

This week Mapoon Mayor Peter Guivarra marks the 8th anniversary of the WCCCA with a discussion about what their various royalty agreements do for their community ...



This month I wanted to talk from a Council point of view about our community as a shareholder and beneficiary of the mining that's going on in the district.

There are a number of trusts set up, mainly through the Western Cape Community Trust, which comes out of the Western Cape Community Coexistence Agreement (WCCCA) with Comalco, and now Rio Tinto, eight years ago this month.

The WCCCA is between 11 Traditional Owner (TO) groups and three Aboriginal Shire Councils from Mapoon to Aurukun, as well as Rio Tinto, the State Government and the Cape York Land Council, who don't have voting rights within the Trust.

Apart from the main trust, there are three sub-trusts which are for Aurukun (Southern), Napranum (Central) and Mapoon (Northern, including New Mapoon) TOs respectively.

There is great benefit from these trusts to our community through the Council and the TOs.

There is no money that goes to hand, most of it is invested, 60%

of it for 20 years on a tax-free basis through an agreement with the Federal Government.

So hopefully in 12 years time when that investment matures there should be well in excess of \$100 million for the TOs of the Western Cape to manage and distribute for the purposes of the Aboriginal people in the community.

It's a very good agreement, besides that 60% investment there is 5% for administration and the other 35% is shared by the TOs and the Council for community projects.

Mapoon has invested in things like 4WD buses, the Mapoon sports and recreation hall, we've had a couple of our old cemeteries fenced in and the WCCCA has been very supportive of economic development through the fishing and crabbing enterprises and the turtle camp.

There was also \$200,000 or more towards the construction and running of the Land & Sea Centre and there has been program money for the mens' and womens' groups who are trying to address some of the social problems within our community.

Smaller grants are also made to benefit individual TO groups, supporting them going back to country.

We've also got the Ely Beneficiary Trust, that came out of an Alcan Agreement signed a few years before the WCCCA.

The Ely Trust is currently being re-structured and will allocate money into certain funding streams which focus on a range of community priorities, including education and business development.

That's just starting to get on its feet and we'll see more benefits coming from that in the very near future.

With the Ely Trust TOs are allowed to receive some money in the hand so they can acquire what they

need for themselves to improve their quality of life, household items and that sort of things, which is totally different from the WCCCA trust.

We are currently negotiating an ILUA with another company called Cape Alumina, which has been set up solely for mining across the Wenlock River and we'll be seeing the benefits of that in community programs and projects as well.

There is another company, Gulf Alumina, which is being set up to mine the DOGIT lands and other lands to the north of our community and our first meeting regarding an ILUA for that is being held this week.

We're very lucky to have these things, the benefits are immeasurable as government would not be able to fund much of this work in full, and we just appreciate the ability we have through these funding streams.

We try to stretch the dollars as far as we can and we go all-out to find other project backers, such as the dollar-for-dollar agreements with government and others, to match our investments.

We are surrounded by mining, but it took many many years for the companies and government to notice we were getting nothing out of it.

With the signing of the WCCCA eight years ago, and the Alcan agreement a few years before, the results are certainly showing.

It's just a shame it took nearly 40-odd years to eventuate.



JASON O'BRIEN MP STATE MEMBER FOR COOK

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