Looking back 40 years - Gove 1972

Over the next few months we will provide a snapshot of what took place in Gove 40 years ago.

1970

- Nabalco kicked off the Gove Project employing more than 500 people in Sydney and Gove.
- Half of the contracts for the Gove Project were approved - total value $160 million
- Population in Gove reached 3020 (including 450 women and children)
- Geoff Dixon arrived from Wagga to take up the Publicity and Public Relations role, he later became CEO of QANTAS
- Allan Coogan was the Gove Project Site Manager
- The general cargo wharf completed
- Clearing work continued on the township with commencement of the family flats and the hospital
- Nabalco altered plans so that the sacred Banyan tree at the refinery remains untouched
- The 12.5 mile overland conveyor rapidly gained a reputation as one of the world’s most unusual materials handling systems.
- Work started on construction of the ultra-modern Walkabout Hotel
- Construction of four holes of the proposed 18 hole golf course commenced
- Assembly of the ship loader commenced
- New bar at Mt Saunders construction camp opened and a new five roomed school went into full operation
40 Years continued

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1971

- The Gove / Darwin route was identified as one of the busiest airline routes in Australia, seven flights a week for passengers plus two for cargo
- Nabalco board of directors flew into Gove and were impressed by the rapid progress
- Heavy equipment for bauxite mining continued to arrive
- Local Indigenous people took court action against Nabalco and Commonwealth Govt, seeking freedom of occupation of their lands, damages and prevention of further mining activities

May 1972

- Sunday April 23, the first baby was delivered at Gove District Hospital
- Completion of the site Administration building with the site technical CCR area being built. The bauxite stacker became operational.
- The operation employed its first electrical apprentice, John Tichbourne (16 years old)
- Students and staff moved from Nhulunbuy South temporary school to the new Nhulunbuy Area School with 14 acres of ground, 21 classrooms and student capacity of 650.
- Gove Arts Theatre staged their first production “See How They Run”
Arafura Dance Wild West Tour

Arafura Dance recently celebrated a successful Highland Dance tour of Western Australia. After six months of intensive training Alicia Wong, Codi Roath, Eliza Jovicic, Emily Tankard, Hannah Devon, Kirsten Savage, Megan Donovan and Yllana Waller set off to compete against some of Australia’s top level Highland Dancers.

The student’s first stop was Kalgoorlie where they exceeded their own expectations and excelled receiving eleven trophies and fourteen medals between them.

Next stop on the tour was Perth where they competed in the 2012 Highland Dancing Championships. Exceptional performances by Alicia Wong, Eliza Jovicic and Meagan Donovan, who, due to their success in Kalgoorlie, had to compete in a higher level division.

There has been overwhelming interest in the Arafura Dance Association from other states, and they have been asked to host a Highland premiership competition in Gove next Easter.

Gove Operations is proud to support Arafura Dance and would like to congratulate the dancers and their teachers on an outstanding tour.

Contractors reach safety milestone

Gove Operations has been effectively working in partnership with our five major contractor groups for the last 12 months to embed a sustainable safety culture.

One of the key aims is to reduce our injury frequency rate as we work towards achieving a zero harm culture on site. After sustaining three lost time injuries in the early part of 2011, the contractor group as a whole increased their focus on sustainable safety practices in the last six months of 2011.

As a result all contractors for the last ten months have no recordable injuries which has assisted Gove Operations in reducing their injury rate by 20%.

Our major contractor groups include Manfield Colair - electrical and refrigeration, Transpacific, Giovenco - scaffolding, rope access and sheet metal lagging, JR Services - site cleaning and UGL – mechanical and conveyor.

An example of excellent adherence to a sustainable safety culture is Transpacific who recently celebrated 12 months recordable injury free.

Since this achievement, the team is currently running at 574 days or 395,732 hours recordable injury free.

Hydro-blasting is a high-risk activity
Contractor safety milestone cont...

This has been accomplished with employees working in six different high risk disciplines:

- Hydro-blasting
- Grit blasting (rust protection)
- Sandblasting and painting
- Scaffolding
- Refractory (welding and brickwork)
- Waste management

This is an outstanding achievement given the high risk nature of the work they undertake.

