Neighbour of Choice: A partnership model

Minerals Futures Cluster Discussion Paper

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CITATION


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This discussion paper outlines the “Neighbour of Choice” project undertaken by Research Centre for Stronger Communities (RCSC) and funded by CSIRO Flagship Minerals Down Under (MDU). The study, undertaken in 2008-2009, combines the Neighbour of Choice (NoC) principles developed by Boston College of Corporate Community Relations (herein Boston NoC model) with advancements incorporating social structures and social relations made by the Research Centre for Stronger Communities (herein RCSC NoC model). The reported study applies the central tenets of both approaches to a mining operation and its constituent communities in regional Western Australia. The case study involves communities within the Shire of Ravensthorpe (Western Australia) impacted by BHP Billiton’s (BHPB) Ravensthorpe Nickel Operation (RNO). Broad findings confirm that the principles of a combined Neighbour of Choice model can be applied to any corporation/company and its localised, geographic communities or communities of interest. These principles serve as a guide to developing strategies, programs and practices in communities with a corporate presence towards mutually beneficial working relationships underpinned by trust—the cornerstone of social capital. This study occupies an under-studied viewpoint as it focuses on the company through the lens of community in critiquing the practices of good neighbouring.

This research approach takes the combined frameworks (i.e. Boston/RCSC) further by (1) testing an incorporation of place as a key component and (2) enabling a flexibility to ensure the integration of identified variations associated with different industry environments. The Boston NoC model, detailed in this discussion paper, advocates a three pronged approach for companies (1) to develop a profile or factual data on community demographics and outline its governance structures; (2) to collect qualitative information including attitudes, concerns and expectations impacting on community/company relations; and (3) to ascertain what threats and opportunities exist for the company and the community (Burke 1999, p. 81-90). The first component, a community profile was completed and submitted to CSIRO in January 2009. This discussion paper accounts for qualitative analysis of community/company relations including extant threats and opportunities.

At the commencement of this study, mining in Australia was in a prosperous phase with high demand and expectations of capitalising on the mineral resources boom. BHPB had officially opened its operation in Ravensthorpe in May 2008, yet by early December, it was reported that the global economic crisis was creating uncertainty about future mining in the Ravensthorpe area (ABC Goldfields WA 2008). The decision to “ramp down” and indefinitely suspend activities at the RNO was publicly announced on 21 January 2009. Business analysts confirm that this was related to:

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1 Buckley, A. 2009, Community Profile of the Shire of Ravensthorpe, Western Australia: An asset mapping report prepared for CSIRO’s Minerals Down Under Flagship, Research Centre for Stronger Communities, Curtin University of Technology, Perth.
... reduced profitability prospects, decreasing scope of nickel market, and increased gap between projected capital expenditure and production volumes (Wang 2009).

The sudden and premature closure of RNO at the time of the study enabled an analysis of the complete lifecycle of mining with regard to the NoC principles—from entry to exit—including feasibility, construction, operational and closure phases from a community perspective.

Guided by premises of the model as developed, this discussion paper presents findings based on shared and unshared expectations including: the company’s entry into the community, workforce participation, leadership, financial contribution, communication, local and regional development and governance.

In critiquing a Neighbour of Choice approach, both the Boston and RCSC models applied to a mining company/community context, revealed the following strengths and challenges.

In relation to its strengths, the models:

- establish an overarching concept — mining as a neighbour — that study respondents found highly relevant;
- encapsulate many of the key dimensions of positive company-community relations addressed in corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability literature;
- confirm that many of NoC principles are highly applicable to contemporary company-community relations in mining, particularly trust and reputation;
- provide a framework for both the company and the community to establish and monitor ongoing relations; and
- demonstrate through an application to place, the importance of trust-based industry-community partnerships.

A major limitation of the Boston NoC model is that it is more instructive about ways that the company can improve relations with the community but less so in reverse, despite claims that the model can be used in reciprocal ways. This has been somewhat addressed through the RCSC model’s social considerations and the current study’s focus from a community perspective. A limitation for the RCSC model is the concept of social capital. There are currently very few ways of measuring the various elements and dimensions of such a complex concept. While wellbeing data can provide useful insights and serve as a proxy measure for social capital, the inclusion of community as well as individual measurement methodologies would assist in strengthening a NoC Partnerships approach.
A recommendation for future use of the model, as the NoC Partnerships model, is as a framework to guide relations from the outset of community-industry engagement. Neighbour of Choice models have now been applied to two corporate contexts, one educational and one multinational mining, both applications have demonstrated its potential utility as both a community relations device for the company and as a capacity building tool for the community, towards creating strong industry-community partnerships.
1. INTRODUCTION

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become an increasingly important and acceptable concept for companies to frame their social, environmental and financial responsibilities towards stakeholders. In particular, the past decade has witnessed a prominent focus on the operations of multinational corporations engaging with local communities. Inherent within a CSR framework is the requirement for community partnerships, enabled by companies, which for communities have led to an increased interest in securing participation in local resource development projects. Communities can, and do, exert significant influence on these projects in seeking to maximise local benefits and ensure protection of the natural environment.

There is a substantial and growing body of international literature dealing with large-scale resource and infrastructure developments on local communities with concomitant frameworks and indicators to measure CSR and sustainable development (Jenkins & Yakovleva 2006). In the mining literature, this tends to focus on social impact assessments of development, mostly as once-off studies and planning processes (Joyce & MacFarlane 2001). There is an increasing emphasis in Australian research literature on the assessment of community engagement, using single or comparative case study assessment approaches, mainly encapsulating an industry perspective (Kemp 2004; Brereton, Beach, Callan, Cheshire, McKenna, Paulsen & Parsons 2005). Other identified models include systematic approaches to community relations (Dunn 2000) and sustainability frameworks for monitoring and reporting the management of community relations (Brereton & Pattenden 2007). Despite this diversity of approaches, Cheney, Lovel and Solomon (2002) argue that much social research has been financed and framed from within the mining industry, thereby offering only a partial view of the social world.

A key consideration for this study is to understand the ways that industry, in this case mining, enacts its social responsibilities with “local” and “affected” communities from a social rather than an industry perspective. In adopting a “Neighbour of Choice” framework, the study explores the degree to which the community is influencing and defining a company’s operations, and if social structures and social relations promote or obstruct a coalition between industry and community.

This discussion paper combines the two models, the Boston College of Corporate Community Relations Neighbour of Choice model (Burke 1999) and the Research Centre for Stronger Communities Neighbour of Choice model (Stehlik 2005), supported by the broader CSR and sustainability literature. Commencing with an overview of the Boston model, the discussion paper then proceeds to outline the RCSC Neighbour of Choice model.
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. BOSTON NEIGHBOUR OF CHOICE MODEL

2.1.1. Psychological contract

The notion of a psychological contract is central to the Boston College of Corporate Community Relations Neighbour of Choice model (herein Boston NoC model). Originally conceptualised by Levinson (1962), a psychological contract according to Rousseau (1998, p. 665) relates to “an individual’s beliefs about the terms and conditions of a reciprocal agreement between that person and another party”. This idea was first applied to managing employee/manager relations and has more recently gained relevance in corporate/community associations (Rousseau 1998). As Burke (1999, p. 5), referring to the Boston NoC model contends, there is “remarkable and instructive similarities between the psychological contract that companies have with their employees and those they have with communities”.

![Diagram of the psychological contract](source: Burke (1999, p. 9))

A psychological contract, for Burke (1999), contains both implicit and explicit aspects and applies equally to companies as it does to communities. As part of an explicit contract, companies are required to pay taxes, meet legislative requirements including protecting the health and safety of their workers and the various communities of location and interest, relative to their activities. For mining companies in particular, Esteves (2008) argues that there is a legal responsibility and fiduciary duties to shareholders to maximise returns while remaining within the law. Similarly, there are implicit expectations that companies have for
community. Companies expect that the community will provide a source of employees and personnel for essential services such as police, fire and ambulance as well as voluntary utilities. For Burke (1999, pp. 5-10) mutual expectations (mostly implied) that communities and companies have of each other involve reciprocity of trust, and a common basis or set of values that unite. As Robinson (1996) identifies, a breach in a psychological contract between the company and its host community can be very damaging to trust.

For clarification purposes, while the terms “community” and “stakeholder” are frequently used interchangeably, they are essentially different. For the Ministerial Council on Minerals and Petroleum Resources (2005, p. 7) “community” in the context of the mining industry is “generally applied to the inhabitants of immediate and surrounding areas who are affected by a company’s activities”. Stakeholders on the other hand, are “those who have an interest in a particular decision, either as individuals or representatives of a group. This including people who can influence a decision, or influence it, as well as those affected by it” (2005, p. 7, emphasis in original). Site (or host) communities are often referred to as “local” or “key” stakeholders while other interested stakeholders include non-government and community organisations, governments, shareholders and employees (see also Minerals Council of Australia 2005; Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources 2006). The term “community” is largely contested. Its usage can vary greatly from one context to another, and has been the subject of longstanding debate. Nevertheless, its agreed upon characteristics are social interaction within a geographic area where there are shared goals or norms, representing more than a place to live, work, shop and do business. For Black and Hughes (2001, p. 111) community provides “psychological bonds” that unite people. Further, as Burke (1999, p. 5) contends, people desire to reside in communities that value common concerns, namely clean, safe, friendly and cooperative environments to raise children, grow business and enhance individual and collective wellbeing.

