FREE THE BLACKS AND SMASH THE ACT!

Aboriginal Policy and Resistance in Queensland between 1965 and 1975

By Valerie Cooms

June 2012

This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Australian National University.
Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis and the work embodied therein is all my own work and will not be used for another degree or subject at Australian National University or any other Institution.

Valerie J. Cooms

June 2012
**Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAC</td>
<td>Aboriginal Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>Act Confrontation Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHL</td>
<td>Aboriginal Hostels Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCC</td>
<td>Black Community Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPP</td>
<td>Black Panther Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAA</td>
<td>Council for Aboriginal Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNA</td>
<td>Department of Native Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAA</td>
<td>Department of Aboriginal Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAIA</td>
<td>Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCAATSI</td>
<td>Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QCAATSI</td>
<td>Queensland Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACC</td>
<td>National Aboriginal Consultative Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTC</td>
<td>National Tribal Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAA</td>
<td>Office of Aboriginal Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDA</td>
<td>Racial Discrimination Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCC</td>
<td>World Council of Churches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

A huge thanks to my primary supervisor, Ann McGrath together with Ann Curthoys and Nicholas Brown, whose assistance, patience, guidance and support during the writing of this thesis has been inspirational. Also, a huge thank you to the staff at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and in particular, the library for their professionalism, assistance, support and encouragement.

My late parents must be acknowledged for instilling respect for formal education from my earliest years. Also, my Sister Hazel for her confidence and belief in my ability to complete this PhD.

A huge thank you to Garth and Helen Pilkinton for planting the seed in my mind about doing a PhD during my undergraduate years. Also, to my friends John Mulvay, Rob Paton, Dr Gordon Briscoe, Neville Perkins, Sam Wickman, Dave Johnston and the late Bob Munn who helped and supported me during my undergraduate years.

To my children Justine, Jonathon and Carmen and their children Tahlia, Shaymus, Alyra, Serenity, Lyndell and Kate Lucy for putting up with me being a Grandmother who studies full time and for what must seem like most of their lives.

To my dear friend Tracey Whetnall who looked out for me and cooked Sunday roasts for most of the time I have been undertaking this journey. Also, my Brother Victor Hart for giving me the title as well as Mick Gooda, Lyndon Murphy and Peter Whalley for standing by me and helping me through the PhD journey. Finally my Tiddas, Dr Jeanine Leane and Dr Kerry Arabena for their advice and support and for leading the way.
Abstract

Free the Blacks and Smash the Act!

This thesis focuses on both the State and Commonwealth Governments' involvement in Aboriginal affairs in Queensland from 1965 to 1975. It also examines the way in which the world anti-racism and decolonisation process was heavily influential not only upon the Australian Government's policy but also upon Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people's responses and methods of protest as well. Because Australia is a settler colony with an Aboriginal population estimated as only 1% between 1965 and 1975, this thesis observes how the United Nations remained particularly watchful over Australia. This occurred at a time when Australia was attempting to convince the international community that it was condemning racism and treating Aboriginal minority populations properly within a post-colonial climate of expectation. However, whatever label either Commonwealth or State Governments placed on newly formed Aboriginal policies, this thesis argues that they were merely more acceptable up-to-date methods of colonisation aimed predominantly at averting criticism.

Given the overwhelming outcome of the 1967 referendum, the Commonwealth had to address Aboriginal affairs in Australian States, especially Queensland. Initially the Commonwealth provided much needed funding to the Queensland Government to provide health, education and housing on reserves. In the late 1960s, the Commonwealth had started to provide funding to the State Government for housing outside of reserves for Aboriginal families. By the early 1970s, the Commonwealth was funding Aboriginal community-based organisations direct (despite Queensland Government's objections), set up a national elected representative Aboriginal organisation, committed to remove discriminatory legislation from Australian statutes.
and introduced legislation to outlaw discrimination, attempted to address economic
development and committed to the provision of Aboriginal land rights.

Using mostly primary resources including speech notes, annual reports and
cabinet submissions and other related papers and files from AIATSIS, National
Australian and Queensland State archives, the State and Commonwealth Governments’
tactics are examined. The examination of activism and resistance provides not only an
overview of the workings of organisations in relation to challenging both the State and
Commonwealth Governments, but more importantly, the use of the enhanced Australian
public opinion together with the UN and international community as effective leverage
at a time when the Australian Government was attempting to convince the world that it
was committed to protecting the rights of Australia’s Aboriginal peoples.

The influx of vast numbers of Aboriginal people into Queensland towns and
cities facilitated the politicisation of many and led to the emergence of more radical
organisations like the Black Community Centre, Act Confrontation Committee, Black
Panther Party, Aboriginal Legal Service and Black Community Housing Serves to name
a few. Most of these organisations played a role notifying the world about the
Queensland Government’s tactics and embarrassed the Commonwealth. Aboriginal
organisations used Australia’s need to avert UN criticism as effective leverage in
Queensland particularly between 1965 and 1975.
Map of Queensland showing Government Reserves

# Table of Contents

1. Introduction .......................................................................................................... 9  
2. International Surveillance ................................................................................. 31  
3. The 1965 Act ....................................................................................................... 49  
4. Opposition to the 1965 Act ................................................................................ 83  
5. The Commonwealth Involvement in Queensland After the Referendum ... 98  
6. The 1971 Act ..................................................................................................... 135  
7. Whitlam in Queensland ................................................................................... 158  
8. White Support, White Concerns .................................................................... 190  
9. FCAATSI Activism and Resistance ............................................................... 220  
10. Black Power .................................................................................................... 240  
11. Conclusion ...................................................................................................... 270  
Bibliography ........................................................................................................... 275
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

At nine years of age, in 1965, I wondered why my school friends in Boulia had suddenly disappeared and where they had gone. When I asked their friends and relatives, I was told they had gone to Palm Island. Since my family came from North Stradbroke Island, I remember asking my Mother whether we would also be able to go to Palm Island and being shocked by her short, angry response: there was no way that we would ever go to Palm Island. I also remember my Aunty Kathleen Walker’s involvement in the campaign for the 1967 referendum on whether to remove provisions in the Australian constitution in favour of Aboriginal people, and my Father providing me with ‘Vote Yes’ pamphlets to distribute at school that year. These memories stay with me, although what they represented only became clear later, and in terms that sit in striking relationship to them.

This thesis analyses the ways in which Australia, a liberal democracy, with both Federal and State levels of administration, attempted to uphold its commitment to Aboriginal policies. By focusing exclusively on Queensland and it is not the intention of this thesis to compare the differences between other States’ administrations of Aboriginal affairs. While there may not be one explanation of why Queensland allowed the situation for Aboriginal people to continue for so long, it would seem issues in relation to Federation and colonial settlement were informed by a strong mindset that Aboriginal people were members of ‘an inferior race, one with unique and unfortunate characteristics’. Some hoped that some fellow colonisers would have ‘some regard for the good name of the colony’. While this mindset was acceptable to many settlers in Queensland in the 1880s, it seems to have unfortunately crept into the mindset held by

1 Reynolds, H., This Whispering in our Hearts, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1998, pp. 112-113,
some over the period examined by this thesis. Kidd argues that bureaucrats and politicians readily invoked and thus revalidated the concept as an Aboriginal problem and that the bureaucracy responsible for the administration of Aboriginal affairs in Queensland had operated since its inception as a ‘closed, secretive and highly defensive agency of government’. Evans argues that areas of Queensland were anti-Brisbane and that many mobilized against Federation in 1899. This perhaps touches on some of the reasons why bureaucrats and politicians by the 1960s remained mindful of the interests of pastoralists and keen to ensure the needs of Aboriginal people did not get in the way of that. Kidd also observes that by the 1950s, policies were being articulated in the media and this thesis also examines the ways that Aboriginal people began to get involved in the resistance to these State Government tactics in Queensland. The Queensland Government espoused a policy of assimilation over the period examined by this thesis after having tried a policy of ‘protection’ in the 1890s which shifted to ‘preservation and protection’ in 1939. The Commonwealth shifted from assimilation and integration in the 1960s and early 1970s to one of self-determination in 1972. The optimism, complications and failures are highlighted and discussed in terms of the complexities associated with implementing a more modified method of colonisation espoused as progressive policies which had to meet the expectations of voters, the United Nations, the Church, international community organisations including Aboriginal groups.

This thesis examines the responses of many non-Aboriginal people to the sudden ‘presence’ of Aboriginal people in Queensland townships and cities which highlights how far out of touch the State’s assimilation policy was with many Queensland town and city dwellers. It also discusses the ways in which Government authorities

underestimated how difficult it would become to assimilate a population of Aboriginal people, many for the first time in colonial history, into Queensland towns and cities.

My approach – in bridging between these two very different levels of seeing and understanding the work of Governments and the responses of Aboriginal people – is an attempt to write Queensland Aboriginal history from an Aboriginal perspective, and to infuse that perspective with an awareness of the larger contexts and politics of fighting for rights and recognition in the twentieth century.

By the time I had reached my teenage years, I had experienced the full impact of discrimination from fellow students, their parents and teachers. In year 8, my high school English teacher marked my essay as a fail because she did not believe I could write that well. Fellow students referred to me as ‘gin woman’, ‘coon borree’ or ‘tar brush’ and their parents also referred to me using names associated with me being Aboriginal. The Mother of my best friend called me a ‘coon’ and chased me from their house when I called to visit. It was obvious that there was much discrimination against me because I was Aboriginal and I did not understand why. My Mother who was Aboriginal told me to turn the other cheek. My non-Aboriginal Father, challenged racism, taught me to box and also gave me permission to assault anyone who referred to me in racist terms. At fifteen when I left school after finishing Year 10 and worked on the telephone exchange (after having passed the Commonwealth clerical examination), young white men were told by their parents not to be friendly with me while other men chased me in the street to teach me a lesson for being an ‘uppity half-caste’. I remember my Father, an active member of the Communist Party, explaining discrimination to me and that some non-Aboriginal people hated Aboriginal people simply because they were not white. He also explained the holocaust, US discrimination, the civil rights movement and apartheid in South Africa. From early on, a sense of interconnections of racism across the globe began to influence my thinking.
When I turned 15, ABC television came to Hughenden in North Queensland where my family was then living. I remember seeing my cousin Denis Walker debating on television and how proud my Mother and Father were of him.\footnote{Denis Walker was son of Kath Walker, later known as Oodgeroo Nunukul. Denis founded the Black Panther Party in Brisbane and Melbourne. Denis openly challenged the Queensland Government over its treatment of Aboriginal people on State reserves. This is further examined in chapter 10 of this thesis.} In 1971 I watched footage of a huge demonstration against the Queensland Government and the need for land rights with Denis jumping on a police car. It was then that I decided that I would travel to Brisbane and find Denis to try and make some sense of the aggressive racism I had both witnessed and been subjected to in North Queensland.

Denis worked at the Brisbane Aboriginal Legal Services in the early 1970s and I went there and found him. After undertaking nursing training in Brisbane and visiting Denis on my days off, I started working at the Black Community Centre at Spring Hill as an office worker with Poet Lionel Fogarty who had grown up in Cherbourg, and, former Woorabinda dormitory inmate, Carol Duncan who were both trainee field officers with the Act Confrontation Committee in 1974. My first job was to read and write a summary of Garth Nettheim’s book \textit{Out Lawed} about the Queensland Government \textit{Aborigines Act 1971} and its discriminatory and draconian measures.\footnote{\textit{Department of Aboriginal and Islanders' Affairs Annual Report for 1971}, Government Printer, Brisbane, 1971, p. 1. The provisions of the 1971 Act are examined closely in Chapter 6.}

While I was reading Nettheim’s book, I remember asking my Mother about being under the Act and realised that she had a thorough knowledge of its workings, which gave me more of an understanding of her fears of the powers the Queensland Government had under such legislation and protection policies. I also understood why as young children we had our names, addresses, telephone numbers and most importantly our Father’s name, work details and occupation drummed into us. I also understood my Mother’s strict rules about carrying handkerchiefs, always wearing hats,
shoes and socks and going to Church and being both baptised and confirmed. My Mother lived in fear of losing us to the Department of Native Affairs (DNA) and ensured we never attracted the attention of authorities. I also began to understand my Grandparents’ fear of the Act and how this also influenced my Mother and in particular the sadness associated with my Grandmother’s removal from her family in 1899 under the provisions of the *Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897*. My Mother’s reaction to my suggestion about us visiting Palm Island also became clear. By 1974, I had begun to understand the extent of Queensland Government’s power, discrimination, subjugation and exploitation of Aboriginal people, especially on reserves and under the 1971 Act. I began to see how pervasive it was, how enmeshed in every-day lives, and also how – for all its intrusions into Aboriginal lives – it began to build its own patterns of resistance. Gradually I began to glimpse what I later understood as settler colonisation and how both State and Federal Governments dressed it up as progressive new legislation and fresh liberating Aboriginal policies.

By 1974, within a few months of working with Denis, I had marched in several demonstrations against the Queensland Government’s 1971 Act and demanded land rights. I had also participated in Black Theatre which was held at the Black Community Centre generally on Friday evenings where various Indigenous individuals or groups presented audiences of predominantly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with traditional and contemporary performances. I had typed submissions for funding from the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA). I also witnessed the Commonwealth Government’s purchase of Aboriginal Hostels in Brisbane and many Aboriginal families housed in either DAIA or Black Community Housing Service accommodation. I had discussed life on Aboriginal reserves with former Cherbourg, Woorabinda, Doomadgee and Palm Island residents. I visited Cherbourg Aboriginal
Settlement, met inmates and saw Denis Walker, John Garcia and Lionel Fogarty arrested for conspiring against the Queensland Government. Because of my involvement with Denis and the Black Community Centre, I was raided by the Queensland Police’s Special Branch in my residence in inner city Brisbane. My name had been added by the Nazi Party to its hit list, and, to instill fear, this list was distributed to Aboriginal organisations in Brisbane. I had met several members of the Communist League and listened to telephone conversations between Denis Walker and members of the Black Panther Party in the United States. All of this occurred while I worked at the Black Community Centre. These experiences set the scene and brought crucial questions to the forefront about why the Queensland DAIA’s treatment of Aboriginal people in Queensland was like it was and how it could have continued for so long. In examining this, this thesis also demonstrates how policy ideals and administrative practices differed.

All of this experience, and the awareness that came from it, informs this thesis and forms part of my journey to undertaking a work of critical analysis such as this, but also part of my insistence that the concepts and perspectives I bring to bear in this work are not imposed on the situation of Aboriginal people in Queensland, but could grow with the struggle that faced them. This interconnectedness of the personal account, and of theoretically-informed interpretation, is crucial to the account I have to offer.

This thesis contains examinations of not only the Queensland Government legislation but the opposition mounted against it. By closely examining Commonwealth and Queensland Governments’ implementation of Aboriginal policies and programs this thesis will demonstrate that all changes brought about by State and Federal bureaucrats and politicians were merely more acceptable methods of colonisation.

The campaign for the 1967 referendum is briefly observed. The involvement of the Commonwealth Government in Queensland after the referendum under Prime
Ministers Holt, Gorton and McMahon is considered. The Commonwealth was keen to work collaboratively with the Queensland Government until the UN expectation forced the Federal Government to pressure Queensland to amend discriminatory legislation.

This is followed by an examination of the Whitlam years in Queensland from late 1972 until 1975. These years included the Federal Government’s examination of the concept of Aboriginal land rights, establishment of a national elected Aboriginal representative body, the NACC, and Aboriginal Hostels Limited, as well as undertakings given to introduce legislation to outlaw discrimination and to remove discriminatory laws from Australian statutes.

The rapid influx of many Aboriginal people off reserves and pastoral properties and into Queensland towns and cities, for the first time in the State’s history, created responses from non-Aboriginal people that are closely explored. The opposition of non-Aboriginal people to both the increased Aboriginal presence in Queensland towns and cities together with Governments’ Aboriginal policies are also examined which sets the scene in relation to the climate within which Aboriginal activism flourished throughout Queensland. This examination sets the scene and highlights the need for not only the politicisation of Aboriginal people and the emergence of resistance organisations with international connections, but the hostile and unfriendly climate within which this resistance occurred as well.

The opposition aimed specifically against the 1965 and 1971 Acts is examined in chapters 4 and 6, while chapter 9 looks at the broader activism of both FCAATSI, QCAATSI. The final chapter focuses on the concept of black power and its influence in Brisbane. Chapters 8, 9 and 10 focus on responses to Governments’ policies by firstly non-Aboriginal individuals, then groups who worked together with Aboriginal people like FCAATSI and QCAATSI followed by Black Power the more militant Aboriginal movement. The Black Community Centre, the Black Panther Party and the Act
Confrontation Committee, police or ‘pig patrols’ and Aboriginal legal service in Brisbane have also been discussed.⁶

Each of these approaches has its own conceptual challenge and integrity. First, State and Commonwealth Governments’ policies are examined together with and the impact they had on Aboriginal peoples.⁷ As a settler state, Australia’s colonisers remained and asserted their own sovereignty over Aboriginal peoples and lands. Despite cutting its ties with England and forming the Australian constitution, this thesis argues that colonisation continued with the British being replaced by Australians.

This thesis period focuses specifically on global anti-racism and world decolonisation between 1965 and 1975 and how this influenced both Governments’ policies and Aboriginal methods of protest. Importantly academics, FCAATSI and QCAATSI utilised the influence and support of the UN and international community particularly newly decolonised nations.

Oral interviews have been undertaken but in no way form the primary evidentiary foundation. It is also not my intention to produce an oral history thesis. Interviews have been included for particular core experiences in an illustrative manner. These experiences illuminate the inadequacies and unchanging colonial power relations regardless of the changes to State or Federal Governments’ legislation policies and practices.

Oral recollections have helped gain an Aboriginal viewpoint about Queensland Governments tactics and provide some insights into Aboriginal people’s relationships

---

⁶ The One People Australia League (OPAL) was a prominent organisation in Brisbane and in some areas like Rockhampton. OPAL was funded and supported by and supportive of the Queensland Government and was not political in nature. As with the Communist Party, there was an absence of evidence in relation to OPAL. I expect the records of OPAL remain within the organisation which is still in existence today.

with the state. My family never resided on Queensland Government reserves, and, other than my Grandmother in the 1890s and early 1900s, had managed to avoid contact with the Queensland Government’s Aboriginal affairs legislation and its associated oppressive tactics. My Grandfather had worked for the Government at a wage rate less than his non-Aboriginal work colleagues but avoided being forcibly removed from his traditional lands on North Stradbroke Island. My Grandparents and my Mother lived in absolute fear of the power of the Queensland Act and chose perceived compliance as the best form of resistance. Given that I have no close relatives residing on Government reserves, I was reliant on the oral recollections of friends and relatives of my children for evidence in relation to their experiences on Government reserves. Oral evidence has also provided insights into the ways in which State and later Federal Government’s policies impacted on Aboriginal people in Queensland both on and off Government reserves between 1965 and 1975.

I carefully chose three people to interview. The first, my friend Michael Mace, is an Aboriginal man from the Koa group who was born in Brisbane (his Mother was from Cherbourg) and spent most of his young life travelling between Cherbourg and Brisbane visiting relatives. Michael’s experiences in Cherbourg, his Mother’s handling of DAIA staff and membership of FCAATSI, as well as the impact of police brutality and harassment in Brisbane between 1965 and 1975, has provided rich contextualisation of the nature of colonisers’ tactics as well as insights into his family’s relationship with the state in the 1960s and 1970s.

---


9 Michael Mace’s Maternal Grandmother was brought in from Western Queensland and placed in the Magdalan Asylum in Wooloowin Brisbane. Following that, she was moved to the ‘Aboriginal Girls’ Home’. During Michael’s Grandmother’s time at both Institutions in the late 1890s and early 1900s she was incarcerated there with my Maternal Grandmother Lucy McCullough, *Queensland Annual Report of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals for 1906,*
I also interviewed my friend Euriel Mackey (formerly Dawson) who was born in Cherbourg and sent out to work from the settlement in 1966. Like Michael Mace, Euriel travelled to and from Cherbourg and has many relatives who still reside there. Euriel’s experiences of having her wages confiscated by the DAIA, her movements and property controlled under the 1965 Act, highlighted Aboriginal people’s experiences and relationships with the state. This also provides information importantly about Euriel’s reflections about how she felt about DAIA’s deliberate subjugation and exploitation.

Both Michael and Euriel’s evidence highlights Aboriginal responses to Queensland Government’s tactics both on and off State reserves. Michael Mace and Euriel Mackey are both related to my first two children and share a relationship with myself and my children’s father’s family. Given my family background, I am an ‘outsider’ when it comes to the collection of Aboriginal people’s recollections about life on reserves under the Queensland Government’s 1965 and 1971 Acts. As Lorina Barker, Aboriginal Historian argues, ‘there is no single ‘right way’ to do an interview’ and that the interview is a ‘relationship embedded within particular cultural practices and informed by culturally specific systems and relations of communication’, I restricted my interviews to three people who I enjoy a relationship with and who both trust and understand my need to contextualise my thesis evidence.10 As an Aboriginal woman from North Stradbroke Island, I would never have been in a position to interview people on reserves. Euriel trustingly provided me with her Mother and Father’s stories about their treatment under Queensland Government’s Act, much of which was outside this thesis’ timeframe but set the scene for her evidence. Euriel also

---

kindly answered my questions openly and honestly. We spent a lot of time together before and after the interview. Similarly, I spent a few days with Michael Mace discussing my topic before I actually noted what he had to say.

Another friend, Paul Richards, a non-Aboriginal man with strong links to my family, also provided me with oral evidence from his experience as one of the first solicitors with the Aboriginal Legal Service and playwright for Black Theatre in Brisbane in the 1970s. Paul’s understanding of Queensland and Federal Governments’ legislation and policies, along with his recollections about Denis Walker, the Black Panthers, Don Davidson, Pastor Don Brady and the Black Community Centre, was extremely valuable evidence. This evidence supports this thesis’s focus on not only the nature of policies but how they impacted on Aboriginal people. My own experiences working at the Black Community Centre and visiting Cherbourg with the Father of my two oldest children in the 1970s has also helped set the scene and raised many pertinent questions for this thesis.

Added to this are the complexities associated with me being part of the Quandamoooka Nunukul clan group with traditional Aboriginal ties to parts of what we now know as Brisbane with Kombumerri, Gubbi Gubbi, Djinabarra, Mulinjarli, Turrabul and Jagara peoples to name a few. Being part of a family deeply intertwined with the local South East Queensland Traditional Owner groups has always made it possible to easily identify those people who did not have these ties. Many families moved to Brisbane after having been sent to Cherbourg from as far away as the Torres Straits, Mt Isa, Central or far North Queensland under the provisions of earlier Queensland Government legislation. Local Aboriginal families had established

---

11 While it is common knowledge to the families traditionally from South East Queensland who is not from the region, this was confirmed from anthropological research undertaken while I was CEO of Queensland South Native Title Services where many families residing in Brisbane were linked to their traditional lands in far northern, western and central Queensland areas.
various organisations and sports clubs in Brisbane to help those in need and to socialise. The influx was not only noticeable at these social functions but the need for extra resources quickly arose. As Lorina Barker notes there is no ‘right way’ to do an interview, however, there are plenty of ‘wrong ways’ to do them which would include breaching ‘culturally specific systems and relations of communication’. It would be most improper for me to interview many people for use in my personal thesis.\textsuperscript{12}

This is not to say that an oral history involving as many Aboriginal people as possible would not be crucial to examining this interesting period, and, particularly those who lived on Government reserves or pastoral properties and moved to Brisbane or other Queensland towns and cities in the 1960s and 1970s. However, oral recollections like this would need to be the subject of a broader community-based research and not a thesis for an individual Aboriginal PhD candidate. This thesis is heavily focused on how both the State and Federal Governments were attempting to uphold and implement Aboriginal policies during this period.

The dynamics between legislation, resistance and policy adaptation has taken me deeply into official archives. Queensland Government State Archive’s files have provided me with primary evidence to support my understanding of the deliberate and oppressive nature of both 1965 and 1971 Acts and associated by-laws. The Department of Aboriginal and Islanders’ Affairs in Queensland was confronted by the influence of world politics, anti-racism, growing public awareness and opinion as well as Aboriginal resistance.

Evidence contained in these files supports and demonstrates the complexities of the State Government’s commitment to its assimilation policy and implementing the provisions of the 1965 and 1971 Acts. It also highlights many examples of domestic

\textsuperscript{12} Barker, 2008, pp. 9.2-9.8.
and international resistance. All relevant Queensland Government's Aboriginal affairs files, Annual Reports, correspondence, parliamentary questions, cabinet submissions and briefings in relation to the Premier's and the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders' Affairs (DAIA) held in Queensland State Archives for the period between 1965 and 1975 have been examined. From this examination I am able to conclude the administration of Aboriginal affairs remained a complex and complicated task for Governments. The complexities associated with Australia being a settler state combined with the nature of Governments and the influence of the United Nations between 1965 and 1975 make this period one of both rapid change and much organised resistance.

The Office of Aboriginal Affairs (OAA) and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) Annual Reports as well as the National Aboriginal Consultative Conference (NACC) files held at National Archives of Australia have also been examined. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies' (AIATSIS) collection has provided me with much primary information about Office of Aboriginal Affairs (OAA), Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) and the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee (NACC). This evidence supports this thesis's argument that the administration of Aboriginal affairs on a Federal level was as riddled with contradictions and complexities as the Queensland Government's, regardless of the nature of political parties. It was the need to appear to have the 'Aboriginal problem' under control so as to avert criticism from an increasingly aware public both within Australia and internationally that this thesis captures. The Commonwealth's push for the elimination of discriminatory legislation from Australia's statutes and for the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation and land rights, combined with the influx of Aboriginal people in Queensland during the period examined by this thesis, proved confronting for many Queenslanders. While this thesis captures many of those
responses, it also focuses on the FCAATSI members and other prominent non-
Aboriginal people who worked both in Australia and with the UN and international
community highlighting the treatment and condition of Aboriginal people in
Queensland.

AIATSIS’ Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait
Islanders’ (FCAATSI) files as well as the Queensland Council for the Advancement of
Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders’ (QCAATSI) collections provide not only
information about State and Commonwealth Governments Aboriginal policies, but both
Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples resistance to it. AIATSIS’ newspaper and
magazine collections have provided useful primary and secondary materials in relation
to a broad range of responses to Governments’ policies between 1965 and 1975. *Black
News Service, New Dawn, Identity* and *Smoke Signals* are all Aboriginal magazines
which have been examined in this thesis and helped gain an insight into the political
activism of Aboriginal people’s involvement in their own affairs during this period.
Furthermore, FCAATSI, QCAATSI and AIATSIS’ collection, Queensland and Federal
Governments’ correspondence as well as Aboriginal newsletters highlight UN and
international influence in the 1960s and 1970s. This evidence provides support in
relation to not only the forms that Aboriginal resistance and activism took between 1965
and 1975, but the strength of international and UN networks as well.

Secondary resources have informed my examination of both State and
Commonwealth Governments design and implementation of Aboriginal policies in
Queensland between 1965 and 1975. The influence of the UN and international
organisations in the 1960s and 1970s are discussed and form a central component of this
thesis. C.D. Rowley not only discusses Governments’ policies and practices, but notes
the underestimation of the strength of Aboriginal peoples’ cultures and the difficulties
associated with the administration of Aboriginal affairs since colonisation.\textsuperscript{13} Rowley also discusses the movement of Aboriginal people into Queensland towns and cities during the period examined by this thesis and highlights the responses of many of those existing town and city dwellers.\textsuperscript{14} Rowley argues that the administration of Aboriginal affairs as one of the country’s most complicated tasks and that while policies changed, Government’s general philosophy had altered little since the protection and segregation eras. Rowley also points out that policies that Governments’ espoused often differed from what it did and that this was particularly relevant in relation to assimilation.\textsuperscript{15}

The influence of the UN and international issues in the 1960s and 1970s are discussed and form a central component of this thesis. Garth Nettheim provides an overview of the Queensland \textit{Aborigines Act 1971} and in particular how it breached UN Human Rights provisions.\textsuperscript{16} Nettheim also edited a publication about Aboriginal people, human rights and the law. Nettheim’s collection provides notes concerning a meeting with Aboriginal people about racism and gives some insight into the provisions of the Queensland Government’s 1971 Act and people’s responses.\textsuperscript{17}

Ros Kidd provides a thorough overview of 100 years of Queensland Government’s tactics used on Aboriginal people from the Protection policy in the 1890s. Many of Kidd’s observations help inform this thesis, particularly in relation to the forms that settler colonisation took in Queensland and the 1965 and 1971 Acts’

regimes. Val Donovan provides an overview of Queensland Government’s legislation and tactics over a period longer than this thesis but includes the 1965 and 1971 Acts and amendments. Joanne Watson examines 90 years of the history of the Palm Island reserve in Queensland. Watson’s examination of the 1965 and 1971 Acts’ impact on Aboriginal people has also provided some helpful insight into the Queensland Government’s administration of Aboriginal affairs and tactics imposed on inmates on Palm Island.

As well as examining life on Queensland Government reserves, Raymond Evans studies Queensland Aboriginal history from early settlement up to 2005 and includes information about post World War II anti-racism and the spirit of world decolonisation. Evans also examines the acquisition of mineral wealth for Queensland settlers, student radicalism, anti-Vietnam demonstrations, the Black Panther Party and anti-Springboks demonstrations in Queensland. Evans argues that many non-Aboriginal Queenslanders were both ‘environmentally and historically challenged’ which explains why Queensland was the last State to remove discriminatory legislation. Similar to Evans, Allen Patience and Ross Fitzgerald provide an informative background into Queensland history. Patience’s collection focuses on Premier Joh Bjelke Petersen and discriminatory tactics which helps support primary evidence in relation to Queensland Government’s by-laws and legislation. Frank Stevens’ collection also provides useful evidence to support primary sources in relation to not only racism in Australia but the

---


Loretta de Plevitz concentrates exclusively on the exploitation of Aboriginal pastoral workers from the nineteenth century under the *Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897*. de Plevitz’ research and evidence about the confiscation of Aboriginal wages under the 1965 and 1971 Acts and the amendments to the *Station Hands Award* in 1968 in Queensland helped contextualise oral evidence contained in this thesis. Bain Attwood looks at settler society with a specific focus on the past few decades and provides some of the principal arguments and historical truths associated with the nature of colonisation. These secondary sources provide rich support and clear evidence in relation to the nature of settler colonisation in Queensland between 1965 and 1975.

The influence of the UN between 1965 and 1975 is mentioned in Curthoys and Lake’s edited collection which examines the ways in which European cultures transcend nation states’ borders to develop new understandings of the post-colonial. Curthoys and Lake’s collection explores the influence of world decolonisation and its links with and support for Aboriginal activism. Lake and Reynolds examine the influence of world

---

views and how Europeans created a framework of belief about the inferiority of those colonised or ‘others’ in terms of human rights and the ‘global dimensions of the colour line’. This is particularly supportive of this thesis’ theme in relation to the influence of the United Nations and world decolonisation. Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin and Howe, Kiste and Lal, examine world decolonisation and related international issues. Howe et al focus mostly on decolonisation in the pacific. Neither focuses on Aboriginal issues but provide information in relation to the impact of world decolonisation.

Robert Young examines international issues in relation to the impact of world decolonisation specifically on Aboriginal people in Australia and in particular how revolutionaries throughout the world were in touch with each other during the period examined by this thesis. UN persuasion, expectation and surveillance of Australia during the period examined by this thesis is also highlighted by Colin Tatz. Ann Curthoys, Allan Martin and Tim Rowse’s edited collection highlights John Maynard’s observation about the historical links between Australian Aboriginal people and the black American movement.

