

Part 2 Scoping Study

33. IDENTIFY THE LOCAL INDIGENOUS FAMILIES CAPACITIES AND CAPABILITIES

There is a potential labour force in Wiluna for an irrigation industry. There is a base level of skills in agriculture and horticulture due to many people having worked on and managed pastoral stations, and on the old Desert Gold orchard. However further support and training is needed. Some of the more experienced people have identified specific areas they would like to improve their skills. Young people leaving school needing training programs developed for them, which will guide them through a career path in agriculture.

Durack Institute of Technology have built a training facility in Wiluna and will open it in the near future. This facility should be the primary centre for training for the irrigation operations, Durack are keen to develop programs that deliver both technical and practical experiences. The Centrefarm 5-Step training program²⁸ (see attachment 9, page 159) must be used as a model for developing an integrated and effective training package for Wiluna. Training should have a large element of on the job work experience.

Discussions have been held with all the families to identify their current and future human resource requirements.

33.1 Mr. Monty and Mrs. Gail Alison

The Alison's are an older couple who are currently running a small-scale horticultural operation on part of the Desert Gold block.

Monty has extensive skills in agriculture having worked on farms and stations all his life. Gail has very good management skills having been involved in running a range of different Aboriginal organizations.

While Monty and Gail currently have the skills to run a horticultural business their main challenge is succession. They have a strong desire to help train the next generation of their own family and also of other young Aboriginal people in Wiluna. They are currently working in partnership with Durack Institute of Technology (previously called Geraldton TAFE) in training a group of young Wiluna people on their block. A trainer from Geraldton comes out 4 days a week (20 week) block to provide onsite training in a Certificate II in Agriculture. The Allison's are keen to provide training of people from other families so that the other families operations are successful.

²⁸ The Centrefarm 5-Step training program, based on experience and information from the Anmatjere region of Central Australia has many similarities to the Wiluna region.

This TAFE level training should be supported and expanded once the new Durack IT building opens in the next several weeks. The Centrefarm model (see attachment 9, page 159) of training could easily be integrated into the formal TAFE training and the practical work experience being gained with the Allison's. Durack lecturer in Wiluna has been a key to the success to date.

33.2 Mr. Allen Ashwin family

The Ashwin's have a large extended family. The family works closely together in running their cattle station at Windidda about 200km East of Wiluna. This experience should be easily applied to horticultural operations on the Duuwa-wati (formerly known as Emu Farm) block. The older family members are keen to see the children come back and participate in this new farming operation. While they have developed a wide range of skills in operating the stations they have identified the need for more training in some management aspects and in horticulture.

The Ashwin's have been operating Windidda for some time. They have completed a skills audit of the family members in relation to running a rangelands grazing enterprise. A separate skills audit has just been done with the family in relation to the irrigated agriculture on the Duuwa-wati block. The Ashwin family operation will include people with a range of ages, experience, interests, formal training and of both genders. The skills, experiences, qualifications and interests of each family member were documented, but this will not be presented, as there may be issues of confidentiality. The training needs and desires for family members were also identified. Developing detailed training plans for all family members should be part of the full business cases study.

Box 6, Summary of the audit and training needs of the Ashwin family

Skill	Experience & training	Desired future training
Horticulture Production	Many people have practical experiences in horticultural crop production through working on the Desert Gold and Emu Farm projects when they were running previously. Three family members of Cert II in Horticulture. Support from an experienced horticulturist advisor would still be desirable.	Younger family members will need horticulture training after leaving school.
Produce processing	Family members have experience with picking fruit, but not with post harvest produce management.	Training will be need in produces processing if perishable crops and value adding are part of their enterprises
Machinery operation	There is extensive experience in operating general farm machinery (e.g. 4WD, tractors etc), but some younger staff have limited experiences	Training for some in machinery operation
Farm equipment	Some with experience in tractor driving, but none with species agricultural implements such as seeders, mechanical harvesters	Specific training with implements to be used
Mechanics	Experienced 'bush mechanics' but none with formal training in mechanics	One family member interested in becoming a qualified diesel mechanic