2.1.2. Community and company’s expectations

In the Boston NoC model, Burke (1999, pp. 5-8) outlines expectations that communities and companies hold of each other based on research conducted with business/company executives. An important premise of the Boston NoC model is that both the community and the company count on each other to act and behave in particular ways, yet these expectations may vary over time (as detailed in Table 1 below). Shared areas of expectation, identified by Burke’s research (1999) include: workforce participation and education, formalised (and legislated) responsibilities, ethical conduct, and mutual understanding between the company and the community. In employment matters, Burke (1999) argues that the company expects to employ and educate a workforce for its growing technological requirements; likewise he contends that the community anticipates reasonable employment and vocational opportunities from the company. Formalised responsibilities for Burke (1999) are chiefly associated with environmental matters. In the case of mining, a governance framework provides legislated mechanisms for the company to redress environmental damage and institute restorative measures. Environmental expectations for the community also include the company being responsible for not repeating the mistakes of the past (Environment
Australia 2002). The company similarly expects the community (through public and private agencies) to be responsible for providing its workforce with important social services and infrastructure including a safe and secure community in which to operate. As Burke (1999) notes, principled conduct from the community’s viewpoint involves the company ethically dealing with its employees and the community at large (see also Garriga & Domenec 2004). Equally, the company expects to be trusted to act in the best interests of the community while pursuing the freedom to undertake its core business. Finally, Burke (1999) concludes that the company requires the community to understand that this occurs in an increasingly competitive global business context.

As the broader corporate responsibility literature attests (Delefile 2006; Nelsen 2006), a company is increasingly required to fulfil its social licence or “informal agreement with their neighbours” (Warhurst 2004, p. 161) by understanding and responding to important community concerns. For Burke (1999), the community anticipates that the company will become a partner in local affairs, one that financially contributes to local charities/clubs and publicly lends support to community activities. It also expects the company to encourage and support employees (at all levels) to participate in voluntary endeavours. Indeed, a great deal of the company’s investment is in support of the not-for profit or voluntary sector. In return, the company counts on the community demonstrating loyalty by supporting its local interests and projects. While the company may demand loyalty, keeping the community informed about current /future business plans and decisions remains for Burke (1999) a community rather than a company imperative.

Table 1 summarises the company and community’s expectations of each other in the past and the present, through the lens of the corporate world. The past refers to the 1970s, a period that signalled a turning point in attitudes and accountability by industry in general, as a response to the previous decades of corporate irresponsibility. Burke’s “present” refers the beginning of the 21st century.
Table 1: Community and company expectations: past and present

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Expectations</th>
<th>Company Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Company Expectations</strong></td>
<td><strong>Past (1970s)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workforce participation and education</strong></td>
<td><strong>Workforce participation and education</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Lifetime employment to residents.</td>
<td>&gt; Employment opportunities (no longer lifetime).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Leadership and contribution</td>
<td>&gt; Educate workforce with responsible and reliable work habits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Provide leadership to important community projects.</td>
<td>&gt; Educate workforce for the company’s growing technological needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Support the community’s values and way of life.</td>
<td>&gt; Lead in solving community problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Loan executives to church.</td>
<td>&gt; Contribute to local charities and support public agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Be involved in civic and business organisations.</td>
<td>&gt; Be involved as partner/financial contributor to improve public services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>&gt; Loan executives to community agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Keep community informed about current/future business plans and involve community representative in decisions that impact on the community.</td>
<td>&gt; Encourage and support employee volunteer programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Loyalty</strong></td>
<td>&gt; Loyalty to the company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Loyalty to the company.</td>
<td>&gt; Support company’s local interests and projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Have pride in the company and its employees.</td>
<td>&gt; Have pride in the company and its employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trust and Ethics</strong></td>
<td>&gt; Trust that the company’s decisions are in the best interests of the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Moral/ethical in dealings with employees/community</td>
<td>&gt; Trust that the company’s decisions are in the best interests of the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Deal fairly with employees and the community.</td>
<td>&gt; Trust that the company’s decisions are in the best interests of the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsibilities</strong></td>
<td>&gt; Provide social services to maintain company’s workforce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Be environmentally responsible.</td>
<td>&gt; Reduce crime and delinquency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Correct past environmental mistakes/problems.</td>
<td>&gt; Correct past environmental mistakes/problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reciprocal understanding</strong></td>
<td>&gt; Support company’s freedom to operate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Understand and respond to concerns and interests of the community.</td>
<td>&gt; Support company’s freedom to operate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Understand company’s business problem; i.e. competitive global environment.</td>
<td>&gt; Understand company’s business problem; i.e. competitive global environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Burke (1999, pp. 5-11)
2.1.3. Key principles of the Boston NoC Model

There are three major strategies or actions identified in the Boston Neighbour of Choice model:

- building sustainable community relationships;
- identifying and acknowledging community concerns, issues and expectation;
- addressing community concerns and quality of life through funding programs.

Fundamental to the Boston model is the principle of trust, enabled through the fostering of respectful relationships. Developing community affiliations with key individuals, groups and organisations requires both planning and strategy; not a process left to chance (Humphreys 2000; Stehlik 2005). At the same time, Burke (1999) notes that responsibility for building relationships requires visible representation in the community by all levels of company management, rather than an activity confined to the public/community relations division. This essential groundwork yields significant benefits for the company. In particular, for Burke (1999) such relationships assist the company to identify, comprehend and often re-negotiate the psychological contract or licence to operate with its host community. Companies that have forged trustworthy and workable community relations are more likely to be given the benefit of the doubt if something unforeseen occurs and are in general treated more impartially by the media, or can draw on the “bank of trust” with community in challenging times (Stehlik 2005, p. 233).

Instituting practices and procedures that anticipate and respond to community expectations, concerns and issues with corporate implications is the Boston NoC model’s second avenue for the company to become a good corporate neighbour. Burke (1999, pp. 26-27) suggests developing programs and plans that foster ongoing dialogue between the company and key individuals and organisations in a community. In taking a pro-active approach to changing community issues and concerns, a company is engaged in its own reputation management.

The third strategy identified in the Boston NoC model is through funding particular initiatives that are responsive to community concerns and quality of life issues (Burke 1999, pp. 27-28). In the shaping of programs that support it various communities, company funded community programs constitute the third type of community action. Including donations of money, goods (including company products) and/or services (voluntarism and community partnerships) these contributions are often the most public and costly elements of a company’s involvement in the community. However, as Birch (2008, p. 131) notes “chequebook philanthropy” by companies can hamper more interactive community/company relations. Nevertheless, “transactional” contributions are frequently the way that both companies and communities characterise the responsibility of the company to its communities (Birch 2008, p. 131). A company may be—fairly or unfairly—judged by the nature and extent of these funded programs. Burke (1999) stresses that it is important for communities impacted upon by the company’s operations, for funding mechanisms to foster mutual trust relationships, respond to identified needs and contribute to the community’s quality of life.
2.2. RCSC NEIGHBOUR OF CHOICE MODEL

In 2003, the Research Centre for Stronger Communities (RCSC) was established as the result of a tertiary/industry sector partnership between Curtin University of Technology and Alcoa Australia. Until 2008, it was the only social science research centre sponsored by the minerals sector in Australia and remains involved in a number of national and international programs. This sponsorship alliance, under the banner of Stronger Communities, was established in recognition that communities need support to flourish in times of increasing technological and societal change.

Broad principles of the Boston Neighbour of Choice model were first applied to a scoping study in 2005, Neighbourhood Alliances, a social impact assessment of Curtin University of Technology within its three local government areas (RCSC 2005). The study sought to establish if Curtin was considered by its neighbouring communities to be a desirable asset: in demonstrating its sensitivity to community concerns; contributing to the quality of community life; and respecting the community’s values and traditions. In other words, the study investigated a key principle of the Boston NoC model, namely can this corporate entity be trusted? Subsequently the concept of NoC has been integrated into Curtin’s Strategic Plan and study findings have informed relevant policies and practices.

Of importance to the current study, Neighbourhood Alliances emphasised that many of the precepts of the Boston NoC model are instructive in fostering strong partnerships and alliances with business and industry. At the same time, the Boston NoC model, and indeed the broader CSR literature remains less edifying about the community dimensions of these coalitions. Revisions made within the RCSC NoC model, incorporating place, social capital and partnerships, were developed through conference presentations, research papers and visiting academic/fellows program contributed to the model outlined by Stehlik (2005).

In conceptualising a RCSC NoC model, Stehlik (2005) argues that CSR although a commonplace term is misunderstood and poorly analysed. The basis of this assessment for Stehlik (2005, p. 231) is that CSR is essentially a top-down interventionist model, highly influenced by the neo-liberal notion of “social coalition” which demands not only less government and more citizenry but the coupling of “community” and industry through alliance arrangements. While such partnerships are theoretically well established (see Woolcock & Naranyan 2000, p. 238), they are at best tentative due to industry’s core business being “production” and not “community” and the assumption that communities, particularly of “place”, possess the necessary capacity and resources to develop and sustain a successful coalition with industry (Stehlik 2005, p. 232). These arguments highlight the three important component of a community based or RCSC NoC model are place, social capital and partnerships.

