



## HEDLAND LOCAL TURNS MINING CAREER INTO ACCOUNTING CAREER



Story and images by Vanessa Cooper-Tims

When Fiona was approached to cover the Accounts Manager role at YIC over the Christmas holidays in 2012, she never imagined it would change the course of her career.

With a background in Business Administration in the mining industry, Port Hedland local Fiona Lockyer had to learn on the job how to take care of the financial aspects of YIC's business from payroll to monthly reports, to salary sacrifice and superannuation.

It was a steep learning curve aided by Fran Haintz, former Treasurer of the Board and an accountant based in Perth. Working closely with them both to learn key aspects of the role, Fiona has successfully held the position of Accounts Manager at YIC for over three years.

"When I started this job, I knew nothing about accounts at all. I love the fact I can see that I've grown into the job.

"Before working here, I never thought I would find a job where I wanted to stay long term. I've seen people do thirty years in one place, and often thought, how do people do that, but then when I came here, it all changed for me.

"I come to work and there's something different every day – it's not just coming to work and doing accounts – I also get to go out and interact with the community I've grown up in."

Fiona was born in Port Hedland and graduated from Hedland Senior High School in 2004. She completed a business traineeship at BHP, undertook a few years of contract work and later returned

to BHP where she stayed on for four years in an administration and travel coordinator role. She has watched the town grow and evolve and would never call anywhere else home.

“Hedland has changed so much. I remember the town being a flat, everyday town. I remember the flood of people coming in and then the flood of people going out. I’ve seen the town go up and down in the last 28 years.”

In her three and a half years as Accounts Manager, Fiona has been able to watch YIC expand and grow into a successful community enterprise which has essentially doubled its staff from 14 to up to 34 staff at any one time, which means her Human Resources role has expanded significantly.

To further her knowledge in the field, Fiona plans to enrol in a Diploma in Human Resources at the end of this financial year. She will graduate with a Certificate in Accounting shortly and hopes to continue her accounting education by completing a Diploma in Accounting.



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Her role is not without its challenges however, and Fiona lists the production of monthly reports as one of its' hardest aspects.

“It’s not just about putting a monthly report together for people to look at, it’s also making sure that YIC is going to be sustainable enough to be able to deliver our programs. If I was to miss something financially, a whole program could go down and that can be a bit of a weight on your shoulders.

“Monthly reports are an exciting aspect of my job too though, because I am a part of keeping this business going profitably into the future.”

Fiona enjoys the challenge of acting on behalf of other high level staff in their absence and sees this as an opportunity to expand her skill set and grow further. She says teamwork and staff longevity at YIC is one of the main things that makes her want to come to work each day.

“We’re all a team of really good communicators and half our workforce has been here for over two years so it shows the kids that we deal with, a level of stability. I can see a change in the kids we’ve been dealing with as a direct result of this. I respect the workers for staying here that long to show these kids the way.

“I think this role has brought out an aspect of my personality I didn’t know was there – I’m more confident and I can’t thank YIC enough for everything they’ve given me over the last three years.

“Coming to work here has opened up so many new doors for me. It’s been a hard but enjoyable road and I think I will be able to deal with anything that comes my way now.”