John Chesterman’s article examines civil rights for Aboriginal people and highlights key points in relation to what he terms ‘two key civil rights’, the right to vote, and the right to receive social security benefits. In an article about Aboriginal civil rights, Chesterman also highlights Australians’ lack of understanding of rights for

Indigenous people. This is described as ‘civil amnesia’ by Chesterman who also states the importance this key theme holds in ‘Australian political history’.\footnote{Chesterman, John, Taking Civil Rights seriously, \textit{Australian Journal of Politics and History}, Volume 46, No. 4, 2000, pp. 497-509.}

John Chesterman and Brian Galligan’s conference paper examines citizenship for Aboriginal people in Australia and, in particular, the UN push and how it impacted in Australia in relation to Aboriginal people.\footnote{Chesterman, J., and Galligan, Brian, Indigenous People and Citizenship, Individual, Community, Nation, the 50th Anniversary Australian Citizenship Conference, 1999.} Post-colonial theorists Linda Tuhiiwai Smith and Aileen Moreton Robinson, Couze Venn, Archille Mbembe and Will Kymlicka provide theoretical argument that examines colonialism in relation to its impact on those colonised. Moreton-Robinson and Tuhiiwai Smith both examine colonisation and analyse it from an Indigenous perspective.\footnote{Moreton-Robinson, A., The House That Jack Built: Britishness and White Possession, \textit{Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association Journal}, Vol. 1, Brisbane 2005 and Smith, 1999.} Both these analyses provide foundation for theoretical argument for this thesis. Moreton-Robinson discusses the importance of Australia maintaining its fantasy that it is a white nation. Smith discusses how colonialism continues particularly in settler states like Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States. Both Moreton-Robinson and Smith provide theoretical support in relation to the examination of both State and Commonwealth Government methods of colonisation. Venn examines the impact of colonisation in terms of winners and losers and argues that those colonised are the losers.\footnote{Venn, C., Neoliberal Political Economy, Biopolitics and Colonialism: A Transcolonial Genealogy of Inequality, \textit{Theory Culture and Society}, Sage Publications, 2009.} Mbembe discusses necropolitics and argues that sovereignty determines who lives and who dies, particularly in a colonialism setting.\footnote{Mbembe, Archille, \textit{Public Culture}, Volume 15, Number 1, Winter, 2003, Duke University Press, pp. 11-40.} Kymlicka examines the internationalisation of minority groups throughout the world and discusses the ways that colonies incorporate Indigenous minorities into societies, particularly in settler colonies.
like Australia. Venn, Mbembe and Kymlicka provide supportive theoretical argument throughout the thesis in relation to the nature and impact of settler colonisation.

Whitlam and Rowse focus exclusively on the Commonwealth Government’s Aboriginal affairs policy developed after the 1967 referendum. Rowse discusses the role of the Council for Aboriginal Affairs and its first Chairman, Nugget Coombs in implementing this policy. Whitlam provides an overview of three years of Australian Labor Party Government and dedicates a chapter specifically to Aboriginal people from 1972 to 1975. Lippmann examines national Aboriginal affairs issues and provides arguments about the establishment of the Whitlam Government’s National Aboriginal Consultative Committee (NACC) in 1973. Peter Read explores the provision of Commonwealth funding to housing in States and Territories specifically for Aboriginal people and their influx into towns and cities during the period, which is also crucial to this thesis examination. Read also examines the shift to support for the Aboriginalisation of FCAATSI. Michael Aird provides oral recollections and an overview of the Aboriginal movement in Brisbane in the early 1970s which supports Chapter 10.

By relying on primary and secondary sources, this thesis will closely examine Federal and State Governments’ policies and practices between 1965 and 1975. It also looks closely at the emergence of Aboriginal organisations as well as the continued

resistance to State and Commonwealth Governments’ tactics in Queensland. This thesis also highlights the ways in which world anti-racism decolonisation and UN expectations influenced Governments. It also demonstrates how international issues impacted on Aboriginal people’s expectations and methods of protest during the 1960s and 1970s.

Chapter 2 examines the international situation and the emergence of the United Nations and world decolonisation. It also highlights the links between Aboriginal people, international organisations, the United Nations and the Civil Rights Movement during the period examined by this thesis. This chapter then sets the scene for an examination of the Queensland Government’s implementation of its assimilation policy under the *Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders’ Affairs Act 1965* at Chapter 3. Opposition to the 1965 Act is then discussed in Chapter 4. The campaign for the 1967 referendum is briefly examined followed by the Commonwealth Government’s involvement in Queensland after that in Chapter 5.

Chapter 6 highlights not only the workings of the 1971 Act but discusses some of the ways it was contested by various groups including Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, Government and non-Government as well as State, National and International organisations. Chapter 7 focuses on the Whitlam years in Queensland and demonstrates the strength of the Commonwealth Government’s need to meet UN expectations in relation to anti-discrimination and Aboriginal land rights. The different responses of non-Aboriginal people to Aboriginal policies are then examined in Chapter 8 with a particular focus on the influx of Aboriginal people into Queensland towns and cities. Aboriginal people’s ‘disappearance’ from Queensland towns, cities and pastoral properties, was attributable to past policies of annihilation, protection and segregation which resulted in diminished numbers of remaining Aboriginal people being incarcerated on Government reserves, or hired out as cheap labour to pastoralists or both. The rapid ‘appearance’ of families from reserves or pastoral properties during the
1960s and 1970s prompted a range of responses from non-Aboriginal people which are highlighted in this chapter. This then sets the scene on relation to the climate within which activism and resistance clearly flourished.

Chapter 9 focuses on FCAATSI and QCAATSI organised resistance and activism. FCAATSI’s own struggles in relation to the need for Aboriginalisation of the governance is also briefly discussed in this chapter and is an indication of the way in which Aboriginal politics shifted particularly between 1965 and 1975 in Queensland. Chapter 10 focuses on the emergence of the concept of black power and how this took hold not only in Brisbane but throughout the State.
CHAPTER 2

International Surveillance

While Aboriginal people in Queensland were suffering from disease and malnutrition, having their wages confiscated, or being jailed for being lazy, careless or for leaving gates open, their bins unwashed or committing adultery, newly decolonised African and Asian nations were watching.¹ These African and Asian nations dominated the UN and ensured its principal focus was on furthering world decolonisation and scrutinising internal policies of settler colonies like Australia.² Black American civil rights activists were also aware that the Australian and particularly Queensland Government’s discrimination against Aboriginal people was not acceptable and had to cease. Australia’s inability to address the impact that colonisation had on Aboriginal people saw attention directed at the nation at a time when it was keen to convince the world that as a successful multi-cultural settler state, it was upholding the human rights of Indigenous minority groups and condemning racism.

This chapter explores the influence that world decolonisation and the anti-racism push had on the Australian Government’s policies and Aboriginal people. It explores the relationships between Aboriginal people, international organisations and the UN and the US civil rights movement. It also examines the way in which human rights became

---


² Lake and Reynolds, 2005, p. 349.
prescriptive and measurable within Australia and particularly in relation to Aboriginal people.³

**World Decolonisation and the Anti-Racism Push**

Academics Bill Ashcroft, Garreth Griffith and Helen Tiffen estimate that, by the 1960s, more than three-quarters of the people in the world had had their lives shaped by colonialism.⁴ Similarly, political scientist Barrie McDonald argues that the nature and structure of the UN was attributable to the estimated 600 million people who were decolonised in the first 15 years after World War II.⁵ The unprecedented ‘changing mood of world opinion’ concerning the rights of Indigenous people followed the independence of seventeen newly decolonised nations according to McDonald.⁶ Griffiths argues that the end of World War II led to global decolonisation that brought about a world-wide anti-racism push that set the parameters surrounding Australia’s treatment of Aboriginal people.⁷

By the mid 1960s, most Western nations had disavowed all forms of racial discrimination and ideas of racial superiority after World War II. Markus argues that change was more apparent overseas than in Australia.⁸ The spirit of decolonisation which swept the world after World War II contributed directly to what Evans describes as a new sense of ‘complaint, resistance and hope’ for Indigenous people.⁹

---


Griffith also notes that the end of World War II brought with it strong feelings against racial discrimination which eventually impacted on Australia’s treatment of its Aboriginal people.\(^{10}\) Given the world’s anti-racism push, and, the Commonwealth Government’s need to have UN conventions ratified, the Queensland Government’s 1965 and 1971 discriminatory legislation thus attracted both national and international criticism.

The post World War II anti-racism intellectual and political movement took the form of calls for equal rights for and the assimilation of Indigenous people in Australia.\(^{11}\) Attwood argues that addressing problems that settler states faced in dealing with the concept of Indigenous rights was difficult for liberal democracies like Australia to contend with.\(^{12}\) Similarly, Rowley describes Aboriginal affairs as ‘one of Australia’s most complicated administrative tasks’.\(^{13}\) Despite Australia’s difficulties, the UN expectation that Australia would recognise the human rights of Aboriginal peoples prevailed.\(^{14}\)

As early as 1965, the UN focused on the need to eliminate discrimination against people based on racial difference. While interest focused on South Africa’s apartheid process and dominated concerns, the UN also concentrated on the rights of Indigenous Australians. Sue Taffe, a former FCAATSI member, notes how many newly decolonised African and Asian nations were interested in Australia’s treatment of its Indigenous peoples from as early as the 1950s.\(^{15}\)

\(^{10}\) Griffith, 2006, p. 12.
\(^{12}\) Attwood, 2005, p. 21.
\(^{13}\) Rowley, 1971, p. 383.
\(^{14}\) Attwood, 2005, pp. 20-23.
\(^{15}\) Taffe, 2005, p. 29.
In December 1965 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination.\textsuperscript{16} In 1966 Australian officials signed the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights but, ratification depended on the removal of all racist legislation from Australian statutes.\textsuperscript{17} Racist laws included the Queensland Government’s Aboriginal Acts as well as some Commonwealth legislation.

While Queenslanders maintained settler beliefs about Aboriginal inferiority, the Queensland Government not only failed to recognise rights of Aboriginal people as Australia’s first people, it continued to implement discriminatory legislation and tactics. Chesterman argues that, by the early 1960s, Australia was ‘receiving much international condemnation for its racially discriminatory laws’.\textsuperscript{18} Evans observes that Queensland Government’s racist behaviour and draconian tactics attracted strong national and international criticism.\textsuperscript{19}

As a result of pressure from the UN, Australia undertook to eliminate all racist legislation from its statutes. Queensland Government’s Acts and by-laws which facilitated control over earnings, property and reserve inmates’ movement, and payment of under-award wages to Aboriginal workers were no longer acceptable.\textsuperscript{20} Despite the Commonwealth Government’s efforts in convincing States’ Governments, Queensland was one of the last in Australia to uphold racist legislation.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{17} Kidd, 1997, pp. 265-267.
\textsuperscript{18} Chesterman, 2001, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{19} Evans, 2007, pp. 212-214.
Finally, in 1975, in an attempt to avoid further UN scrutiny and criticism, the Commonwealth passed both the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (Queensland Discriminatory Laws) Bill 1975*, over-riding legislation specifically for Queensland as well as the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*. This occurred at a time when FCAATSI, QCAATSI, the National Tribal Council, Black Panthers, Black Community Centre, the Act Confrontation Committee and newsletters like the *Race Relations* and *Black News Identity* and *Smoke Signals* used their UN and international networks and connections to highlight Queensland Government tactics as leverage to embarrass the Commonwealth.

**UN and International Organisations and the Concept of Human Rights**

As historians Lake and Reynolds observe, in the 1960s, African and Asian countries had gained a majority in the UN General Assembly and, although these countries ‘varied widely’ in culture, traditions and government, they ‘shared’ a history of ‘imperial domination’ and had lived under the ‘inescapable presumption of white superiority’. The UN’s principal focus was on furthering the process of decolonisation and scrutinising the internal policies of the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. These nations were settler states where, after colonisation, settlers remained and Indigenous peoples were reduced to a minority of the population. The UN focussed on the rights of Indigenous minority groups especially in successful settler states like Australia.

Decolonised nations’ pressure and expectations not only influenced the Australian Government, but Indigenous minority groups’ awareness of rights and


\[23\] Lake and Reynolds, 2008, p. 349.
methods of protest as well. By 1965 the UN, international groups and Aboriginal people were increasingly in touch with each other. In 1965 the UN invited Amnesty International to ‘scrutinise the Australian racial situation’ resulting in a ‘study committee’ being set up which produced a report which was critical of both State and Commonwealth Aboriginal policies. Horner also notes that in the late 1950s, the London Anti-Slavery Society was interested in working with FCAATSI to bring ‘the position of Aboriginal Australians to the attention of the UN. Taffe also argues that ‘much to the embarrassment of Australian diplomats and politicians’, Australian activists appealed ‘to the UN and publicised Australian legislation which discriminated against Aboriginal Australians’. It was clear to the UN, the Commonwealth and Aboriginal groups that the Queensland Government’s discriminatory legislation was unacceptable. Unfortunately, the Queensland Government did not agree with this view and continued to implement discriminatory legislation which embarrassed the Commonwealth Government at a time when it was hoping to convince the UN that it condemned racism.

While the Queensland Government knew its legislation was attracting criticism, it remained uninterested in amending and, despite acknowledging the UN push for equal rights for Aboriginal people during the debate surrounding the passing of the 1965 Act, it was not bothered by UN concerns or expectations. Many of the provisions of both the Queensland Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders’ Affairs Act 1965 and the Aborigines Act 1971 and associated by-laws were in conflict with Articles 2(2) and 2(3)

26 Taffe, 2005, p. 29.
of the UN Declaration. Article 2(2) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination which stated:

States' Parties shall, when the circumstances warrant, take in the social, economic, cultural and other fields, special and concrete measures to ensure the adequate development and protection of certain racial groups or individuals belonging to them for the purpose of guaranteeing them the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. These measures shall in no case entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate rights for different racial groups after the objectives for which they were taken have been achieved. \(^\text{28}\)

Similarly article 2(3) of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination specified:

Special concrete measures shall be taken in appropriate circumstances in order to secure adequate development or protection of individuals belonging to certain racial groups with the object of ensuring the full enjoyment by such individuals of human rights and fundamental freedoms. These measures shall in no circumstances have as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate rights for different racial groups. \(^\text{29}\)

As well as the UN, there were a range of international organisations including the World Council of Churches, Survival International, Colonialism and Indigenous Minorities Research which were all critical of the Queensland Government’s Aboriginal legislation. \(^\text{30}\) These organisations’ criticism would have ensured that the Commonwealth Government was aware that both the UN and International organisations were watching over Australia’s treatment of its Indigenous minority groups. Despite being aware of UN surveillance, DAIA continued to implement discriminatory legislation and by-laws. As an additional measure to avoid criticism, DAIA conveniently ensured that both Aboriginal reserve councils and the State Government’s Aboriginal Advisory Committee (AAC) held responsibility for the implementation of racist and oppressive by-laws on State reserves.

\(^\text{29}\) Nettheim, 1973, p. 6.
\(^\text{30}\) Fitzgerald, 1984, p. 509.
Australian Aboriginal Groups and International Embarrassment for Australia

FCAATSI utilised newly decolonised nations’ interest and distributed details of Queensland’s racist Aboriginal legislation throughout its national and international networks. FCAATSI used these international and UN networks to ensure that pressure was exerted on the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Government’s efforts to meet UN expectations created conflict between the Federal and State Governments concerning the need to amend Queensland’s discriminatory provisions.

While the Commonwealth and State Governments remained in dispute over Queensland’s Aboriginal legislation, Aboriginal organisations played what Robbins describes as the ‘politics of embarrassment’. FCAATSI and QCAATSI criticised and scrutinised the State Government’s 1965 and 1971 Acts and by-laws. FCAATSI also highlighted State Government bureaucrats’ rights of veto over AAC nominations and decisions of the Commonwealth, overseas and with the UN. Chesterman asserts that increased international interest in Aboriginal affairs was drawn upon by activists in Australia who subsequently created much ‘international embarrassment’ for Australia. This was clearly the case in relation to FCAATSI and QCAATSI.

Despite Australia’s willingness to remove all forms of racist legislation, the denial of basic human rights for Aboriginal people on Queensland reserves continued. The Commonwealth Government’s denial of DSS benefits and the Queensland Government’s payment of under-award wages to and confiscation of earnings of Aboriginal workers clearly violated Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 23 stated:

(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. (2) Everyone,

32 Chesterman, 2001, p. 23.
without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection [and] (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests. 33

DAIA’s denial of political lobbying on reserves as raised in Chapter 3 would have also breached this article.

Tuhiwai Smith observes that Australia like Canada and New Zealand was viewed as a ‘white dominion’ within the British Empire with Indigenous populations reduced to minorities. Settler colonialism thus equated to the continued colonisation of Indigenous populations in Australia. 34 The Commonwealth’s dilemma was clear given its need to avoid UN criticism on the one hand, but please the Australian majority non-Aboriginal population and work cohesively with the Queensland Government on the other. As raised earlier, Tuhiwai Smith argues that ‘powerful settler or class interests’ would inevitably prevail over the rights of Indigenous peoples. 35

Attwood and Markus observe how Aboriginal people’s use of the UN became a ‘powerful lever’ which embarrassed Australian officials at a time when the country was trying to present an image of a racially equal, multicultural nation to the world. 36 Chesterman suggests it was international pressure that ‘forced Australian governments to make legislative change’. 37 Chesterman argues that the Australian Government’s ‘fear of foreign criticism’ was a ‘genuine encouragement for reform’ to the legal position of Aboriginal people and that Australia was ‘led by international pressure or the fear of it’ to bring its ‘laws into line with the international principles it publicly

35 Smith, 1999, p. 23.
37 Chesterman, 2001, p. 22.
supported’. The Commonwealth thus had to be seen to be addressing issues on Queensland Government reserves to avert UN criticism. Had Australia not needed to publicly support international principles, it would not have bothered to intervene in State Government’s administration of Aboriginal affairs in Queensland regardless of growing public awareness. As Macdonald argues, since Australia was keen to be seen as a multi-cultural nation, it was ‘more sensitive’ to world opinion than other major powers.

Fitzgerald mentions a wide range of international organisations and bodies that were critical of the Queensland Government’s Indigenous legislation and policy. These groups included the World Council of Churches, Survival International as well as the Centre for Colonialism and Indigenous Minorities Research. As well as criticism from these international organisations, Bryant, FCAATSI Vice-President, also argued that Bjelke-Petersen was ‘insensitive’ to Australia’s image abroad and human rights at home.

In 1971, the International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, the Standing Committee for Human Rights, Queensland Division, worked closely with the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and focused on the Queensland Government’s discriminatory legislation. The Australian Committee for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination wrote letters to newspapers on behalf of the Australian Committee and provided facts about both the South African apartheid and Queensland Government situations. This group also made representations to Prime Minister McMahon and Premier Bjelke-Petersen

40 Fitzgerald, 1984, p. 509.
41 Ms 3759, Series 13, Item 4, Papers of FCAATSI, Press Statement, Mr Gordon Bryant, M.H.R., FCAATSI Vice-President, 29 July, 1971.
urging ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The campaign brought the issues of racism and racial discrimination before the Australian public through coverage in the mass media. Publications about racism in South Africa and Australia were also produced by FCAATSI. As well as informing the UN, these publications included information about the Queensland Aboriginal Act that would have embarrassed and pressured the Commonwealth Government. Pressure from the UN eventually resulted in the Commonwealth not only amending its own legislation but subsequently providing incentives, writing letters and releasing press statements to convince the Queensland State Government to amend its discriminatory legislation.

In 1971, the United Nations Association of Australia wrote an international report about Indigenous legislation in Queensland and opposition to the Australia tour of the South African Rugby Team. This again resulted in wide news coverage and public debate of a question which had not been previously considered. The additional coverage newspapers were giving to racially discriminatory practices both in South Africa and in Australia increased public awareness.

In 1973, Clyde Cameron, Federal Minister for Labour, referred to the need for Australia to satisfy the International Labour Organization convention No. 111. This convention required Australia to ratify a national policy designed to promote equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of employment and occupation with a view to eliminating any discrimination, and to pursue the policy enunciated in accordance with

---

42 MS 3759, Series 14, Item 4, Papers of FCAATSI.
43 MS 3759, Series 14, Item 4, Report of Australian Committee for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.
44 MS 3759, Series 14, Item 4, Report of Australian Committee for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.
45 MS 3759, Series 14, Item 4, Report of Australian Committee for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.
the range of action specified in the convention.⁴⁶ This convention made it important for the Commonwealth to remove racist legislation and introduce the Racial Discrimination Act (RDA). The expectation prevailed that all racist legislation would be removed from Australia’s statutes so that UN conventions such as this could be ratified.

Arguably, discriminatory legislation would not have been removed, the RDA implemented or Aboriginal land rights entertained had it not been for UN pressure and the Commonwealth Government’s need to meet that expectation. The Commonwealth would have continued to ignore the Queensland Government’s treatment of Aboriginal people under its legislation on reserves had the members of the UN not understood what Curthoys and Lake describe as Indigenous minorities ‘tragedy under the weight of colonisation’.⁴⁷ Fortunately, between 1965 and 1975, both FCAATSI and QCAATSI remained vigilant in embarrassing Commonwealth and State Governments by informing the UN and the public about Queensland Government’s discriminatory legislation and the appalling treatment of Aboriginal people. Post-referendum census data and the public access to statistics, together with evidence-based academic research on Aboriginal people led to the indisputable need for the Commonwealth to introduce a range of programs to address the situation of Aboriginal people in Queensland. Land rights and economic development were programs aimed at addressing the pauperization of Australia’s Aboriginal populations caused by colonisation. The Commonwealth was prepared to address land rights and economic development but the Queensland Government remained opposed to any Commonwealth funding outside of State reserves. As Doug Everingham, ALP member for Capricorn asserted in 1974,

⁴⁶ MS 3759, Series 30, Item 1, Papers of FCAATSI, Speech by the Hon. Clyde Cameron, M.P., Minister for Labour on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation, Ministerial Statement dated 22 May, 1973.

Queensland remained the only State in Australia which had refused to discuss Aboriginal land rights.48

Aboriginal people, the UN and International Connections

People grew increasingly aware of UN support for Aboriginal Australians and the nation’s need to avert growing criticism. Young argues that anti-colonial revolutionaries were increasingly in touch with each other in different ways during the course of the twentieth century and that a global, political and theoretical convergence took place in the 1960s.49 In 1965 the Kenyan Government invited FCAATSI members to join its independence celebrations. Maori parliamentarians in New Zealand and politicians from Papua New Guinea provided FCAATSI with ideas and models for support.50

For many years strong networks existed between people from other counties including the United States. Furthermore, as John Maynard has pointed out, African American issues had influenced Aboriginal people in Australia for many years.51 As well as the newly shaped UN, Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement in the US also influenced Aboriginal people’s expectations and methods of protest, particularly at a time when television media broadcast images of other movements throughout the world.52 Aboriginal people in Australia between 1965 and 1975 saw pro-Aboriginal street marches in protest over Government policies. The anti-Vietnam war protests and civil rights movement in the US also influenced many people in Australia. The 1960s and 1970s saw much interaction, influence and connections

48 M5039, Item 1, Department of Aboriginal Affairs file, National Archives of Australia, Press Release by Doug Everingham, ALP Member of Parliament for Capricornia in Central Queensland.
50 Taffe, 2005, pp. 264-265.
between Aboriginal Australians and African Americans. Similarly, Paul Richards, one of Brisbane Aboriginal Legal Service’s first solicitors, notes how the Civil Rights and Anti-Vietnam movements influenced Aboriginal people like Pastor Brady during his visit to the US in the 1960s.

In 1965 African-American activist, Malcolm X predicted that Australia’s treatment and condition of Indigenous peoples would become an ‘international issue’. Curthoys and Lake assert that cultural and political connections between the US and Australia aided Indigenous complaints about the perpetuation of the Queensland Government’s discriminatory policies. Aboriginal Australians established the Black Panther Party in Queensland which was similar to the Black Panther Party in America.

Strong links between Aboriginal people in Queensland and international groups as well as the UN was evident between 1965 and 1975. Tatz mentions the furore created in 1965 when FCAATSI contacted the UN Commission on Minorities for help in obtaining compensation for dispossessed Indigenous lands. In 1971, FCAATSI wrote to the General Assembly of the United Nations providing a report on Racism and Racial Discrimination in Australia. FCAATSI also extended an invitation to the UN General Assembly and many international agencies to visit Australia and examine examples of racism. In 1970, Tom Newnham, Secretary of the Citizens Association for Racial Equality, Auckland, New Zealand, wrote to FCAATSI offering its support for

---

53 Curthoys and Lake, 2005, p. 208 – Australia’s Freedom Rides in 1965 was an example. Freedom Rides were undertaken by Sydney University students and arranged by Charles Perkins and the Student Union. Students travelled by bus throughout outback New South Wales and challenged racist tactics and staged demonstrations. It created much conflict but also heavily influenced Aboriginal resistance throughout NSW.


55 Curthoys and Lake, 2005, p. 199.


57 MS 3759, Series 14, Item 4, Report of Australian Committee for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.
their bicentenary protests.\textsuperscript{58} The responses by these non-Aboriginal groups exemplify that Indigenous groups in nations throughout the world had shared common experiences of disempowerment and exploitation under colonisation. The rapid decolonisation process that occurred after World War II also facilitated the ability of many minority groups to not only speak out but remain watchful over settler states like Australia through the UN.

In planning its 1973 Conference, FCAATSI noted that it was continually in touch with the World Council of Churches (WCC) for support. FCAATSI had mentioned that the WCC had given advice on ways of working with non-Aboriginal people.\textsuperscript{59} Maynard argues that Aboriginal people understood that racism did not only occur in Australia alone but that it was international.\textsuperscript{60} Baldwin Sjollema, South African representative of the World Council of Churches, wrote to FCAATSI thanking Joe McGinness for information about Australia's racism and asked to be kept informed of developments in Australia, particularly regarding the new Government policy, Aboriginal demands and the implementation of Indigenous policy.\textsuperscript{61}

In 1973, \textit{Black News}, a FCAATSI newsletter, reported Amnesty International's support for Aboriginal prisoner release as well as Aboriginal people's entitlement to Commonwealth benefits on Queensland reserves.\textsuperscript{62} Distribution of this type of newsletter on reserves would have annoyed Queensland State Government officials,

\textsuperscript{58} MS 3759, Series 14, Item 2, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, Tom Newnham letter to FCAATSI dated 1 March 1970 concerning support for Bicentenary protest.

\textsuperscript{59} MS 3759, Series 13, Item 1, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, copy of FCAATSI letter to all affiliates dated 31 October, 1972, signed by Faith Bandier, General Secretary and Jack Horner, Secretary to the General Secretary.

\textsuperscript{60} Curthoys and Lake, 2005, p. 199.

\textsuperscript{61} MS 3759, Series 6, Item 15, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, \textit{Black News} No. 6. 

\textsuperscript{62} MS 3759, Series 6, Item 37, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, \textit{Black News} No. 6.
altered Indigenous inmates’ expectations and informed many Aboriginal people of their rights, particularly in relation to the payment of Commonwealth entitlements. However, having the newsletter distributed throughout the world also drew attention to and attracted additional support for changes to the Queensland Government’s discriminatory and oppressive regime. This would have no doubt embarrassed the Australian Government and influenced its policies in relation to Aboriginal autonomy, self-determination, land rights and the need for the RDA.

In 1973, Aboriginal people distributed lists of organisations to appeal to outside of Australia about the treatment and conditions of Australia’s Indigenous minorities. This included organisations based in USA, Ethiopia, Canada, Tanzania, Zambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea, India, Pakistan, Cuba, Fiji, Mexico and African and Asian countries. Newsletters were distributed to all of these networks. While Australia was still viewed as a white nation, these newsletters would have made it difficult for Australia to convince the UN it was catering for or ‘accommodating’ its Indigenous minority groups. In 1975 Mr Moolla of Natal, South Africa, wrote to the Premier of Queensland and described the 1971 Act as ‘repressive’.

FCAATSI’s *Black New Service* continued to distribute newsletters throughout Aboriginal communities outlining life on reserves under the Queensland 1971 Act. Reports from Zimbabwe and in particular the Lusaka Agreements and violations of the agreements were included in the newsletter as well as political matters involving the African National Council (ANC). The *Black News Service* provided reports on a Supporters’ Rally for Joann Little, US Black Panther. These issues were not only

---

63 MS 3759, Series 6, Item 15, Papers of FCAATSI, copy of Black News No. 8, October, 1973, article concerning seeking support outside of Australia.


distributed amongst Aboriginal communities throughout Australia, but throughout Zimbabwe and the United States of America as well. Black News Service not only spread information about other Indigenous groups’ struggles with colonisation and racism but contained much information about subjugation and exploitation of Aboriginal people in Queensland and particularly on Government reserves.

In 1973, the African Research and Information Centre noted that the current decade would be focused on the elimination of racial discrimination. In FCAATSI’s 1975 Presidential Report the issue of working within the international community was highlighted together with the ability to ‘line up with other Black Liberation movements’. FCAATSI also continued to use the international arena as well as the UN as an effective tool to pressure the Commonwealth Government. Maynard mentions the focus on ‘international connections of influence’.

In conclusion, the period between 1965 and 1975 saw the world anti-racism push (fuelled by the rapid post World War II global decolonisation of millions of people) filter into Australia and shaped Aboriginal organisations like FCAATSI’s and QCAATSI’s expectations and methods of protest. FCAATSI made good use of its UN and international networks to highlight repressive regimes while the Federal Government was in need of UN support and keen to convince the world Australia condemned racism. The difficulty the Australian Government faced was convincing the nation to support the world anti-racism push.

Similarly, by introducing the national elected representative body, the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee (NACC) as well as both the Aboriginal and Torres

---

67 MS 3759, Series 11, Item 15, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, Reports and Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Aboriginal Affairs, Canberra, 1975, Terry O’Shane, Presidential Report.
Strait Islanders (Queensland Discriminatory Laws) Bill and the Racial Discrimination Act in 1975, the Commonwealth Government was attempting to remove what Maurice describes as the ‘blot’ on Australian ‘civilisation’.

The Commonwealth’s need to work cohesively with States’ Governments saw Aboriginal land rights, economic development and the anti-racism push stalled in Queensland. QCAATSI and FCAATSI worked hard and continually kept both the UN and the Commonwealth briefed about the treatment of Aboriginal people under the Queensland Governments Aboriginal Acts. The Commonwealth was in a difficult position given Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were a minority of the population but, all the same, supported by the majority in the UN. This was also at a time when the UN was influential and Australia was in need of international support and approval.

The link between the United Nations and Aboriginal resistance in Queensland remained strong, particularly between 1965 and 1975. Pressure was applied by newly decolonised nations, the UN and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations to both Federal and Queensland officials concerning racist legislation. During this period, the need to be accepted became imperative for Australia, and, members of the UN that were aware of the impact of settler colonisation on Indigenous minority groups remained influential, watchful and vigilant.

Chapter 3

The 1965 Act

The 1965 Act was the third major piece of legislation passed in Queensland specifically in relation to the administration of Aboriginal affairs. The *Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897*, attempted to clear the settlers’ landscape of all Aboriginal suffering. The 1897 Act was aimed specifically at addressing the treatment and condition of Aboriginal people. Under the policy of ‘protection’ Queensland Government bureaucrats powers were enhanced to firstly define who was an Aboriginal person. The 1897 Act enacted laws to allow Government Protectors and Police Officers to remove Aboriginal people by compulsion and incarcerate them on reserves set aside specifically for that purpose. Powers were also granted to bureaucrats to maintain law and order on reserves, discipline inmates and control their movements, property, employment and earnings.\(^1\) Public access to these reserves was restricted and Annual Reports painted a better picture of the treatment and condition of Aboriginal people than later reports revealed.\(^2\) Furthermore, at the time

---

1. *Supplement to the Queensland Government Gazette, December 1897, No. 146,* Section 4, p. 1388.

that the Protection legislation was passed, and following two official State Government investigations, authorities knew that something had to be done to protect Aboriginal people from the perils associated with colonisation. At the time that the legislation was passed, it was known that Aboriginal people would not be dealt with within any realm of justice.

... to deal with them [Aboriginal people] effectually, in accordance with any system of justice, would practically have meant the stopping of all settlement until the future of the aboriginals was definitely arranged.³

In legislation amended in 1902, the Queensland Government took control of all Aboriginal workers’ employment contracts and earnings.⁴ From early Chief Protector’s Reports, Aboriginal people avoided Government protection in Queensland.⁵ Aboriginal inmates served as cheap labour which was controlled by Managers of Reserves or Police Protectors. After many years, the Queensland Government changed the Chief Protector of Aborigines title to Director of Native Affairs under the Aboriginal Preservation and Protection Act 1939 (Qld).⁶ This Act for some reason, focused heavily on Aboriginal people categorised as ‘half-caste’ by Government workers.

³ Supplement to the Queensland Government Gazette, May 1902, No. 146, Brisbane.
⁴ Queensland 1918 Report on the Operations of Certain Sub-Departments of the Home Secretary’s Office, 13 March 1900, Letter No. 03566, Z1608, Microfilm (M1362), COL/142, Colonial Secretary’s Office, General Correspondence and Papers re Aboriginals 1896-1902, Queensland State Archives.
Queensland Government reserves continued to serve as pools of cheap labour particularly for the pastoral industry. The Queensland Government maintained control over Aboriginal people’s movement, earnings and property and incarceration on State reserves under the 1939 Act. The Queensland Government’s *Aboriginal Preservation and Protection Act 1939* remained in place in Queensland until 1965.

By 1965 the Queensland Government had pledged commitment to a policy of assimilation in relation to Aboriginal people. This policy, according to Jack Pizzey, the Queensland Minister responsible for Aboriginal affairs as well as Patrick Killoran, the senior bureaucrat in charge of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Affairs (DAIA), aimed to ensure that Aboriginal people attained a ‘...similar manner and standard of living to that of other Australians...’.