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2 The RCSC was known as the Alcoa Research Centre for Stronger Communities from July 2003 to December 2008.
2.2.1. Place

In outlining these concepts, first “place” or “sense of place” as a social rather than a geographical construct recognises that location is mediated by relationships between people and interactions with their surroundings (Tall 1996). This understanding enables a distinct way of defining community within three social levels: the individual, the collective or community, and the societal or cultural scale (Dixon & Durrheim 2000). Inter-related elements that encompass sense of place include identity and attachment. Place-identity as described by Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoå (1983, p. 60) is a “pot-pourri of memories, conceptions, interpretations, ideas and related feelings about specific physical settings”. A central feature of place-identity is a sense of belonging (Tuan 1980), not only at the self-defining level but encompassing the collective nature of the relationships between persons, identities and material settings (Dixon & Durrheim 2000). For Putnam (2000), social connectedness and a sense of belonging are elemental to understanding social capital within communities.

2.2.2. Social Capital

The second concept, social capital, is generally considered to be the relationships among people that facilitate collective action and access to resources. First used by Jacobs (1965, 1992) in the context of neighbourhoods functioning as communities, the concept of “social capital” has been advanced by the work of Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1990) and highly profiled in Australia by Cox (1995). It incorporates the elements of trust, social networks, social norms, reciprocity and altruism within a myriad of social structures and social relation in a civil society. In elaborating on these initial contributions, Fukuyama (1999) and Putnam (2000) attribute many of the social and economic ills of contemporary society to the gradual deterioration of community life. For many, “social capital” acts as “glue” binding human interaction within communities (Cox 1995; Roche 2005).

The concept of social capital, while acknowledged as having important policy and practice implications, has largely proven difficult to measure. A series of studies undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 2004, 2009) while providing at best a relative measure for individuals, has been less successful in validating community social capital measures. Regardless, Bullen and Onyx’s (1999) ground breaking social capital research involving five NSW communities sheds light on the elements necessary for building capacity and relationship support processes within communities. For Bullen and Onyx (1999, p. 27) these include to:

- develop essential human capital pre-requisites e.g. self esteem, communication skills and trust;
- increase the material well-being of the group through advocacy, social policy development and material assistance;
- develop the physical infrastructure: meeting rooms, public spaces; and
• undertake activities through which people can make interconnections with each other in a safe environment.

There are emerging signs of recognition by industry of the importance of social capital (Svendsen, Boutilier, Abbott & Wheeler 2002). More progressive companies are providing training and capacity building aimed at strengthening the social capital of their constituent communities. As a consequent of knowledge and skills development, communities have successfully demanded new community development and infrastructure projects from relevant tiers of government (Zandvliet 2005). At the same time, Zandvliet (2005) cautions that an often unforeseen consequence of this objective for companies is skilling a community to become better equipped at dealing with the corporate presence. However, the net benefits of increasing social capital for Stehlik (2005, p. 242) includes working with communities that have a greater capacity to make a real contribution in partnering with industry, are more welcoming of newcomers, and possess a greater potential to flourish in challenging times.

2.2.3. Partnerships

The third important inclusion in the RCSC NoC model is partnerships, a term that is frequently used to describe a very wide range of collaborative efforts and activities. Within a CSR model, a notional community partnering with industry, often understates the complexity of developing true partnerships between community—as individuals, community organisations (including government) and local businesses —and industry. For Frank and Smith (2006) a true partnering needs to address three fundamental aspects: (1) power, who has it and where is it shifting; (2) self interest, what personal or professional interest is being served; (3) resources, what contributions (time, expertise and funds) are expected (Frank & Smith 2006, pp. 101-103). These dimensions, while important for successful partnering, assume that there is a level of capacity and resources within a community to deal with a company, in this case a multinational entity. For Stehlik (2005, p. 233) integrating social capital with partnerships allows for the development of a learning alliance with community, moving the company beyond compliance and contributions (pragmatic) towards a civil (altruistic) stage. A learning partnership offers the potential to incrementally build trust, described as a “bank of trust”. In enabling the development of trust, drawing on Glazer (2001), Stehlik argues that such learning partnerships then pursue a common goal, build a stronger relationship and understand and respect each other’s goals.

In support of a central principle of Boston NoC model that trust is a key aspect of developing community social capital and corporate reputation, the RCSC model proposes as a common goal the linking together of both the company and the community, in establishing a “bank of trust”. This combined approach, vital to the RCSC model will contribute to a “stronger communities” model and enable industry-community partnerships to emerge.
2.2.4. Defining the company’s “communities”

“Community” is often a complex construct for the company (Jenkins 2004). As previously discussed, it contains greater meaning for people than just a place to reside. Just as there are different stakeholder types, there are many different community types that a company needs to respond to as part of its operations. The Boston NoC model (1999, pp. 60-67) defines six such communities (see Figure 2 below) as site, employee, fence-line, impact, cyber and common interest communities.

Site community

The site community is defined by its geographical boundaries and as the location for the major facility. It is an important and influential type of community and defines the company’s licence or freedom to operate. Importantly, the site community enacts and enforces laws and regulations that determine how and where the company can operate in the community.

Employee community

Rather than considering employees as a community, this type refers to the location where company employees chiefly reside, namely its in-situ or residential workforce. This distinction is important for the current study as most large mining operations in WA utilise a fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) workforce (Storey 2001). In the case of this study, BHPB opted for a residential workforce based in Hopetoun instead of a FIFO system. In order to attract and retain employees, many companies focus on the quality of life in the location where their employees live. Likewise, employees consider that the company has an obligation to support and provide services and programs to support their wellbeing. Yet, Burke argues that employees rarely make the distinction between the site community and the community in which they reside in terms of the company’s philanthropy (1999, pp. 62-63). If employees invest in voluntary activities in the community, their expectation is for acknowledgement and financial support from the company. Similarly, it is common place for community based organisations to expect the company to be a financial contributor (Stehlik 2005).

Fence-line community

The fence-line community surrounds the property of the company or as described further below, in the current study, the mine site. Residents of the fence-line community are impacted directly by the operations of the company. Noise, traffic, dust, odour and even employee behaviour have an influence on the neighbours adjacent to the company’s operations. Nevertheless, as Burke points out, the fence-line community can exert considerable influence on the operations of the company including whether it can expand or conduct specific operations.
Impact community

Some company operations can impact on a community although they are not necessarily located in that community. Burke (1999, p. 63-64) identifies four different types of impact communities. The first operations impact is where a community is affected by operations of the company, for example, discharge of waste in the waterways or transporting material through a community. Influence impact, the second type of impact, applies when a company wants to influence major stakeholders not in the site community, but in a proximal town or city. A third impact community type is an exiting impact where the company is closing its operation or relocating to another location. The fourth and final impact community that Burke identifies is an entry community, where the company is undertaking feasibility studies or planning to commence operations.

Cyber or virtual community

New for most companies is the cyber or internet community. The Boston NOC model identifies that this type of community possesses very few characteristics of other communities. Specifically, it does not share geographical boundaries, decision making features, leadership patterns or structures. Increasingly, companies utilise the Internet to provide information, market and sell products as well as develop a community of interest around their product/s. Many companies also publish their community relations programs online as well as any sustainable development strategies and progress reports (Tilt & Symes 1999). Activist groups also use cyber space to publicise and make comment on corporate practices. In some cases, these Internet sites have rapidly relayed information about a company’s behaviour and
compliance with the principles of social justice, human rights and ecologically sustainable development. For example, Cragg and Greenbaum (2002) outline the role of international “mining watch” groups in actively monitoring and critiquing the activities of the mining industry.

Common interest communities

A sixth and final type of community that the Boston NoC model identifies is that of a community of interest, as distinct from community of place/location or site community. Community of interest may be interest groups or functional groups. The purpose of a common interest group is to bring together those with a shared interest. For many people, it is not the locality where they reside that provides their primary experience of community life. Rather, it could be as part of a sporting group or a group of people who share a common interest or hobby which provides a sense of community. In the case of BHPB, its shareholders can be considered an interest community.

This section has provided an overview of two models focussed on corporate/community neighbouring. The next section details the context in which this study was developed, commencing with descriptions of local and affected communities within the Shire of Ravensthorpe, followed by a description of the RNO including some background information about the project.

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3 An Australian “mining watch” group, Mineral Policy Institute (MPI) specialises in research, advocacy and campaigning on environmentally and socially destructive mining, minerals and energy projects. See http://eyeonmining.wordpress.com/about/.
3. NEIGHBOURS IN PERSPECTIVE

This study was conducted in the Shire of Ravensthorpe on the south coast of Western Australia. Selecting the Shire as the trial site to apply and evaluate the Boston NoC model and its developments within the RCSC NoC model, was based on research already conducted in the area over a period of some years, and existing relationships and networks with a range of communities and stakeholders.

Importantly, with respect to mining/minerals industry, the Shire was the site community for Australia’s largest laterite nickel operations and processing plant (Clark 2007), BHP Billiton’s Ravensthorpe Nickel Operation (RNO), which at the commencement of this study (August 2008) was in its early operational phase. However, during the study, BHPB prematurely and unexpectedly ceased its operation in Ravensthorpe, necessitating an extension of this study to more fully incorporate the threats and opportunities presented across the mining lifecycle into the model development.