Gove Operations would like to congratulate Transpacific Gove on reaching this milestone and thank the other contractors for their adherence to achieving best practice and for the last 10 months results.

Pacific Aluminium employees off to the Olympics

Gove Operations employees were prominent among individuals and teams selected as finalists in the “Rio Tinto Heroes” global employee recognition programme.

Gabriella Sipos and Stephane Torsiello were recognised for their contribution to the team that helped understand the problem of silica variation in Gove alumina quality and will eventually enable overall silica levels to be lowered.

The water balance team at Gove Operations were recognised for two years of steady improvement in the water balance at the Residue Disposal Area (RDA). This allowed liquor to be consistently recycled from the RDA to the refinery for the first time.

Alicia Sherwood was recognised for her contribution to the team that negotiated the historic Gove Traditional Owner Agreement. This was a momentous occasion for the entire community as it formally acknowledged Traditional Owners for the first time in the Operation’s history.

We are proud of our employees at Gove Operations, and their contribution to the business with special mention to Steven Rheinberger, member of the water balance Team and Alicia Sherwood who will have the unique opportunity to represent Gove Operations at the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Members of the water balance team at Gove Operations were recognised for two years of steady improvement in the water balance at the Residue Disposal Area (RDA).
Yolngu artist finds new use for mine conveyor belt

Yolngu artist Gunybi Ganambarr, well known for his innovative approach to bark painting has taken his art practice to new heights in a solo show in Sydney.

Recognised for his individual approach and penchant for thinking ‘outside the square’, Ganambarr’s latest body of work utilises the found object in a way that speaks honestly about his contemporary environment. With motives practical rather than political the artist manages to convey an apt commentary on modern uses of the land.

“I started using the different materials that I found...to balance the Yolngu world and the Ngapaki* world systems...what is in the land with what is on the land” says the artist.

A discarded conveyor belt from the Gove Operations mine site, found under a water tank at a remote homeland, is painted and carved with traditional bark painting designs. Designs are found on thin sheets of metal, shiny pieces of ceiling insulation and PVC piping. Chicken wire is fashioned into sculptures and two dancing brolgas are painted on a large screen fashioned from a galvanised-iron water tank.

Ganambarr’s revolutionary approach to reinventing his chosen medium, whilst remaining true to Yolngu Madayin (law) has earned him the attention of the art world. He won the 2011 West Australian Indigenous Art Award and his work now features in the collections of the National Gallery of Australia, South Australian Museum and the Queensland Art Gallery as well as other numerous private collections in Australia and Overseas.

Gunybi Ganambarr’s solo show “From My Mind” runs until 16 June at Annandale Galleries in Sydney.

* Non-Indigenous Australians
ANZAC Day is remembered

The Gove Peninsula sub-branch of the RSL hosted ANZAC Day ceremonies with a dawn service at the Gove Boat club and a memorial service at the Cenotaph. Former military personnel their families and various groups in the community along with the Darwin Air Force 13 Squadron marched from Nhulunbuy Primary School to the Cenotaph for the ANZAC day memorial service at 11:00am. At both the dawn and later morning services, former Gove resident, John O’Brien, attended to Master of Ceremonies and Father Barry Hanson lead the prayers.

Various community groups and businesses, including Gove Operations, laid wreaths in respect of those who have sacrificed their lives.

It was an honour to hear the Last Post played by Australian Army Band Officer Mark White, who flew in from Darwin for the event.

Also well attended was the service for Kapyong Day commemorating the battle of Kapyong, 24 April, during the Korean War. A ceremony was held at the cenotaph to remember those who fought in this battle.

Watch this space

SMS Notification System

In order to improve communications in the event of a power outage or town water restrictions Gove Operations are in the process of developing an SMS Notification system. Initially, this system will be used to update key external stakeholders and businesses however plans are in place to extend this service to employees and the wider community. The aim is to supplement rather than replace the updates on the Gove Operations Facebook page and these updates will still be provided.