Welding / construction	Considerable experience. Two members completed TAFE course in welding, but none with a trade certificate	Further TAFE training for some people
Building / construction	Experience with station building but no certificates	Some would like to do a TAFE level certificate
Fencing	Extensive experience through station management	None required
Irrigation scheduling	Some with experience in with setting programmes in irrigation controllers, but none with calculating irrigation requirements. No formal training	Training in irrigation scheduling, but should have ongoing support from a specialist
Irrigation maintenance	So experience but no formal training	
Live stock handling	Extensive experience from the station but no formal training	Interest in doing Low Stress Stock Handling (LSS) course
Management		
Training others	Considerable practical experience with older family members but no formal training	
Mentoring	Considerable practical experience with older family members but no formal training	
Administration	Two female members currently doing a wide range of administrative functions for the family	
Computing	Some members of the family use computers regularly but would still like to improve their skills, others wish to learn how to use a computer	Beginners and advanced computer training
Book keeping	Some of the women currently manager business accounts	
OH&S	Some members have had OH&S inductions (e.g. 'blue card'). Some people have currently First Aide certificates	More OH&S training for some people
Marketing	Experience in marketing cattle but not fruit and vegetables	Training on marketing (e.g. visits to Perth markets)
Priorities for Future training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administration 2. Computing 3. Machinery operation 4. Construction 5. Irrigation maintenance & scheduling 	

	6. Livestock handling (LSS)	
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33.3 Farmer families

Ken & Jorna Farmer family

Ken and Jorna Farmer run a successful wild harvest Sandalwood business (Anroj). This business has been operating over a period of 20 years. They have a good range of business management, people management and operational skills. Their success in the sandal wood business is widely acknowledged as a positive example for the broader Aboriginal community. Their business employs people from the family (pool of 10) and the Fijian community in Wiluna (pool of 10).

Ken Farmer is also a shire councillor with the Wiluna shire. Son Clinton is growing into a leadership role within the family and will play a key role in the future management of the family business. Ken and Jorna have support in their business from an experienced accountant (Edward Alaga) and a business administrator (James Hiukino) based in Perth. These people will assist the Farmers and the Business Planners in developing the business plan for their Desert Gold operations. This family will need some support in the technicalities of growing irrigated tree crops. Management training and mentoring would be desirable for some of the younger members of the family. Ken and Jorna have a strong desire to see the skills of their family members developed so as they can run a sustainable business well into the future.

Mr. Darren Farmer & family

Darren Farmer is an emerging leader within the Martu community. Darren has been involved in many community organisations and projects within the Martu and the broader aboriginal community. This includes Darren having been a director of ATSIC.

Darren has 20 years experience in the wild harvest sandalwood business with Ken and Jorna Farmers business (he is the nephew of Ken and Jorna). Darren has access to a pool of approximately 12 family members aged between 18-25, resident at Kutkabubba. Darren would work closely with Ken and Jorna Farmer in sharing the labour pool of the wider family. This approach will help to provide year round employment for people as the bush harvesting of Sandalwood is confined to the cooler 6 months of the year.

Darren has long-term vision and many innovative ideas about culturally based business opportunities. Darren is keen to see value adding of local products by Martu owned business. This is particularly so for products such as sandalwood that has cultural significance to the Martu people. This vertical integration will give the Martu more control over their economic and cultural future. Darren is keen to develop a 'Martu' brand so that local people gain the marketing benefits from indigenous products that are currently being derived from non-indigenous companies further along the business chain.

Darren has identified the need for specialist technical support for his enterprises. This can be supplied through technical support from the WDC as well targeted training to family members.

33.4 John Kyanga & family

John has an extensive experience in agriculture from working on station for much of his life. He also has extensive experience in management through his work in Aboriginal organisation and as a shire councillor and shire president. John's main challenge that many of his family are working in other districts and the family labour supply may be limited initially. John is currently seeking out potential joint venturers for his block. He is investigating partners from outside of the region as well as another local family who have shown interest in partnering John Kyanga.

33.5 Training and mentoring plan

The long-term success of the WDC and family horticulture business will be dependent on developing the skills of the Martu people involved. A skills audit has been conducted with the Ashwin family covering all family members. From this specific training has been identified for each individual, and to ensure that combined set of skills of the whole family is adequate to run a successful business. The skills and training needs of the other families have been addresses, but not down to the level of every individual. The detailed skills audit should be conducted for all of the other families.

Once all families have completed detailed individual skills audits, the data can be combined to show the complete training needs for the WDC. This information should then be used to develop a package of specific training for Wiluna. The delivery of the package would be developed in conjunction the Wiluna campus of Durack Institute of Technology and modelled on the Centrefarm 5-Step training program (see attachment 9, page 159). Discussions have commenced with Durack IT and they are very keen to be involved. Durack IT will appoint at manager to the Wiluna campus very soon.

A holistic training and mentoring package should be based on the Centrefarm 5 Step training program. This would combine accredited training course delivered by Durack IT integrated with on the job training and mentoring. The WDC staff would play a key role in the onsite training and thus would be critical partners with TAFE lectures.

Recommendation:

24. Business Planners develop a combined training and mentoring plan in conjunction with Durack Institute of Technology that is based on skills audits across all families, using the Centrefarm 5-Step Training model.