3.1. THE SHIRE OF RAVENSTHORPE

The Shire of Ravensthorpe is located 550 kilometres south-east of the Perth and covers some 13,000 square kilometres (Shire of Ravensthorpe 2007). Currently, one-third of the Shire’s area is given over to agricultural production, predominantly broad-acre farming and wool production. The remaining two-thirds is set aside for nature parks and reserves, containing critical biodiversity areas within what is Australia’s only internationally recognised hotspot or area of highly diverse plant endemism (Harris, Majer, Williams, Buckley & Stehlik 2008). Contained also within the Shire is over 100kms of protected coastal and marine zones (Shire of Ravensthorpe 2007). This constellation of Western Australian South Coast protected areas feature a unique, yet fragile, Mediterranean ecosystem designated by UNESCO in 1979 as a biosphere reserve: the Fitzgerald Biosphere Reserve.

The Shire of Ravensthorpe has four identifiable place-based communities impacted by the RNO: Ravensthorpe, Hopetoun, Jerdacuttup and Munglinup (see Figure 3):

*Ravensthorpe*, the regional or service centre and largest town in the Shire, is the seat of local government. It includes surrounding farming settlements. In the communities typology previously discussed, Ravensthorpe is the “Site Community”.

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4 Commencing in late 2005, *Sustaining Gondwana*, a five year Fellowship Program funded by Alcoa Foundation’s International Conservation and Sustainability has included both social and ecological research projects undertaken along the south coast of Western Australia. Further information on this program is available at [http://strongercommunities.curtin.edu.au/gondwana.htm](http://strongercommunities.curtin.edu.au/gondwana.htm). A series of working papers, associated with *Sustaining Gondwana* are available at [http://strongercommunities.curtin.edu.au/workingpapers_list.htm](http://strongercommunities.curtin.edu.au/workingpapers_list.htm).
Hopetoun, a coastal community, is 50 kilometres from Ravensthorpe and is the location where BHPB developed substantial housing and infrastructure for its residential workforce. Prior to closure of the mine, Hopetoun’s population had trebled (Mayes 2008, p. 5). Pre-closure it was depicted as “yet another WA mining boom town”, with housing development akin to Perth’s expanding outer suburbs (Parker 2007, p. 14). As the residential location for the majority of the mine’s workforce, it is the “Employee Community”.

Jerdacuttup, a small, second-generation broad acre farming community is situated approximately 50 kilometres south east from Ravensthorpe town and is the closest fence-line neighbour to the RNO mine site. The farming population of this community had declined considerably with the acquisition of 10 farms for the RNO as part of the mine site and buffer. Despite this decline in population, the Fence-line Community retains a school, local hall and sporting facilities.

Munglinup, a community located 50 km further east of Jerdacuttup, is co-located in the Shire of Esperance. It is considered an Impact Community due to the operational impact of drive-in/drive-out (DIDO) traffic from Esperance and the transportation of ore/goods to and from the Esperance Port.

Figure 3 (below) illustrates the geographical locations of these four communities. Of note is the proximity of these communities to the Fitzgerald River National Park, the heart of the Fitzgerald Biosphere Reserve, which lies to the west/south west of the identified locations.

Figure 3: Ravensthorpe Hopetoun District

The history of the Shire of Ravensthorpe can be read as an account of the ebbs and flows of land use change in Western Australia, initially gold and copper mining, then agriculture and, more recently, a mining resurgence. Intertwined in this land use change are the histories and rivalries of the major two settlements: the inland service or administrative centre of Ravensthorpe and, 50kms south, the coastal town of Hopetoun (formerly Mary-Anne Harbour). In the 1970s, the last remaining mine of the gold rush era, Elverdton, was shut down and for a significant period there was limited evidence of mining activity in the Shire (Donaldson & Donaldson 2000). Until this decade, mineral reserves in the Shire have been typified anecdotally by local prospectors “as a little bit of everything but not enough of anything” (Buckley 2008, p. 5). This perspective was altered by the construction of RNO at Bandalup Hill, equidistant between the towns of Ravensthorpe and Hopetoun in 2004.

### 3.2. RAVENSTHORPE NICKEL OPERATION (RNO)

In 1997, junior exploration company, Comet Resources commenced studying the feasibility of mining nickel deposits at Bandalup Hill, 35 kilometres east of Ravensthorpe in southern WA. In this location, three nickel ore bodies lay largely in unclassified crown land in a corridor or band of remnant vegetation fringed by farmland (EPA 1999). By 2000, Comet had secured a “world class” technical and financial partner when QNI (Queensland Nickel; a fully owned subsidiary of Billiton) acquired a 50 per cent interest in the nickel project. In the following year and immediately prior to the announcement of the BHP Billiton merger, Billiton (through QNI) acquired Comet’s remaining share of the Ravensthorpe Nickel Project (RNP). Following this takeover, BHP Billiton (BHPB) sought approvals for an expanded and altered operation (EPA 2003). Construction commenced in March 2004 of an integrated (open-cut) mine and primary processing plant for Australia’s largest nickel laterite mine. Official reports and promotional material estimated the lifespan of the ore reserve (and operation) as 21-25 years (BHPB 2005, p. 375), with an operational workforce of 650 staff (Department of Industry and Resources 2008, p. 3). Annual contained nickel production capacity was estimated at up to 50,000 tonnes, with a further 1,400 tonnes of MHP (a contained cobalt in a mixed hydroxide intermediate product) per annum (BHPB 2004a, p. 2). At the time of its official opening in May 2008, some nine months behind schedule, the Ravensthorpe Nickel Operation (RNO) was estimated to have cost AUD$2.8 billion (Department of Industry and Resources, 2008 p. 28) more than double the initial projection of AUD$1.340 billion. At that time, it was also

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5 A fuller description of the history of mining in the Shire is provided in the Asset Mapping Report (Buckley 2009).
6 Across a range of BHPB documentation, the Ravensthorpe operation is variously described according to the specific phases/ownership of the project. As discussed by Mayes (2008, p. 30) BHPB Newsletters describe the Ravensthorpe Nickel Project (RNP) as distinct from Ravensthorpe Nickel Operations Pty Ltd (RNO) a 100% owned BHP Billiton company managing the development of RNP. From the official mine opening onwards, documentation refers to the Ravensthorpe Nickel Operation or RNO.
estimated that the investment from the BHPB project represented AUD$2.6 billion to the Western Australian economy (Department of Industry and Resources 2008, p. 3).

The local and regional development benefits attributed to the establishment of the RNO operation resulted from a historic agreement in 2004 between the Federal Government, the State (WA) Government and BHPB towards multi-user infrastructure (Department of Industry and Resources 2008, p. 2). Federal funding contributions were contingent on the establishment of a residential workforce in Hopetoun (Tuckey 2004). Capital investments of close to $40 million for the Shire of Ravensthorpe included State Government ($18m), Federal Government ($9.8m) and BHP Billiton ($9.5m) contributions for upgrading roads, a new community centre, telecentre and a primary school in Hopetoun with some upgrading of essential services in Ravensthorpe (Department of Industry and Resources, 2008, p. 2).

In 2004, BHPB committed to a locally based residential workforce with the majority of employees proposed being housed in Hopetoun (BHPB 2004b). Opting for a residential workforce ran counter to the preferred commute-based or fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) mode characterising mining in WA since the 1980s (Storey 2001). The residential workforce, directly employed by BHPB, was estimated at 300 workers (plus families). Due to a number of complicating factors, including the doubling of the required workforce and the re-negotiation and coordination of government and corporate contributions and responsibilities, an infrastructure lag developed impacting on residential housing (Jerrard 2007). To address this gap, and not delay operations further, an interim hybrid strategy of residential, drive-in/drive-out (DIDO) and fly-in/fly-out was adopted following the building of an extension to the local Ravensthorpe airport. By mid-2008, the estimated long-term locally based residential workforce was 650 workers (plus families), with more than 300 families reported as already residing in the community, and an estimated 450 families relocating into the region by the close of that year (Department of Industry and Resources 2008, pp. 2-3).

The decision to indefinitely suspend activities at the RNO, publicly announced on 21st January 2009, came as a shock to the local community, including BHPB’s own workforce. Although there was speculation about the mine’s future for some weeks prior in the media (ABC Goldfields WA 2008), there was no official word from the company until this public announcement to the Australian Stock Exchange, and then, subsequently, to its workforce. Overnight, 1,800 RNO employees and contractors were dismissed, with further staff layoffs taking place as the project “ramped down”. Within weeks of closure, BHPB CEO, Marius Kloppers, described the RNO as “not the finest investment decision the company has made” (Hayward 2009, p. 4) and one that the company may divest (Chambers 2009, pp. 19-20). A full analysis of the closure of the mine and its impact on the Shire of Ravensthorpe was undertaken by the Research Centre for Stronger Communities and published in May, 2009 (Browne, Buckley & Stehlik 2009).

The next section discusses the approach adopted for the study. Following a brief discussion of the review of relevant literature, this section outlines the ethics, methods adopted, and data coding and analysis processes.
4. **APPROACH**

4.1. **DESKTOP ANALYSIS**

In positioning the Neighbour of Choice study within a broader context, reviewed were relevant Australian and international literature on corporate community relations, corporate social responsibility, social capital and community partnerships, as well as literature specifically related to the mining sector. This desktop analysis also included a review of locally relevant documentation to support or add further context, such as Minutes of Ravensthorpe Shire Council and locally sourced reports. Where appropriate and relevant this material is referred in the following discussion.

