

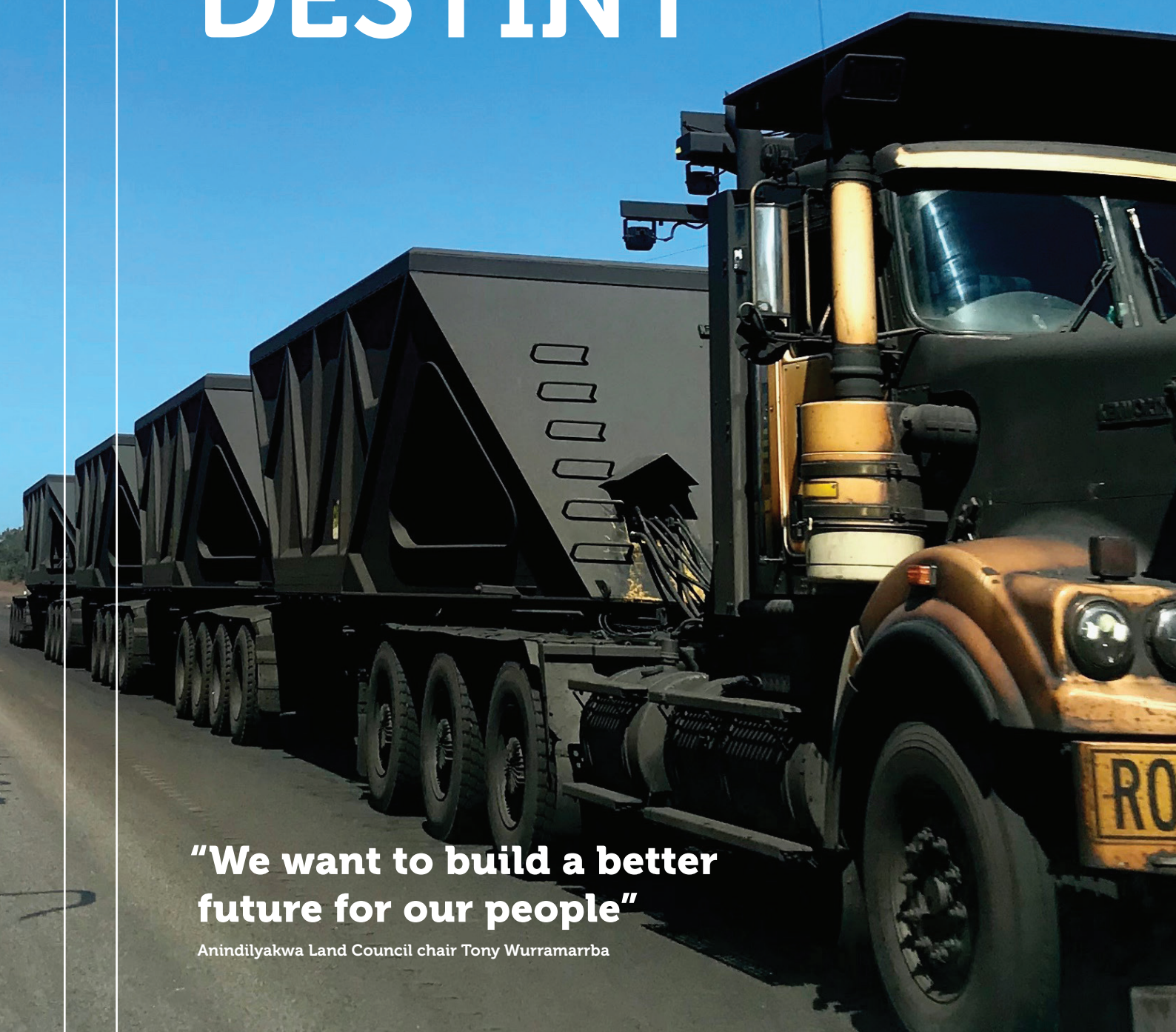
**WINCHELSEA MINING**

BUILDING FUTURE GROOTE

# MASTERS OF OUR OWN DESTINY

**"We want to build a better  
future for our people"**

Anindilyakwa Land Council chair Tony Wurramarra







A rock jetty – costing \$1.3 million – has been built so that equipment can be landed on the island.

A loading dock will be built on the other side of Akwamburrkba.



# THE STORY OF WINCHELSEA AND ITS PEOPLE

The Anindilyakwa people living on the remote Groote archipelago are taking their lives into their own hands by doing something that would have been unthinkable only a few years ago.

They plan to open and operate a manganese mine.

The mine is part of a comprehensive strategy to make the 2000 islanders economically independent.

Anindilyakwa Land Council chair Tony Wurramarrba knows that this is groundbreaking.

“Nobody would have thought it possible for Traditional Owners to mine their own land in an environmentally, well-managed way. But that’s what we’re going to do.

“It will create the wealth for us to be able to stand on our own feet.”

