorships for local clubs and competition
- Donations of team clothing
- Prizes and awards for junior competition

Educational

- Annual prizes to NT University's undergraduates courses
- Annual prizes for local primary and high school, tertiary scholarships, annual award for youth achievement
- Aboriginal employment programme for numeracy and literacy
- Assistance to community organisations in areas of training in first aid
- Annual sponsorship of NT Vocational Training Awards
- Provision of paid employment to undergraduates from the NT University
- Financial support for the NT University Foundation
- Provision of land and housing for a newly established Christian in a NT regional centre

Health Support

- Community Rewards on Continuing Safety (CROCS) funds \$30000 per annum for community projects of a health and safety nature
- Support to Miwatj Health Outreach Programme to assist with Aboriginal health and welfare projects
- Corporate members of major medical research projects such as, Heart Foundation, Diabetes Australia, Cancer Council and Asthma Foundation.
- Provision of ambulance service to township residents at no cost to recipients of the service
- Assistance to the Menzie School of Health Research

Community Infrastructure

- Operation of regional airports and airfields
- Financial support for community buildings including art centres, health centres and community care centres
- Support to non-profit community groups by way of repairs and maintenance on buildings and free electricity

Other Contributions

- Donation of ex-company vehicles to Aboriginal communities
- Support to local ranger programmes
- Apprentice labour
- Donation of second hand equipment
- Expertise of other personnel including environmental engineers, accountants and heavy earth moving operators