4.2. **ETHICS**

This project was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines established by the Human Research Ethics Committee, Curtin University of Technology. An extension to ethics approval (RD 30-07) was granted in August 2008. Prior to the commencement of interviews all respondents were provided with a written description of the project including information about consent, confidentiality and reporting/publication of findings. Respondents were given the opportunity to seek further clarification about the project, the voluntary and confidential nature of the research and assurances that findings would be de-identified prior to any reporting related to the study. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents at the commencement of interviews.

4.3. **METHODS**

In accordance with the project brief, engagement was sought from local people involved broadly in governance within the Shire. The study involved a respondent sample reflecting a mix of mining, business, agriculture, Local Government, State Government, NGO and environmental perspectives. Respondents were recruited to the study through purposive means, namely, selected into the study due to specified criterion (Patton 1990). Most interviews were conducted between October and December 2008; however following the closure of the RNO, respondents were recontacted and invited to participate in a second (post-closure) interview. Interviews were conducted in-person and by telephone. The majority of pre-closure interviewees agreed to be involved in a second interview, while a small number of study interviewees participated in a post-closure interview only. Guided by both the Boston/RCSC models and broader partnership literature, a semi-structured interview schedule sought to capture key dimensions of pre-closure relations and lessons learnt post-closure.

4.4. **DATA CODING AND ANALYSIS**

The researcher transcribed audio files and used computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (NVivo8) to code the transcripts and analyse them into key themes. This coding and analysis process took into consideration the ways that respondents’ viewpoints reflected different communities described in the Boston NoC model.
The following section applies the concept of Neighbour of Choice, using key features identified in both the Boston NoC and the RCSC NoC model, and where relevant the broader literature. In guiding this discussion, specific aspects of the Boston NoC framework, as outlined in Table 1, serve as a framework for thematic analysis.
5. APPLYING THE CONCEPT OF “NEIGHBOUR OF CHOICE”

This section of the paper arranges the themes addressed by study respondents across a range of broad themes including: workforce participation and education, leadership and contribution, communication, loyalty, trust and ethics, responsibilities and reciprocal understandings. This first section commences by discussing mining background and company entry issues; community/company expectations; local governance and mine closure.

5.1. MINING BACKGROUND AND COMPANY ENTRY ISSUES

A critical component in the Boston NoC model is the way in which a company “enters into” its various communities. However, this entry and initial engagement is itself circumscribed by the community’s past, particularly in a location where mining has had such a mixed history. The first section of findings examines these issues: the community’s past involvement in mining, and the RNO’s entry into the community.

5.1.1. Past involvement in mining

Most respondents to the study reflected on their own past involvement with mining. This ranged from some respondents working within the mining sector (or affiliated industries) to residing in a community with a history of mining operations in various locations, including the Shire of Ravensthorpe.

There was a variety of identified experiences specific to the Shire. These included the legacies of the Shire’s mining history and impacts of more recent mining operations. One such example is Elverdton Mine, located approximately five kilometres from the town of Ravensthorpe, which closed in 1971 leaving behind a significant tailings legacy. In highlighting the deleterious aspects of abandoned mines, the Department of Mining and Petroleum describes Elverdton Mine as “unsafe (due to proximity to town), unstable (dispersing down a creek line), and not supporting any kind of ecosystem” (2004, p. 78). As its closure occurred prior to mining regulation, there remains little redress under existing legislative measures (Environment Australia 2002). Regardless, a community steering group had been formed in an attempt to resolve the environmental consequences of this abandoned mine. A member of the community steering group commented:

_This was a first taster for me about how mining finishes and how the mining industry is different and almost above the regulations of any other industry. (Female, Site Community)_

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From a Natural Resource Management (NRM) perspective, past involvement for a study respondent was associated with the environmental impact of an overflow from a mining operation’s tailings dam in the early 2000s.

There was an expression of salinity coming up in the creek from the mine ... water that used to flow south was flowing north ... due to our intervention, the Department of Mines and EPA made them [a pre-RNO mining company] undertake remedial action, to capture the water and monitor it. (Male, Impact Community)

Reported also were the operations of Norseman Gold in Ravensthorpe from the late 1980s to the early 1990s, with the company investing $11 million locally before being placed into receivership. This operation’s rapid departure in 1991 was reflected on by respondents as having left behind a cynicism about mining as well as a “hollowing out” of the Shire’s population, particularly its young people. One respondent described this as follows:

People left, the young ones left, this town has never recovered from that. Ravensthorpe actually died at the demise of Norseman Gold. It has not ever gained its pre-Norseman Gold stature because it drained the community of young people and the effective people left. In 1997, Comet was doing a bit of poking around to see what they could find, and there was talk about nickel. (Male, Site Community)

It is important for a NoC Partnerships model to consider the ways that this history, while perhaps not related directly to any new operation, continues to impact. As a result, with BHPB’s entry into the Shire of Ravensthorpe, there were already some entrenched opinions about mining held by the various communities associated with the Shire. As Stehlik (2005, p. 240) argues history not acknowledged can “derail” emergent relationships. Predicated on the Shire’s mining history, there was clear evidence of past practices not to be repeated.

5.1.2. Company’s entry into the community

Some reoccurring themes emerged from interviews about the RNO’s entry into the Shire including: initial opposition to mining; early perceptions; and measures adopted to foster company-community relations. Recent mining history had generated some strong opinions and, in some cases, opposition, towards mining prior to the RNO. This was identified as particularly evident within the Shire Council as well as the wider community. As one study respondent concluded:

The Shire Council of the day [mid to late 1990s] was strongly of the opinion that mining would not happen on its watch ... they were here when Norseman Gold closed down and witnessed the destabilisation it caused. (Male, Site Community)

Similar sentiments about the wider community were reflected by another interviewee:
Right from the beginning there wasn’t an open commitment ... so the project started with an opposition to mining out of Ravensthorpe. Hopetoun was a town for retirees, they didn’t want mining either. (Male, Site Community)

Another theme that emerged from the interviews was the early appraisals of the community by the initial BHPB team and the community’s reaction to the arrival of a multinational mining corporation. The most frequent and somewhat pejorative description of the company repeated by a number of respondents was that of being a “cash cow”. When the company first entered the community and well into its construction phase, expenditure associated with the RNO operation was depicted as “free flowing” and “big money upfront” by study respondents from both the Fence-line and Site Communities.

In describing competing perspectives of the community/company nexus early on in the project, one respondent noted that the “initial team” experienced some difficulty in finding common ground with the Fence-line Community. On reflection, this respondent from the Impact Community contributed:

*I strongly recall that the feeling amongst the BHPB people at the time was that they felt like they were in a foreign land. A strange environment for them, they didn’t relate to the farmers ... they didn’t really have a common language to talk to the farmers and the farmers felt the same.* (Male, Impact Community)

According to this same respondent, for the Fence-line Community, there was reported “fear” and apprehension about the disruption that both the mine and the arrival of the mining workforce would have on their lifestyle and the concomitant environment concerns. In his words:

*... the main expressed emotion was fear, many were concerned and fearful of the disruption to their lifestyle and in a social sense, an influx of people altering how they were used to living. There were also concerns about classic environmental impacts downstream, noise, dust, pollution and all that sort of stuff. Overall, you could say that there was unrest and dissatisfaction about the project.* (Male, Impact Community)

These matters, particularly the environmental impacts, correspond with fence-line communities concerns outlined in the Boston NoC model. Disquiet by the Fence-line Community, as noted in the *JRWG Summary of Baseline Studies Report*,9, led to concerns being raised directly with the RNO, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and at community meetings. As a result, BHPB reported that it developed internal and external communication and consultation mechanisms including the establishment and support of a fence-line community working group – the Jerdacuttup RNO Working Group (JRWG) (BHPB 2005, p. 376). Outlined in the Baseline Studies Report are nine main issues or risks reported as “perceived” by the fence-line community (2006, p. 4). These include: farm values, air quality, blasting, ground water, soils and vegetation, tailings and evaporation ponds, surface hydrology, drinking

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water and community health. At the time of compiling the Baseline Report (August 2006), studies into eight of these concerns had been completed.

Aside from the JRWG, another identified communication avenue was the RNO’s Community Liaison Committee (CLC), which had a broader representation of non-government organisations (NGOs) within the Shire. The formation of the Community Liaison Committee (CLC) according to BHPB was “to assist the wider regional community to adapt to the arrival of a major mining and processing operation” (2005, p. 376). It comprised representatives from seven NGOs, two local governments and one independent person with a key role in “reducing potential tensions that could be associated with the difference in disposable incomes between the mining and agricultural sectors” (BHPB 2005, p. 376). According to study respondents, other aspects of the CLC were its “meet and greet” function for newly arrived employee families and an ongoing role in administering and distributing the company’s profits. Aside from these two groups, the other most identified avenue of community consultation was through BHPB’s Community Relations Manager (CRM) who became a regular presence in the community. The extent of the CRM’s involvement included door-knocking members of the fence-line community, holding and attending regular community meetings with a range of stakeholders. As a respondent from the Site Community discussed:

... he [CRM] would have been down here almost every week going to meetings, calling in on farmers, working with the Shire, talking to the Education Department, working all the stakeholders, telling them what BHP was planning. He was finding out what all those people wanted and trying to accommodate them ... [the company] started doing public displays at the Esperance and Ravensthorpe Shows and held public meetings as well. He [CRM] became very well known to most people. (Female, Site Community)

This aspect, the importance of relationship development undertaken by community relations personnel, was acknowledged in the Boston NoC model as an essential strategy in building sustainable community relationships. However, as noted by Harvey and Brereton (2005) this community focus is often conditional, based upon the individual qualities and motivations of community relations staff and the level of support from general management.