This chapter examines the administration of the Queensland Government’s *Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders’ Affairs Act 1965* and the political deception associated with the implementation of the policy of assimilation. It shows how the Queensland Government’s DAIA committed to a policy that it simply could not administer. As Rowley argues, the administration of Aboriginal affairs in Australia is one of the country’s ‘most complicated administrative tasks’. The Queensland Government espoused a policy of assimilation as if Aboriginal people would or could immediately become like non-Aboriginal people. Rowley argues the assimilation policy under-estimated the strength of Aboriginal culture and that becoming like a white

---


person was not like losing a ‘bad habit’ or something that Aboriginal people could ‘shed with training’. Furthermore, and, as observed by Rowley, assimilation depended on the level of resistance from the majority of Australian town dwellers to the ‘integration’ of Aboriginal people as part of the ‘town society’. As well as this complication, the people who were kept on reserves served as cheap labour, were kept isolated, sick, pauperized, incarcerated and disempowered. The Queensland Government wanted to appear progressive and attempted to espouse a commitment to assimilation and avert criticism, established the Aboriginal Advisory Committee (AAC) as a way of appearing to be consulting with its Aboriginal inmates in relation to its policies and practices.

In 1965, during the passing of the *Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders’ Affairs Act*, Jack Pizzey, Queensland Minister for Education and Aboriginal Affairs, expressed much optimism and described the new Act as one which would ‘ensure the ‘progressive development’ of Aboriginal people and guard against ‘exploitation’. Pizzey argued that the 1965 Act was needed to maintain control over Aboriginal people. He also added that if the Queensland Government failed to maintain control over Aboriginal people, the Courts would have no alternative but to send Aboriginal people to jail. Whatever the method, Pizzey was assuring the public that through the 1965 Act or the use of the criminal justice system, the state had the issue of Aboriginal peoples under its control.

Pizzey argued that the incarceration on reserves was an opportunity for Aboriginal people and their descendants to ‘rehabilitate themselves among their own

---

people'. By incarcerating Aboriginal people either on reserves or within the criminal justice system, the Government was using what Foucault terms the ‘traditional weapons of sovereignty’. The underlying belief associated with colonisation supports the theory that there were what cultural theorist Couz Venn terms ‘winners’ and ‘losers’. In the case of the Queensland Government’s regime, Aboriginal people were more obviously the ‘losers’ in the equation. Since it was believed that the colony was inhabited by ‘savages’ before settlement, the Queensland Government was confident about implementing its discriminatory tactics and remained conveniently oblivious to the world anti-racism and decolonisation push. This helped support the colonial belief that Australia was a white nation and, as Indigenous academic Aileen Moreton-Robinson argues, also helped ‘establish the nation as a white possession’. Having said this, the Queensland Government argued that the idea of allowing Aboriginal people the right to live as settlers do was progress in relation to the treatment of those colonised.

By 1965 Pizzey was pledging the Queensland Government’s commitment to assimilation as its policy for Aboriginal Queenslanders:

The policy of assimilation seeks that all persons of Aboriginal descent who choose to attain a similar manner and standard of living to that of other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community, enjoy the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities and influenced by the same hopes and loyalties as other Australians.

Pizzey justified and supported the restrictive parts of the 1965 Act and argued that there was always a ‘certain proportion’ of Aboriginal people who by virtue of their ‘ability and circumstances’ needed to have their money and property managed by the

---

16 Venn, 2009, p. 208.
17 Mbembe, 2003, p. 17.
18 Moreton-Robinson, 2005, p. 27.
Government or its agents.20 In the same year, Patrick Killoran, Director of the Queensland Government’s DAIA argued that the 1965 legislation would ‘promote the well-being and further progressive development of all the aboriginal inhabitants of the State’.21 Again, the Queensland Government’s need to convince the public that in Queensland the ‘savages of the colonial world’ were under the absolute control of the sovereign power was clear.22

The Queensland Government was prepared to assimilate Aboriginal people into society, and at the same time, had to explain and justify its own discriminatory tactics that contradicted its policy commitment. Arguably, the need to be seen to be in support of the concept of Aboriginal people becoming part of settler colonial society in Queensland was strong and indicates this pressure originated from the Commonwealth.

According to Kidd, by 1962, the Commonwealth had come under pressure from the international community about the treatment and condition of Aboriginal people under the Queensland Government regime.23 As raised in the introduction, Reynolds argues that some people hoped that fellow colonists would have ‘some regard for the good name of the colony’ in the late 1800s.24 Organisations like FCAATSI and QCAATSI, Churches and Trade Unions as well as academics were urging the Commonwealth Government to stop Queensland bureaucrats’ cruel and inhumane treatment of Aboriginal people particularly on reserves. The Queensland Government conveniently espoused assimilation but continued to exploit, exclude and deliberately pauperize disempowered Aboriginal people. While espousing this policy may have averted some

---

20 Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 4, Pizzey’s speech 1965, p. 3, Pizzey estimated 9000 Aboriginal people on reserves and a further 10,000 under the Act residing off reserve all of these people would have had their wages and property controlled by DAIA.
22 Mbembe, 2003, p. 18.
criticism of Queensland Government’s tactics, organisations like FCAATSI and QCAATSI strengthened their relationship with national, international organisations, Churches and Trade Unions, publicised discriminatory tactics and challenged the State. The Queensland Government tried to control visitors, reading material, mail and political lobbying to stifle the spread of information about the treatment and conditions on Queensland reserves. Despite DAIA’s efforts, the Commonwealth Government, Australian Churches, Trade Unions, academics and the UN continued to watch Queensland closely.

Killoran described the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders’ Affairs Act 1965 as ‘the most significant development in Queensland with regard to Aboriginal and Island affairs’. Queensland bureaucrats were committed to convincing the public that the lives of Indigenous populations would improve with the new opportunities that the 1965 legislation and the assimilation policy would create. Clearly, Government bureaucrats were either overly optimistic or seriously misinformed. This legislation was an improvement on the previous Aboriginal Preservation and Protection Act 1939 for, under the provisions of the 1965 Act, bureaucrats lost the ability to apprehend, forcibly remove and incarcerate Aboriginal people indefinitely on reserves. Pizzey claimed that under the provisions of the 1965 Act, Aboriginal people were able to move around ‘more freely’. As Rowley points out, a ‘particular branch of government does not easily change its methods, or its philosophy’ and that a good deal of the policy and practice which had been relevant in the days of protection by segregation still applied despite Government commitments to assimilation as Aboriginal policy.

Economic Exploitation

On top of controlling Aboriginal people’s property, earnings and movement, DAIA deliberately excluded Aboriginal people from economic development. One of the main spheres of Government control of Aboriginal people was in the economy. As Tuhiwai Smith, Indigenous New Zealand academic and researcher argues, powerful settler or class interests prevailed over the rights of Indigenous peoples, this is certainly the case in Queensland. At the same time as it was expressing support for a policy of assimilation that would ensure Aboriginal people enjoyed the same rights and privileges as other Australians, the Queensland Government was openly exploiting Aboriginal labour. The economic development of Queensland was one of the most important tasks before the State Government. As Fitzgerald, Megarrity, and Symonds put it, the Queensland Government

...fostered a culture of capital intensive development to provide employment, prosperity and the government revenue needed to upgrade regional infrastructure especially the road and electricity network.

Both Pizzey and Killoran supported the continued exploitation of Aboriginal people under the 1965 Act. During the debate on the 1965 Act, Pizzey acknowledged that Aboriginal pastoral and reserve workers’ wages were ‘comparatively low’. As a way of justifying the non-payment of award wages to Aboriginal workers on Queensland’s reserves, Pizzey noted that the Government had ‘never claimed to be in a position to provide full employment on award wages to all settlement and mission residents’. Killoran defined and categorised deliberate racist subjugative and exploitative tactics as ‘protective measures’ and special ‘avenues for assistance’, which also justified the

29 Smith, 1999, p. 23.
31 Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 4, Pizzey’s speech 1965, pp. 4-5
denial of human rights on reserves. Because both DAIA and employers benefited from the exploitation of Aboriginal labour, Queensland Government bureaucrats like Killoran and men like Pizzey felt comfortable and confident in justifying it. The Queensland Government was clearly far removed from the post-World War II world anti-racism push or the concept of human rights for Aboriginal people.

As well as paying under-award wages to Aboriginal workers, Pizzey highlighted how the DAIA deducted extra money from underpaid married reserve mission or settlement workers by 10% and unmarried workers by 5%. Pizzey justified this, stating that people had to contribute to the cost of their own upkeep on reserves.

Australia’s mining boom dominated the economy during the 1960s. North Queensland held some of the largest bauxite deposits in the world. Bauxite mining subsequently had a profound impact on the lives of Aboriginal people residing in North Queensland and particularly on Government reserves. The Queensland Government was keen to secure and retain official tenure over its reserves and particularly those with either deposits of bauxite or that were located in areas earmarked for future development. Despite pledging commitment to the new ‘progressive’ 1965 Act and a policy of assimilation, Queensland Government bureaucrats deliberately excluded Aboriginal people from economic development activities in North Queensland and especially in relation to bauxite mining.

As well as discouraging permanent residency and forcibly removing Aboriginal people from bauxite rich lands, the Queensland Government maintained control over bauxite mining royalty payments for Aboriginal communities in Aurukun and Weipa.

34 Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 4, Pizzey’s speech 1965, p. 15.
36 Fitzgerald, 1984, p. 297-305
37 Curthoys, Martin and Rowse, 1987, pp. 136-139.
DAIA managed and controlled these royalty payments in the same way that it managed Aboriginal people’s property, earnings and Commonwealth benefits payments under the provisions of the 1965 Act. Queensland politicians and bureaucrats knew that Aboriginal people were being deliberately excluded from bauxite mining activities. In 1965, Members of Queensland’s Legislative Assembly condemned Comalco for discriminating against Aboriginal people in Weipa. Pizzey was challenged by Mr Lloyd, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, about the lack of compensation for Aboriginal communities as a direct result of bauxite mining. However, the DAIA continued to espouse its policy of assimilation, argued that the 1965 Act was progressive and that the situation for Aboriginal people in Queensland was improving. Despite objections, the Queensland Government continued.

As well as having under-award earnings confiscated by DAIA, Aboriginal inmates on Government reserves were not allowed to generate or supplement their income from the sale or use of lands or any property. Section 37 of the 1965 Act prohibited Aboriginal residents of Queensland Government reserves from generating income or undertaking economic activity ‘unless written authority of the manager of such reserve or of the director’. Inmates were restricted and disallowed to ‘remove from any reserve any natural primary or manufactured product of such reserve or, on any reserve purchase, lease, hire, rent, acquire or receive by barter or otherwise any such product of such reserve or any property situation on such reserve’. The Act also stipulated that on any reserve Aboriginal people were not allowed to ‘sell, lease, hire,

39 Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders’ Affairs Bill, Queensland Official Record of the Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard) Second Session of the Thirty-Seventh Parliament comprising the periods from the Eighteenth day of August to the Ninth day of December, 1964; and from the Second Day of March to the Eighth Day of April, 1965, Volume 240, Brisbane, p. 2553.
rent, supply to or place under the control of an assisted Aborigine resident or such reserve resident any property'.

The 1965 Act facilitated bureaucrats' management of Indigenous workers' earnings and property with powers delegated to DAIA District Officers. Pizzey noted during the passing of the Act that Aboriginal people were not allowed to operate their own savings accounts. The Act stipulated that if District Officers were satisfied that the 'best interests of the assisted Aborigine', or 'any member of the family of such assisted Aborigine' the District Officer could determine '... who should be supported by him', require it, undertake and maintain the management of the property of any assisted Aborigine ... 'who usually resides within the district of such District Officer'. If that Aboriginal person moved to another area, the District Officer of that area 'shall undertake and maintain management of the property of such assisted Aborigine ...'. The District Officer 'who was maintaining the management of the property of an assisted Aborigine', may if he was satisfied that 'the best interests of such assisted Aborigine ... or of any member of the family of such assisted Aborigine ... take possession of, retain, sell or otherwise dispose of such property'.

Furthermore, as argued by de Plevitz, when Aboriginal workers received award wages, DAIA confiscated anything from 50 to 90% of their earnings. The Queensland Government's practice of payment of under-award wages, over-taxing of underpaid reserve residents, controls over workers' wages, theft of deceased workers' earnings and restrictions on the ability to generate income directly contradicted the assimilation

---

42 The Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders' Affairs Act of 1965, p. 303.
43 de Plevitz, 1998, pp. 143-158.
policy as outlined in the 1965 Native Affairs Annual Report. Instead of ‘progressing’ Aboriginal people, these measures enhanced Indigenous poverty, destroyed incentives and created dependency. Euriel Mackey mentions how she and her siblings were called to the DAIA office in Cherbourg and told that after 40 years of work, her Father’s savings totalled $100.00. Strictly calculated Euriel’s Father must have worked for only 5 cents per week over the 40 year period particularly since he did not receive his earnings, only pocket money allowances when deemed appropriate by either his employer and the DAIA bureaucrats.

Not only were earnings controlled but restrictions imposed upon Aboriginal reserve residents’ ability to generate income. Perhaps this ensured that the Government’s stores on reserves did not have to share profits. As well as holding Aboriginal workers’ earnings, when Aboriginal people made purchases from the State stores on reserves, they were charged 25% over the marked-up price by DAIA. This amount for purchases was conveniently deducted from Aboriginal people’s earnings which were held in trust by DAIA bureaucrats. Euriel Mackey recalls shopping at the Cherbourg store for food on Wednesdays and, if DAIA advised her there was any monies left over, she was able to purchase some clothing the following day. She was unable to access her earnings or shop elsewhere. This enhanced poverty and created dependency amongst Aboriginal residents on reserves and those under DAIA’s control and, at the same time, maximised DAIA profits through its reserve stores.

---

44 Queensland Department of Native Affairs Annual Report 1965, p.1.
DAIA and its methods of control

As historian Allan Patience argues, nearly half of Queensland’s Indigenous population resided on reserves in 1968. Pizzey’s argument that the 1965 Act would subsequently ‘promote the well-being and further progressive development’ of all the Aboriginal inhabitants of the State, in my view was without foundation. The DAIA was keen to appear thrifty to the Queensland Government. Inherent cost-cutting and racism created suffering for Aboriginal people. Historian Raymond Evans notes that stagnant water, dilapidated houses, health scandals, military-style discipline, floggings, head shaving and arbitrary imprisonment were some of the deplorable conditions that DAIA bureaucrats subjected Aboriginal people to on Queensland’s reserves. As Evans asserts, conditions on Queensland’s reserves in the 1960s were similar to incarceration conditions in ‘convict times’. Given Australia was seen as a successful settler state, information such as this would no doubt have continued to be used to embarrass the Commonwealth in the hope it would force the Queensland Government to stop. Clearly the State Government was not bothered by being seen to be imposing draconian by-laws long ceased in its own society and creating starvation, poverty, disease and suffering. By 1965 many of the newly decolonised members of the UN were aware of the catastrophic impact colonisation was having on Aboriginal people in Queensland.

Historian Tim Rowse observes that Queensland officials ‘left nothing to chance’ in relation to administering the reserves. Broome notes how the ‘petty tyranny’ of Queensland Government superintendents included opening mail and corporal

50 Evans, 2007, p. 212.  
52 Curthoys, Martin, and Rowse, 1987, pp. 135-137.
punishment to Indigenous adults. Patience argues that the DAIA was ‘backward looking’ and created ‘maximum conflict’ with Aboriginal people. Fitzgerald highlights evidence of three Aboriginal men on Palm Island being jailed by the Queensland Government for more than one year without a trial for complaining about reserve by-laws. Similarly, Watson notes how on Palm Island, as mentioned earlier, people were expelled for objecting to harsh by-laws. Despite knowing that their treatment was appalling, this action would have deterred other reserve inmates from making complaints. As Atkinson argues:

... no amount of oppression can make men and women give up all love of precedent, all feeling for this agreed or established forms which structure dialogue and social relations. Equally nothing can destroy their sense of injury, whether outspoken or not, selfish or not, when they see those forms violated.

The appalling conditions on Queensland reserves were deliberately and conveniently omitted from official Annual Reports.

DAIA tried to keep ‘assisted’ Aboriginal people away from people who had either not yet come under, or, who had been exempted from the Act. This would have ensured ‘assisted’ Aboriginal people did not come into contact with Aboriginal workers who earned award wages or who enjoyed freedom of movement and full access to their earnings. Euriel Mackey’s older siblings, after being exempted from the Act and left the reserve, had difficulty gaining permission from DAIA to visit their sick Mother at Cherbourg before she died. Michael Mace mentions how his family assisted people

---

53 Broome, 2001, p. 182.
58 Euriel Mackey, Pers. Comm. 23 January, 2012. Euriel’s older siblings were taken to the Dormitory by DAIA bureaucrats. When it came time for them to leave, rather than have these children reside with their Mother, they exempted them and encouraged them to leave Cherbourg.
who were constantly either sneaking on or off reserves from the 1950s to the late
1970s. Queensland Government’s deliberate attempts at keeping oppressed
Aboriginal reserve residents separated from Aboriginal people outside of DAIA
surveillance or control was to ensure ‘assisted’ Aboriginal people remained oblivious to
what equality meant. This strategy attempted to keep Aboriginal expectations low. It
also ensured Aboriginal people remained impoverished, isolated and easier for
bureaucrats to control. Killoran’s comparison between reserves and country towns of
equivalent size in official reports was clearly to avert criticism. Of course, the
Queensland Government did not restrict visitors to residents of country towns and did
not control either DSS benefits or the earnings of non-Aboriginal workers.

It is difficult to understand what DAIA bureaucrats could gain by denying a
dying Aboriginal woman access to her children but it certainly indicates it was devoid
of ideas on how best to effectively control populations on reserves and keep critics at
bay in relation to its treatment of Aboriginal people. It was also beginning to become
clear to even the Queensland Government that people were watchful and openly critical
of its attempts at administering reserves and controlling Aboriginal people.

As a means of containing or controlling Aboriginal populations and to further
justify discriminatory behaviour, Aboriginal people were defined by Pizzey according
to their ‘degree of assimilation’ with terms such as ‘semi-nomadic’ or ‘only 10-20 years
out of the tribal state’ applied. DAIA categorised Aboriginal people as a ‘full-blood

---

59 Euriel mentioned how DAIA bureaucrats would not allow her Mother to have custody of her
oldest children.

60 Michael Mace, Personal Communication, Moffat Beach, 24 January, 2012.


people throughout Queensland stayed either on or close to their traditional lands despite the
presence of pastoralists. Following the amendments to the Station Hands Award 1968 and the
compulsion for pastoralists to pay award wages, many employers approached the Queensland
Government to forcibly remove many Aboriginal people from pastoral properties or their
traditional lands and take them to reserves throughout Queensland. When these people were
brought in to reserves they had had minimal contact with wider non-Aboriginal society which is
descendant’, a person who has a ‘preponderance of the blood of an Aborigine’, a ‘part-Aborigine who lives as spouse with an Aborigine’, a ‘resident of a reserve for Aborigines’ ‘one of whose parent is an Aborigine’ or the other of whose parents ‘has no strain of the blood of the Indigenous inhabitants of the Commonwealth other than a Torres Strait Islander’ and who ‘himself has a strain of more than twenty-five per centum of such blood’ but who has not a ‘preponderance’ of such blood, is a part-Aborigine for the purposes of this Act. The Queensland Government ensured it captured all Aboriginal people leaving no stone unturned in terms of who its provisions applied to. DAIA was comfortable describing Aboriginal people in these terms.

As an additional means of oppressing reserve residents, the Queensland Government developed by-laws to enforce discipline and control over reserve inmates. The 1965 by-laws attracted strong criticism from many including Barrister James Staples, concerning the ‘characterization of status by executive regulation’ which was ‘wholly repellent to the traditions of the common law and parliamentary government’. As historian A. and R. Doobov point out in Queensland, Australia’s Deep South in Frank Stevens’ collection, by-laws supported harsh measures on Queensland reserves such as making it a punishable offence for Aboriginal reserve residents to enter or leave a park in any way other than through a gateway provided for that purpose. Similarly, as A. and R. Doobov also point out, it was an offence to gossip or ‘carry tales about a person’. Aboriginal parents were punished if it was considered that they provided inadequate care or love for their children. Queensland officials also made it a jailable

why Pizzey would have described many Aboriginal people in this derogatory manner. These removals became evident to me during my term as CEO of Queensland South Native Title services managing claims throughout Queensland’s South West region. Furthermore, my Son knows of many families who originated from traditional lands in far South West Queensland and were removed to Cherbourg in the 1960s who speak their traditional language and remember being removed.

62 The Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders’ Affairs Act of 1965, pp. 300-303.
offence for Aboriginal reserve residents to be ‘insolent, idle or careless’. Similarly under the 1965 Act’s by-laws, sexual intercourse and adultery were tried and punished and attracted jail sentences long after it had ceased to be an offence in the ‘outside world’. Many people found guilty of offences under the 1965 Act by-laws were incarcerated in jails on reserves. Despite the Queensland Government’s assertion that the 1965 legislation was progressive, as Fitzgerald asserts, the associated by-laws ‘smacked of 19th century protection’.

Aboriginal people were expelled from reserves or punished if they objected to by-laws. Given that the payment of award wages deterred employers from engaging Aboriginal workers and access to Department of Social Security (DSS) benefits was denied, Aboriginal people expelled from reserves had no means of support. David Gundy, former Palm Island reserve resident, noted how inmates expelled from Palm Island were left unemployed, pauperized and destitute in Townsville and open to jail sentences states:

If you go down to the Strand (in Townsville) you’ll see a lot of coloured men – ask them and they’ll tell you they are from Palm. Its the same in the Watch house – they are just dumped ashore – They steal for food and drink and get into trouble, they don’t know what else to do.

Venn argues that the subsequent ‘pauperization’ and dispossession of Aboriginal people were ‘inherent’ and ‘necessary’ features associated with effective colonisation. The Queensland Government served non-Aboriginal employers by not only providing unlimited access to lands and resources but cheap Aboriginal labour as well. This enhanced non-Aboriginal people’s economy and maximised profits. As mentioned earlier, it is difficult to understand how Pizzey or Killoran could argue that the

65 Kidd, 1997, p. 244.
69 Venn, 2009, pp. 210-213.
repressive provisions of the 1965 Act were progressive or that Government reserves resembled country towns that were of equivalent size. Furthermore, as argued by Watson, DAIA’s by-laws breached human rights provisions which had been ratified by the Australian Government.\textsuperscript{70}

The Aboriginal Advisory Committee

Despite upholding these tactics, the Queensland Government was clearly aware of enhanced criticism towards its legislation and policies in relation to Aboriginal people and particularly from groups like FCAATSI and QCAATSI. As a way of averting criticism, the Queensland Government attempted to convince the public that the Queensland Government’s policies were progressive and the situation was improving. In 1966, Bjelke-Petersen, the then Minister for Education, announced that former Reserve Superintendents would be known as Managers or District Officers. Bjelke-Petersen also announced that DAIA would make the way clear for elected Aboriginal councillors on reserves.\textsuperscript{71} In 1966, with the establishment of reserve councils, DAIA arranged for one half of Councils’ members on Reserves to be appointed by Killoran and the other half elected by inmates. Community and reserve councillors were expected to preside over reserves while DAIA bureaucrats held powers of veto over nominations and decisions by reserve Councils. Killoran reported the ‘increasing public and social awareness of Aboriginal Queenslanders’. As a means of appearing to be in formal consultation with Aboriginal people, the DAIA also established the Aboriginal Advisory Committee (AAC) which was made up of one representative from Queensland Government reserve councils. Its dual task was to advise officials and preside over reserve by-laws.\textsuperscript{72} The Chairman of each reserve

\textsuperscript{70} Watson, 2010, p. 127.
\textsuperscript{71} Kidd, 1997, pp. 243-244.
\textsuperscript{72} The Aborigines and Islanders’ Affairs Act 1965, pp. 312-316.
Council made up the membership of the Committee. Designed at least in part to avert criticism, the AAC potentially shielded Queensland officials from critics of its policy contradictions and inactivity as well as its failure to improve the lives of Aboriginal people residing on Government reserves. Whenever the Queensland Government came under scrutiny over conditions on the reserves, it could conveniently fall back on its ability to consult and take advice from its own elected representative Aboriginal reserve or advisory councils. Relying on AAC advice also proved relatively effective for DAIA in counteracting an emerging Aboriginal voice. Despite the AAC, many Aboriginal people residing outside of the reserve system remained vocal and critical of the 1965 Act and its associated by-laws on Queensland Government reserves.

The AAC consisted of elected Indigenous representatives from each of Queensland’s Indigenous reserves including Cherbourg, Woorabinda, Yarrabah, Palm Island, Lockhart River, Hopevale, Doomadgee, Aurukun, Kowanyama and Mornington Island as well as the Islands of the Torres Straits. While this would have appeared to be a positive step in line with the policy of assimilation, the 1965 Act by-laws contained provisions which gave official non-Indigenous managers or superintendents of each reserve the ability to reject all AAC or reserve council nominations and overturn decisions. Furthermore, in 1965, within a week of forming the AAC, Patrick Killoran wrote to the Managers of each Government reserve stipulating who he preferred to nominate to stand for election. He thus ensured that any Indigenous reserve resident either guilty of an offence under its draconian by-laws associated with the 1965 Act, or not on Killoran’s list of nominated persons, was unable to stand or represent the views

Killoran ensured from the outset that community councils and AAC members would remain under the controls of DAIA reserve managers or bureaucrats. It also ensured AAC and Community Councils were not influenced by more radical ideas which would have challenged Queensland Government’s controls and tactics.

Not surprisingly, the AAC was not representative of the broader Queensland Indigenous community. Earlier State Government estimates noted that 9000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on Queensland Government reserves and 10,000 outside of the reserves were in need of DAIA ‘assistance’ under the 1965 Act. AAC represented only reserve inmates, and members were totally reliant on support from DAIA managers. As they held paid positions and enjoyed full access to their earnings, fear of failing to be endorsed to stand again for election would have no doubt impacted on AAC members’ decisions and behaviour. Furthermore, under the provisions of the 1965 Act, AAC members (together with reserve council members) were made Justices of the Peace and became responsible for presiding over implementation of harsh by-laws on reserves. Having Aboriginal Justices of the Peace on reserves upholding the 1965 Act and its by-laws was a deliberate move to avert criticism from the Church, Trade Unions, Aboriginal groups and the UN about Queensland Government policy and processes. By using inmates to enforce by-laws, the State hoped to avert some of the growing criticism and awareness of the situation for Aboriginal people throughout Queensland and particularly on reserves.

Meanwhile, Aboriginal reserve residents continued to be subjected to harsh and often unreasonable treatment which included corporal punishment and control over property, earnings and movement breaching human rights provisions. Euriel Mackey

---

recalls at 13 years of age being locked in the reserve jail with her sister for running away and hiding in Cherbourg. Euriel notes that that is what life was like for Aboriginal people on reserves in the 1960s. Similarly, as raised earlier, Michael Mace mentions how his family helped Aboriginal people to successfully sneak on and off Cherbourg from the 1950s into the 1970s. On the other hand, the Queensland Government boldly argued its policy of assimilation was progressive. Similarly, consulting with elected Aboriginal representatives would have alleviated outsiders’ concerns about injustice and poor treatment of Aboriginal people on Government reserves. The Queensland Government’s actions deliberately restricted Aboriginal people’s ability to live like other Australians, and, were in direct contradiction to its policy of assimilation. The Queensland Government needed to express optimism and continued to dupe the public in relation to the treatment and condition of Aboriginal people to avoid unwanted criticism. The very nature of colonisation meant settlers’ rights had to prevail and Queensland Government’s tactics reinforced this.

Given the treatment and conditions on Queensland reserves, Reserve Councillors and AAC representatives would have welcomed the opportunity to represent their communities and find out more about how the State Government bureaucracy worked. At its first conference in 1967, the AAC passed a resolution of appreciation for the Minister for Education and Aboriginal and Islanders’ Affairs, Jack Pizzey, and noted that he had ‘led them well and gained many things which gave pride of race and a feeling of self-reliance’. At the 1967 Conference, the AAC was informed of the outcome of the 1967 referendum and resolved to notify the Prime Minister that they approved of the Commonwealth’s intention to provide funding to Queensland.

---

82 1A/759, QS 505/1, Box 156, Administration General, Minutes Aboriginal Conference Palm Island 1967, Queensland State Archives, p. 5.
Government authorities under new provisions. The AAC also resolved to provide electricity to all reserves as soon as funding was available.83

In 1966, DAIA reports noted how AAC members had ‘responded admirably’ to the administration of justice on reserves.84 This would have assured the readers of the reports that justice was being administered by Aboriginal people on Queensland reserves. Because Queensland Government bureaucrats used the AAC for advice, other Indigenous opinion and advice was neither solicited nor considered. In 1966, despite commitment to assimilation, Killoran restricted reserve inmates’ exposure to political lobbying once Aboriginal people gained rights to vote in Queensland Government elections.85 This would have helped the Queensland Government avoid some of the growing Aboriginal activism in relation to the treatment and conditions of Aboriginal people on reserves.

In 1968, Killoran reported Indigenous reserve residents’ pride in becoming Justices of the Peace and upholding the 1965 Act’s by-laws on reserves.86 The Queensland Government conveniently used the AAC to avert criticism about various issues including DAIA’s non-payment of Commonwealth DSS benefits to reserve inmates. Unlike other Australians, DAIA received DSS benefits and held this money on behalf of reserve inmates or assisted Aboriginal people.87 Furthermore, if Aboriginal people had of gained access to DSS benefits as Australian citizens, DAIA bureaucrats would have lost their ability to exploit workers and provide cheap labour to settlers. Aboriginal people’s only access to money was by working for under-award wages and

86 Queensland Annual Report 1968, p. 1
87 1A/567, QS 505/1, File No. 2, Box 102, Administration General, Questions and Answers in the House, Queensland State Archives, 17 November, 1967.
pocket money allowances probably less than the equivalent of their DSS entitlements. In 1967 the Queensland Government claimed that the State Aboriginal Advisory Committee (AAC) had endorsed the arrangement in place which facilitated bureaucrats’ control over Aboriginal people’s Commonwealth DSS benefits such as child endowment. 88 Clearly, Queensland politicians were being lobbied and informed about DAIA’s treatment on reserves. Moreover, DAIA used the AAC to conveniently endorse its tactics in the hope this would satisfy critics. This proved no match for the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal resistance networks in Queensland that had contacts throughout the world and amongst prominent and influential people.

**Health, Education, Housing, and Welfare Benefits**

In 1967, questions were raised in Queensland Parliament concerning infant mortality rates on State reserves and Commonwealth social security entitlements being controlled by bureaucrats and not paid directly to residents. The Queensland Government responded that statistics were not kept on Aboriginal infant mortality rates and that the Aboriginal Advisory Committee (AAC) had endorsed the arrangement in place which facilitated bureaucrats’ control over Aboriginal people’s Commonwealth benefits such as child endowment. 89 Killoran and Queensland Members of the Legislative Assembly were further challenged when Mr F. Bromley asked a question of the Minister for Education about an ‘outbreak of sickness or epidemic’ at Cherbourg, and Killoran’s suggested response noted that:

> During the last week of December, 1966, and the first half of January, 1967, Cherbourg suffered an outbreak of gastro-enteritis coincidental with other centres in Queensland. Approximately one-quarter of the total population were affected many seriously, resulting in a total of seven deaths. 90

88 1A/567, Questions and Answers in the House, 1 December 1967.
89 1A/567, Questions and Answers in the House, 1 December 1967.
90 1A/567, Questions and Answers in the House, 1 March, 1967, Queensland State Archives.
Given the Queensland Government compared reserves with country towns of equivalent size, it surely would have taken action if one-quarter of any country town’s population had been infected with gastro-enteritis or if local Government authorities endorsed controls over residents’ DSS benefits. The Queensland Government’s absolute control equated to total responsibility for poverty, health, hygiene and outbreaks of contagious disease. The Queensland Government attempted to control, contain, deny and play down the extent of suffering of Aboriginal people on reserves to avoid criticism. The Queensland Government’s decision to deny and not address Aboriginal suffering worsened the situation.

Aboriginal people had limited access to health and education services. On reserves, deliberate restrictions were imposed on trade and business activities, and workers were overtaxed and underpaid. Queensland’s Aboriginal people would never have been able to attain a similar standard of living to that of other Australians as espoused in official reports and in line with the policy of assimilation, particularly under the provisions of the 1965 Act and associated by-laws.

As early as 1965, both the inadequacy of and the need for the provision of education for Aboriginal peoples was mentioned. Herbert Adair, MLA, stated that education of Aboriginal people was a ‘big problem’. Adair also argued that the Queensland Government should assume responsibility for education of Aboriginal children on reserves.