Land Council chief executive Mark Hewitt says: “This is a historic, radical move. Indigenous people have always been seen as passive recipients of mining royalties. It was never contemplated that they would mine their own land for their own benefit.”

Gemico, a world-class mine, already operates on Groote; it is run by South32, a subsidiary of the global resources company BHP.

The mine pays millions of dollars in royalties into an Aboriginal trust account every year; 85 percent of the money in the account comes from mining royalties.

About \$40 million a year is spent on Indigenous social and job-creation programs on the island for the benefit of Traditional Owners, who come from 14 clans.

Royalties are used for infrastructure, such as roads and tracks to country, sport and recreation, and education.

The money supports two main programs:

Community support: this includes a bus service, inter-island ferry, house building and maintenance. It also helps people in their day-to-living and includes services such as bringing families back from Darwin after medical and dental treatment.

Cultural: this uses radio, film, language and an arts centre to maintain Anindilyakwa language and culture, and to create a bilingual education curriculum.

There are also highly-regarded land and sea rangers, who carry out patrols and environmental work.

The rangers have removed many ghost nets – huge Indonesian fishing nets that can cause devastating environmental damage; some of the recovered nets have even been included in works of art.

South32 is scheduled to cease mining in about 12 years, which means royalties will end.

The trust account holds about \$200 million – but accountants say it must be built up to \$550 million so the interest can be used to keep important programs going when mining royalties come to an end.

So Anindilyakwa Land Council needs to pump at least \$350 million into the account over the next 12 years.

The land council has formed a new company, Anindilyakwa Advancement Aboriginal Corporation, which is undertaking a \$7 million exploration program.

A Chinese company has signed an agreement to buy the manganese, a crucial step towards underpinning the whole operation.

The small mine will be on Akwamburrkba Island, formerly known as Winchelsea, which is a 15-minute boat ride from Groote.

It will support local jobs, including running the inter-island boat service.

The exploration program has delineated a significant discovery of a shallow modelled Mn mineralised deposit area in the central southern region of the tenement that displays significant geological and grade continuity. The deposit is similar in style to the ore bodies successfully mined on Groote Eylandt with the mineralisation in this region showing no or very little overburden with the Mn mineralised intervals outcropping to the surface, which results in a very low strip ratio.

The valuable mineral, which is a so-called transition metal used to make steel, is so prevalent on the 20 square kilometre island that it can be seen on the beaches.

There are hopes that the mine will go into production within two years. The land council plans to mine slowly – over 10-15 years – to maintain jobs.

Akwamburrkba is a pristine island – it is free of cats and cane toads, and only has one species of weed and a few tamarind trees – but the two clans who “own” the island say it does not have any cultural significance and are confident the environment will be rehabilitated properly when mining ceases.

Traditional Owners take

environmental protection extremely seriously. They have set more than 120 traps to assess the animal population on Akwamburrkba. Trees will be harvested and the wood used to make roof trusses for a house-building program, which will further create jobs and stimulate the economy.

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**“It’s all about being able to make our own decisions”**

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Anindilyakwa Land Council chair  
Tony Wurramarrba

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**Anindilyakwa**  
Land Council

**The Anindilyakwa Land Council represents all the people living on the Groote Archipelago. Its management board includes two representatives from each clan.**

**Anindilyakwa Land Council has many other visionary plans to improve the lives of Traditional Owners, including building a boarding school; starting a correctional culture-cum-boot camp; taking greater control of housing initiatives, township land and health services; launching a high-end aquaculture industry on Groote; and breaking away from East Arnhem Regional Council to form a local government council on the island.**





Anindilyakwa people have been using manganese as the jet black background for rock art for thousands of years. They call it “mamajinga” – black gold. Manganese was also used in the prehistoric cave paintings in Lascaux in France – they are the most famous examples of rock art in the world, even though there are far more and better preserved paintings in Arnhem Land.



# MANGANESE FACTS



Manganese is a silvery-grey metal that resembles iron. It is hard and very brittle.



Manganese-rich foods include whole grains and seeds.



About 110 years ago, Americans started using manganese to stop guns from rusting.



Manganese, which is named after the Magnesia region in Greece, is mainly used to prevent rust and corrosion in steel.



The Gemco mine on Groote Eylandt started more than 50 years ago. The mine has gone through several expansions, the last one being completed in 2013.



The Gemco mine is an open-cut operation. The ore is shipped to a manganese alloy plant in Tasmania and around the world. It is the most efficient manganese mine in the world.



Romans and ancient Egyptians used manganese to either take the colour out of glass or to add colour; this technique was used in Venice until the Middle Ages.



Manganese is needed for many chemical processes in the body to take place. For example, it aids metabolism, helps bone formation, regulates blood sugar and contributes to decreasing inflammation.



## WINCHELSEA MINING

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Winchelsea Mining acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of country throughout Australia and acknowledges their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the elders past, present and emerging.