In summing up, this section discussed the early perceptions of the company and the community and the measures introduced to improve relations arising from shared uneasiness. By establishing community consultation groups, one as part of RNO’s charter (CLC) and the other to manage the fence-line community’s expectation of “no social or environmental harm” (BHPB 2005, p. 376), the company was arguably building relationships through these mechanisms. Aspects such as the important influence that the fence-line community brings to bear on a company’s operations and the crucial role of community relations personnel for the company’s operations are discussed in the Boston NoC model. Given that the Boston model chiefly offers a company perspective on community relations, the development of consultative structure and processes as identified would be considered “good corporate practice”. However, this may not always be the understanding shared by its communities. As discussed, a community oriented partnerships model recognises that “formal structures” do not necessarily represent the voice of community. This discussion paper highlights many different and competing views about the RNO.
5.2. COMMUNITY/COMPANY EXPECTATIONS

As the Boston NoC model proposes, both the community and the company count on each other to act and behave in particular ways. To test this further, this study explored areas of shared and unshared expectations in the areas of workforce participation, leadership and contribution, communication and local and regional development.

5.2.1. Workforce participation

According to the Boston NoC model principles in employment matters, recruiting and educating a workforce is essential to company operations. Similarly, the community has expectations of an increase in local employment and vocational opportunities either as a direct or indirect benefit of having a company in its midst. The majority of interview respondents reflected that local employment prospects had increased as a result of the construction, and later, operational phases of the RNO. Such opportunities were associated with construction, allied and service industries and the outsourcing of operational tasks to subcontracted companies as well as direct employment with BHPB. As Mayes (2008, p. 11) reports, direct employment of local people in the RNO was around 10 per cent, across both operational and administrative sectors. Nevertheless, study respondents recounted a general sense of disappointment among local people about the low levels of direct employment within the Company. Direct employment was discussed as preferable, due to higher remuneration, better conditions and greater job security. Although impediments to direct employment of local people were largely attributed by study respondents to the specialised nature of the RNO operations, it was reported that positions requiring a more generic skill base were also not filled locally. As a study respondent from the Site Community observed during the Company’s operations:

... when you look at the gates security, the logistical people, and the administrative staff, BHP are literally flying in security personnel, admin people, cleaners, anyone and everybody. It disappoints local people but it is just part of the culture that has been formed.

(Male, Site Community)

This was not an isolated view, another respondent from one of the operation’s Impact Community reflected on the differences in job roles between locals and the newly arrived mining community:

Higher level jobs are being filled by outsiders and the more menial tasks given to locals. An important lesson to be learnt ... however the up-skilling of people can’t happen overnight.

(Male, Impact Community)

As the Boston NoC model claims, employment and the opportunity for education/training are shared expectations of both the company and the communities, occurring in current and past considerations (see Table 1). Nevertheless for study respondents, employment was one aspect that fell short of community expectations.
5.2.2. Leadership and contribution

Another emphasis in the Boston NoC literature is an expectation that the company will contribute to community life. In particular, it is anticipated that the company will be at the forefront of resolving community problems by contributing to and supporting local organisations and initiatives. This includes financial contributions, company support of employee volunteering, and partnering with local organisations and agencies and the company’s local spend.

Study respondents outlined some positive assessments of ways in which the RNO had actively contributed to community life. Specifically, these included supporting the voluntary contributions of its workforce in local services and activities, community liaison and community safety. On the other hand, mixed views were expressed about the distribution of company profits through the CLC.

Employee volunteering was discussed favourably by respondents in particular the RNO’s formula for its workforce’s contribution to local emergency services. This is summed up by a Fence-line Community respondent as follows:

*If an employee joins the SES and gives five volunteer hours per week, BHP donates so much per hour to that group.* (Female, Fence-line Community)

Overall, there was genuine regard for the RNO’s community relations in the Shire during both the construction and operations phases. Their role in working effectively with the community was acknowledged and encapsulated in the following comment made when operations were still underway:

*Their community relations people are working and liaising with the community; there is the perception that they are getting along well with the community. Basically, they are doing their job.* (Female, Site Community)

Another reported benefit of the RNO’s presence in the Shire was the improved road infrastructure and its impact on community safety. One study respondent from the Site Community described how the sealing of road surfaces and grading of road verges had resulted in a significant decrease in motor vehicle accidents particularly heavy vehicle and caravan rollovers.

*BHP demanded that the roads be widened and sealed. Since its arrival there have been less car accidents, less ambulance call outs and therefore less pressure on community volunteers.* (Male, Site Community)

A topic attracting less positive appraisal was equity in the profit sharing or allocation mechanism that formed part of the RNO’s charter. The CLC’s role in making recommendations
to the RNO for “sponsorship allocations”\(^\text{10}\) was for some considered biased. During the operational phases of the RNO, there were reported disparities in funding allocations purported to favour the Employee Community. This was outlined by a respondent from the Site Community:

> There was heated discussion about the terms of reference for the CLC and that each part of the community needed representatives to access the money. Up to now, Munglinup [Impact Community] has had very little, Jerdacuttup [Fence-line Community] quite a lot, Hopetoun [Employee Community] was central to BHPB’s operations and Ravensthorpe [Site Community], well most people would tell you they haven’t seen a cent. Distribution has very much favoured Hopetoun. (Male, Site Community)

Overall, the company’s leadership and contribution was considered positively, prior to closure of the mine. Particularly constructive aspects included funding arrangements that valued employee volunteering, good relations with company personnel and improvements in road safety due to works instigated as a result of the Company’s operations. An area of exception identified in this section was the considered disparity in allocation of company profits. According to Zandvliet (2005, p. 12) when companies implement policies and practices that favour selected communities they inadvertently create “have’s” and “have-not’s” increasing tension not only among these different communities but between the aggrieved communities and the company.

5.2.3. Communication

As the Boston NoC model identifies, the community is more likely to expect to be kept informed of current/future business plans of the company including the right to have a community representative involved in decisions that impact on the community. Study respondents assessed that across the feasibility, construction and early operations phases, the RNO had established a range of approaches to keep the community informed. In addition to the CLC and the JRWG, the company sent out newsletters and many of their key staff were reported by interview respondents to have worked productively with community groups. Improved communication was supported by the publication of an e-newsletter (2006-08) by the Ravensthorpe Shire’s Community Service section\(^\text{11}\) which included local issues and events, funding opportunities and developments arising from BHPB’s presence in the Shire. Other sources were the local community paper, The Community Spirit where the RNO was featured in articles and the subject of community letters and a website for the newly arrived workforce and their families hosted by the RNO from Hopetoun.

The possibility of community input in company decisions involving the community was considered by study respondents to be desirable yet essentially unrealistic given their

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\(^{10}\) There was no clear understanding among interviewees about what percentage of profits or how it was determined, however a number of study respondents estimated community funding at between .2 and .5 per cent of the company’s annual profits.

experience in established consultative structures. Most respondents recognised that the multinational status of BHPB meant that the many tiers of decision-making complicated the possibility of receiving a direct response to certain issues at the local level. For a female Site Community member these impediments cast doubt on the “the well-meaning intention of community engagement”. From the perspective of a male Site Community member involved in the CLC, the protracted RNO processes for decision making about community matters and the seeming incapacity to make decisions at the local level appeared to be tactical:

There didn't seem to be any continuity in decision making, the company needed to have greater clarity in its communication and decision making processes. There was a divide between the site and Perth. Whether that was a real divide or just a tactical one was unclear, but there was plenty of ‘we need to ask Perth about that’. We'd wait another two weeks to get a response. This was part of their ongoing game and it didn't take long to work out that it wasn’t one you were going to win. (Male, Site Community)

While there is some evidence of sound communication practices and mechanisms, there were criticisms and some confusion about decision making mechanism at the local level and which part of the Company made those decisions. In the majority of discussions, most respondents referred to BHP[B], the parent company, and not the RNO. It is therefore critical that responsible mining companies decentralise their decision making to the local level (Labonne 1999) and not “hide” behind the language of its subsidiaries—an important lesson for Minerals Down Under (MDU) and Mining Council of Australia (MCA) as well as a critical aspect of a NoC model.