By the 1960s, evidence-based research and analysis of census data was able to measure and expose Aboriginal suffering and importantly compare it with the non-Aboriginal population. These statistics would have strengthened opposition and

---

91 Queensland Annual Report, Native Affairs 1965, pp. 1-5.
resistance and provided the UN and the Commonwealth Government with more ammunition to expose the Queensland Government.

While the population of Aboriginal people was growing rapidly, infant mortality and statistics did not support Killoran’s claim that Aboriginal inmates on reserves were ‘healthy and thriving’. Research undertaken on Queensland Government reserves between 1967 and 1969 indicated that up to 50% of children had serious growth retardation from malnutrition. Infant mortality was six times higher for Aboriginal children than non-Aboriginal children. One in every nine Aboriginal children living on Queensland reserves died before the age of one. The death rate on Queensland settlements for Aboriginal children was 112 in 1000 which was more than six times higher than the white population. Widespread infection, disease and severe growth retardation of up to 40% of the reserve population prevailed according to a report provided by the Queensland Institute of Medical Research (QIMR) reported in 1969 at a Canberra meeting of the Australasian College of Physicians.

High Aboriginal infant mortality rates in Queensland generated criticism for both the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments to deal with. Massive infection loads from substandard living conditions on Queensland reserves, a still birth rate 4.2 times the general rate as well as neo-natal deaths of one per month and starvation of 50% of children aged between six months and three years were highlighted from research. Furthermore, in 1969 at a Commonwealth Department of Health convened Aboriginal Health Workshop which Queensland Health Department bureaucrats attended in Sydney, results presented by Professor Rendle-Short from the

---

96 The Australian, 16 October, 1969.
University of Queensland again highlighted startling statistics about Aboriginal children on Queensland reserves. In response, Queensland bureaucrats stated that they did not know the chronological ages of Aboriginal children on reserves and that DAIA had thought that six year old children were healthy three year olds.\(^{99}\) It is difficult to believe that DAIA bureaucrats who upheld by-laws about people having sexual intercourse or entering parks by way of gates built for that purpose, and, controlled movement of Aboriginal inmates, would not have kept accurate data about the birth dates of Aboriginal inmates’ children. This further supports this thesis argument that the Queensland Government’s policy was a more modified method of colonisation aimed at upholding settler rights and interests and not those of Aboriginal people. Organisations like FCAATSI used this research evidence to lobby and shame the Commonwealth into doing something. The Commonwealth argued it could not intervene because of clauses in the Australian constitution. The Commonwealth not only failed to intervene when up to 50% of children on Queensland Reserves were suffering from malnutrition, but knew that these people were totally and completely in the hands, and, at the mercy of the DAIA. Furthermore, the Commonwealth knew that the Queensland Government removed the distribution of rations in the form of food in 1968 and that access to DSS benefits for reserve inmates was being denied.\(^{100}\)

The Commonwealth had been able to avoid involvement in the administration of Aboriginal affairs until the referendum. However, once it was held, the strong expectation amongst Aboriginal groups like FCAATSI that the Commonwealth should intervene on behalf of Aboriginal peoples prevailed. This was particularly the case in Queensland from the late 1960s to the early 1970s where Indigenous suffering on

---


Government reserves continued and subsequent evidence-based research caused embarrassment for both Queensland and Commonwealth Governments.

The DAIA deliberately excluded Aboriginal people from access to Commonwealth welfare payments. In 1967, Edwin Wallis-Smith MLA asked Parliament whether it was true that Commonwealth social security entitlements were being controlled by bureaucrats and not paid directly to reserve residents. The Minister for Education, Pizzey, was briefed to respond that the AAC had endorsed the arrangement in place which facilitated bureaucrats’ control over Aboriginal people’s Commonwealth benefits and that this involved a ‘bulk cheque’ paid to Killoran to cover pensioners and amounts handled ‘in the same manner as with child endowment payments’. ¹⁰¹ (That is in a bulk cheque payment to DAIA and not direct to Aboriginal people on Queensland reserves). Killoran reported the payment of some Commonwealth Government entitlements to Aboriginal reserve residents and how these were being managed and controlled by DAIA. ¹⁰² People on reserves did not receive DSS unemployment or sickness benefits despite the Federal Government making it available to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 1959 unless classified as ‘nomadic’. ¹⁰³ Furthermore, Aboriginal people on Queensland reserves could hardly be defined as nomadic given DAIA’s strict controls over inmates’ movements. The Queensland Government assured the public that it had the welfare of Aboriginal people under control, the policy of assimilation was its main aim and aspiration and that discriminatory tactics were sometimes needed. Research provided indisputable ammunition that resistance organisations continued to use in the hope that the Commonwealth would intervene in Queensland.


¹⁰³ Chesterman, 1999, p.4.
Political Rights

In 1965, after consideration of whether a separate electoral process and roll be established for Aboriginal people in Queensland, Pizzey announced the removal of the discriminatory provisions in the Queensland Government’s Electoral Act, and noted that Indigenous people would became eligible to vote in Local and State Government elections. This action was in line with the Government’s assimilation policy. However, when this was announced, Herbert Adair immediately expressed concerns about North Queensland’s high Indigenous population and made demands for alteration of electoral boundaries. This was clearly to avoid the possibility of an electorate supporting an Aboriginal majority. Furthermore, in response to prejudicial concerns expressed by some non-Aboriginal North Queensland residents in the mid 1960s, when Aboriginal people had enrolled to vote, the State Government subsequently disqualified all Aboriginal voters in Burke, Cook and Carpentaria Shires, from participating in local Government elections. (These electorates contained many Government reserves).

Disqualification of Aboriginal voters was in direct contrast to both a commitment during the debate and the Queensland Government’s policy of assimilation. Clearly the Queensland Government’s commitment to ensuring that Aboriginal people enjoyed the same rights and privileges as other Australians was insincere. With the contradiction obvious between policy and practices, it is difficult to comprehend why the Queensland Government would amend its Electoral Act, qualify Aboriginal people to vote and then disqualify them. One way to explain this action is that Government policies were predominantly about averting criticism and not about dealing with Aboriginal people in an equitable way. Added to this, as raised earlier, in

---

1966 Killoran outlawed political lobbying on Queensland Government reserves.\(^\text{107}\) This left Aboriginal people on reserves without the ability to influence politicians or participate in any electoral debate. In a political sense, despite being allowed to vote, Aboriginal people on reserves remained powerless regardless of the Queensland Government’s commitment to assimilation as its official policy. In Queensland electorates with high populations of Aboriginal people the real threat of political domination had to be managed by bureaucrats.

In Mapoon and other areas throughout the Cape York region, the Queensland Government was keen for mineral exploration and extraction to occur. The Comalco bauxite mining initiative attracted long awaited development capital which meant that it was imperative that State Government officials maintained absolute control over reserve lands which included those with valuable deposits of minerals. In April 1970, the Queensland Minister in charge of Aboriginal Affairs, Neville Hewitt, issued a press statement explaining that the Queensland Government would be accepting an offer by Comalco to take up 40,000 shares to be held in trust for the benefit of all Aboriginal Queenslanders. Hewitt also announced Comalco’s $300,000 grant to re-house Weipa Aboriginals along with power line constructions, generators and development.\(^\text{108}\) DAIA got Aboriginal people out of the way so that settlers’ economic development could continue. The exclusion of Aboriginal people from exploration and extractions of bauxite and control over benefits offered by mining interests were simply a more up-to-date method of effective colonisation which controlled lands and its resources with no recognition of Aboriginal rights.


\(^{108}\) Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 5, Series 1043, Consignment 1, Box 518, Item 2964, Batch No. 275, Premier’s Department, Co-ordinator General’s Department, Queensland State Archives, Press Statement by Neville Hewitt, M.L.A., dated 23 April, 1970.
In 1968 Joh Bjelke-Petersen became Premier of Queensland. Bjelke-Petersen was well known for his ‘uncompromising conservatism’ which made him one of the ‘best-known political figures’ in twentieth-century Australia.\(^{109}\) In 1970, Bjelke-Petersen refused to conduct an enquiry into the Woorabinda reserve in response to allegations of primitive conditions and discrimination. The Premier argued that Aboriginal people were free to leave Woorabinda.\(^{110}\) People on Queensland reserves had been subjected to poor health and nutrition as well as limited education, this would have no doubt not only restricted their ability to gain and retain meaningful employment outside of reserves but also reinforced dependency.\(^{111}\)

Continued surveillance by DAIA District Officers outside of reserves combined with the poverty and dependence that the 1965 Act and its by-laws created, made it difficult for many Aboriginal people to leave. When Aboriginal people did leave reserves, many did not have the benefit of support of relatives residing close particularly since many were incarcerated on reserves thousands of miles from family members or traditional lands. This was arguably a continuation of the colonisation process which ensured Aboriginal people remained impoverished ‘losers’.\(^{112}\) In relation to African people, Mbembe argues:

> The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes of coal of light...
> The native town is a crouching village, a town on its knees. ... \(^{113}\)

---

\(^{109}\) Johannes Bjelke-Petersen was the longest serving and longest lived Premier of Queensland and held office from 1967 to 1987. During this period Petersen was responsible for considerable economic development of Queensland. His uncompromising conservatism assisted in the downfall of the Whitlam Federal Government. In later years, Bjelke-Petersen’s Government was revealed to be institutionally corrupt, http://en.wikipedia.org/Joh_Bjelke-Petersen.  

\(^{110}\) \textit{The Australian}, 4 February 1969.  

\(^{111}\) \textit{The Australian}, 18 April, 1969 – Wentworth citing Bureau of Statistics figures estimated that 40% of Australia’s Aboriginal population were undereducated.  

\(^{112}\) Venn, 2009, p. 208.  

\(^{113}\) Mbembe, 2003, p. 27.
While Aboriginal people were in poor health, under-educated, malnourished and impoverished, the Queensland Government continued to convince the public that the case was otherwise. Yet, as raised earlier, Killoran reported in 1968 that Aboriginal populations were generally ‘healthy and thriving’. The good news type correspondence and reports that the Queensland Government put out clearly indicates the State’s need to remain highly sensitive about and somewhat reactive to criticism over its policy failures.

Mbembe argues that in the situation of colonialism, sovereignty ‘means the capacity to define who matters and who does not, who is disposable and who is not.’ Mbembe also observes the way that colonisers ensured their own standards of living were superior to those colonised. Townships of African colonised peoples were starved of resources and isolated from mainstream society similar to conditions on Queensland reserves. Similarly Mbembe mentions how native towns in Africa were cut off from services and deliberately isolated. This was a similar process to the Queensland Government’s deliberate isolation of reserve residents from resources, visitors, newspapers and political lobbying. Mbembe argues that:

...besieged villages and towns are sealed off and cut off from the world. Freedom is given to local military commanders [District Officers and Reserve Managers] to use their discretion .... Movement between the territorial cells requires formal permits ... the besieged population is deprived of their means of income...  

DAIA ceased the dispensation of rations to inmates in the form of food in 1968. Access to Commonwealth DSS benefits such as child endowment was also restricted by the Queensland Government Department of Aboriginal and Islanders’

---

115 Mbembe, 2003, p. 27.
Affairs staff and according to Killoran, supported by reserve councillors.\textsuperscript{118} Payments of under-award wages, control over earnings and cessation of food rations by DAIA continued to enhance poverty, starvation and suffering amongst Aboriginal people.\textsuperscript{119}

As discussed earlier, the Queensland Government discouraged visitors or outsiders’ entry to reserves. In 1979 DAIA’s Director, Killoran defended the decision not to allow unassisted Aboriginal people on to reserves and stated that DAIA bureaucrats wished to guard against a ‘deterioration in standards of health, hygiene and accommodation’ which would result if ‘unrestricted access’ were permitted.\textsuperscript{120} These ‘unassisted’ Aboriginal people included family members of reserve residents. Arguably visitors would have been in danger of being infected given the poor health conditions on reserves. The Queensland Government was possibly concerned about QCAATSI, FCAATSI or other resistance organisations’ members gaining access to reserves and liberating or influencing inmates. However, the State Government’s attempts at shielding Aboriginal reserve inmates from the influence of Aboriginal people no longer subject to DAIA’s controls became increasingly more difficult for bureaucrats to maintain. As mentioned earlier, Euriel Mackey’s older siblings after being exempted from the Act were refused entry to Cherbourg to visit their Mother when she was ill.\textsuperscript{121} Euriel did mention, however, that when her Sister did visit Cherbourg, the family learned that life was much easier for her family members who resided in Sydney and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{118} IA/567, Questions and Answers in the House, memorandum from Killoran to Minister for Education dated 30 November, 1967. Killoran’s memorandum was in response to a Question on Notice from Mr. Wallis-Smith, MLA, about payment of child endowment for children at Cherbourg being withheld by bureaucrats in lieu of butter and school uniforms.
\item \textsuperscript{119} Commonwealth funded Queensland Institute of Medical Research dedicated a specific area of research for Aboriginal Health. It also conducted an evidenced base health research project for children on Queensland Government reserves headed by Dr Jose a paediatrician. Dr Jose’s research found that one in nine children on reserves died before age one. Death rates were six times higher than non-Aboriginal children and that 40% of children on Queensland Reserves were suffering from severe growth retardation – report published in The Australian on 16 October, 1969 also highlighted by Kidd, 1997 pp. 257-259.
\item \textsuperscript{120} Queensland Annual Report, 1969, p. 7.
\item \textsuperscript{121} Euriel Mackey, Pers. Comm., 23 January, 2012.
\end{itemize}
received award wages which were not confiscated by the New South Wales Government. 122

As well as upholding draconian tactics on reserves, Queensland Government Ministers and bureaucrats rejected suggested change. In 1970, in response to a request from Aboriginal people for anti-discrimination legislation, Minister Hewitt argued that legislation would not change the public’s attitudes towards Aboriginal people and that anti-discrimination was merely an ‘idealist’ view of the situation. 123 Officials were reluctant to confront perpetrators of racial discrimination and could not see the benefits in drafting anti-discrimination legislation, since Aboriginal people constituted a small percentage of the Australian population. Moreover, the State Government was probably fearful that its own discriminatory legislation and practices would be scrutinised. Despite its assimilation policy, official reports and advice to non-Aboriginal critics, the main objective of the Queensland Government was clearly the protection of its ‘principality’ and its ‘subjects’ and not the well-being of Aboriginal people. 124

The influence of international issues was evident in Queensland and led to the enhanced scrutiny of the living conditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In 1971, DAIA’s official report mentioned criticism from overseas about Indigenous people but argued that Australia’s Indigenous populations ‘differed considerably from those from the United States of America’. DAIA reported that new Indigenous ‘expectations’ and ‘willingness to protest’ were contributing to

122 Euriel Mackey, Pers. Comm., 23 January, 2012. Aboriginal people understood that NSW Aboriginal welfare regime was no longer as vigilant or oppressive as in Queensland, particularly during the period examined by this thesis.

123 Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 5, Copy of Memorandum from Hewitt (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Queensland) to the Premier of Queensland concerning a Brisbane Aboriginal activists suggestion (Mr McBride) that the State Government needed to introduce anti-discrimination legislation, dated May 1970.

'breakdowns' within Indigenous 'family structures'. Links between the civil rights movement in the United States and Aboriginal rights were made by the Queensland Government. The Queensland Government was clearly aware of changes in world opinion in terms of post World War II anti-racism and civil rights movements. As well as this, the growing awareness about the rights of Indigenous peoples, while dismissed as outsiders’ concerns, highlighted and enhanced the Queensland Government’s need to avoid scrutiny and criticism.

The Queensland Government introduced the 1965 Act and argued that it was progressive. However, by examining Queensland Government’s tactics, this chapter has highlighted contradictions in the State’s official assimilation policy. Payment of under-award wages to Aboriginal workers, controls over property and earnings, elimination of Aboriginal voters from local Government elections and restrictions on electoral lobbying, were all tactics resorted to by the DAIA and were in direct contradiction to the assimilation policy.

In many ways the Queensland Government and the DAIA duped the public about its colonial controls, administration and alleged commitment to assimilation. Its policies under the 1965 Act created much suffering and impoverishment amongst Aboriginal people, and attracted criticism from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, the Commonwealth Government as well as the UN. The Queensland Government’s DAIA was unable to answer accusations of inadequate health care and racial discrimination, and despite espousing a policy of assimilation, it continued to exert controls over Aboriginal people’s lives, earnings and property that were not used amongst non-Aboriginal people.

---

CHAPTER 4

Opposition to the 1965 Act

Despite the Government attempts to keep Aboriginal people isolated on reserves, word spread throughout the state and beyond about Queensland’s oppressive regime. Opposition was expressed by the Commonwealth Government, and by Aboriginal organisations and their academic and professional supporters. Opposition ranged from the need for compensation for reserve lands lost in the bauxite mining in North Queensland and on Government reserves and equal wages for Aboriginal workers and cessation of DAIA confiscation of earnings and property. This chapter examines the range of objections lodged against the Queensland Government’s 1965 Act and associated by-laws.

Increased public awareness about the conditions and treatment of Aboriginal people on Queensland Government reserves resulted in criticism by some non-Aboriginal people. The pressure from members of the non-Aboriginal community began to concern Killoran. As early as 1968, in its official Annual Report for that year, Killoran complained that it had become ‘fashionable for non-Aboriginal people to have Aboriginal Queenslanders amongst their acquaintances’ and that they had become ‘vociferous in [their] advocacy of the cause of Aboriginal Australians’.¹ In 1970, Killoran was again critical of non Aboriginal ‘activism’ and the ‘pressure group nature’ of those involved in Aboriginal affairs. Killoran argued that some of the most vocal opponents of Queensland’s Indigenous policy were from other States. Killoran’s 1970 Annual Report of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs also challenged critics’ lack of ‘real’ personal contribution or involvement in the Indigenous welfare

field. In 1970, Queensland officials complained about how ‘radical’ and ‘subversive’ activities and methods of protest had become a ‘burden’ and a ‘definite hindrance’ to the ‘progress of Aboriginal Queenslanders’.

With the movement of Aboriginal people off pastoral properties and reserves and into towns and cities, contact with Aboriginal organisations was inevitable. Once they moved into towns and cities, Aboriginal people were able to share their experiences on reserves with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

As a means of justifying the deprivation of human rights of Aboriginal people on reserves, Bjelke-Petersen assured the Archbishop of Brisbane that the 1965 Act was under ‘constant review’. This had not been mentioned in Annual Reports nor during Pizzey’s speech concerning the introduction of the 1965 Act. The Premier also added that while there may seem to be parts of the Act that were ‘unnecessary’ and ‘harsh’, they were there to ‘help’ and ‘encourage’ Aboriginal people. He also added that some Aboriginal people found it hard to manage their money so DAIA bureaucrats ‘banked’ it for them. Again, as argued earlier, Euriel Mackey worked for many years for minimal amounts of money. This is further evidenced by a response to the State Government’s public statement that Aboriginal people in Queensland were subject to

---


4 The influx of Aboriginal people into Queensland towns and cities with Palm Island people to Townsville, Yarrabah people to Cairns, Woorabinda people to Rockhampton and Cherbourg people to Murgon and Brisbane. Rowley describes this as the ‘urbanisation of the Aboriginal population’, Rowley, 1972, pp. 84-108 and p. 136. Also, The Brisbane survey in Poverty research conducted in 1974 noted that 55% of the people interviewed in Brisbane had spent their childhood on Queensland Government reserves, Brown, J., Hirshfield, R., and Smith, D., - under the supervision of Edna Chamberlain and J. Brown, Aboriginal and Islanders in Brisbane, 1974 Research Project, Australian Government Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra, 1974. Many people left reserves and moved into towns and cities throughout Queensland. In Brisbane, Aboriginal people socialised together to avoid disappointment and active discrimination and also accessed various Aboriginal organisations for support for families and to gain a better understanding of their rights.


---
neither the abuses nor the apparent injustices that affected minority groups in other parts of the world.\textsuperscript{6}

This indicates that officials in Queensland were mindful of pressure from overseas, the UN, and the world anti-racism movement. While the Queensland Government exploited and subjugated Aboriginal people on reserves, it attempted to justify these acts as a necessary part of what Kymlicka terms their ‘accommodation’ into non-Aboriginal society.\textsuperscript{7}

FCAATSI called for Indigenous control over Queensland reserve councils. Joe McGinness FCAATSI, Trade Union member and Aboriginal activist, reported that in Queensland, the decisions of reserve councils were often overruled by Departmental officers with many constructive ideas vetoed because they were not in accord with DAIA policy. In 1971, McGinness argued that it was important that FCAATSI campaign vigorously until it won full representation at all levels of Government, from the ‘Aboriginal Affairs Ministerial Department, down to the reserve and Island Councils’.\textsuperscript{8} FCAATSI knew that the time had come for Indigenous people to take control over all Aboriginal affairs issues.

Joe McGinness noted the number of letters of complaint FCAATSI received from Aboriginal Queenslanders on reserves.\textsuperscript{9} As a way of exposing Government tactics, FCAATSI and QCAATSI highlighted the treatment and conditions of Aboriginal people on reserves and distributed information to Government officials and the public.

\textsuperscript{6} Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 6, Series 1043, Consignment 1, Box 518, Item 2966, Batch No. 275, Family and Community Histories Section, Queensland State Archives, undated copy of letter from Under Secretary, Premier’s Department, in response to concerns expressed by Mrs Jewell.

\textsuperscript{7} Kymlicka, 2007, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{8} MS 3759, Series 11, Item 8, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, FCAATSI Annual Conference 9-11 April 1971, Presidential Report by Mr McGinness.

QCAATSI also distributed an overview of what needed to be amended in Queensland’s 1965 legislation to put an end to the poor treatment of Aboriginal people on reserves.\textsuperscript{10} Over-taxing of under-award wages was of concern to QCAATSI, together with the need for restrictions to be lifted over Aboriginal people’s movement on or off reserves. DAIA bureaucrats subsequently discredited criticism that it could not address by writing ‘Communist Front’ across QCAATSI letters. Department of Native Affairs bureaucrats also conveniently accused QCAATSI (and not reserve inmates) of initiating complaints.\textsuperscript{11}

QCAATSI notified Queensland Government bureaucrats it was disappointed with the 1965 Act and in particular with regard to the powers relegated to reserve managers in over-turning decisions made by the newly established AAC. QCAATSI distributed a letter to the public and noted that any Queensland Government mention of citizenship rights for Aboriginal people was ‘farcical’. When QCAATSI issued a Declaration of Rights for Indigenous Queenslanders, the Queensland Government again responded with accusations of communism.\textsuperscript{12} The Queensland Government was clearly unable to defend the State’s action but instead discredited the organisations. However, the Queensland Government did not dispute FCAATSI and QCAATSI’s claims.

Aboriginal members of QCAATSI were clearly not concerned or fearful of repercussions from the Queensland Government. FCAATSI members communicated regularly with reserve inmates and watched the Queensland Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAIA) closely in its treatment of Aboriginal people particularly on


\textsuperscript{11} Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 4, copy of letter from Eunice Gilmore, Publicity Officer, Queensland Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders to Hon. G. F. R. Nicklin, Premier of Queensland, dated 22 September, 1964, ‘Communist Front’ written across the letter by DAIA bureaucrats.

\textsuperscript{12} Fitzgerald, 1984, p. 513.
Government reserves. FCAATSI prepared and distributed flyers that contained information about not only the 1965 Act by-laws but highlighted Queensland Government's tactics which deprived human rights such as the exclusion of Aboriginal people from arbitration awards and the Electoral Act. FCAATSI also argued for the need for professional staff in the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders' Affairs, equally trained justice systems on reserves and the provision of education for all Indigenous children.

In the early 1960s, FCAATSI had previously had some 'small wins' which resulted in the Lutheran Pastor at Hopevale Mission being removed from the reserve for flogging reserve residents. Consequently, word about FCAATSI's work spread throughout Queensland and they took up many complaints on behalf of Queensland reserve residents. As Taffe argues, in 1965 FCAATSI's campaign resulted in changes to the tuberculosis legislation and the cessation of exclusions of Aboriginal sufferers.

As well as concerns about the State Government, McGinness reported that the condition on many reserves resembled 'penal settlement' days. On 27 May 1968, Kath Walker, Queensland State Secretary of FCAATSI, complained about conditions

---

14 MS 3759, Series 11, Item 40, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.
15 Taffe, S., *Black and White Together, FCAATSI: The Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders 1958-1973*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2005, p. 72. The Lutheran Pastor at Hopevale initially asked the inmate's brothers to flog him and when they refused opted to perform the punishment himself. Word got out to FCAATSI who took him from Hopevale and into hiding. Stories like these would have spread quietly amongst reserve inmates. The days of controlling Aboriginal people's movements, property and earnings were beginning to come to an end during the period examined by this thesis. Floggings of reserve inmates was no longer acceptable and were replaced by the brutality and harassment of police.
17 Taffe, 2005, pp. 132-134, Aboriginal tuberculosis sufferers were restricted from accessing the Government's tuberculosis sufferers' allowance until 1965.
and Government administration of the Yarrabah and Cherbourg Government reserves. Walker noted that it was exactly one year earlier that the people of Australia had voted overwhelmingly for amendments to Sections 51 and 127 of the Commonwealth Constitution, and that, as a consequence, the morale of the Australian Aboriginal people was ‘at its highest since the European invasion’. Walker then asked when Aboriginal people could expect some action, and challenged both State and Federal officials to live at Cherbourg for a period of six months and suffer the same conditions as Aboriginal residents who were housed in ‘third rate homes’. This is but one indication of the hard-hitting campaign being run by FCAATSI and QCAATSI.

Distressing reports continued to be brought to FCAATSI’s notice about the appalling living conditions and harsh regulations experienced by Aboriginal inmates on Queensland reserves. In 1968, Faith Bandler publicly revealed FCAATSI was aware that on Queensland reserves, informants were frequently punished by authorities, children had only three years’ access to education, pensioners received only $5.00 per fortnight and brutal punishments were being carried out by DAIA bureaucrats. McGinness also complained about the reserve courts and the by-laws that applied to Queensland Government inmates.

At the Annual Conference of FCAATSI in Canberra in April 1969, Kath Walker pointed out that politicians were not allowed to lobby Aboriginal people on Queensland Government reserves. Kath Walker urged people to go back to their communities and raise their voices about their conditions. Kath Walker also argued that all Indigenous people must agitate for the removal of Government welfare departments and administrators from Aboriginal Affairs, particularly in relation to Queensland’s

---

assimilation policy and associated by-laws. Walker asserted: ‘this land is yours, hold on to it’. 22

FCAATSI argued that the Queensland Government was the ‘disgrace of Australia’ as far as Aboriginal affairs was concerned. 23 In 1969, FCAATSI President, Joe McGinness argued that the Queensland Government had taken considerable time to produce the 1965 Queensland Act with its 69 clauses and 110 regulations. McGinness pointed out that members of Parliament and Native Affairs officials had promised prominent Aboriginal people that the Act would contain everything for which the advancement movement was asking. FCAATSI argued that nothing could be ‘further from the truth’, with Queensland authorities continuing to uphold the 1965 Act, its regulations and contrasting policy of assimilation. 24

In 1970, the Townsville Daily Bulletin reported that Aboriginal Pastor, Don Brady had asserted that Aboriginal people were ready for self-government and prepared to show the people of Australia that they were capable of looking after their own affairs. 25 This was clearly in line with Queensland’s Indigenous assimilation policy. Queensland Government authorities, however, did not support this view. They endeavoured to have Pastor Brady and his colleague Senator Keeffe charged for publicly burning a copy of Queensland’s 1965 Act. The Solicitor General of Queensland wrote to the Premier and expressed his concern over Brady’s treatment of a copy of the State Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Affairs Act of 1965. The Queensland Police Forces’ Special Branch prepared a comprehensive report

---

22 Smoke Signals – Volume 8, No.12, June 1969, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.
24 MS 3759, Series 6, Item 6, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, Abschol Conference on Attitude Change, May 1969.
concerning the burning of the document by the pair. The report included the names and
funding sources of those who had attended a public meeting arranged by Pastor Brady
and Senator Keeffe.\textsuperscript{26} It is difficult to understand why the Queensland Government
would require that level of detail about Aboriginal people. It does, however,
demonstrate how unfamiliar the State Government was with public opposition tactics or
dissident views in relation to Aboriginal peoples, particularly in North Queensland.

At FCAATSI’s National Conference in Townsville in April 1971, McGinness
not only criticised the Queensland Government’s 1965 legislation but described the
Queensland Government’s Trust Fund as ‘racist’.\textsuperscript{27} Aboriginal people enjoyed no
freedom of movement off reserves, no freedom of service in hotels and no protection
from the law, McGinness argued. McGinness also emphasised the urgent need for
housing for Indigenous peoples.\textsuperscript{28}

FCAATSI worked hard at embarrassing the Queensland Government by
highlighting its discriminatory tactics. In response to the Queensland Government
holding its Aboriginal Advisory Council (AAC) meeting at Yarrabah in 1971,
FCAATSI issued a press release and again highlighted the issue that not all members of
the AAC had been elected and that some had been appointed and ‘paid off’ by State
officials. McGinness also argued that AAC members were paid a ‘retainer fee’ by the
Queensland Government DAIA and enjoyed certain privileges over other residents of
the reserves. These ‘pay offs’ to AAC members would be sufficient to make the
recipients feel ‘obliged’ to support Government policies, McGinness argued. FCAATSI

\textsuperscript{26} Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 5, Queensland Police Force’s Special Branch Report
concerning Aboriginal People’s [Pastor Brady and Denis Walker] attendance at Conference and
their method of funding for travel dated 1970.

\textsuperscript{27} MS 3759, Series 14, Item 4, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres
 Strait Islander Studies, Canberra. This was part of the Queensland Government’s 1965 Act
which allowed authorities to control earnings and property. The ‘trust fund’ was where
Aboriginal workers’ monies were held. de Plevitz, 1998, pp. 143-158.

\textsuperscript{28} MS 3759, Series 11, Item 8, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres
 Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, Copy of FCAATSI 1971 Annual Conference Proceedings.
considered moving a vote of no confidence before the conference against both the Queensland Minister of Aboriginal and Island Affairs and the Department’s administrators.  

In 1971, when Premier Bjelke-Petersen asserted that Gorton and Wentworth lacked knowledge of the Aboriginal problem in Queensland and challenged the pair to visit Queensland and see Indigenous living conditions for themselves, FCAATSI immediately issued a press release and offered to take the Commonwealth officials on a guided tour if they took advantage of the Premier’s offer. This would have embarrassed the Queensland Government.

As well as challenging the Queensland Government about removing discriminatory legislation, FCAATSI also worked with Trade Unions to fight the exploitation of Aboriginal workers. In 1971, FCAATSI sought support and assistance from the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) to help stop DAIA’s exploitation and discrimination in employment and wages provisions. In the same year, FCAATSI objected to the State Government’s role in the exploitation of Aboriginal labour and demanded the return of workers’ wages confiscated by Queensland DAIA.

In 1967 FCAATSI sent a deputation of thirty-six people to Canberra. The deputation criticised officials’ ignorance of the problems faced by Aboriginal people and argued that they (Commonwealth politicians) wanted to remain ignorant. FCAATSI members continued to also highlight many of the inadequacies of the

\[29\] MS 3759, Series 13, Item 4, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, J. McGinness, President, FCAATSI, FCAATSI Press Release, 9 February, 1971.

\[30\] MS 3759, Series 13, Item 4, Press Statement, 18 February 1971.

\[31\] MS 3759, Series 13, Item 4, Press Statement, FCAATSI, in relation to the end of racial discrimination in employment and wages provisions, 31 October, 1971.

\[32\] de Plevitz, 1998, pp 143-158.

\[33\] \textit{The Australian}, 1 December, 1967.
Queensland Governments' tactics and its assimilation policy. FCAATSI also knew the Queensland Government was reluctant to report the treatment and condition of Aboriginal people to the public. FCAATSI urged the Commonwealth to conduct its own official enquiry into the conditions of Aboriginal people.

FCAATSI was also aware of the Queensland Government's reluctance to highlight the appalling conditions and serious inadequacies on reserves as well as discriminatory legislation and draconian by-laws. FCAATSI challenged State and Federal officials to live at Cherbourg for a period of six months and suffer the same conditions as Aboriginal residents who were housed in 'third rate homes'. In 1968, McGinness, (FCAATSI President), complained about the reserve courts and the by-laws that applied to Queensland Government reserve inmates. Kath Walker continued to highlight the deplorable conditions on Queensland reserves to the general public, the Commonwealth Government as well as the UN.

The need for economic development on reserves and removal of racist legislation remained central to FCAATSI and QCAATSI's demands. In 1970, Joe McGinness highlighted the need for economic development on Queensland Government reserves such as Yarrabah and Mona Mona. McGinness also noted that the Prime Minister’s promise to remove discriminatory legislation had not been honoured. Joe McGinness stated:

---

34 *The Age*, 13 July 1967.
39 FS.24/1, FCAATSI Reports and Proceedings for the Annual Conference on Aboriginal Affairs, Canberra, 27-29 March, 1970, Copy of President’s Report, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.
...in spite of all the fine mouthings, one cannot but wonder if State and Federal Governments really want Aboriginal and Islanders to prove themselves. ... In Queensland reserve and Island Councils [AAC] are often non-autonomous as their decisions are often vetoed by European Departmental officers.40

By making these complaints about the Queensland Government, FCAATSI continued to highlight the exploitation of Aboriginal people. In October 1968, a police sergeant in North Queensland was arrested and charged on sixty counts of forgery in relation to Aboriginal people’s monies confiscated under the provisions of the 1965 Act.41 In June 1969, in response to concerns expressed by Jack Horner, the Under Secretary of the Queensland Premier’s Department advised that all savings accounts held on behalf of Aboriginal Queenslanders could be identified by a personal ledger account in the name of the individual and that accounts were not operable other than through the nominated acknowledgment of the account holder. The Under Secretary also argued that all transactions were subject to a ‘continuing audit’ and controlled by the Auditor-General’s Department.42 FCAATSI’s surveillance would have ensured that authorities knew that an organisation which included prominent non-Aboriginal people was suspicious of and watchful over the State Government’s methods of controls over Aboriginal workers’ earnings.43 Furthermore, the confiscation of Aboriginal people’s earnings and entitlements by the Queensland Government was not in line with its policy of assimilation.

40 FS.24/1 FCAATSI Annual Conference Proceedings, 1970, President’s Report.
41 Ms 3759, Series 26, Item 7, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, Letter from Under Secretary, Queensland Premier’s Department to Jack Horner, FCAATSI, copy dated June 1969.
42 MS 3759, Series 26, Item 7, Under Secretary, Queensland Premier’s Department to Jack Horner, FCAATSI.
43 In some cases, aged pensions and child endowment were paid to Aboriginal people outside of reserves to ‘assisted’ Aboriginal people. These entitlements were paid to members of the police force on behalf of Aboriginal recipients.
In addition to controls over Aboriginal people’s property and earnings in Queensland, Pittock argued for greater power for Queensland reserve council members.\textsuperscript{44} He noted that some progress had been achieved in the elimination of undesirable legislation, but that those improvements had been slow.\textsuperscript{45}

As well as criticising Queensland Government’s discriminatory tactics and controls over reserve councils and AAC, FCAATSI highlighted and objected to conditions on Queensland Government reserves. In 1969, Dr Barry Christophers, described Queensland’s 1965 Act as ‘devilish’ and stated that it must end. Christophers was also critical of the 1965 Act’s ability to control Aboriginal people’s earnings and property.\textsuperscript{46} In 1971, Gordon Bryant, the FCAATSI Vice President, visited Palm Island and observed that it was very ‘isolated’ and that at first sight the Island was ‘depressing’. He argued that authorities did not pay enough attention to the dietary requirements of Aboriginal children on the Island and that the foods eaten were nutritionally ‘inadequate’.\textsuperscript{47}

FCAATSI continued to notify the public about the Queensland Government’s tactics and life on State reserves. Bryant argued that the Queensland Act and its regulations included provisions which would not be ‘tolerated’ by any ‘other’ Australian community and observed that the resident manager and his staff had ‘absolute authority’ over Aboriginal inmates. Bryant noted that he found it difficult to

\textsuperscript{44} MS 3759 Series 11, Item 5, Papers of FCAATSI, A. Barrie Pittock, Legislative Reform Committee Report 1967-1968. DAIA bureaucrats held powers to disqualify nominees and veto decisions of reserve councils and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee (AAC).

\textsuperscript{45} MS 3759 Series 11, Item 5, Papers of FCAATSI, A. Barrie Pittock, FCAATSI Legislative Reform Committee Report 1967-1968 and, as raised in Chapter 2, the Queensland Government established Reserve Councils and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee in 1965 to provide advice to bureaucrats in relation to implementation of legislation and draconian by-laws. The Queensland Government also retained the ability to veto decisions of the councils and AAC and to disqualify people nominated to stand.

\textsuperscript{46} The Australian, 6 October, 1969.

\textsuperscript{47} MS 3759, Series 2, Item 12, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, Mr Gordon Bryant’s Report to the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders on visit to Palm Island by the Aboriginal Affairs Committee of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party, 31 May, 1971.
understand the need for a prison on Palm Island and that the reason was that for drunkenness, or even perhaps just heavy drinking, gambling, or, ‘being found in a compromising position with a person of the opposite sex’, could incur a relatively heavy jail sentence under the Queensland Government’s oppressive regime.\(^{48}\)

In 1971 Gordon Bryant, FCAATSI Vice-President, reported that no worker on Palm Island received award wages. Bryant reported that there was ‘no justification’ for non-payment of award wages on Palm Island and added that ‘this matter should be taken up immediately with the trade union movement and the appropriate Government authorities’.\(^{49}\)

Gordon Bryant reported the isolation of Palm Island was not just physical, it was ‘social’ and ‘economic’ and that the people on Palm Island had very few ‘resources’ at their ‘disposal.’ Bryant argued that the Queensland Government’s Aboriginal Advisory Committee (AAC) was ‘more apparent than real’ because reserve managers could veto their decisions.\(^{50}\) In 1971, Gordon Bryant reported to the FCAATSI Executive about his trip to Cloncurry and Mt Isa. Bryant mentioned the use of the ‘passbook system’ of Aboriginal workers’ wages and that he witnessed little ‘respect’ for ‘Aboriginal culture’ in Queensland. Bryant also argued that Queensland officials seemed to have no intention of changing legislation and suggested that it was a ‘disgrace’ that the situation in Queensland had endured for so long. The FCAATSI Vice-President also stated that he would be talking to the local Government about plans to bulldoze shacks on the

---

\(^{48}\) MS 3759, Series 2, Item 12, Papers of FCAATSI, Mr Gordon Bryant’s Report to the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders on visit to Palm Island by the Aboriginal Affairs Committee of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party, 31 May, 1971.

\(^{49}\) MS 3759, Series 2, Item 12, Papers of FCAATSI, Mr Gordon Bryant’s Report to the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders on visit to Palm Island by the Aboriginal Affairs Committee of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party, 31 May, 1971.

\(^{50}\) MS 3759, Series 2, Item 12, Bryant’s report.
Cloncurry reserve. Bryant publicly stated that he would ask the Federal Government for housing for Aboriginal people as a priority in Queensland.51

Prominent members of the academic community were openly critical of the Queensland Government’s treatment of Aboriginal people. In March 1966, Colin Tatz, political scientist and academic, criticised Queensland’s assimilation policy and asserted that the positive changes in the *Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders’ Affairs Act 1965* were inadequate and that the ‘penal flavour’ of Queensland’s administration remained.52 Tatz also urged Governments to provide social services for all Aboriginal peoples.53 William Stanner, a prominent anthropologist, noted that Aboriginal people on reserves held nothing in common except subjugation by non-Aboriginal people. He also argued that the 1965 Act placed Aboriginal people into positions of ‘dependence in a power relationship’ from which they ‘could not exit’.54 While prominent people like Stanner and Tatz openly criticised the States’ Indigenous policies, their level of influence is questionable given the Queensland Government was in control and also representative of the majority of Queensland’s population. The nature of Government meant it had to appease the majority of voters to be re-elected. This equated to its need to please the majority of its constituents who were not in support of Tatz’ or Stanner’s view, non-Aboriginal and generally either unaware of or not interested in the need for legislative reform in Queensland Aboriginal affairs.

Concerns continued to be expressed about how Australia was viewed by other nation states over its treatment of Aboriginal people. Non-Aboriginal Australians noted

51 MS 3759, Series 13, Item 4, Papers of FCAATSI, Press Statement, Mr Gordon Bryant, M.H.R., FCAATSI Vice-President, copy dated 29 July, 1971. The passbook system referred to is DAIA’s control over access to earning, benefits or bank account. The Cloncurry reserve lands were owned by DAIA but had no resident Manager. The police were relied upon to control Aboriginal people’s access to their own bank accounts.

52 Fitzgerald, 1984, p. 528.


54 Fitzgerald, 1984, pp. 530-531.
that sections of the Australian constitution were out of date and had become a ‘national
embarrassment’.

The Council for Civil Liberties supported the amendment of Australia’s Constitution to prohibit racial discrimination. Non-Aboriginal individuals alleged that an apartheid system existed in Queensland and that the way Aboriginal people were treated was a national disgrace. Other non-Aboriginal people wrote to The Australian and expressed support for Aboriginal activists. Some drew attention to Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legislation and stressed the need for Australians to understand how oppressive laws impacted on Aboriginal people.

Opposition to the Queensland Government 1965 Act was constant and originated from various sectors. FCAATSI and QCAATSI professionals and academics openly criticised the State’s legislation and deprivation of human rights. Queensland Government’s Annual reports were clearly written to avert criticism, they did not depict the situation.

The Queensland Government was conscious of resistance to its activities and pushed to continue to exploit Aboriginal workers. Disease, suffering and mistreatment of Aboriginal people were all issues that the Queensland Government had difficulty explaining, justifying and ignoring. The suffering of Aboriginal people in Queensland became more measurable after 1967 when data began to be gathered, scientifically examined and exposed through Commonwealth Government funded evidence-based research. The outcomes of such research fuelled more opposition to Queensland Government’s policy and practice.

56 The Australian, 13 December 1965.
57 The apartheid regime was a system of racial segregation implemented in South Africa between 1948 and 1994, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa_under_apartheid.
58 The Australian, 13 October 1966.
CHAPTER 5

The Commonwealth Involvement in Queensland

After the Referendum

In the years leading up to the referendum in 1967, the Commonwealth Government was aware of the poor health and suffering of Aboriginal people in Queensland, but argued that the terms of the Australian constitution disallowed its intervention.¹ This left Queensland Aboriginal people’s futures in the hands of the State Department of Aboriginal and Islanders’ Affairs (DAIA). This situation changed when the referendum to alter the Australian constitution in such a way as to allow Commonwealth intervention was passed in 1967. Although the Commonwealth Government was, like the Queensland Government, conservative (until December 1972), and willing to appease, there were policy differences between the two Governments which had led to a rift by the 1970s. Issues of contention included the Commonwealth’s policy on Aboriginal land rights, removal of discriminatory legislation and commitment to outlaw racism.

After a brief discussion of the campaign in Queensland for a Yes vote in the 1967 referendum, this chapter examines the involvement of the Commonwealth Government in Aboriginal affairs in the years immediately following and highlights the conflict between the two Governments.

QCAATSI and FCAATSI, followed by Aboriginal organisations like the National Tribal Council (NTC), continued to work with decolonised nations and the

¹ From its own hook-worm surveys in North Queensland in the 1940s, the Commonwealth Government was aware of the poor health and suffering of Aboriginal people in Queensland, Kidd, 1997, pp. 171-173.
United Nations. As a consequence, many people throughout the world were aware of the extent of suffering of Aboriginal people in Australia and especially in Queensland. Pressure subsequently shifted to the Commonwealth and its need to amend the Australian constitution so that suffering of Aboriginal people could be addressed by the Federal Government in Queensland.

Despite the known suffering of Aboriginal people, the Commonwealth Government refused to intervene in Queensland’s administration of Aboriginal affairs. Section 51 of the Australian constitution prevented the Federal Government from legislating on behalf of Aboriginal people (except in the Territories which were controlled by the Commonwealth) and Section 127 disallowed Aboriginal people from being counted as part of the Australian population and subsequently were not included in the census.\(^2\) Attwood and Markus argue that the Commonwealth could have intervened on behalf of Aboriginal people as Australian citizens at any time.\(^3\) The Commonwealth chose to leave Aboriginal people in the hands of the State Government despite the State’s poor treatment and the Federal Government’s awareness of the suffering of Aboriginal people in Queensland.\(^4\) The Australian Government had to keep Aboriginal criticism to a minimum, ensure 99% of the non-Aboriginal population remained on side, but, it wanted to be seen internationally as dealing fairly with its Indigenous minority groups. State and Federal issues were sensitive and the complexities of the administration of Aboriginal affairs added another layer of difficulty.

---

\(^2\) Horton, 1994, pp. 933-934.

\(^3\) Attwood, B., and Markus, A., _The 1967 Referendum Or When Aborigines Didn’t Get the Vote_, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, 1997, pp. 37-41.

\(^4\) Kidd, 1997, pp. 257-259 – Dr Jose, Paediatrician from Queensland Institute of Medical Research, identified malnutrition as the key factor in 85% of infant deaths on Queensland Reserves and malnutrition was identified in 50% of children on Queensland reserves and growth retardation of up to 40% of reserve populations – A. and R. Doobov in Stevens, Volume 2, 1972, p. 162.
Commonwealth members of Parliament understood that States’ Governments had failed to implement Aboriginal affairs policies, and intervention by the Commonwealth was necessary. In 1966, *The Australian* reported that several Federal members of Parliament stated that the ‘advancement’ of Aboriginal people should be a ‘national problem’ rather that a State issue. Members of Parliament from both the Government and the opposition urged the Commonwealth to take more action to improve the position of Aboriginal people across Australia.\(^5\) The Queensland Government had caused and prolonged Aboriginal suffering under its 1965 Act and resistance organisations appealed to the Commonwealth Government in the hope that it would intervene in Queensland. However, the Commonwealth would not intervene unless amendments were made to Sections 51 and 127 of the constitution. Furthermore, before changes could be made, a national referendum had to be held and voters had to agree to amend the constitution.\(^6\) It is difficult to comprehend why the Commonwealth was reluctant to intervene, but given the nature of Government it is not surprising that it was unable to break down the settler colonial mindset and in need of approval of the majority of the Australian population.

**The 1967 Referendum**

FCAATSI formulated a submission to the Federal Government for a referendum to allow the Commonwealth to intervene in States’ administration of Aboriginal Affairs.\(^7\) FCAATSI knew that the Commonwealth Government had difficulties administering Aboriginal Affairs in the Northern Territory but nevertheless continued to seek Federal commitment to hold a referendum to change the Australian constitution. It was hoped that constitutional change would make the way clear for Commonwealth

---

\(^5\) *The Australian*, 11 March 1966 – the names of members were not listed in the article.


\(^7\) Attwood and Markus, 1997, pp. 40-41.
intervention in States’ administration of Aboriginal affairs. FCAATSI lobbied, campaigned and distributed petitions which supported and demonstrated a need for the referendum.

FCAATSI eventually convinced the Commonwealth Government to agree to hold the referendum to formally alter the constitution. FCAATSI believed that a favourable outcome from the referendum would ensure the Commonwealth would intervene in States’ administration of Aboriginal affairs across Australia. On 26 May 1967, Whitlam commented that if the referendum resulted in a yes vote, the Commonwealth Government would have ‘no more excuses’ for not improving the conditions of Aboriginal people. On the following day, the 1967 referendum gave the Commonwealth Government the political mandate for action in relation to Aboriginal people, particularly in Queensland.

Once the Federal Government agreed to hold the referendum, FCAATSI organised the campaign and encouraged the Australian public to vote ‘yes’ to alter the constitution. Historians Attwood and Markus argue that FCAATSI turned the referendum campaign into an issue about Australian national identity and reputation which proved enormously successful. Many Indigenous people believed that the referendum and subsequent constitutional change would clear the way for the Commonwealth to intervene and ‘solve’ [Aboriginal people’s] problems and put an end to Queensland Government’s discriminatory tactics. FCAATSI also believed that,

---

12 Griffith, 2006, pp. 16-17.
once the referendum was over and the constitution amended, the Commonwealth would provide a ‘real program of equal rights’.\textsuperscript{13}

According to Attwood and Markus, there was very little public scrutiny concerning the validity and accuracy of information exchanged during FCAATSI’s campaign for the referendum. Attwood and Markus also argue that the referendum assumed the ‘character of a myth for its champions’ and became a powerful highly symbolic narrative.\textsuperscript{14} As Vanessa Castejon points out, the referendum occurred in the context of global decolonisation and claims for civil rights around the world.\textsuperscript{15} The referendum itself would have helped Australia gain mileage overseas and with the UN, particularly given the overwhelming outcome. While the referendum brought little immediate change to the Queensland Government, Castejon argues that the subsequent federalisation of Aboriginal affairs, saw Aboriginal identity evolve as a ‘radical’ voice and describes this as a ‘redefinition of Aboriginality’.\textsuperscript{16}

In respect of Aboriginal people, the referendum posed a two-part question which asked whether the constitution should be altered to omit references to Aboriginal people and, whether voters agreed to have them included in the census.\textsuperscript{17}

FCAATSI triumphed in the overwhelming outcome of the 1967 referendum. Nearly 90% of voters opted to allow the Commonwealth necessary jurisdiction over Aboriginal people. One important outcome of the referendum ensured the national census included more careful analysis of Aboriginal people which helped highlight the severity and extent of Aboriginal economic, health and social needs. Furthermore, it

\textsuperscript{13} Attwood and Markus, 1997 pp. 38-39.
\textsuperscript{14} Attwood and Markus, 1997, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{16} Gifford and Zezulka-Mailloux, 2003, pp. 133-134.
\textsuperscript{17} Attwood and Markus, 1997, p. 118.
was more convenient for Aboriginal organisations to lobby the Commonwealth and use the UN for leverage. Aboriginal people continued to organise nationally and lobbied the Commonwealth for Aboriginal rights and services. Unlike the Commonwealth, however, the Queensland Government was not in need of or interested in UN approval of its tactics.

After the Referendum

The Commonwealth Government’s reluctance to move outside of the constitutional divide of responsibilities between Commonwealth and States in relation to Aboriginal affairs continued after the referendum. While many people anticipated immediate change following the referendum, Attwood and Markus argue that it was obvious during the campaign that the Commonwealth Government had not developed a policy on Aboriginal affairs. Immediately after the 1967 referendum, the Commonwealth Government announced that it planned to maintain the ‘status quo’ in relation to Aboriginal matters in the States. This gave the Commonwealth some time to ratify and develop its Indigenous policy but they upheld States’ jurisdictions at the same time. In fact, the ‘status quo’ that the Commonwealth Government wished to maintain in Queensland equated to the continuation of starvation, disease, poverty and subjugation of Aboriginal inmates under the State Government’s reserve regime as well as poverty, poor health and over-representation in the criminal justice and children’s services systems in towns and cities.

The nature of the relationship between State and Federal layers of Government in Australia is no doubt riddled with layers of complexities. The Commonwealth used

---

19 Attwood and Markus, 1997, p. 60.
20 The Australian, 23 September 1967.
the need for amendment to the constitution as an excuse for not intervening in Queensland Government’s appalling treatment of Aboriginal people. The Commonwealth used its inability to encroach on Queensland Government’s colonial territory to avert criticism and address organised resistance from both FCAATSI and QCAATSI as well as the UN and the international community. Once the referendum was held and one would presume that the Commonwealth was no longer able to refuse to facilitate change, none the less, it immediately ensured that the Queensland Government knew it held no intention of interfering in States’ administration of Aboriginal affairs. Given the Federation was clearly fraught with difficulties and the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the added layer of the responsibility for and administration of Aboriginal affairs made this environment no easier for either the States or Federal Governments to navigate.

The Commonwealth probably failed to intervene because Aboriginal people constituted only 1% of Australia’s population between 1965 and 1975. Clearly the Commonwealth was aware of the need to keep the majority of the Australian public on side and that if it was seen to be providing funding for Aboriginal people, and, always at the expense of non-Aboriginal (according to themselves) it jeopardised being re-elected. Queensland’s bureaucracy knew also that the non-Aboriginal population was not ready to deliver any form of compensation to Aboriginal people to address the impact of colonisation, let alone equal access to all services non-Aboriginal people enjoy including alcohol outlets and public spaces. According to Attwood and Markus, most States had agreed to eliminate discriminatory legislation by 1966 and Queensland and Western Australia remained the last States to relinquish with Queensland continuing to oppose Commonwealth policy implementation in the State.22

22 Attwood and Markus, 2007, p. 44.
From the way in which the Federal Government went about administering Aboriginal affairs from Canberra after the referendum, it was clear that the Commonwealth was caught between the expectations of the United Nations and the need to keep both the States as well as the majority of its constituents on side. Aboriginal people worked both within and outside of Australia to embarrass the Government at a time when FCAATSI and other Aboriginal resistance organisations knew the Australian Government needed to avoid criticism and have UN conventions ratified.

**The Office and Council for Aboriginal Affairs**

In September 1967, the Federal Government announced that it would be setting up an Office of Aboriginal Affairs in Canberra to ‘carry out policy co-ordination for Australia’s 130,000 Aboriginals’. In late 1967, the Commonwealth Government’s Office of Aboriginal Affairs announced that Herbert (Nugget) Coombs, the former Reserve Bank Chairman, would take up the position as Chairman of the Council for Aboriginal affairs (CAA).

In December 1967, at the first formal meeting of the Council for Aboriginal Affairs, Coombs informed the members that he was not in favour of Aboriginal welfare authorities having ‘omnibus portfolios’ and that both Commonwealth and State functional Departments should be involved in the administration of Aboriginal affairs.

In 1967 Coombs criticised State Governments’ Aboriginal welfare authorities for being

---


24 Rowse, 2000, p. 29. Coombs was born in 1906 and grew up in Western Australia the son of a railway station master. Coombs attended the University of Western Australia and gained a Masters of Economics and went on to a PhD at Cambridge University in 1933, worked as Director of Rationing in 1943 and then director-general of Postwar Reconstruction (1943-1948), vice-chancellor of the Australian National University and Governor of the Commonwealth Bank. In 1967 Coombs became Chair of the Council for Aboriginal Affairs and in 1972 was Australian of the Year, (Rowse, 2000, pp.1-2).

25 Rowse, 2000, p. 29.
poorly resourced and staffed, and steeped in a punitive, authoritarian culture'. Coombs’ strong views about what was wrong with the Queensland Government’s administration of Aboriginal affairs flagged the need for funding in essential areas like health, education and housing to address the suffering of Aboriginal populations in Queensland. Coombs ensured Commonwealth funding was released to the DAIA specifically for dental and medical clinics along with schools and houses on Government reserves.

In November 1967, Prime Minister Holt commented that the role of the Commonwealth in Aboriginal affairs in the future would be one of policy co-ordination, while the role of the Council for Aboriginal Affairs would be to provide advice. In 1967, Prime Minister Holt outlined that the four main functions of the Council of Aboriginal Affairs were to consult with Aboriginal people, to advise Government on Indigenous policies, consult with other Departments and agencies and help to ensure ‘co-operation between Commonwealth and State authorities’. Holt noted that CAA would formulate national Indigenous policies and consult with Commonwealth Departments about Aboriginal affairs. After the Office of and Council for Aboriginal Affairs defined its role, it made it clear it wanted to work with States.

Co-operation with States

Despite the justification for and outcome of the 1967 referendum, the Commonwealth assured Queensland it was mindful of States’ jurisdictions. In 1968 Holt explained that while the Commonwealth was in a position to make special laws

---

26 Rowse, 2000, p. 29.
[post referendum], it was not seeking to ‘intrude unnecessarily’ in this field or into areas of activity currently being dealt with by the States. Holt stipulated that the Council of Aboriginal Affairs would provide ‘powerful reinforcement’ for the continuing efforts that the Commonwealth Government and Australian States and the Northern Territory were making for the ‘advancement’ of Australian Aboriginals.29

This was a positive step but the Queensland Premier and DAIA were not always willing to work in partnership with the Commonwealth in relation to the administration of Aboriginal affairs. While both State and Commonwealth authorities grappled with the prospect of co-operative joint involvement in Aboriginal affairs, as raised earlier, 50% of Indigenous children on Queensland reserves aged between 6 months and 3 years were suffering stunted growth from not enough food.30

The Commonwealth Government was also vulnerable to criticism in relation to the administration of Aboriginal affairs in the Northern Territory. Aboriginal workers employed by the Army at Larrakeyah Barracks in Darwin were paid less than half the basic wage.31 Moreover, the Commonwealth segregated Aboriginal patients at Darwin hospital and only in 1967 announced its cessation.32 While the Commonwealth argued that it was unable to interfere in the State’s administration of Aboriginal affairs in Queensland until changes were made to the Federal constitution through a referendum, it was fully aware of not only the appalling conditions on Queensland reserves, but the need to amend its own policies as well.33

31 The Australian, 29 September 1965.
32 The Australian, 22 September 1967 – Northern Territory Government announced it had ended racial discrimination at Darwin Hospital with the opening of a new $580000 air-conditioned block for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal patients. It would seem that Aboriginal people had not shared wards at the Darwin Hospital prior to this.
33 Taffe, 2005, pp. 128-132.
In 1968, Coombs mentioned that the CAA had talked freely with the States about matters which were ‘far from clear’ in the minds of the Commonwealth officers and that States’ input helped develop Indigenous policies. Coombs suggested that benefits in relation to Aboriginal people should be dealt with through a variety of Departments rather than singly through a particular channel labelled ‘Aboriginal affairs’. In amongst these discussions no doubt, the Commonwealth would have provided assurances to States about respect for jurisdictions. The Commonwealth persuaded the States to outline activities in relation to Indigenous affairs proposed for the next five years for the Commonwealth to comment on.

In 1968 Prime Minister Gorton announced that the Commonwealth was ‘prepared to support additional action to help Aboriginals’. He also related that the Commonwealth proposed to ‘assist’ States by providing extra funds to address Aboriginal health, education and housing. In the following year, Gorton reported that it was not his Government’s intention to ‘usurp’ State functions, since the Commonwealth Government’s decentralisation and regional administration worked for the benefit of Aboriginal people. Gorton recognised Indigenous ‘progress’ over the

---

34 MS 3694, Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council [Standing Committee of Officers Meeting held in Sydney 13 and 14 February 1968 transcript of proceedings], Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, p. 12.


36 John Gorton was born in Melbourne and served in the Australian Air Force during World War II. He was elected to the Senate for the Liberal Party in 1949 and served in various positions and started to be considered for leadership once he moderated his ‘extremely right-wing views’. Gorton was elected Party Leader on 9 January 1968 and Prime Minister on 10 January in the same year. Gorton was the only Senator in Australia’s history to serve as a Prime Minister. In the 1969 federal election, the coalition suffered a 7% swing against it which prompted a leadership challenge by William McMahon. Gorton resigned from the Liberal Party in 1975. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John-Gorton.

37 MS 3694, Gorton, John, Prime Minister, Aboriginal Affairs Address at the Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers Responsible for Aboriginal Affairs at Parliament House, Transcript of Proceedings, Melbourne, 12 July 1968, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

last quarter century and acknowledged that many Aboriginal Australians had been
'subjected to special handicaps which impeded their advancement'.\textsuperscript{39} Despite this
recognition of handicaps imposed on Aboriginal people by the Queensland
Government, the Commonwealth largely remained committed to working with the
State.

\textbf{OAA Consultations with Aboriginal people and Aboriginal autonomy}

As well as working co-operatively with States, the Commonwealth policy
supported consultation with Aboriginal people about issues affecting them. In 1968,
Prime Minister Gorton commented on the Commonwealth’s policy on Aboriginal
affairs: ‘In other words, without destroying Aboriginal culture, we want to help our
Aboriginals to become an integral part of the rest of the Australian people, and we want
the Aboriginals themselves to have a voice in the pace at which this process occurs’.\textsuperscript{40}

The Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs was keen to be seen to be in
consultation with Aboriginal people in relation to Aboriginal affairs. Coombs
envisaged that the CAA would act as the ‘eyes and ears of Government’ and ensure that
Commonwealth officials remained alert to all ‘indigenous ferment’.\textsuperscript{41} The
Commonwealth Government also stated that it was committed to encouraging
‘indigenous people’s positive self-consciousness’.\textsuperscript{42} These statements indicate that the
Commonwealth was aware of the nature and effectiveness of Aboriginal resistance and
the need to be seen to encourage and assist Aboriginal autonomy.

\textsuperscript{39} Aboriginal Affairs Council Officers Meeting, 1969 and Kunmanggur, Office of Aboriginal
Affairs Report No. 3, December 1969, Prime Minister Gorton’s Aboriginal policy outline 8
October 1969, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, pp.
1-4.

\textsuperscript{40} MS 3694, Gorton, John, Prime Minister, Aboriginal Affairs Address at the Conference of
Commonwealth and State Ministers Responsible for Aboriginal Affairs at Parliament House,
Transcript of Proceedings, Melbourne, 12 July 1968, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

\textsuperscript{41} Rowse, 2000, p. 26.

\textsuperscript{42} Rowse, 2000, pp. 29-30.
Gorton explained that the Commonwealth wanted Aboriginal people to choose their own future and to regain ‘initiative’ and ‘independence’. In 1968 at the opening of the FCAATSI Annual Conference in Canberra, Coombs noted the increasing strength in the numbers of Aboriginal members and that with Aboriginal people’s unity and identity, objectives would be planned. Coombs continued to focus on Indigenous representation and consultation.

In 1969 the Commonwealth OAA reported that it supported and encouraged the involvement of local Aboriginal communities in the administration of their own local Government. In September 1969, Wentworth, the Commonwealth Minister in charge of Aboriginal Affairs raised the need to consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, share information and arrange seminars and conferences. Wentworth mentioned that the CAA was reliant upon some local Aboriginal organisations including FCAATSI to help arrange meetings within Indigenous communities. In 1969, the Council for Aboriginal Affairs announced that it had also enlisted the help of three Aboriginal liaison officers, Margaret Lawrie, Reginald Saunders and Phillip Roberts.

In 1969, the Commonwealth Minister of Aboriginal Affairs commented that the Government’s Indigenous policy would depend largely on what Aboriginal people wanted. While the Queensland Government could conveniently use its AAC to avert much criticism within the State, it was no match for FCAATSI and other organisations that the Office of Aboriginal Affairs (OAA) and the Council for Aboriginal Affairs

---


44 Kunmanggur, Office of Aboriginal Affairs Report, No. 5, April 1970, RS 25.1/3, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, pp. 6-7.

45 Rowse, 2000, p. 29.


47 Aboriginal Affairs Council Officers Meeting, 1969.

dealt with like the National Tribal Council. The Commonwealth remained keen for States’ co-operation but also emphasised the need for consultation with Aboriginal groups. The OAA had started to allocate extra funding to facilitate consultation with FCAATSI and other Aboriginal groups to quieten activism and avoid embarrassment from these organisations’ networks, representations and complaints to the UN and overseas.

Given the outcome of the 1967 referendum the Commonwealth sent strong messages of co-operation to the Queensland Government and offered funding on top of existing allocations to upgrade conditions on reserves. It also started to accurately measure the health of Aboriginal people in Queensland and particularly on Government reserves.

OAA Funding

In 1968 the newly established Office of Aboriginal Affairs provided substantial increases in funding to the Queensland Government DAIA specifically for services to Aboriginal people. Gorton stated that funding provided to States by the Commonwealth OAA would be in addition to the normal annual allocations made at Premiers’ Conferences and Loan Councils. Gorton also announced that a condition of the grants was that the Commonwealth expected that any assistance it provided would be in addition to and not in substitution for any amount which would otherwise be spent by a State upon Aboriginal welfare.49 In 1969, Gorton argued that the Commonwealth had ensured that despite the referendum, it remained committed to working with the States and that it had subsequently increased its States Grants in relation to Aboriginal funding.50 Coombs would have known funding was necessary to resolve Queensland

49 MS 3694, Prime Minister Gorton’s address at the Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers, 12 July, 1968.

50
and other States’ Aboriginal affairs issues. Funding States and consulting with Aboriginal groups after the referendum initially proved effective for the Commonwealth to avoid criticism.

The Commonwealth’s involvement in Aboriginal affairs after the 1967 referendum also created expectations that States would deal with the economic development of Aboriginal communities. In 1968 at the State/Commonwealth forum on Aboriginal affairs, Killoran, Director of the DAIA, listed both maritime and pastoral industries as the main economic activities for Aboriginal people in Queensland. Killoran also mentioned Government authorities’ concerns about the numbers of Aboriginal people who were ‘unemployable’. When questioned by the Conference as to whether there was any real means of establishing a viable economy on Queensland reserves, Killoran noted that they [State Government] had ‘some pretty good lands’. The Queensland Government was reluctant to focus on economic development needs of Aboriginal populations and conveniently failed to mention bauxite deposits on North Queensland reserves. In 1968 Killoran sought clarification at the forum about the machinery for parcelling out ‘land rights’.

Clearly Killoran did not support reserve land falling into the hands of Aboriginal people particularly after the discovery of bauxite in North Queensland. Killoran not only failed to link Aboriginal labour with the mining industry, he allowed mining activity to disrupt Indigenous communities. The Queensland Government disregarded its policy of assimilation in relation to Aboriginal workers’ participation in the bauxite mining industry.

---


51 MS 3694, Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council [Standing Committee of Officers Meeting held in Sydney 13 and 14 February 1968 transcript of proceedings], Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, p. 119.