5.2.4. Local and regional business development

It was anticipated that the RNO would bring the opportunity for regional economic expansion through the introduction of new business and the sharing of resources across industry sectors. Study respondents talked positively about the increase in services due to the growth in population, as well as the new and upgraded infrastructure. Benefits identified by local businesses included RNO’s local spend as well as new business “start up” initiatives in the Shire. Businesses operating in the Shire were looking for the company and its employees to spend money in the town, or “buy local” and to secure contracts for associated infrastructure. Aside from the significant community and operational infrastructure, there was an additional $120 million expenditure for residential land, housing and community amenities (Jerrard 2007, p. 13). In emphasising its valuing of the local economy, BHPB defined “local” in the context of suppliers as “either from the community where the mine is located, or where operation is fly-in/fly-out, from the nearest appropriate regional centre” (BHPB 2006, p. 472). The use of “local” businesses was reportedly more evident in the feasibility and construction phases. For local building suppliers and contractors engaged in the RNO housing construction, their capacity to secure tenders reportedly declined over time due to a reported “policy change”. In the words of one respondent:

Initially BHP looked at small parcels of land and engaged local trades people to build houses in Hopetoun and then some regional builder did some, all to get the money flowing through the community. Then there was a policy change, instead BHP put all the buildings together in one group, a big multinational company won the tender to build houses for BHP. Local companies and the local community lost out. (Male, Site Community)
At the same time, some study respondents discussed the considerable efforts made by the company in encouraging local businesses to grow. This expansion was chiefly focussed into Hopetoun. As one interviewee noted:

*If you speak to local businesses, they’d tell you if you didn’t work out of Hopetoun then contractually you wouldn’t be working for BPH in the future.* (Male, Site Community)

Although as one respondent from the Site Community remarked there was limited improvement in established businesses despite the increase in custom generated by the company’s operations, as

*... existing businesses probably didn’t improve their infrastructure much, they just enjoyed having more people and probably had trouble getting staff and servicing those people ... .* (Female, Site Community)

The lack of local business start-up and expansion reportedly “frustrated the company” and led to the promotion of business opportunities for people from the region, the State and interstate prepared to relocate to the Shire. In justifying local reluctance, one respondent from the Employee Community linked this to independent business advice arranged through the Ravensthorpe Regional Chamber of Commerce (RRCC).

*A consultant spoke with a lot of local businesses and advised that once the mine was up and running, the population of the Shire was still only going to be around 4000, by his account, marginal for any business. It would probably be the minimum that you would need to set up a viable business and I think local people knew that and were sitting back and waiting.* (Female, Employee Community)

In summary, for study respondents there were some identified benefits for local and regional business development as a result of the RNO, however this was highly contingent upon the type of business and its location. Reports that the RNO’s local housing spend had been diverted to a multinational housing construction firm, not only upset local construction businesses, but contradicted BHPB stated “buy local” policy. Acknowledged was the RNO’s support for growing local businesses focussed on Hopetoun, the Employee Community, nevertheless there was reported limited local business uptake. Whether this was due to the lack of critical population mass, issues of “risk” and “trust” in relation to the RNO or the looming global economic crisis, the nature and scope of local and regional business expansion and local spending are important indicators of successful neighbouring.

### 5.3. GOVERNANCE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Developments over recent time, from government regulation of mining with marginal community involvement to crucial involvement by communities, have highlighted the role of local governance structures. In this shifting governance landscape, communities now frequently represent themselves as business groups, agencies, local chambers, regional development, community and environmental organisations (NGOs). In turn, this means that companies are now required to develop direct relationships with local communities and local
government. The increasing emphasis on local governance in mining creates challenges for both the company and the community.

5.3.1. Local Government

Many respondents spoke about such challenges for Local Government as the in-situ governance instrumentality associated with the RNO. Respondents frequently expressed the view that the Local Government Authority, the Ravensthorpe Shire Council, had struggled with this “massive” project from the outset, as the following highlights:

_In the formal agreement between the Commonwealth, State and BHP, the Shire while not a signatory, was part of the content of the agreement, but you have to remember that this is a small local government in rural community and to suddenly have tens if not hundreds of millions of dollars for a project. In my opinion, this was above the Shire’s capacity to actually fully grasp the implications of the funding, deliverable and timescale._ (Male, Site Community)

The identified juxtaposition of a “very small rural shire with low staffing levels and skill set” (Male, Site Community) and a “very sharp and very large multinational corporation” (Male, Impact Community) generated a range of respondent opinions about the Shire’s capacity. An issue considered critical for the Ravensthorpe Shire, and indeed local government in general, was the lack of State and Federal Government support for engaging with mining conglomerates at critical points in the mining lifecycle.

_Governments, but particularly at the State level, should insist on a support mechanism whereby experienced senior managers and practitioners are parachuted into for both the entry and the exit strategies._ (Male, Impact Community)

Another important issues identified was the lack of capacity of the Local Government Authority to attract and retain suitably qualified and experienced people to deal with these challenges. While this high staff turnover was recognised by the Shire Council; changing personnel was common to both sides, as one respondent observed:

_For [both] the Shire and the Company alike, the people who started out are not the people who are now running it._ (Male, Site Community)

This pattern, recognised as a regular feature of the resource extraction industry, contributes to disrupted and uncoordinated community relations (Humphreys 2000) and a loss of corporate memory (Harvey & Brereton 2005). Further, as Stehlik (2005) concludes, a lack of human capital governance at a community level interrupts the building of social capital.

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5.3.2. Guardians of the community

While changes from the “original team” and the original or “entry” proposals for the mine were considered challenging for governance, a possible role for community as guardians of this process was raised. A number of study respondents assessed that it was local community who possessed a “collective memory” of what had been promised and what was delivered. Locals also had both the capacity to provide continuity of interest and the commitment to monitoring agreed upon strategies across the lifecycle of the mine. These issues discussed by two study respondents, one from an Impact Community and another from the Site Community, are as follows:

There was an issue about what the company may have promised or committed to early on, compared to the new people who are here saying they have never been aware of that and having no sense of past discussions. But the [pre-mine] community members had a continuous presence and a strong memory of what was committed to or promised. (Male, Impact Community)

I guess the community needed to look more closely at what they proposed to do and how they were going to manage things. What are their entry, operational and exit strategies? I think the community needed to engage in these strategies for its own sake, particularly the exit strategy. (Female, Site Community)

Both community consultation groups, the JRWG and the CLC, were established and managed by the RNO, therefore respondents were uncertain if there was scope for broader community input and monitoring outside of such structures. There was no identification of a third tier of governance independent of the Company or the Shire. Nevertheless, the importance role for community in a full lifecycle approach was recognised after the mine had closed. In arguing from a development perspective, Joyce and MacFarlane (2001) point out that there is a general absence of relevant capacity in companies, governments and communities to fully participate in consultative processes. Further, they conclude that just as it is logical for a company to fund capacity building, the state has a role in promoting opportunities to educate and train its population to participate more fully. This is arguably what Brereton and Pattenden (2007, p. 5) address in their sustainability monitoring framework established between the RNO management and the CLC. To maintain community input, they recommended, first, that the company include ongoing capacity building and training for the CLC and second on a more cautionary note, that this committee not remain the sole avenue of contact with the wider community. These important considerations, enabling and supporting participatory approaches, can produce both social and economic benefits for both the company and its communities (Stehlik 2005, p. 230), provided that the operation remains long enough within the community to achieve these ends.
5.4. MINE CLOSURE

The sudden closure of BHPB’s RNO has received national and international media attention. In its aftermath, media headlines such as “Open mouths, closed mine” (Lague 2009, p. 3) and “The town that BHP killed” (Burrell 2009, p. 22) form part of the ongoing and emotive coverage of the plight of the Shire of Ravensthorpe, with an impact on the “the Big Australian’s” reputation (see Browne et al 2009). For study respondents, however, there were divergent views about the mine closure, ranging from cynicism to pragmatism.

5.4.1. Views on closure

For some, the closure of the mine confirmed and further entrenched suspicions of promised benefits associated with mining operations, particularly when there was ample evidence across the State of the footprint of failed mining. For others, the closure had potential consequences for future mining proposals. These sentiments are discussed by two respondents:

*I remember being at an early meeting with community people and recall a cynic amongst us saying ‘What will happen if you build up this mine and infrastructure like towns up north and then you go into care and maintenance?’ The [initial] BHP team said ‘No it will never happen, we’re here for the long haul ...’. They sold it to the community. There are legacies of mining promises all over WA. (Female, Site Community)*

*I would be very wary of any resources industry making approaches to this community and it is fair to say that the wider community perception would be tempered by the experiences in Ravensthorpe. (Male, Impact Community)*

Other respondents characterised the mine closure as a business decision, based on profits and accountability to shareholders, ultimately acknowledging the company’s “freedom to operate” as a business enterprise. This perspective, or the “production” imperative, is recognised in both the Boston and RCSC NoC models. In the case of the RNO the relatively short period of its operation did not allow sufficient time to establish trust based relationships which moved beyond “compliance” into more integrated or “civic” approaches (Zadek 2004, p. 127) recognising societal expectations. It could be argued that a longer lasting and more robust partnerships, featuring power sharing arrangement and negotiated purpose as discussed by Frank and Smith (2006) may have enabled the Company to pursue a collective response to the closure of the mine, one that supported a “stronger community”, rather than left it as a “passive bystander” (Stehlik 2005, p. 232). As concluded by a Site Community respondent:

*I can't criticise BHP for making the decision they have made, it is a business decision. However it was the way that they did it. (Male, Site Community)*
Since the closure, respondents reflected on the contribution of the mine to the various communities of place. It was considered that the population increase and its resultant diversity had created a richer and livelier community life, findings confirmed by Browne et al (2009). Other discussed benefits were the buoyancy in the housing market, more services and improved infrastructure. However a sketch of the cost/benefit analysis of having BHPB in its midst offered by a Site Community interviewee characterised the workforce of the RNO as advantaged over the broader communities of place:

Initially, locals thought that massive wealth was going to come into Ravensthorpe, huge growth, especially when housing and infrastructure improvements started. People quickly started to realise that unless you were wearing the orange fluoro or working on the mine site there weren’t many direct benefits. Sure, there were indirect benefits, because services and infrastructure did improve but unless you could afford the land, houses, toys (cars, boats etc.) that came with the wage bracket, there was very little benefit. (Male, Site Community)

As previously discussed, the Company was aware of the need to mediate the possible tensions arising from income disparity between the mining workforce and the broader community in assigning this as a function of the CLC. However, less evident was the Company’s awareness of the need to address tensions that surfaced due to its considerable investment into the Employee Community, reigniting past rivalries between Hopetoun and Ravensthorpe (see also Mayes 2008). On the one hand, employees are an important stakeholder which the Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development Project (MMSD 2002) argues is a compelling reason to attend to the quality of life in mining communities for a stable and reliable workforce. However on the other hand, in the case of RNO, offering services for a “high quality” Employee Community led to a reported marginalisation of the non-employee communities. Returning to the importance of history, re-igniting traditional rivalries of place have implications for social cohesion and the levels of social capital.