53 Aboriginal Affairs Council Officers Meeting, 1968, pp. 119-120.
mining industry. Arguably the work of FCAATSI and QCAATSI and affiliation with Trade Unions could have ensured that under-award wages for Aboriginal workers in the mining industry would not have been tolerated.

The Commonwealth Government’s Office of Aboriginal Affairs continued to provide extra funding to the Queensland Government specifically for Aboriginal health, housing and education. In 1968, the Prime Minister wrote to the Queensland Premier and stipulated that 40% of funding provided for housing be spent in cities and towns, outside of reserves.\(^{54}\) This indicates that the Commonwealth was aware of the growing housing needs of Aboriginal people outside of Queensland reserves. In 1969 DAIA bureaucrats expressed gratitude for the Commonwealth’s additional interest in Indigenous affairs’ administration and noted that ‘practical assistance’ was ‘forthcoming’ for the first time. Killoran reported that DAIA was subsequently able to purchase established homes as well as receive unmatched capital grants for health, housing and the education of Aboriginal peoples.\(^{55}\) The Commonwealth attempted to address the appalling conditions on Queensland reserves by providing additional funding for the establishment of nearly 100 houses in the 1968 and 1969 financial years, as well as hospitals, schools and dental clinics. The Commonwealth also provided funding to the State Government for either the purchase or construction of houses for Aboriginal people in Queensland towns and cities.\(^{56}\)

The extent of Commonwealth assistance and construction of infrastructure on reserves after the referendum indicates the lack of essential services provided by the

---

\(^{54}\) Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 4, Copy of Letter from Prime Minister J. G. Gorton to Premier Bjelke-Petersen dated 16 September 1968, concerning funding to States specifically for Aboriginal housing and in particular, the attached statement of purpose of the grant, the Commonwealth stipulated that no less than 40% of funds allocated be provided for housing in Queensland towns and cities.


Queensland Government. The Commonwealth believed that conditions on reserves were caused by inadequate resources and that additional funding would alleviate Aboriginal suffering. Regardless of injustice and breaches of human rights by DAIA in the administration of its 1965 Act and by-laws as well as exploitation of Aboriginal workers, the Commonwealth remained keen to co-operate with the Queensland Government in relation to Aboriginal affairs. Given the period examined by this thesis is only 65 to 75 years outside of the Federal Constitution, perhaps the Commonwealth was mindful of not being seen to be controlling the country from Canberra. States Governments’ jurisdictions such as lands and Aboriginal people were clearly areas that the Commonwealth was keen to relinquish particularly since Aboriginal people were a small minority.

In the 1968/69 financial year the Commonwealth Government’s Office of Aboriginal Affairs allocated an unprecedented $2.3 million to Queensland Government Aboriginal housing programs on the proviso that it supplemented existing state expenditures. By 1971 the Commonwealth had increased Aboriginal housing grants to the Queensland Government’s DAIA by 75%.57 The Commonwealth grants provided to the Queensland Government increased from $2.055 million in 1969/1970 financial year to $10.362 million in 1974/1975.58

As well as providing funding to the DAIA for housing both on and off Government reserves, the Federal Government also funded and implemented Aboriginal outstation movements. These ‘movements’ provided facilities and infrastructure for Aboriginal people to reside upon their traditional lands. This program was initiated in remote areas where Aboriginal people had been forcibly removed by previous

58 A5039, Department of Aboriginal Affairs File, Item 1, National Archives of Australia.
Indigenous policies. This program commenced in 1969/1970 in Queensland with Aurukun and Yarrabah people receiving Commonwealth Outstation funding.\textsuperscript{59}

As well as post referendum Commonwealth funding to the State Government to alleviate suffering of Aboriginal people in Queensland and especially on reserves, the Commonwealth also started to fund research bodies to measure the health and well-being of Aboriginal people.

\textbf{Research Findings}

Following the 1967 referendum, the enhanced collection and collation of census data significantly highlighted needs in Aboriginal communities. In 1974, Gordon Bryant noted that ‘one of the major areas which has been traditionally neglected has been the accurate compilation of statistics relating to Aboriginal people’.\textsuperscript{60} The Commonwealth Bureau of Statistics predicted the rapid growth of Indigenous populations which consequently triggered the urgent need for economic development. In 1968, Prime Minister Gorton reported that while the Commonwealth Government understood that welfare policy within each State should be undertaken by that State’s administration, this would not preclude the possibility of ‘independent Commonwealth action’. Prime Minister Gorton stated that the Commonwealth would consult with the States’ Governments concerning such measures within their boundaries.\textsuperscript{61}

In addition to predictions from census data, statistics from evidence-based research made it possible for the Commonwealth to measure the extent of Aboriginal suffering against the health, housing, education and employment levels of non-Aboriginal people. Infant mortality rates were indisputable indicators that Governments

\textsuperscript{59} Patience, 1985, pp. 120-121.

\textsuperscript{60} A5039, DAA.

\textsuperscript{61} MS 3694, Prime Minister Gorton’s address at the Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers, 12 July, 1968.
could not ignore and that easily attracted UN criticism. As a means of addressing predicted rapid increases in Aboriginal populations, the Prime Minister announced the establishment of a fund for special assistance, including a capital fund, for potentially viable enterprises to be established for or by Aboriginals either individually or co-operatively.62

The Commonwealth Government’s OAA also focused on child health research in Queensland and in 1969 engaged the services of Professor Rendle-Short of the Department of Child Health, University of Queensland, to conduct research on Aboriginal children over a three year period.63 At the 1969 Aboriginal Health Workshop convened in Sydney by the Commonwealth Department of Health, participants attacked the high rates of infant mortality and child morbidity as well as malnutrition particularly on Queensland Government reserves.64 According to the Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs, after six months of age, the growth of Aboriginal children was retarded and infections were common. Commonwealth officials noted that medical care was obviously important in dealing with the problems and that efforts had to be made during the early months of Aboriginal children’s lives.65

By the 1970s, the Commonwealth’s involvement in Aboriginal affairs after the referendum enhanced the collection and analysis of important census data in relation to the health and well-being of much of Australia’s Indigenous populations.66 Both evidence based research and enhanced census data analysis highlighted conditions that

---

62 MS 3694, Prime Minister Gorton’s address at the Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers, 12 July, 1968.
63 Kunmanggur, No. 5, April 1970, pp. 5-6.
64 Kunmanggur, No. 5, April 1970, pp. 5-6.
65 Kunmanggur, No. 5, April 1970, pp. 5-6.
66 As outlined in Chapter 3, reports between 1967 and 1969 indicated that up to 50% of children on Queensland Reserves were suffering serious growth retardation from malnutrition. (Doobov, A and R., in Stevens, 1972, Volume 2, p. 162).
led to the Commonwealth attempting to deal with issues (particularly since the census findings were also accessible and available to the public).

The Commonwealth funded the Queensland Institute of Medical Research (QIMR) to conduct health screenings on Queensland Government reserves which led to revelation of startling statistics concerning the health and well-being of Aboriginal inmates. Doctor Jean McFarlane, Director of Queensland Maternal and Child Welfare, claimed that the Queensland Government’s medical attention on its reserves was inadequate.67 Drs Jose and Welsh, Pediatricians from the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, identified malnutrition as the key factor in 85% of deaths of infants on Queensland Government reserves. These pediatricians also argued that a ‘mass feeding program’ was the only way to address starvation on Queensland’s reserves.68

As Queensland Government reserves were initially established to ‘protect’ Aboriginal people from the perils associated with colonisation, it is difficult to comprehend why Aboriginal people would be deliberately starved and neglected by State bureaucrats. Given Queensland bureaucrats would have appeared compliant and successful in operating with limited funding, this inherent racism and cost cutting subsequently created suffering, disease and deaths of Aboriginal people. In the 1960s and 1970s it is doubtful that this situation would not have been tolerated for non-Aboriginal people. It appears that the colonial belief about Aboriginal inferiority and settler superiority remained strong amongst Queensland bureaucrats. The allocation of necessary resources to deal effectively with the impact that colonisation was having on Aboriginal populations would have instilled fear amongst settlers much as it does today. Fear that their own resources would be challenged and the need to protect these forms

the foundation of the settler colonial mindset. The rights of the settlers had to prevail over all else, and particularly over Aboriginal people who between 1965 and 1975 it is estimated only constituted 1% of the overall Australian population.

In 1971, the outcomes of continued health research was raised by Mr Edwin Wallis-Smith, member of the Queensland Legislative Assembly, who asked the Queensland Minister for Conservation to address statements by Dr Jean McFarlane, concerning the malnutrition death-rate of Aboriginal children in Queensland. In an attempt to avoid embarrassing health statistics in Queensland, the Commonwealth Government provided funding to the State Government to lower infant mortality and enhance Aboriginal health. In September 1972, the Queensland Health Department received funding from the Commonwealth Government to establish the Aboriginal Health Program (AHP). The aim of the AHP was to facilitate the provision of a preventive health program, the placement of registered nurses on all Queensland Government’s reserves, the establishment of travelling health teams and infant feeding programs, indicating the Commonwealth Government’s willingness to work cooperatively with the Queensland Government. The Commonwealth plainly believed it was best to fund the Queensland Government (despite Commonwealth research findings) rather than challenge it about why it had allowed Aboriginal people to starve and suffer poor health conditions.

The Commonwealth reported that unless a concerted effort was made in all fields including Governments, the medical profession, and by Aboriginal people

---

69 1A/567, Questions and Answers in the House.

70 Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 7, Premier’s Department, SRS 1043/1, Item 1585, Box 519, Queensland State Archives, Tooth, Minister for Health, Cabinet Submission No. 15745, Copy No. 24, Proposed Provision of an Aboriginal Preventative Medicine Programme funded by the Commonwealth Government by way of unmatched grant, 28 September, 1972.

71 As mentioned earlier, QIMR research indicated that infant mortality of Aboriginal children was six times higher than non-Aboriginal children, 50% of children on reserves suffered malnutrition and severe growth retardation was evident in 40% of the children on reserves and DAIA had mistaken six year old children for healthy 3 year olds. This is examined in detail in Chapter 3.
themselves, the health of Aboriginal children would not improve. Immediate action took the form of funding by the Commonwealth to the Queensland Government to address the poor health of Aboriginal people particularly on Queensland Government reserves.

**Education and Addressing Economic Development Need**

Now mindful of the necessity to address the health needs of Aboriginal people in Queensland, the Commonwealth devised measures to improve infant mortality rates. The Commonwealth funded the State Health Department to provide feeding programs for children in Queensland to address starvation and high Aboriginal infant mortality rates. It was hoped this would improve health statistics and, at the same time, ensure the State Government maintained control over its jurisdiction.

Furthermore, after the referendum the Commonwealth was no longer able to argue it was unable to address the poor health of Aboriginal people in Queensland because it was the State Government’s responsibility. Queensland Government’s poor treatment and inadequate health care of Aboriginal populations was attracting unwanted criticism from the UN and overseas. The Commonwealth Government was clearly juggling ways of appeasing the Queensland Government, keeping the majority of the Australian voters on side, averting the UN and influential Aboriginal groups’ criticism as well as addressing poor health and the economic needs.

As well as appalling health, the evidence suggested that Aboriginal people had been denied access to education. In May 1970 at the Buntine Oration, Dr Coombs, 

---

72 *Kumanggur*, No. 5, April 1970, pp. 5-6.
74 As late as 1978 the Aboriginal Health Programme with offices on reserves and country towns throughout Queensland provided High Protein drinks and biscuits through distribution. The contents of these drinks were provided by the State for distribution throughout Aboriginal families.
Chairman of the Council of Aboriginal Affairs, cited census figures which highlighted poor levels of education amongst Aboriginal people and concluded that the Australian education system had failed them. Coombs argued that past education policies had ‘frozen’ Aboriginal workers into the limited kinds of ‘unskilled labour’ capable of being performed by the ‘illiterate and the near illiterate’. Coombs knew about economic development and the role education, employment and land played in Australia’s post World War II development.

**Economic Development and Land Rights**

While the use of lands formed the foundation of colonisation in Australia, the idea that Aboriginal people either owned lands before non-Aboriginal people arrived or were in need of or entitled to lands was not addressed. As Moreton-Robinson argues:

> Contemporary and historical narratives of Britishness and Australian national identity reveal that the values required to establish the nation as a white possession are those that were also required to dispossess Indigenous people of their lands...... but Australian national identity is predicated on retaining the benefits of colonial theft on the one hand, while exalting a sense of tolerance and fair play on the other. Britishness has metamorphosed into Australian national identity and culture but Indigenous sovereignty continues, through the presence of Indigenous people and their land, haunting the house that Jack built, shaking its foundations and rattling the picket fence.

Australia attempted to deal with economic development of Aboriginal people and knew that the provision of land was the most efficient and effective means of implementation. The concept of having Aboriginal people’s rights to land explored or entertained confronted many non-Aboriginal people in Australia.

The belief that Aboriginal people had disappeared was put to rest by the Commonwealth Government’s census data collection and analysis, which indicated Aboriginal populations were not only growing but at a faster rate than that of non-

---

75 *Kunmanggur*, Office of Aboriginal Affairs Report, No. 6, September 1970, RS 25.1/3, Dr Coombs’ address at Buntine Oration, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, pp. 7-10.

76 Moreton-Robinson, 2005, p. 27.
Aboriginal people. Given the predicted Aboriginal population expansion, the Commonwealth Government’s CAA knew it had to address the economic needs of Australian Aboriginal populations as a priority.

The Commonwealth knew that combining economic development with Aboriginal land rights would conveniently avert UN criticism and improve the situation of Aboriginal populations. The Commonwealth Government’s policy for land rights proved difficult to implement. The Commonwealth knew that the climate was not conducive to implement either Aboriginal land rights or economic development in Queensland. The Queensland Government opposed the Commonwealth’s outstation program, economic development and Aboriginal land rights policies. The Queensland Government argued that economic development should only occur on Queensland reserves and would not entertain Aboriginal land rights in any form. Because both the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments were reliant upon the support of the majority of its voting population, Aboriginal land rights was always going to be an unpopular priority.

The UN continued to urge the Commonwealth to look at the economic needs of Aboriginal people which included the concept of Aboriginal land rights. Attwood argues it was UN pressure that prompted the conservative coalition Government to consider a change of direction of Aboriginal policies. According to Elizabeth Robbins’ thesis, after the 1967 referendum there were many ‘racist’ and ‘historical’

---

77 MS 3694, Prime Minister Gorton’s address at the Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers, 12 July, 1968 and Rowley discusses the ‘disappearance’ of Aboriginal people under previous Government’s segregation policies (Rowley, 1971, p. 384).
78 MS 3694, Prime Minister Gorton’s address at the Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers, 12 July, 1968.
79 Attwood, 2005, p. 25.
factors dealing with Aboriginal people that saw many non-Aboriginal bureaucrats reluctant to change.  

Despite Queensland Government opposition, the Commonwealth continued to attempt to pedal Aboriginal land rights but being careful to include justification on economic terms. In 1968, the OAA acknowledged that land rights for Aboriginal people was crucial to economic development. In 1968, William Stanner, Anthropologist and CAA member, introduced Australians to the needs of Aboriginal people and discussed the impact of colonisation upon Aboriginal people. Stanner argued that the taking of land without acknowledgement or just compensation for the ownership and possessory and other rights would be seen by Aboriginal people as an ‘act of bad faith’. As argued in chapter 3, the use of, or need for land in economic development was only supported by the Queensland Government in terms of non-Aboriginal development activities. Briscoe, Aboriginal historian argues that the concept of Aboriginal land rights created much fear amongst non-Aboriginal people and that fear was associated with the belief that their own traditional legal tenure over colonised lands could be jeopardised.

Despite the expectation from the UN that Australia would implement Aboriginal land rights, the Supreme Court Decision on the Northern Territory Yirrkala land rights case in 1971 highlighted how the relationship between clan and land did not amount to proprietorship as understood in non-Indigenous law. Although the judgment was based

---


81 MS 2352, Council for Aboriginal Affairs: Policy and Correspondence on Aboriginal Land Rights including submissions to Aboriginal Land Rights Commissioner by Department of Aboriginal Affairs incorporating Council views, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

solely on current Australian law, the Government intimated that it might bear other considerations in mind in formulating policy for land for Aboriginal people.\textsuperscript{83}

In addition to considering Aboriginal land rights in Queensland, the Commonwealth also involved itself in securing the economic needs of Aboriginal people in relation to bauxite mining activities. In 1971, Coombs wrote to Bjelke-Petersen concerning Commonwealth Government involvement in mining negotiations. Coombs suggested that the CAA should be included in ‘bargaining’ with mining and other companies prior to leases being granted on Aboriginal reserve lands. The Queensland Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs, Neville Hewitt, noted and concurred that the Director of DAIA should write and inform the Chair of CAA that while the Government appreciated the offer of assistance, its view was that such negotiations would continue to be conducted by State authorities.\textsuperscript{84}

In 1971, under strong pressure from the UN, the Commonwealth agreed to devise an Aboriginal land rights policy. Prime Minister McMahon stated that Australian Indigenous issues had his ‘strong personal interest and support’. The Prime Minister explained that the Commonwealth would devise policies to meet the ‘special needs and problems of Aborigines’. McMahon supported Aboriginal groups’ access to land for ‘recreational’ and ‘ceremonial’ purposes as well as for the development of enterprises and suggested the need for an appropriate land policy for Aboriginal people.\textsuperscript{85}

\textsuperscript{83} Kunmanggur, Office of Aboriginal Affairs Report, No. 8, September, 1971, RS 25.1/3, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{84} Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 5, Cabinet Submission No. 13774 Copy No. 24 dated 10 February 1971. As argued in Chapters 2 and 3, the Queensland Government removed Aboriginal people from bauxite rich lands, excluded Aboriginal people from employment in the bauxite mining activity, excised Aboriginal lands to facilitate mining leases and controlled royalties on behalf of Aboriginal people.

\textsuperscript{85} Kunmanggur, No. 8, September 1971, pp. 4-8.
Prime Minister McMahon explained that ‘Aboriginal Australians should be assisted as individuals and, if they wished, as groups to hold effective and respected places within the Australian society with equal access to the rights and opportunities it provided’. McMahon also stated that his Government’s policy would be directed to ‘preserving and developing Indigenous culture and language’. Aboriginal affairs did not have a single functional responsibility like most other portfolios; it was ‘general care for the whole welfare of a minority people with a variety of special problems’, the Prime Minister elaborated. Like Coombs earlier, the Prime Minister also suggested that the many areas pertaining to Aboriginal advancement could be incorporated into portfolio areas outside of the administration of Aboriginal affairs. The Commonwealth Government argued strongly that its policies were inclusive of and reliant upon the States’ Governments’ participation.  

The Commonwealth remained committed to working collaboratively with the Queensland Government. In 1971, the Commonwealth Government attempted to address economic development needs by combining it with Aboriginal land rights. However, its coalition partners the Country Party were resolutely opposed to the concept. The Commonwealth OAA reported that Aboriginal land rights be based on economic development terms. As the historian, Griffiths expresses, some people argued that it was ‘wrong’ to encourage Aboriginal people to think that because their ancestors had a long association with a particular piece of land that they had claim to it.  

By 1971 Aboriginal land rights clearly presented challenges for the Federal Government. As The Australian reported, the coalition was split over the Aboriginal land rights issue. Wentworth, Minister responsible for Aboriginal affairs, called for ‘great caution’ concerning the option of the Northern Territory Gurindji group resuming

---

86 Kunmanggur, No. 8, September 1971, pp. 4-8.
some of Vestey’s lease as he was concerned about the subsequent ‘precedents’ this
could set.\textsuperscript{88} Wentworth’s fear of precedent supports Briscoe’s argument that Aboriginal
land rights challenged non-Aboriginal people’s own lands and instilled fear about
threats to Australia’s legal land structures.\textsuperscript{89} The Country Party was particularly fearful
given the extensive use of lands for pastoralists’ profits. The concept of Aboriginal land
rights challenged colonisers’ beliefs and threatened the profits available to pastoralists
by diminishing their use of available lands and its resources. Furthermore the colonial
mindset amongst non-Aboriginal people about Aboriginal demands for land rights and
Commonwealth attempts at meeting these demands, threatened the justification of the
theft of lands which was the core foundation of the colonisation process. The UN on
the other hand, expected that Australia as a successful settler state would address
Aboriginal land rights since its Indigenous minority groups only constituted 1% of the
nation’s population. However, at the same time the Commonwealth was keen to work
collaboratively with States’ Governments and relied upon the support of the majority of
its settler colonial population who had benefited from the use of Aboriginal lands and its
resources since 1788.

In 1972 the Queensland Government openly opposed the Commonwealth
Government’s proposed Aboriginal land rights and economic development policy. In
response to the Prime Minister’s Indigenous Policy Speech of 21 January 1972, Premier
Bjelke-Petersen indicated that the Queensland Government was opposed to Aboriginal
land rights and economic development activities or policies proposed by the
Commonwealth. In background materials attached to an official cabinet submission, the
Premier of Queensland informed Prime Minister McMahon by telegram on 25 January
1972 that he was unable to concur with the text of the proposed Aboriginal land rights

\textsuperscript{88} \textit{The Australian}, 30 May, 1968.

\textsuperscript{89} Briscoe, 2010, pp. 121-123.
statement. The Queensland Premier objected strongly to attempts by the Federal Government to implement an economic development policy for Aboriginal communities. Bjelke Petersen recognised the need for economic development but argued that this should happen only on State Government owned reserve lands. Similarly, Hewitt demanded that the Commonwealth note that Queensland did not support the acquisition of large areas of additional freehold or leasehold land for development by Aboriginal people.90 In September 1972, Hewitt stipulated that the Commonwealth Government’s Office of Aboriginal Affairs be notified that the Queensland Government did not favour proposals to acquire large areas of additional freehold or leasehold land for development by Aboriginal people and demanded that the Commonwealth only provide funding to develop Queensland Government reserves.91 Evidently, the Queensland Government did not want Aboriginal people to develop economic independence despite espousing a policy of assimilation. Alternatively, the Queensland Government may have feared that Commonwealth spending on Aboriginal land rights and economic development may have jeopardised much needed funding for services and development on Queensland Government reserves. Whatever the reasons, the State Government remained in dispute with the Commonwealth on the best methods of settler colonisation and continued to contradict its own assimilation policy.

As well as embracing the concept of Aboriginal land rights, the McMahon Government was expected to deal with racist legislation and discrimination against Indigenous minority populations. McMahon claimed that much had already been achieved in health, education, housing, vocational training, placement in employment

90 Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 7, Premier’s Department, SRS 1043/1, Item 1585, Box 519, Queensland State Archives. Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs, Cabinet Submission No. 15612, Copy No. 18, Aboriginal Reserve Lands Queensland.

91 Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 7, paper titled Land Reserved for Aboriginal Purposes and Placed under the Control of the Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs upon Trust, attachment to Confidential Cabinet Minute Submission No. 15612, Copy no. 18, Decision No. 17541, 4 September, 1972.
and in economic development throughout the States. On the other hand, McMahon stressed the need for continued and substantial progress to end ‘racial discrimination’ and ‘reinforce respect, justice, humanity and compassion’ for Aboriginal people.92

The Commonwealth Government needed to be seen by the UN as dealing fairly and justly with its Indigenous populations. It was clear that the UN expectation was strong particularly during the period examined by this thesis.

Removal of Racist Legislation

As well as funding the Queensland Government to improve the housing and health of Aboriginal people and committing to Aboriginal land rights and economic development, the Commonwealth was also under pressure from the UN to remove racist legislation from Australian statutes.

The 1971 International Year to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination brought attention to Australia’s need to remove Queensland Government’s racist 1965 Act. In 1971, while attending the Commonwealth Leaders’ Conference in Singapore, Gorton repeated the Federal Government’s pledge of October 1969 to remove all legal discrimination against Aboriginals by the end of 1972, if necessary, by ‘moving in’ against reluctant State Governments. A Federal Government spokesperson said that of the State Governments, Queensland and Western Australia were of particular concern. The Australian reported that Commonwealth bureaucrats stated that ‘..........when the gun is pointed at their [Queensland Government] heads we may find we do not have to fire the bullets’.93 The Commonwealth Government was desperate to demonstrate to the UN that it had an anti-racism policy and deliberately described Queensland and Western Australia as problem States to eliminate blame from Federal authorities.

92 Kunmanggur, No. 8, September 1971, pp. 4-8.
The Commonwealth’s strong desire to eliminate racist legislation at this point is evidenced in press releases. The need to amend the Queensland Government’s 1965 Act was also taken up by OAA. In Brisbane’s Courier-Mail on 20 February 1971, Gorton and the Commonwealth Minister in charge of Aboriginal Affairs, William Wentworth, replied to Bjelke-Petersen’s statement that the Commonwealth was unaware of the problems of Aboriginals. Gorton stated that the Commonwealth (and not the States) had the ‘paramount responsibility’ for Aboriginal people resulting from the 1967 referendum. The Commonwealth Government was also quoted as stating that it wanted ‘co-operation’ and not ‘confrontation’ with Queensland authorities concerning Indigenous legislation.\(^94\) Bjelke-Petersen accused the Prime Minister of ‘bluffing’ in his threat to override the State to eliminate discrimination against Aboriginal people through legislation.\(^95\) Again, on 22 February 1971 in The Australian, Bjelke-Petersen accused the Prime Minister of ‘sheer hypocrisy’, stating that the Commonwealth Government’s attitude towards the administration of Aboriginal affairs was little more than a ‘smokescreen’ to cover its own inactivity and lack of help for Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory (which fell within the Commonwealth’s jurisdiction).\(^96\)

In 1971 both the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments issued a press statement and noted that both the Prime Minister and the Premier indicated a willingness on the part of both Governments to work together in implementation of Indigenous policies. Bjelke-Petersen was in a position to ‘confirm’ to his Minister in charge of Aboriginal affairs that the general lines had already been laid for preparation of ‘draft legislation’ to be introduced at the ‘next session of the Queensland


Parliament'. The Commonwealth OAA provided incentives in the way of an increase of approximately $500,000 more funding to the Queensland Government than the previous year after the State's commitment to introduce new Aboriginal legislation.

The need to avert UN criticism made the Commonwealth anxious about the requirement for Queensland to amend its discriminatory legislation to meet UN expectations. As Chesterman argues, 'it was often international pressure that forced Australian governments to make legislative change'.

The Commonwealth not only pressured States to amend discriminatory legislation, but had to amend its own. The Commonwealth announced that since the State was willing to remove legislation which discriminated against Aborigines, the Federal Minister for Repatriation would introduce legislation in the House of Representatives relating to pensions and other benefits for Torres Strait Islanders and mainland Aborigines who had previously received pensions and benefits under the Native Members of the Forces Act 1957-1968. Australia was keen to be considered a tolerant assimilated nation free of official discriminatory practices. As historian Fletcher concludes, it was international concerns over the Queensland Government's treatment of Aboriginal people that influenced the actions of the Commonwealth Government. However despite pressure from the UN and the need to take part in international politics, the Commonwealth was reluctant to intervene in what was accepted as States' responsibility. On the other hand, Australia had to convince the UN that it 'accommodated' and 'integrated' Australia's Indigenous minorities.
appropriately. As well as the UN expectation that Australia’s discriminatory legislation would be removed from its statutes, pressure was applied by the UN on Australia to legislate to outlaw racial discrimination.

**Racism**

In 1968 Coombs asserted that Australians were ‘ill-equipped by experience to deal with cultural and ethnic diversity’. He stated that it was vital to replace ‘prejudice’ and ‘ignorance’ with ‘knowledge’ and ‘tolerance’ and he suggested that the school was a good place to begin. Coombs explained that a nation’s willingness and capacity to embrace ethnic diversity was a valid test of integrity. Clearly, in Coombs’ opinion, the Commonwealth acknowledged that it did not have an adequate strategy to address Australians’ racism. Furthermore, Coombs was faced with the task to change the mindset held by many non-Aboriginal people. This mindset included beliefs that Aboriginal people were inferior and should be excluded from economic development activity with no recognition of pre-colonial ownership of lands.

The UN upheld the expectation that Australia would take adequate steps to deal with Australia’s Aboriginal populations. The Commonwealth refined its policy in early 1972. In stating that ‘Australia’s determination to deal effectively with [Aboriginal people] in their own society should not be in doubt’, Prime Minister McMahon acknowledged that ‘problems associated with racial differences including poverty, ignorance, prejudice and discrimination which so often go with them were among the most urgent and most difficult in the world today’. He added ‘at a time when the moral indignation of the world was directed at these evils, it was important for Australians’ sense of humanity and for its relations with the rest of the world to address this problem’. McMahon stated that his Government would not allow ‘prejudice’ or

---

104 *Kunmanggur*, No. 6, September 1970, Dr Coombs’s address at Buntine Oration, p. 17.
‘temporary financial difficulties’ to stand in the way of more effective action to deal with these ‘intensely human problems’.\textsuperscript{105} The Commonwealth commitment indicates the extent of the UN’s influence.

Prime Minister McMahon mentioned the Commonwealth Government’s interesting experiments in fields of community development and group economic enterprises. McMahon also claimed that much had already been achieved in health, education, housing, vocational training, placement in employment and in economic development throughout the States. On the other hand, McMahon stressed the need for continued and substantial progress to end ‘racial discrimination’ and ‘reinforce respect, justice, humanity and compassion’ for Aboriginal people.\textsuperscript{106}

\textbf{New Policy}

On 26 January 1972, the Commonwealth Government launched its Australian Aborigines Commonwealth Policy and Achievements. Prime Minister McMahon stated from the beginning:

\begin{quote}
When the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory decided on 27 April last year that Australian law did not recognise Aboriginal title to land in Australia the Government decided to review its policies relating to the Aboriginal people and their aspirations.
\end{quote}

The policy outlined its intention to ‘encourage’ and ‘assist’ Aboriginal people to ‘maintain’ their own culture. It also noted that new policies would take the views of Aboriginal people into consideration, ‘increase’ economic development, ‘reduce’ existing social handicaps, ‘promote’ enjoyment of normal civil liberties and ‘eliminate’

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{105} \textit{Kunmanggur,} No. 8, September, 1971, Statement by the Prime Minister the Right Honourable William McMahon, to the Conference of Commonwealth and State Minister’s responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs in Cairns, 23 April, 1971, pp. 4-8.
\textsuperscript{106} \textit{Kunmanggur,} No. 8, September 1971, pp. 4-8.
\end{flushright}
Clearly the Commonwealth Government was now under the necessary pressure to ensure that it implemented policies to address the needs and rights of its Indigenous minority groups.

In my view, had it not been for the newly shaped UN opinion and awareness about the treatment and condition of Aboriginal people, alleviating suffering and exploitation would not have been considered by the Commonwealth Government. As stated earlier, in 1965, Gough Whitlam argued that the treatment of Aboriginal people endangered Australia’s international reputation. In 1967 Prime Minister Holt mentioned both international and national opinion in relation to Aboriginal people.

As argued earlier, as well as UN expectations and the nature of Governments, the Commonwealth had to please the majority of its voters to ensure it was able to be re-elected and noted that it did not wish to ‘magnify’ the Aboriginal problem.

Census information indicated that Aboriginal populations were increasing at a faster rate than non-Aboriginal people. This information forced the Commonwealth to implement a policy in relation to the need to immediately enhance economic development of Aboriginal populations before it became more of a burden on the nation. Queensland’s Premier remained opposed to any Commonwealth economic development outside of State owned reserves. While both Governments understood the need for land in any economic development equation, the concept of Aboriginal land rights was met with much opposition from the Queensland Government.

While the Commonwealth espoused commitment to working collaboratively with the Queensland Government, Aboriginal people and the UN expected the Federal

---


110 Attwood and Markus, 2007, p. 61.
Government would intervene in States’ administration in Aboriginal affairs following the referendum. International pressure clearly shaped the Commonwealth’s policy, and, as Attwood notes how from the late 1960s, the Commonwealth Government became more involved in Aboriginal affairs because of increasing domestic and international pressure. Attwood also argues that the ‘ongoing apprehensions about international criticism of Australia’s treatment of Aboriginal people’ is what prompted the conservative coalition Government to consider a change of direction in Aboriginal policies. 111 To add to this, Chesterman, political scientist and lawyer argues, the results of the 1967 referendum are often undersold and one is led to believe that Aboriginal people gained civil rights as a result of a ‘slowly developing governmental mindset’ that gradually and simply came to see the ‘existence of racially discriminatory laws as unjust’. 112 Rather, the most significant changes to the civil rights status of Indigenous Australians occurred during a time of ‘enormous change in international law’ and its ‘declarations’ and ‘conventions’ and were prompted by the Federal Government’s fear of ‘international condemnation’. 113

This chapter has highlighted the Commonwealth’s commitment to work cooperatively with the Queensland Government. It also clearly demonstrates that it was growing UN surveillance and criticism that influenced Commonwealth intervention.

The Commonwealth held the 1967 referendum, gave commitments to the UN about removing racist legislation from Australian statutes and eliminating racial discrimination, coerced the Queensland Government to change its 1965 Act, set up both the Office and Council for Aboriginal Affairs and provided funding to Queensland Government for health, education and housing. By 1972, the Commonwealth also

111 Attwood, 2005, p. 25.
113 Chesterman, 2000, pp. 503-504.
began to fund Aboriginal community-based organisations to provide services to Aboriginal people, committed to the removal of discriminatory legislation and outlawing racism and implemented economic development strategies involving Aboriginal land rights. These policies were all devised and implemented despite the Queensland Government’s objections.\textsuperscript{114}

CHAPTER 6

The 1971 Act

Needing to meet UN expectations which included removing all discriminatory legislation from Australian statutes to have conventions ratified, the Commonwealth Government pressured the Queensland Government to amend its 1965 Act. In June 1970, a Queensland Government press statement informed the public that Aboriginal people on reserves throughout Australia could ‘leave at any time’ and that the Commonwealth and Queensland State Governments were committed to co-operating in any future review of legislation that covered Aboriginal welfare.¹ A few months later, the Queensland Government made a commitment to introduce new legislation to replace the 1965 Act.² By April 1971, the two Governments had reached agreement on some key issues such as Aboriginal people’s freedom of movement off as well as public access. To ensure racist provisions were removed from Queensland’s statutes, the Commonwealth Government also successfully urged the repeal of the Queensland Government’s vagrancy laws.³ The result was the Aborigines Act 1971 which was gazetted in 1972. Despite this appealing and hopeful change, this chapter highlights the provisions of the 1971 Act and the use of police to support the implementation of discriminatory by-laws. Described by Patrick Killoran, the Director of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Affairs as the ‘third’ and most probably ‘final’ phase towards the total assimilation of Aboriginal people in Queensland, the newly introduced legislation upheld the Queensland Government’s paternalistic and colonial controls over

² Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 5, Cabinet Minute dated 22 October, 1970. Also as a result of the Queensland Government’s commitment, the Commonwealth OAA subsequently provided DAIA with an unprecedented grant of $42,538,000 in the 1970-71 financial year which was approximately $500,000 more than the previous year.
³ Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 5, Press Statement dated 8 April, 1971. Australia’s commitment to the UN to remove all racist legislation from its statutes is discussed in Chapter 2.
Aboriginal populations. The Government’s tactics under the 1971 Act remained human rights on reserves continued to be denied.

1971 Act

The *Aborigines Act 1971* came into operation on 4 December 1972 and impacted on an estimated 50,000 Aboriginal people in Queensland. According to Nettheim, Australia’s preeminent legal rights academic, Queensland’s 1971 Act was passed quickly with most parliamentarians only having the draft Bill for less than one week for consideration and comment. Non-parliamentarians had less than 7 days to consider the Bill before it was passed. Hewitt, Queensland Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders’ Affairs argued that the State Government had undertaken consultations with the reserve councils about the new legislation.

The 1971 Act was open to criticism on several broad grounds which included a ‘lack of consultation’ an ‘excessive delegation to administration’ and a ‘series of major and minor violations of fundamental Human Rights’. As Fitzgerald argues, Queensland’s 1971 legislation held ‘elements of rush and secrecy’. Despite the rush, the new 1971 Act was not gazetted until late 1972. The new legislation saw officials lose some of their powers which according to Evans freed Indigenous people to move off reserves.

Despite such changes, DAIA bureaucrats continued to wield enormous powers over the lives of Aboriginal people under sections 17 to 28 and 37 to 47 of the 1971

---

5 Nettheim, 1974, p. 15.
8 Fitzgerald, 1984, p. 524.
9 Nettheim, 1974, p. 15.
These sections included provisions for by-laws, discipline on Queensland Government reserves (including Aboriginal courts), revocation of reserve residence or visit permits, administration of Aboriginal people’s estates and controls over property and earnings. Aboriginal inmates had no representation in reserve Courts and bureaucrats controlled the earnings of workers.

The Queensland Government’s new 1971 legislation failed to adequately remove tactics such as property management or restrictions on access to reserves which contravened the UN Declaration of Human Rights. The Australian Government was mindful of the UN expectation and had to work hard at ensuring all racist legislation was removed from its statutes which included Queensland Government’s 1971 Act.

As well as continuing to uphold many of the draconian tactics outlined in Chapter 3, the 1971 Act also facilitated Queensland police presence on reserves for the first time. On 25 May 1971, the State Minister for Aboriginal affairs presented a cabinet minute which made ‘necessary provisions’ for the establishment of ‘civil police powers on Aboriginal and Island reserves’ similar to those exercised in other places.

As outlined by Nettheim, the Minister for Aboriginal and Islander Affairs had stated:

Members of the Police Force of Queensland are granted full exercise of their normal functions on reserves. The reserve area in this regard is treated as any other country town within the State, and the Bill also includes authority for police officers to take any

---

13 Attwood and Markus, 2007, p. 61. FCAATSI and QCAATSI ensured that the UN remained briefed on Aboriginal issues and in particular, Queensland Government’s 1965 and 1971 Acts and breaches of Aboriginal people’s human rights in relation to controls over movement, property and earnings. This occurred at a time when the UN was influential and newly decolonised nations aware of the need to remain watchful over the rights of Indigenous minorities, particularly in settler states like Australia.
14 Aborigines Bill, 24 November, 1971, Official Record of Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard), Third Session of the Thirty-Ninth Parliament, Comprising the Period from the Twenty-Seventh day of July to the Tenth day of December, 1971, Volume 258, Queensland, pp. 2153-2155, Queensland State Archives.
Clearly by 1971 the Queensland Government wanted to tighten its grip on reserve inmates and engaged police to help implement its by-laws.

The adoption of assimilation by the Queensland Government flagged changes in direction for Aboriginal policy in Queensland but it did not prevent the blatant denial of Aboriginal people's human rights by DAIA. As raised earlier, the Queensland Government continued to uphold tactics it would never had used on non-Aboriginal Australians like jailing people for breaching the 1971 Act by-laws including being careless or idle, spreading gossip not cleaning their bins or entering parks the wrong way. Added to this, under the 1971 Act, Queensland police were able to assist bureaucrats to implement these by-laws.

As well as misleading critics about the 1971 Act and its by-laws, Queensland Government bureaucrats denied and ignored the poor health of Aboriginal people on reserves. Despite alarming Aboriginal health statistics, in 1972, the Queensland Minister for Aboriginal Affairs informed the public that following early colonisation 'the structure of Aboriginal society was in most cases severely damaged or destroyed and the Aboriginal population tended to decline quite markedly'. Hewitt boldly suggested that due to the 'unremitting efforts of this and previous Governments' that the early decline of Aboriginal people had been 'halted and reversed'. There was no mention of QIMR research findings, infant mortality of Aboriginal children being six times higher than non-Aboriginal children, malnutrition amongst 50% of children and severe growth retardation of up to 40% of reserve populations, or sadly, that DAIA had mistaken six year old children as healthy three year olds, as discussed in chapter 3.

17 1A/345, QS 505/1, Box 75, Administration General, Policy Native Affairs, File No. 3, Queensland State Archives, copy of letter from Neville Hewitt, Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs to Mr J. E. Hine dated 9 October, 1972.
Not only did Hewitt avoid criticism about poor health of Aboriginal people in the State, he also excluded Aboriginal people from the bauxite mining industry in North Queensland. In 1972, Hewitt reported that Aboriginal reserves were generally free from mining lease commitments which highlights the State Government’s tactics of excising Aboriginal reserve lands to facilitate bauxite mining in North Queensland. The proposal included solutions such as re-including land back into the reserve from which it had been excised once the extraction of minerals was completed.\(^\text{18}\) It was clear that the Queensland Government’s economic development policy only applied to non-Aboriginal industries and people. The exclusion of Aboriginal people and excision of reserve lands from mining leases contradicted the Queensland Government’s commitment to its policy of assimilation.\(^\text{19}\)

As late as 1974, bureaucrats restricted visitors or political lobbying and continued to ignore Aboriginal people’s human rights. In relation to the enhanced publicity that highlighted AAC’s decision to restrict access to reserves, in 1974 Killoran argued that the AAC was concerned that any influx of people (who were not reserve inmates and were possible trade union members, journalists or Aboriginal activists) would only ‘confuse’ reserve inmates.\(^\text{20}\) Restrictions on both visitors and electoral lobbying on reserves continued under the 1971 Act up until 1975.\(^\text{21}\) This ensured Aboriginal people did not enjoy the same rights and privileges as other Australians as espoused by the Queensland Government in relation to its official assimilation policy.

---

\(^{18}\) Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 7, paper titled Land Reserved for Aboriginal Purposes and Placed under the Control of the Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs upon Trust, attachment to Confidential Cabinet Minute Submission No. 15612, Copy no. 18, Decision No. 17541, 4 September, 1972.

\(^{19}\) The Australian, 20 November, 1969 – reference made to there being only 14 Aboriginal workers in the bauxite mining industry in Weipa in the same year.


In 1974, Hewitt wrote to Mr Hodel in response to his enquiry about Queensland Aboriginal people and treatment on reserves. In his reply, Hewitt noted the policy of the Queensland Government was to provide a ‘climate and material background’ and to enable Aboriginal people to ‘contribute fully to the social and economic life of the State wide community’. Hewitt stated that he believed Aboriginal people had a ‘unique contribution’ to make and that he hoped to create a ‘complete equality’.22

The rhetoric espoused by Hewitt did not match what the State Government was doing to Aboriginal people in terms of exclusion from bauxite mining in North Queensland, payment of under-award wages, restrictions on visitors and political lobbying, confiscation of earnings and securing police assistance for the implementation of draconian by-laws on reserves. The Queensland Government attempted to convince people of the benefits of its policy. In 1974, Killoran informed guests at a Public Administration Institute meeting it was ‘unsophisticated in the extreme’ to believe that solutions could be bought and that it was the job of the department to ‘encourage aborigines to become contributors to the general good of society’ and convince non-Aboriginal Queenslanders that ‘aborigines had a unique contribution to make’.23

The Queensland Government loss of controls over reserve inmates under the 1971 Act was a liberating change, particularly those imposed over Aboriginal people’s movement off reserves. This led to an influx of more Aboriginal people into Queensland towns and cities particularly after 1972 when the 1971 Act was gazetted.24
While the Queensland Government was keen to keep reserve inmates isolated, once people moved into Queensland towns and cities, the State was unable to exert total control over who these people shared their stories with or what involvement they had with resistance organisations. Furthermore, as outlined by Paul Richards and Michael Mace, police harassed Aboriginal people in Brisbane particularly in the 1960s and 1970s. Aboriginal people were jailed for loitering in the city. This led to the McMahon Government funding the Aboriginal legal service to ensure representation. Regardless of the funding for the Aboriginal legal service, Aboriginal people continued to be grossly over-represented in the criminal justice system.

**Queensland Government’s legislative amendment**

Despite the Queensland Government’s opposition, the Commonwealth continued to threaten to take over Queensland reserves if the State did not amend the provisions of its 1971 Act. In an attempt to avoid the Commonwealth Government’s threat, the Queensland Government amended its 1971 Act in 1974 to address Commonwealth concerns. As well as facilitating the State Government’s mineral extraction, the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Amendment Act 1974* ensured community councils’ members were elected and no longer appointed by the DAIA. Controls over Aboriginal people’s property and earnings were also lessened but not removed. Aboriginal reserve inmates had to make application to the District Officer to no longer have their earnings and property controlled. Applications had to be witnessed by Justices of the Peace under the *Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Amendment Act 1974*.²⁵ Despite Queensland Government amendments, the State still controlled...
Aboriginal workers’ earnings and property with the use of DAIA’s Welfare Fund and kept deceased workers’ property until 1979.\textsuperscript{26}

As well as amendments to the 1971 Act and opposition to Commonwealth policies of land rights and economic development, the Commonwealth threat to take over Queensland reserves saw the State Government also pass legislation to control bauxite mining on Government reserves. Queensland authorities introduced legislation to protect bauxite deposits on Aurukun on 4 December, 1975.\textsuperscript{27} This legislation provided approval and security for extraction of bauxite at Aurukun and Weipa and the creation of special bauxite mining leases.\textsuperscript{28} The Queensland Government secured its control over bauxite mining in the face of threats by the Commonwealth of intervention by introducing the \textit{Aurukun Associated Agreement Act} in 1975.\textsuperscript{29} As Venn observes, this is an example of the treatment of those colonised and the ‘counter-history’ of pauperization and that ‘Political power can be seen to be bound up with devices and strategies that are both discursive and material, put in place to secure accumulation and inequality in its many forms’.\textsuperscript{30} Even with the Queensland Government’s attempts at amending its 1971 Act to avoid Commonwealth intervention, the Commonwealth finally introduced over-riding legislation in 1975.\textsuperscript{31}

While the 1971 Act was an improvement on the 1965 Act, provisions such as exploitation of Aboriginal workers and earnings breached human rights and continued to attract unwanted criticism. Added to this, the implementation of draconian by-laws

\textsuperscript{26} de Plevitz, 1998, pp. 148-153.
\textsuperscript{28} Donovan, 2004, p. 261.
\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Aurukun Associated Agreement Act} 1975, p. 817.
\textsuperscript{30} Venn, 2009, p. 208 and p. 213.
on reserves was supported by Queensland police under the 1971 Act. The inability of the Queensland Government to hold Aboriginal people on reserves against their will, led to their influx into towns and cities and the subsequent expansion of Aboriginal organisations to support Aboriginal families. As Rowley argues, despite Governments’ commitments to assimilation, many non-Aboriginal people were unhappy about the Aboriginal presence in towns and cities. Another factor that coincided with the population shift of Aboriginal people was complaints about police harassment and brutality. Added to this was the post-referendum census data that confirmed the dramatic over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system.

Contesting the Act

By 1971, activism had spread throughout Queensland and resistance organisations had been formed. The Queensland Government continued to come under pressure from various groups including the FCAATSI and QCAATSI. In response to growing criticism about the Queensland Government’s treatment of Queensland Aboriginal reserve residents, Hewitt, Queensland’s Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders’ Affairs, argued that:

Aboriginal reserve lands are for all Aboriginal people collectively;
Vesting trusteeship in the Director of Aboriginal and Island affairs provides a ‘safeguard’ and the Director is required to account to the Auditor-General;
Aboriginal reserve residents benefit from general State funds to a greater degree than do other residents and thus are both legislatively and administratively viewed in the list of being a ‘special class’.


33 Fitzgerald estimates that between 1968 and 1971 40% off all people arrested in Queensland were Aboriginal (refer Fitzgerald, 1984, p. 529 and Cunneen in Hocking collection notes the ‘criminalization’ of Aboriginal people, Hocking, Barbara, (ed), Unfinished Constitutional Business, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2005, p. 49,

In 1972, Killoran criticised what he described as the ‘considerable expansion of interest in the affairs of Aborigines and Islanders’. Killoran reported that Aboriginal citizens were being subjected to a ‘massive campaign’ intended to influence their thoughts and actions.\(^{35}\) Killoran criticised Aboriginal people opposed to Queensland Government policies and described them as ‘professional’ or ‘pseudo Aborigines’.\(^{36}\) Aboriginal activists’ opposition to Queensland Government’s Indigenous policies was described as ‘radical’ or ‘subversive’ by Killoran.\(^{37}\) By dismissing ‘radical’ or ‘subversive’ activities or advice, the State Government did not have to listen to Aboriginal people outside of its own reserve councils and Aboriginal Advisory Committee (AAC). The Queensland Government continued its strategy and went to great lengths to ensure Aboriginal reserve inmates, councillors and the AAC were deliberately isolated from people outside of DAIA’s control. DAIA also continued to shield itself from growing criticism by limiting its consultations and dealings to the AAC.

In 1972 Killoran reported a ‘growing political awareness’ amongst Queensland’s Aboriginal populations and defended the AAC. Killoran argued that Queensland Government’s AAC had been consulted and regularly provided advice to DAIA on legislation. Killoran also noted that by-laws were necessary to help administer the assistance his Department provided to Aboriginal people.\(^{38}\)

According to DAIA and the Queensland Minister for Aboriginal affairs, AAC did not support inmates having visitors on reserves. Killoran argued that AAC was opposed to Aboriginal land rights and were supportive of the Queensland Government’s


\(^{38}\) Queensland Annual Report 1972, pp. 2-3. As discussed in Chapter 3, these by-laws included provisions that made sure reserve inmates entered parks through gates provided for that purpose, washed their bins and were not insolent, idle or careless.
legislation, by-laws and policies. Interestingly however, in 1972, when the AAC attended the National Conference of Aboriginal Advisory Councillors, convened by the Commonwealth Minister for Environment, Aborigines and the Arts in Canberra, representatives expressed ‘strong and unanimous support’ for the people moved from ‘Old Mapoon’ and asked that ‘the State and Commonwealth Governments assist those people, who wished to do so, to return there’. AAC members also complained about the payment of ‘low wages’ to Aboriginal workers and demanded that ‘full and proper wages be paid to Aboriginal and Islander workers on missions, settlements and cattle stations throughout Australia’. Payment of unemployment benefits was demanded by the AAC as well as the need for ‘justice’ which they felt was not being administered on Queensland reserves. AAC members also agreed that ‘there was a need for representation of Aborigines living off missions and settlements in Queensland at national conferences’ and that ‘all adult Aborigines and Islanders be eligible to vote for representatives without Government interference’. Furthermore, this strongly suggests AAC members knew that what DAIA was doing was unjust.

It is revealing that the AAC had ‘spoken out’ at this forum, particularly when DAIA bureaucrats were not present to record proceedings or to intimidate members.

39 Queensland Annual Report of the Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs for the year ending 30 June 1974, Government Printer, Brisbane, 1974, pp. 2-4 and Premier Bjelke-Petersen noted in the press that the AAC was opposed to Land Rights, refer copy of article in The Australian, dated 21 September, 1974 contained in Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 8, SRS 1043/1/1586, File No. 275, Item No. 539359, Queensland State Archives.

30 pNAT, National Conference of Aboriginal Advisory Councillors, Convened by the Minister for Environment, Aborigines and the Arts at Canberra, 10-11 August, 1972, Proceedings, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, 323.119.915 PRO, p. 13. Notes of proceedings do not list who raised what issues, it is recorded as Queensland delegates suggested. The list of members who attended the Conference included: Mr H. Tanner, Mr T. Geia, Mr J. Hobson, Mr J. Tamwoy, Mr J. Johnson, Mr G. Pablo, Mr D. Mamoose, Mr F. Yunkaporta, Mr P. Coleman, Mr H. Gregory, Mr D. Brookdale, Mr E. Decral, Mr B. Yarrie, Mr R. Livingstone, Mr S. Chong, Mr T. Nona, Mr G. Lui and Mr G. Mye.

41 pNAT, National Conference of Aboriginal Advisory Councillors, 1972, Canberra, p. 15.

42 pNAT, National Conference of Aboriginal Advisory Councillors, 1972, Canberra, p. 16.

43 pNAT, National Conference of Aboriginal Advisory Councillors, 1972, Canberra, p. 9 and p. 17.
Furthermore, if AAC provided advice the Queensland Government did not support or agree to as mentioned earlier, DAIA would have either ignored or not supported or reported it. Queensland Government rights of veto over AAC decisions and elections together with deliberate isolation from outsiders as well as implementation of draconian by-laws were effective methods of control over the lives of Aboriginal people.

The Queensland Government simply denied the Federal Government’s criticism of the State’s discriminatory 1971 Act. On 13 March 1973, Hewitt wrote to Bjelke-Petersen about the Prime Minister’s threat to legislate on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland if State Government authorities refused to amend its 1971 legislation. Hewitt supported Bjelke-Petersen’s decision to notify Commonwealth authorities that racist provisions within the Queensland Government’s legislation and by-laws were not discriminatory. Hewitt also noted that the AAC itself agreed with Queensland authorities that the 1971 legislation was not discriminatory. Furthermore, since the Queensland Government alleged that the AAC was not in support of amendments to 1971 legislation, Hewitt stated that any amendments would equate to the ‘betrayal’ of the wishes of the Queensland Government’s Aboriginal representative body.\(^{44}\) The Premier was also keen to use AAC advice as the reason for not changing legislation or embracing economic development of Aboriginal people.\(^ {45}\) The Queensland Government used its policy to assure the non-Aboriginal population of a new approach to Aboriginal people but at the same time, to maintain discriminatory and draconian tactics. The Queensland Government openly excluded Aboriginal people from economic development and maintained rights of veto over reserve councils and


\(^{45}\) Premier Bjelke-Petersen noted in the press that AAC was opposed to Land Rights, refer *The Australian*, 21 September, 1974.
AAC decisions and nominations. When this attracted criticism, the Queensland Government stubbornly insisted that its legislation was not discriminatory.

In 1973, Killoran reiterated the important role that the AAC played in the administration of Aboriginal affairs. Killoran accused sympathetic non-Aboriginal people of ‘intellectual paternalism’ and noted that this was as ‘dangerous’ as previous policies. In 1973 after criticism from the Commonwealth about Queensland Government racist legislation, Bjelke-Petersen wrote to Prime Minister Whitlam and argued that the Queensland Government did not consider the provisions of the 1971 legislation were discriminatory. Bjelke-Petersen also provided documentation concerning AAC support for the 1971 legislation. The AAC consisted of people who were under constant and close scrutiny by DAIA bureaucrats, denied the right to receive visitors or daily newspapers, enjoyed no access to election campaigns and had limited access to health care, education, electricity and public libraries. The Queensland Government’s denial of reserve residents’ access to outsiders (including visitors, political lobbyists or Aboriginal activists) would have helped to keep AAC members isolated or simply not in a position to gain exposure to international, national and UN expectations like Kath Walker, Charles Perkins, Don Brady and other Aboriginal workers and members of organisations like FCAATSI, QCAATSI and NTC. Given the comments made by AAC members at the 1972 National Conference of Aboriginal Advisory Councillors in Canberra as mentioned earlier, it is not surprising that Killoran and DAIA wanted to keep AAC and reserve council members isolated.

By the 1970s, despite Queensland Government’s attempts at isolating Aboriginal reserve inmates and avoiding Commonwealth surveillance, it was obvious and

indisputable that residing on Queensland Government reserves was the cause of much ill health, poverty, subjugation and exploitation. The Queensland Government criticised allegations of State Government interference from Charles Perkins and Senator Keeffe. \(^{49}\) The Premier stated that

I have also seen and heard claims by Senator Keeffe, Mr Charles Perkins and Mr Dennis Walker about Palm Island, about takeovers and exploitation as a tourist resort and about bloodbaths if the people are moved off the islands. These claims are a deliberate attempt to incite violence and these three men are guilty of attempting to use the Palm Island people for their own political ends. ..... This appears to go further than the principle of reasonable participation by Aborigines in the conduct of their affairs. Such words carry a ‘black power’ connation and a separatist flavour that suggests an Australian version of apartheid. \(^{50}\)

While the Premier accused Perkins, Keeffe and Walker, in the same year, an ABC reporter and cameraman went to Palm Island and took photos pointed out by Palm Island residents, Iris Clay and Bill Rosser, which according to Val Donovan, led to the Queensland Government’s sacking of Fred Clay and the Palm Island Reserve Council. Issues highlighted on Palm Island included filthy public toilets, unhygienic food handling, shortages of food and evidence of the sly grog trade. \(^{51}\) The Queensland Government dissolved the community council on Palm Island in 1974 and in the same year Bjelke-Petersen called for all ‘outsiders’ to leave Palm Island people alone until they had elected a new community council. \(^{52}\)

The Queensland Government, after pressure from the Commonwealth, had replaced the 1965 Act and introduced new legislation in 1971 which was gazetted in 1972. In 1972, in response to the new legislation, QCAATSI produced a pamphlet


\(^{50}\) Queensland Journals of Parliament Session of 1974, pp. 171-173.

\(^{51}\) Donovan, 2004, p. 197.

\(^{52}\) Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 8, copy of newspaper clipping, the Courier Mail dated 7 September, 1974. Sly grog trade involved the illegal sale of alcohol to reserve inmates at inflated rates.
informing the public about the racist provisions contained in the 1971 Act and its associated regulations which exploited workers and confiscated earnings.\textsuperscript{53}

Resolutions carried during the FCAATSI Conference in 1973 included demands that the State Government appoint Queensland Aboriginal advisors to confer with the Minister of the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the Queensland Government and Mr Bryant (Commonwealth Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) about the abolition of the *Queensland Aborigines Act 1971*.\textsuperscript{54}

FCAATSI persisted with complaints about the Queensland Government’s 1971 Act and in particular its breaches of human rights. In 1974 a letter signed by Lambert McBride, Queensland Secretary of FCAATSI, Mrs Celia Smith, Secretary of QCAATSI, Mrs May McBride, Publicity Officer, and Mrs Hazel Mace, Executive Officer of QCAATSI, challenged Queensland Government regulations. QCAATSI members noted how they were unable to visit relatives residing on Queensland reserves.\textsuperscript{55}

At the FCAATSI Executive Meeting held in Townsville in April 1974, it was agreed that Neville Bonner, Australia’s first Aboriginal Senator, would be approached to intervene on behalf of Queensland Aboriginal peoples to urge Premier Bjelke-Petersen to remove the 1971 Act.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{53} pQUE, QCAATSI, Why we ask you to stop work on Wednesday June 5, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, undated article concerning Queensland 1971 Act and associated regulations.

\textsuperscript{54} MS 3759, Series 11, Item 11, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, copy of Resolutions carried during the Annual Conference of FCAATSI held in Brisbane April 1973.

\textsuperscript{55} MS 3759, Series 2, Item 19, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, copy of letter sent to the Editor of the *Courier Mail*, 29 April, 1974 and mailed 30 April, 1974.

\textsuperscript{56} Ms 3759, Series 1, Item 5, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, copy of notes of FCAATSI Executive Meeting, Townsville, 15 April, 1974. Neville Bonner was a member of the Jagara group from the area now known as Brisbane and was the first Aboriginal person to sit in Federal Parliament as Senator for Queensland from 1971 to 1983. Bonner was born in 1922 on the Tweed River attended school and worked as a stockman throughout Queensland. He married in 1943 and lived on Palm Island.
FCAATSI hoped for the elimination of the Queensland Government’s 1971 Act and its discriminatory provisions and by-laws.\(^{57}\) At the FCAATSI 1974 Conference in Townsville, reports of injustice in Queensland continued with observations made about there being a lot of ‘law’ but not too much ‘justice’.\(^{58}\)

In 1974, in response to concerns, Evelyn Scott, FCAATSI General Secretary, wrote to Prime Minister Whitlam asking him to eliminate the clauses in the *Queensland Aborigines Act 1971* which discriminated against Aboriginal people. Cavanagh advised FCAATSI that the Government had introduced a general Racial Discrimination Bill which would be introduced for the third time during the present session. Cavanagh also informed Mrs Scott that the Government intended to introduce legislation to over-ride provisions of the Queensland legislation which were ‘objectional in terms of human rights’ and that this was being drafted as a matter of urgency.\(^{59}\)

Fear amongst inmates, reserve council and AAC members was probably instilled by DAIA bureaucrats about the growing popularity of Aboriginal autonomy and black power.\(^{60}\) In 1974, Aboriginal Pastor, Don Brady travelled to Cherbourg to meet with inmates and discuss their liberation and human rights. However, when he arrived on the outskirts he was met with a barricade involving AAC and reserve council members who urged him to turn around.\(^{61}\) Perhaps reserve council and AAC members felt it more appropriate to intercept Pastor Brady and to use whatever methods they would have

---

\(^{57}\) Ms 3759, Series 1, Item 5, Papers of FCAATSI, copy of notes of FCAATSI Executive Meeting, Townsville, 15 April, 1974.

\(^{58}\) MS 3759, Series 6, Item 15, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, *Black News No. 7*, 21 March, 1974.

\(^{59}\) MS 3759, Series 30, Item 3, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, copy of letter from J.L. Cavanagh, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on behalf of the Prime Minister to Mrs Evelyn Scott, General Secretary (FCAATSI), copy dated 4 November, copy of letter from Mrs E. Scott to Prime Minister Whitlam dated 23 April, 1974.

\(^{60}\) The concept of Black Power is examined in Chapter 13.

devised over many year of residing under the Queensland Government's regime. Aboriginal activism that openly challenged the power relations between coloniers and colonised had not been witnessed by residents and were possibly not seen as the best way to deal with the need for liberation. From my visits to Cherbourg in the 1970s, there was much fear expressed about 'black power'. By isolating reserve inmates from Aboriginal people and particularly those involved with organisations like FCAATSI or NTC, the Queensland Government continued to attempt to ensure 'radical' or 'subversive' ideas did not enter and take hold on reserves. Despite Queensland Government's efforts, and given the 1971 Act freed up movement off reserves into towns and cities, the Queensland Government was inevitably fighting a losing battle. Michael Mace recalls how Black American magazines discussing civil rights matters were being distributed throughout Brisbane and Cherbourg as early as the 1950s. Mace also mentioned that he spent his childhood helping his parents sneak inmates on and off Cherbourg. 62

Gordon Bryant reported on both the treatment and condition of Aboriginal people on Queensland reserves and towns in regional areas. Unacceptable laws on reserves, resentment towards Aboriginal people in Queensland and the need for housing for Aboriginal families were issues highlighted by Bryant. Bryant also knew that the 1971 Act contained provisions in relation to confiscation of Aboriginal workers’ earnings. At the 1974 Annual Conference, FCAATSI presented a paper concerning Queensland’s Aboriginal Legislation (1971 Act) in relation to wills and estates. FCAATSI argued that Aboriginal people’s monies are transferred to the Aborigines’ Welfare Fund which prompted questions about why Aboriginal people’s monies were put into Queensland Government accounts. Discussion centred around restrictions on

---

Aboriginal inheritance. FCAATSI also presented a report on Queensland’s 1971 Act and in particular this legislation being open to exploitation by Government District Officers and other administrators of Aboriginal people’s money. FCAATSI urged the Commonwealth to over-ride Queensland’s Indigenous legislation and continued to lobby for reform in Queensland.

McMahon’s commitment in 1972 to outlaw racism, remove discriminatory legislation from Australian statutes and embrace Aboriginal land rights and economic development, soon created friction with the Queensland Government over provisions of the 1971 Act. This opposition to the 1971 Act and strong commitment to UN and anti-discrimination was also taken up by the Whitlam Government in late 1972. By 1973 the Whitlam Government was threatening to introduce over-riding legislation in Queensland if the State Government did not amend the 1971 Act and remove discriminatory provisions.

The International Commission of Jurists applied pressure to the Queensland Government and noted that the State’s laws had attracted criticism for many years. Jurists urged Queensland authorities not to implement regulations that controlled Aboriginal property, earnings and movement under the 1971 Act and asked the State to await the outcome of Garth Nettheim’s findings in relation to the ways in which the new legislation breached UN Human Rights provisions. Regardless, the Queensland Government knowingly pressed on with its 1971 Act and its associated by-laws which breached the human rights of Aboriginal peoples.

63 MS 3759, Series 11, Item 12, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Studies, Canberra, 1974 Annual Conference on Aboriginal Affairs, Queensland Aboriginal Legislation report on Wills and Estates by Frances H. Lovejoy. Deceased Aboriginal estates were managed by the DAIA until 1979, de Plevitz, 1998, pp. 143-158.

64 MS 3759, Series 11, Item 12, 1974 FCAATSI Annual Conference Report on Queensland Legislation by Ruth Kaplan.

The Commonwealth Government’s need to eliminate discriminatory legislation to meet UN requirements clearly remained strong. In 1974, the Commonwealth Government again attempted to convince the Queensland Government to amend its 1971 Act. Cavanagh, the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, commented that Bjelke-Petersen’s unreasonable attitude contributed to Queensland’s reputation as a racist State.66 Following a visit to Queensland in 1974, Cavanagh described Queensland’s Premier as a ‘stumbling block’ in terms of the Federal takeover of Aboriginal affairs.67

The Commonwealth continued to threaten to introduce legislation to over-ride Queensland’s 1971 Act and take control of Queensland’s reserves. In The Australian on 1 March 1973, Bjelke-Petersen accused the Federal Government of attempting to create a system of ‘apartheid’ in Queensland. He claimed that a proposed Federal takeover of the State’s Aboriginal reserves would lead to ‘segregation’ and ‘racism’.68 In background to a press release, the Commonwealth Government’s DAA justified the need to introduce legislation to over-ride the Queensland 1971 Act by stating that the ‘hostility’ of the Queensland Government to ‘efforts’ by the Australian Government to legislate to improve the conditions under which the Queensland Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders live and are governed has less to do with political ideology than States’ Rights.69 Bjelke-Petersen accused the Federal Government of ‘standover tactics’ and

69 M5039, 2010, 1, Department of Aboriginal Affairs File, National Archives of Australia.
stated that Queensland had no intention of handing over its control of Aboriginal
affairs.70

On 6 June, 1973, both the Courier Mail and The Australian reported that
Queensland State Cabinet had rejected a request from Prime Minister Whitlam to hand
control of Queensland Aboriginal people to the Federal Government.71 Queensland’s
Premier could no longer sustain an argument that the 1971 legislation was not
discriminatory. In an attempt to avert growing criticism, Hewitt argued that if the
Commonwealth Government thought the Queensland Government was racist it meant
that the AAC was also racist.72 In 1974, the Queensland Government argued that the
AAC did not support Aboriginal land rights or the need to change the 1971 legislation.
The Queensland Premier subsequently expressed anger at the news that the
Commonwealth was threatening to take over the State’s 16 Aboriginal reserves and
continued to use AAC support as a defence.73

Hewitt remained critical of the Commonwealth’s label of Queensland
Aboriginal legislation as racist. In 1975, Bjelke-Petersen wrote to the Prime Minister
and stated that the AAC was assisting with the ‘achievement of social growth levels
comparable with those of other citizens of Queensland and Australia’ and, ‘ensuring an
equal sharing by Aborigines of the benefits and responsibilities attached to the

---

70 Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 8, copy of press clipping, The Australian dated 15

71 Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 8, copy of press clipping, Courier Mail article dated 6

72 Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 8, copy of press clipping, Courier Mail dated 12
September, 1974.