5.4.2. Exit strategy

As the Boston NoC model (1999) outlines, a critical aspect of reputation management by a company is the way it handles its departure from its communities of place and interest. The “hurried exit” by BHPB from the Shire of Ravensthorpe appeared to be at odds with the more deliberate and timely entry processes undertaken to engage and establish trust within the Shire’s communities. One respondent put it this way:

They took seven years negotiating into this community and overnight to exit. It makes you wonder what it was all about. (Female, Fence-line Community)

Ideally, as Hannan (1998) argues, a locally planned and supported mine closure leaves a positive legacy; rather than one where the community believes it has been abandoned by the company. Interview respondents were largely in unison with the view that the lack of an exit strategy was a significant oversight of both the company and the regulators. For one respondent, the multinational status of BHPB appeared to have made it impervious to
consequences; the Company was too big to be troubled by the potential actions of relatively small players:

   It appears that their exit strategy was say nothing, do nothing, ‘we are big enough to ride this one out’. I have to say it has been extremely effective so far. The threat of legal action for this and that, the majority of people have taken the recompense offered, why would anyone want to take BHP on? (Male, Impact Community)

This last comment links strongly with the literature associated with both CSR and the Boston NoC model, namely that sudden closure of an operation has reputational ramifications for companies. Levinson (1976) describes a company who announced the closure of their refinery a year prior, putting in place a range of transition programs for the community including employment transfers, the establishment of alternative industries and site rehabilitation for use as a community facility. These process were not necessarily because the company was a model corporate citizen but due to the considerable backlash and reputation damage arising from their unplanned departure from another community. As Levinson concludes, “when a corporation is concerned about perpetuation, it soon learns that it cannot do with short-term expedient solutions” (1976, p. 93).

Given that the RNO had only opened its facility in May 2008, and then announced its closure in the following January, it was clearly not a planned process similar to the one that Levinson outlines. However, the need to “plan for closure” is a critical component of any trust-based NoC relationship, and had this been “on the agenda” in the Shire of Ravensthorpe from the beginning, the outcome and legacy may now be different.
6. TOWARDS A “NEIGHBOUR OF CHOICE” PARTNERSHIPS MODEL

This study has applied the concepts of Boston NoC and revisions made within the RCSC model to mining in place, namely the RNO within the Shire of Ravensthorpe. The concept of “place” proposed within the RCSC NoC model combined with the Boston NoC delineations of communities provided a constructive way of investigating location and interest impacts. In this case study, the Boston NoC typology revealed largely shared opinions across its “local” and “affected” communities, specifically its Fence-line, Site, Employee and Impact Communities.

Aspects of the Boston NoC model confirmed within the study include that: (1) the community expected the Company to provide employment, leadership and contribution, be environmentally responsible and to keep it informed of changes and future directions of the Company’s operations; (2) the Company expected the community to provide services (essential and non-essential) and to realise that “the business of business” is located in a broader global economic context. Community/Company expectations involving ethics, loyalty and mutual understandings between both parties were not confirmed in this study.

Increasingly, mining companies are undertaking community consultation processes to develop an understanding of the communities concerned. While these may assist the company to comprehend some of the immediate needs and priorities, what may not always be apparent are the informal networks, relationship, shared histories and connections between neighbouring communities, the complexity of which both the Boston NoC model schema and RCSC NoC model suggest. Findings of this study point to the importance of two key areas: (1) the social “cultures” of place including rivalries between communities; and (2) the history of corporate involvement—for this study—namely resource extraction.

Combining the original Boston NoC model with the RCSC model enabled a community focus approach centred on capacity building, social capital and partnerships towards sustainable social coalitions. Important in the development of such coalitions is the inclusion of action based learning cycles which support transparent and timely communication. Less easy to ascertain is the impact on social capital. As discussed in the literature review, the complexity of social capital has resulted in few measures which successfully account for this dimension; therefore there is a limitation in applying such a highly theoretical concept. Nevertheless for the ABS (2004), wellbeing data provides useful insights into community dynamics and may serve as a proxy measure for social capital. Subjective wellbeing was collected in two studies conducted within the Shire and are outlined in associated reports providing pre- and post RNO closure data (Williams, Buckley, Stehlik, Majer & Harris, 2008; Buckley 2009; Browne et al 2009).
In conceptualising a NoC Partnerships framework that involves the community and the company in sustainable, ongoing and mutually beneficial relationships, a continuum or iteration of inter-related and supportive interactions contributing to a “bank of trust”, is illustrated in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: Iterative Interactions**

This continuum of interactions involve seven dimensions that are mediated by an action cycle, based on the values of respect, mutuality and reciprocity (see Stehlik 2005) and underpinned by good, transparent and timely communication. As trust development is an incremental process, all actions on the continuum contribute to or detract from this “bank of trust”, which is central to the figure. Aspects of the proposed NoC Partnerships model include:

**Grants, donations and volunteer support**

Company support for community initiatives through grants, donations and volunteering were identified in the study as important aspects of being a good neighbour. However, as a recursive aspect, it is important that these types of contribution not be conflated with “fixing” social problems or as the only avenue in company-community relations.
Leveraging relationships
Community consultative processes provided the company with considerable knowledge about its communities. Mining companies through their influence and resources can encourage State and National governments and other development interests to collaborate in meeting local needs. A company may advocate for or leveraging relationships in partnership with community.

Training and education
A lack training and education initiatives offered by the Company were considered to have limited local people’s potential for involvement in the operation. As well, there was limited success in stimulating local business development. There are generally advantages in collaborating with other interests, e.g. TAFE and Higher Education sector to develop and implement training and education programs.

Capacity Building
As shown in this study, local people and businesses frequently did not possess the capacity/confidence to take full advantage of business start-up and enhancement opportunities to supply goods and services to the RNO. Another understanding of capacity building within communities, relates to building the skills of local people to be involved in learning partnerships with industry.

Employment
The lack of direct employment with the Company was an identified concern for local people. Frequently identified barriers to employment include training, education and capacity development. Increasing local employment, both directly and with suppliers and contractors, offers an efficient and cost-effective method of providing local benefits.

Procurement
Losses in benefits associated with limited local procurement of goods and services were an identified concern for the local economy. As with employment, there are frequently capacity and structural barriers to overcome in order to maximise local procurement of goods and services.

Partnering
At the community level there was evidence of sustained interest in participating in local resource development projects, particularly evident for the Fence-line Community. As identified, industry-community partnering has become more prevalent and companies will need to consider how to best enhance its own and its communities’ capacity to fully participate. Partnerships offer the possibility of aligning corporate and community interests to the advantage of both.
7. CONCLUSION

This discussion paper reports on a Neighbour of Choice study of corporate community relations applied to mining in regional Western Australia. In applying this model to the Shire of Ravensthorpe, the study captures views about the various phases of the RNO’s truncated lifecycle. It establishes that the Company was mostly “compliant” in terms of CSR until its unscheduled closure. At this juncture, the extent to which the Company built and maintained trust, essential to company/community relations was quickly erased, leaving behind local communities openly cynical about the experience. This discussion paper identifies that there are hazards for communities engaged with large-scale mining projects and contingency plans need to be part of the negotiated process. Benefits to local communities as a result of mining activity are far from guaranteed, just as social and environmental damage has been shown to outweigh economic benefits. This certainly appears to be the case in the Shire of Ravensthorpe.

In concluding, this study has confirmed the importance of aligning this framework with place. While it could be argued that many of the findings are particular to place, there are aspects and themes which consistently appear in both the Boston NoC and the RCSC models and the broader CSR and mining literature. This demonstrates that the model possesses the flexibility to be integration into different industry contexts, from its origins investigating corporate America, to an Australian educational institution and in this study, mining operation in a regional Australian community. There remains consistency in its central tenets that can account for the specificities of situation and place.


Section 1.

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## GLOSSARY

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<td>BHPB</td>
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<td>Community Liaison Committee</td>
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<td>DIDO</td>
<td>Drive-in/drive-out</td>
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<td>Environmental Protection Authority</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non government organisation</td>
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<td>Neighbour of Choice</td>
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<td>Research Centre for Stronger Communities</td>
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