73 Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 8, copy of press clipping, The Australian dated 21
September, 1974.
Despite Queensland Government’s objections, the Commonwealth continued to publicly threaten to take over Queensland reserves.\(^{75}\)

**Commonwealth take-over of Queensland Reserves**

The Queensland Government’s refusal to amend its discriminatory 1971 Act saw Prime Minister Whitlam threaten Premier Bjelke-Petersen that the Commonwealth would take-over reserves and over-ride Queensland’s racist legislation. *The Australian* reported that Whitlam was going ahead with a take-over of Aboriginal people in Queensland despite its [Queensland’s] rebuff the previous week.\(^{76}\) In 1974 the *Courier Mail* reported that the Federal Government reported moves to take-over land for Aboriginal people in Queensland. In the same year, the Federal Government announced its plans to take over all Aboriginal reserves in Queensland and implement land rights for 33,000 Aboriginal people who lived on them.\(^{77}\) In a press release in 1974, Dr Everingham noted that Queensland was the only State in Australia that had refused to discuss Aboriginal land rights and described Queensland as a ‘tyranny-ridden State’.\(^{78}\)

On 13 January 1973, Gough Whitlam wrote to Bjelke-Petersen expressing concerns about the way that Aboriginal people on Queensland reserves (like Palm Island) were expected to live. Whitlam suggested a meeting between State and Federal Ministers responsible for Aboriginal Affairs administration in Queensland. Whitlam wrote to the Premier and listed issues such as Aboriginal title and economic development on Queensland Government reserves. Self-government for reserve

---

\(^{74}\) Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 9, Series 1043/1589, Box 520, File No. 275, Part 9, Queensland State Archives, Premier Bjelke-Petersen to Prime Minister Whitlam, copy of letter dated 8 May, 1975.

\(^{75}\) 5039, 2010, 1, Department of Aboriginal Affairs File, National Archives of Australia.


\(^{78}\) A5039, Department of Aboriginal Affairs File, Item 1, National Archives of Australia.
communities and economic enterprises was also raised by Whitlam.\textsuperscript{79} Whitlam urged Queensland authorities to remove discriminatory provisions and consider Indigenous tenure and governance over Queensland Government reserves as matters to be discussed. Again, in 1973, Whitlam wrote to Bjelke-Petersen asking for advice on how his Government intended to change the 1971 Act and remove racist provisions pertaining to the need for property management.\textsuperscript{80} In 1973, Gordon Bryant (Commonwealth Minister for Aboriginal affairs) urged Queensland officials to give Aboriginal people title to their own lands and control over their own affairs.\textsuperscript{81} The Queensland Government continued to argue that the provisions of its 1971 legislation were not racist and that its Indigenous representative body, the AAC supported its view. Minister Hewitt argued that any amendments to the 1971 Act would equate to the ‘betrayal’ of the wishes of the State’s Aboriginal Advisory Committee (AAC).\textsuperscript{82} Despite this, the Commonwealth continued to urge Queensland to amend its legislation so that it was then able to ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination.\textsuperscript{83}

Despite the Queensland Government’s willingness to co-operate, the provisions of the 1971 Act continued to attract State, national and international criticism. By 1975 the Commonwealth was determined to address the 1971 Act by either convincing the Queensland Government to amend it or by introducing over-riding legislation. The Commonwealth was in a bind given the UN expectation that it would introduce

\textsuperscript{82} As highlighted in Chapter 3, Premier Bjelke-Petersen reported to the press that the AAC was opposed to Land Rights, \textit{The Australian}, 21 September, 1974. Minister Hewitt also stated that any amendments to the 1971 legislation would equate to the betrayal of the wishes of the AAC, Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File, Part 8, Hewitt, Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs to Premier Bjelke-Petersen, copy of letter dated 13 March, 1973.
\textsuperscript{83} Whitlam, 1985, p. 467.
legislation to outlaw racism. The Commonwealth had to remove discriminatory legislation from its statutes first, and then the Queensland Government’s 1971 Act. Furthermore, the Commonwealth was conscious of UN scrutiny, while resistance organisations like FCAATSI and QCAATSI strengthened relationships with the UN and international organisations and continued to highlight Queensland Government’s discriminatory tactics.
CHAPTER 7

Whitlam in Queensland

At the federal election of December 1972, the Australian Labor Party won Government. The new Government, headed by Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, hoped to protect Aboriginal people’s interests, implement Aboriginal land rights, remove racist legislation, outlaw racism and establish a national Aboriginal representative body. Between 1972 and 1975, the Whitlam Government established the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee (NACC); ensured Aboriginal people accessed Department of Social Security benefits, and provided funds to enhance housing, accommodation, health and education for Aboriginal people. It also established an inquiry into the question of land rights and passed the Racial Discrimination Act 1975. This chapter focuses on the attempts by the Commonwealth Government to implement its self-determination policy from late 1972 with the election of the Whitlam Government until its dismissal in 1975 and draws attention to some of the complications and contradictions. It also considers the Government’s introduction of legislation to over-ride the Queensland Government’s 1971 Act.

The adoption of a policy of self-determination was another strategy by which the Commonwealth hoped to both avoid UN criticism and address its concerns. Attwood argues that this policy was introduced at a time when Australia was confronted by the need to redefine its national identity. It realised that its racial policies and practices were attracting increasing criticism from post-colonial nation states, and that the influx of post World War II non-British migrants highlighted the need for a new historical narrative for Australia.\(^1\) Attwood also asserts that the Commonwealth Government realised that Aboriginal culture and art was becoming a ‘valuable commodity’ while the

\(^1\) Attwood, 2005, pp. 20-22.
study of archaeology and anthropology helped Australia find its ‘ancientness’ and informed its new national heritage.²

Castellino and Gilbert describe self-determination as ‘the most romantic of rights within the human rights agenda’ and argue that the term self-determination creates ‘confusion’ and that there is ‘considerable ambiguity’ regarding the principle outside the scope of the ‘traditional decolonization agenda’.³ The Commonwealth was obviously attempting to highlight a change in the country’s focus in relation to Aboriginal people. However, the policy of self-determination, while it meant much to newly decolonised nations, meant much less in the Australian domestic situation. Australia’s policy of self-determination had nothing to do with the decolonisation of Aboriginal people. As Griffiths argues, self-determination as defined by Whitlam equated to ‘Aboriginal participation in making policies and in decisions about their progress that affect them and about their future’.⁴ Furthermore, as Rowley argues, while policies may change the general philosophy and nature of policies and practices do not.⁵ This policy informed the removal of discriminatory legislation, outlawed racial discrimination, funded Aboriginal organisations, established a formal national Aboriginal consultative mechanism and investigated processes for Aboriginal land rights. As Anthropologist David Martin argues, the Commonwealth Government’s new policy of self-determination soon developed into political embarrassment.⁶

---

⁴ Griffiths, 2006, p. 36.
The Commonwealth attempted to address a range of issues to tackle Aboriginal disadvantage and avert UN criticism. The first was to continue to remove racist legislation from Australian statutes. On 7 January 1973, the Minister for Immigration, the Honourable A.J. Grassby, announced the removal of racist components of the Commonwealth Government's Migration Act (Section 64) which required permits for Aboriginal people to leave Australia.\(^7\) The Commonwealth acknowledged that this law represented a 'hangover from colonial times' and described it as 'offensive to aboriginal people ...'.\(^8\) As well as removing its own discriminatory legislative provisions, in March 1973 Gordon Bryant, Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs called for the Queensland Government to repeal its 1971 Indigenous legislation. The Queensland Government was threatened that if it did not amend its legislation, that the Commonwealth would exercise its power to legislate to overrule Queensland's Indigenous legislation and make it 'unusable'.\(^9\) The Commonwealth Government continued to pressure the Queensland Government to amend its 1971 Act. The Commonwealth expressed concerns about Queensland's reputation as a 'racist state'.\(^10\)

As discussed in chapter 5, after the referendum the Commonwealth Bureau of Statistics enhanced its collection, collation and analysis of data in relation to Aboriginal people. This led to measurement of the suffering of Aboriginal people and in comparison to non-Aboriginal people. This data also predicted the growth rates of Aboriginal populations across the country. Evidence-based research outcomes

---


continued to create problems for DAIA bureaucrats and the Premier of Queensland. In April 1974 the Queensland Government noted the Commonwealth’s isolation of Aboriginal people for research data production and argued that it did not view this favourably.\textsuperscript{11} Perhaps Queensland authorities knew and understood that data concerning Aboriginal people highlighted deficiencies in Governments’ (and particularly Queensland) policies and programs which would have attracted more unwanted scrutiny and criticism. The Queensland Government was clearly embarrassed about its perceived failure and how research findings highlighted the DAIA crisis on reserves. Despite research findings, Queensland authorities continued to argue that its tactics were not discriminatory or unacceptable.

In the 1974/75 financial year, Dr Everingham, Federal Member for Capricorn in Central Queensland, noted that the Woorabinda Hospital was non-operational, housing was poor and laundering and bathing facilities were inadequate.\textsuperscript{12} The Commonwealth Government not only needed to work with the Queensland Government to improve the health of Aboriginal people to avoid embarrassment and UN criticism, but was expected to address land rights, economic development, housing and the need to consult with Aboriginal people about policies impacting on them. In September 1974 Dr Everingham wrote to Jim Cavanagh, Minister for Aboriginal affairs, and informed him that in relation to DAIA staff, ‘.. they are understaffed and the over-worked white staff are in no mood to be social welfare workers’\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{11} Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 8, Confidential Cabinet Submission No. 18196, Copy No. 19, Decision No. 20398, April, 1974.


\textsuperscript{13} A5039, 2010, Item 1, Department of Aboriginal Affairs File, National Archives of Australia.
The Commonwealth provided funding to the Queensland Government regardless of the State’s record of poor administration and treatment of Aboriginal people. Despite objections by the Queensland Government, the Commonwealth Government continued to fund and support evidence-based research in relation to Aboriginal people.

**Opposition to Commonwealth Policy – Aboriginal Land Rights, Housing and Autonomy**

Dr Everingham noted the ‘absence of co-operation’ from the Queensland Government in relation to the provision of Aboriginal land rights.\(^\text{14}\)

In December 1974, Premier Bjelke-Petersen wrote to the United Graziers’ Association of Queensland in response to its concerns about the Commonwealth Government’s policy on Aboriginal land rights. Bjelke-Petersen enclosed a copy of the Commonwealth commissioned Woodward Report and informed the United Graziers that Queensland authorities did not support the report recommendations.\(^\text{15}\) Queensland authorities were aware of the need for land for effective economic development but remained opposed to Aboriginal land rights and associated reports commissioned by the Commonwealth. While the UN expectation and world anti-racism push encouraged the Commonwealth to address economic development land rights and racism towards Indigenous minority populations, it did not influence Queensland authorities.

Regardless of appalling conditions of Aboriginal people both on and off Queensland Government reserves, DAIA bureaucrats remained opposed to Commonwealth efforts, particularly when Federal funding was not provided to the

---

\(^{14}\) A5039, 2010, Item 1, Department of Aboriginal Affairs File, National Archives of Australia.

State. The Commonwealth Government subsequently decided to fund Aboriginal organisations (and not the Queensland Government) specifically for Aboriginal land rights.\(^{16}\) In a press release, Dr Everingham noted that the Queensland Government was the only one in Australia which had refused to discuss the proposition of Aboriginal land rights.\(^{17}\)

As well as opposition to Aboriginal land rights and economic development, the Queensland Government was also concerned about the relationship between Aboriginal groups and the Commonwealth. On 18 August 1972, Bjelke-Petersen wrote to the Prime Minister expressing the Queensland Government’s ‘apprehensions’ and ‘serious concerns’ about the Commonwealth’s ‘apparent support’ to ‘self-appointed militant groups or individuals which assisted them in their objective of extending and gaining publicity for their activities’.\(^{18}\) Clearly Aboriginal resistance was gaining publicity and support and the Queensland Government remained opposed. In 1972 Premier Bjelke-Petersen wrote to the Prime Minister expressing concerns about Commonwealth funding to Aboriginal people:

> You will therefore realise the concern which my Cabinet colleagues and I felt on learning that travel warrants had been issued by the Department of the Interior on Trans Australians Airlines, Brisbane, for travel by Denis Bruce Walker and Donald Brady from Brisbane to Canberra on Saturday 29th July which, of course, was the day immediately preceding the publicly announced demonstration outside Parliament House in Canberra.\(^{19}\)

\(^{16}\) M5039, 2010, Item 1, DAA File (Press Release by Dr Everingham, September, 1974).

\(^{17}\) M5039, 2010, Item 1, DAA File (Press Release by Dr Everingham, September, 1974).


\(^{19}\) Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 7, Premier Bjelke-Petersen to Prime Minister, copy of letter dated 15 August, 1972.
On top of funding Aboriginal organisations, the Commonwealth established DAA offices throughout Queensland. The Queensland Government was unable to contain or exert control over the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) or Aboriginal actions in Queensland in relation to racist legislation, the need for Racial Discrimination legislation, land rights and other solutions supported, encouraged and funded by the Commonwealth.

Commonwealth solutions such as funding Aboriginal Hostels Limited to provide accommodation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in provincial centres throughout Queensland, were not supported by the State Government. In March 1975, Claude Wharton, Queensland Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement wrote to the Premier’s Department concerning the proposed purchase of the Queens Hotel building in Townsville. Wharton expressed concerns about the lack of consideration displayed by the Federal Government’s Aboriginal Hostels Limited for the ‘social affect’ of its activities. Wharton hinted that Commonwealth Government selections were made to create situations of ‘confrontation’ and ‘friction’ amongst non-Aboriginal people and accused the Commonwealth of ‘hindered’ the progress of Aboriginal people instead of ‘helping’ them. What Wharton was concerned about was not that AHL accommodation would ‘hinder’ Aboriginal people, but the criticism it attracted from non-Aboriginal people. Furthermore, the provision of accommodation for Aboriginal people in Queensland towns and cities could have encouraged and supported movement off reserves.

The Queensland Government was also opposed to the Commonwealth elected representative body the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee (NACC). In April

---


21 Aboriginal Welfare File Part 9, Claude Wharton, Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement to Under Secretary of Premier’s Department, copy of letter dated 25 March, 1975.
1975, Killoran wrote to the Premier’s Department in relation to the Commonwealth Government assertion concerning resolutions passed at a Conference in Cairns in October 1974 in relation to Queensland Government legislation. Killoran noted that most participants at the Conference were the Commonwealth Government’s elected National Aboriginal Consultative Congress (NACC) members.22 Premier Bjelke-Petersen subsequently wrote to Prime Minister Whitlam concerning the Commonwealth’s meeting with the NACC and stated that Queensland’s policies were ‘viewed most favourably’ and, ‘regarded successfully by the Aboriginal Advisory Council’. Bjelke-Petersen also stated that the AAC was assisting with the ‘achievement of social growth levels comparable with those of other citizens of Queensland and Australia’ and, ‘ensuring an equal sharing by Aborigines of the benefits and responsibilities attached to the Australian social life’. Bjelke-Petersen added that the ‘resolutions adopted’ in Cairns ‘propose separate laws and isolation from the Australian social structure’, and would ‘significantly’ contribute to ‘the establishment of separate racial communities’. Bjelke-Petersen informed the Prime Minister that ‘attempts to pursue such a path are opposed by the majority of Queensland Reserve residents’. Bjelke-Petersen added that ‘many Aboriginal citizens in Queensland living off reserves’ were also opposed.23

In 1975 Bjelke-Petersen wrote to the Leader of the National Country Party of Australia and described the NACC as a body without ‘recognition or status’ and accused members of the NACC of endeavouring to secure recognition as a virtual

---


‘Parliamentary congress’. By implementing draconian by-laws, exploiting Aboriginal labour, restricting both visitors and political lobbying on Queensland Government reserves, it was DAIA which was contributing to the establishment of separate racial communities. It is interesting that Bjelke-Petersen could use the argument of ‘separateness’ to instill fear and gain support for assimilation as the Queensland Government official policy but at the same time continued to confiscate Aboriginal workers earnings and controlled inmates’ property, earnings and access to visitors.

As discussed, the Queensland Government also conveniently used the AAC to support its tactics, oppose the Commonwealth and reject policies of Aboriginal land rights, economic development, and the establishment of the NACC and AHL. The Queensland Government argued that Commonwealth support should only be provided to reserves through the State Government and not direct to Aboriginal organisations. The Commonwealth push to eliminate suffering, address poor health and disadvantage and provide housing and accommodation for the influx of Aboriginal people into Queensland towns and cities attracted criticism and opposition from the Premier and the Queensland Minister responsible for Aboriginal affairs. At the same time, this demonstrates the level of crisis the Commonwealth was in concerning the scrutiny and expectation of the UN. The Commonwealth needed to convince the UN it was dealing fairly with Aboriginal people.


---

Aboriginal Land Rights

As well as urging the Queensland Government to amend discriminatory legislation, the Federal Government attempted to address Aboriginal land rights to meet UN expectations and lose its discriminatory reputation. In 1973, the Whitlam Government appointed Justice Woodward to enquire into and make recommendations to the Government on ways to implement Aboriginal land rights. The Aboriginal Land Rights Commission Final Report formed part of Woodward’s recommendations which were supported by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Prime Minister. Similarly, to ensure the Commonwealth Government avoided criticism from Australians, DAA highlighted Woodward’s recommendation that argued that cash compensation in the ‘pockets’ of the generations of Aboriginals was no answer to the ‘legitimate’ land claims of a people with a ‘distinct past’ who wanted to maintain their separate identity in the future. Recommendations noted that Aboriginal people should be free to follow their own traditional methods of decision-making. Aboriginal control over Government reserves was also proposed as part of land rights policy as well as rights over mineral exploration and extraction. While these proposed steps would have gained the Commonwealth approval with the UN, Queensland authorities remained bitterly opposed. The Commonwealth had to not only deal with the expectations of the UN as well as organised Aboriginal groups but a hostile Queensland Government and many angry constituents as well. The Commonwealth Government noted how the Queensland Premier refused to discuss Aboriginal land rights.

The Queensland Government continued to object to attempts by the Commonwealth Government to implement Aboriginal land rights in Queensland. Bjelke-Petersen wrote to Senator Cavanagh, Commonwealth Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, stating that Queensland authorities were completely opposed to what is known as Aboriginal land rights and could not agree with the findings of the Commonwealth Government’s Woodward Commission in this regard. In 1974, Dr Everingham argued that the Australian Government would help by handing Aboriginal people title to their traditional lands.

In May 1974, Commonwealth authorities reported the Woodward Aboriginal Land Rights Commission Second Report. In short, the Commonwealth Government planned to commence comprehensive consultations with Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. Whitlam notified Bjelke-Petersen that he was going to list Aboriginal land rights for discussion at the forthcoming Premiers’ Conference. In 1974 the Prime Minister also sought a response from the Queensland Government on the State’s plans for Aboriginal land rights. It is difficult to understand why the Queensland Government needed to hold on to reserves and not entertain the possibility of Aboriginal people taking control. Perhaps it was the fear of losing mineral wealth, given Weipa Mapoon and Aurukun reserves’ bauxite deposits had provided economic advantages to the State in previous years. Alternatively the Queensland Government may have not wanted to give up its access to pools of cheap labour especially on reserves. Furthermore, DAIA may have needed to continue to access and control


30 M5039, Item 1, DAA file.


32 Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 8, Prime Minister Whitlam to Premier Bjelke-Petersen, copy of letter dated 22 May, 1974.
Aboriginal workers’ earnings and property, particularly those fortunate to access award wages. While the Commonwealth Government battled the Queensland Government over its exploitation of Aboriginal workers, it continued its Aboriginal land rights proposal.

In 1974, Senator Cavanagh, Federal Minister for Aboriginal affairs attempted to contact Queensland officials to discuss the outcomes of the Woodward Land Rights Commission and how these could be implemented in the States. The second reading of the Aboriginal Land Fund Bill 1974 was ‘... second in a series of 4, that ‘the Government planned to bring down to ensure that Aboriginal communities would be able to obtain land and, among other things, develop the economic potential of that land as they wished’. This policy also involved the establishment of an Aboriginal Land Fund and Aboriginal Enterprise Fund for assistance by way of loans or grants. The third stage involved the incorporation of Aboriginal Councils and Associations and the final stage involved the hand-over of reserve lands.

In 1974, people met with Senator Cavanagh in Weipa about the possibility of Commonwealth assistance for people returning to the former Mapoon reserve. Iris Clay from Palm Island urged Senator Cavanagh to use the Commonwealth’s constitutional powers to grant Aboriginal people land rights in Queensland. Clay

37 MS 3759, Series 6, Item 15, Papers of FCAATSI, Black News Service, Volume 1, No. 2, 1975, p. 7. The Queensland Government ordered no further support be provided to Mapoon Mission and its people to discourage Aboriginal people from residing there to make way for bauxite mining. By 1963 houses were run down and people were suffering. Premier Nicklin arranged for armed police to enter Mapoon in the middle of the night and marched families into a mission hut where they were held until dawn. Houses were demolished and burned, with all of their belongings demolished and destroyed. Mapoon people were sent to Bamaga, The Aboriginal Advancement League (AAL) in Cairns notified people throughout Australia about the plight of the Mapoon people, Kidd, 1997, pp. 221-223.
sought clarification from Cavanagh as to why the Commonwealth would not set Mapoon as an Aboriginal land rights precedent. Cavanagh replied that there were more groups in Queensland other than Mapoon and the Commonwealth was reluctant to set any precedents.\(^{38}\) The Commonwealth Government’s fear of precedent as well as the need for State co-operation prevailed over the rights and interests of Aboriginal people.

The Commonwealth’s attempts at incorporating Aboriginal land rights stiffened Bjelke-Petersen’s resolve to object to the Commonwealth’s plan to take over Queensland Government reserves and facilitate Aboriginal land rights. Both the Liberal and National Country parties were reported to have planned to use their numbers to reject Commonwealth Government legislation aimed at taking over Aboriginal reserves in Queensland.\(^{39}\) In 1975, Whitlam was reported as stating that Queensland still discriminated against Aboriginal people and warned Australians not to obstruct the move towards granting Aboriginal people land rights.\(^{40}\) In September 1974 Dr Everingham issued a Press Release in relation to the ‘hostility’ of the Queensland Government and noted that Queensland Premier and Ministers refused to discuss or grant Aboriginal land rights.\(^{41}\)

The Whitlam Government’s determination to implement land rights was a bold move and indicates its willingness to appease the UN and avert further criticism in relation to the treatment of Aboriginal people. Australia was hopeful that it could prove


\(^{41}\) A5039, 2010 Item 1, Department of Aboriginal Affairs File, National Archives of Australia.
to the world that it was prepared to deal fairly and justly with its Indigenous minority populations despite being a settler state.\textsuperscript{42}

In 1974 the DAA proposed to establish regional land corporations in all States to provide support for Aboriginal land councils.\textsuperscript{43} Indigenous community development needs were defined by the DAA:

The term community development has come into international usage to connote the processes by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of government authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities to integrate those communities into the life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national development.\textsuperscript{44}

The Commonwealth knew Aboriginal land rights and economic development was necessary for Aboriginal people. The Commonwealth was also in need of co-operation with States and the approval of the majority of the Australian population. It also needed to meet the expectation of the UN. The Commonwealth faced opposition from the Queensland Government but knew that the participation of Aboriginal people in all aspects of economic development was crucial.\textsuperscript{45}

\textbf{NACC}

As well as pressuring the Queensland Government to remove racist legislation from Australian statutes and attempting to address Aboriginal Land Rights and economic development, the Commonwealth Government was keen to be seen to be formally consulting with Aboriginal people in relation to policies and programs affecting them. The need for DAA to be seen to be involving Aboriginal people in

\textsuperscript{42} Needless to say, Aboriginal land rights was only implemented by the Commonwealth Government in the Northern Territory and after the period examined by this thesis. Aboriginal land rights remained an issue of contention within the Queensland Government where the settler colonial mindset remains strong. The need to please the UN was not strong enough to influence or inform changes to Queensland legislation in relation to Aboriginal people.


\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Department of Aboriginal Affairs Annual Report 1974-1975}, p. 18.

\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Department of Aboriginal Affairs Annual Report 1974-1975}, p. 18.
Aboriginal affairs was highlighted by the Commonwealth. In 1973 the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs reported that it was ‘difficult’ to think of any programs in Aboriginal affairs that had not been ‘designed and executed’ by ‘white administrators’. DAA also pledged to ‘involve Aboriginals in programs’. 46

To facilitate formal consultation with Aboriginal people, the Commonwealth DAA established the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee (NACC) in 1973. In October 1973, Gordon Bryant, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, proposed the NACC to be a ‘forum for the expression of Aboriginal opinion on all matters, and a channel through which we as a Government may receive representative advice on the direction in which the Aboriginal people wish to move on matters specifically affecting their affairs’. Bryant also promised to ensure that the NACC was consulted on ‘proposed legislation’ and ‘proposals’ originating within the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. 47

The Commonwealth undertook to take advice from the NACC in relation to both Indigenous policy directions and proposals. The Commonwealth initially got together 81 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people selected by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to constitute an interim NACC. This body elected a Steering Committee to develop specific proposals and endorsed the election of an NACC in May 1973 at which 80% of eligible Aboriginal voters participated. The Commonwealth reported that it was looking forward to consulting with the NACC. 48 In 1973 the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs reported that NACC would provide DAA policy advice and be consulted about proposed legislation. The Commonwealth made mileage on its duly elected Indigenous body, but as Lippmann observes, the absence of secretariat support services necessary

47 Confidential Cabinet Minute, Decision No. 1525, Copy No. 32, Submission No. 690, NACC, Series No. A5915, Decision No. 1479, 1508 (WEL) and 1525, National Australian Archives, p. 1.
for the effectiveness of NACC poses the question as to whether the Federal Government ever really expected it to effectively perform its functions.49

On the other hand, the Commonwealth conveniently used NACC to help eliminate discriminatory legislation from Australian statutes to avoid UN criticism and fulfill its expectations. On 20 February 1975, Barry Dexter, Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs, wrote to the Queensland Premier’s Department outlining the resolutions passed at a Regional Conference of representative Aboriginal people from the area surrounding Cairns in Queensland between 14 and 16 October of the previous year. Resolutions included how the Australian Government would take full control of Aboriginal affairs in Queensland, the total rejection of Queensland’s policies and the attitudes of the Premier of Queensland and its Department of Aboriginal and Islanders’ Affairs and demands for the return of ownership of and security of tenure over land to Aboriginal peoples.50

By 1974 the Commonwealth had moved away from its initial policy commitment of consultation with Aboriginal people. Cavanagh noted that the NACC had been established to ‘provide independent advice’ to the Government on matters relating to Aboriginal affairs, by 1974 the NACC had made ‘some submissions’ on national policies but had not yet been ‘really effective in submitting advice and recommendations’ and that DAA would act in ‘developing new programs and policies’. Cavanagh argued that NACC had ‘potential’ to make a ‘substantial contribution’ to Aboriginal affairs, but that it was unlikely to realise this potential fully during the ‘first term’ of office, which expired in December 1975.51 The Commonwealth had moved

50 Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 9, Dexter to the Under-Secretary, Department of Premier, Queensland, copy of letter dated 28 February, 1975.
51 Confidential Cabinet Minute, Decision No. 215, Submission No. 1190, Copy No. 32, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, funds for National Aboriginal Consultative Committee and Departmental Consultations with Aboriginals, Series No. A5915, National Archives of Australia, 22 August, 1974, p. 1.
away from its initial policy commitment of consultation with NACC about Aboriginal policy.

By 1974 disputes had arisen between the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the NACC. In 1974, the NACC asked the Federal Government to change both the constitution and the name of the Committee. NACC also suggested that provision be made for a secretariat and that funding for Aboriginal programs be provided direct to NACC and not through DAA. This is reflected in comments by Cavanagh who noted that the Commonwealth Government was responsible for ascertaining Aboriginal views in relation to existing policies and programs affecting Aboriginal people through seminars, conferences and meetings and that funding NACC to undertake consultations would result in ‘duplication’ of services.\(^52\) This suggests that the Commonwealth was initially keen to be seen to receive advice from the NACC. However, disputes soon arose between the Commonwealth and the NACC when the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs received advice that he did not support or agree with or simply could not address.

The Federal Government became concerned about the composition, structure and function of the NACC and its role in relation to the Commonwealth.\(^53\) Martin argues that, as an organisation, the NACC was ‘conceived, established, funded and ultimately controlled by whites, its chances of success, less still survival were indeed small.’\(^54\) Martin asserts that much of the confusion associated with the NACC was ‘either deliberately created or allowed to continue unchecked’.\(^55\)

---

\(^{52}\) Confidential Cabinet Minute, Decision No. 215, Submission No. 1190, Copy No. 32, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, funds for National Aboriginal Consultative Committee and Departmental Consultations with Aboriginals, A5915, National Archives of Australia, 22 August, 1974, p. 5.


\(^{54}\) PMS 2805, Martin, 1978, p.3.

\(^{55}\) PMS 2805, Martin, 1978, pp. 4-5.
As Lippmann argues, the Commonwealth Government’s failure to provide funding for the provision of NACC’s secretariat services indicates either the Commonwealth did not think this through, or planned on ensuring that the NACC remained immobilised without a secretariat. Furthermore, given the lack of planning for resources for NACC, it could be argued that the Commonwealth established the NACC so it could utilise advice selectively and both quieten activism and ignore criticism from other organised national Aboriginal groups like the National Tribal Council or FCAATSI. The inability of the NACC to effectively function suggests the Commonwealth established a national Aboriginal representative body to avert criticism. This pseudo-consultation is another example of the adoption of more acceptable methods of colonisation aimed at satisfying critics and not at consulting with or dealing with issues identified or undertaking recommendations posed by an elected, representative national Aboriginal organisation.

Less than one year after its establishment, NACC members made demands for reserved seats for Aboriginal people in Northern Territory and Commonwealth Parliaments as well as an Aboriginal Land Rights Commission with Aboriginal representation. NACC members also demanded Aboriginal control over all reserves and missions as well as the replacement of non-Aboriginal State Government directors with Aboriginal people. A public relations program to educate non-Aboriginal people was also requested by NACC members together with a national housing corporation.

In 1974, police harassment and over-representation of Aboriginal people within the criminal justice system was also a priority raised by NACC, along with the need for

---

prisoner aid, land rights, compensation and the abolition of the Queensland Government's *Aborigines Act 1971*. NACC demanded sanctions against South Africa and Rhodesia and objected to the fostering and adoption of Aboriginal children by non-Aboriginal families. The NACC also lobbied for alcohol detoxification for Aboriginal people in police lock-ups. NACC also raised salinity issues within the Murray River and demanded funds to produce its own newsletters and reports to inform Aboriginal groups throughout Australia. The Commonwealth Government, however, argued it could not fund a newsletter that was going to be critical of Federal bureaucrats and policies. This was in contrast with the previous Commonwealth commitment to the NACC about the provision of advice as well as its policy of self-determination.

The Commonwealth Government had difficulty determining how best to deal with the range of demands or address the issues highlighted by the NACC. It is interesting, however, that the NACC was able to identify the problem of over-policing in provincial centres on racial grounds. The Commonwealth Government preferred to fund Aboriginal legal services to ensure Aboriginal people were legally represented when they inevitably came in contact with States' criminal justice systems rather than challenge the States' criminal justice systems or processes. Many of the issues raised by NACC remain unresolved and were mentioned in 1992 during the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. It is difficult to understand why the Commonwealth was fearful of demands of NACC or what issues the Federal

---


176
Government hoped the committee would raise. This again supports Rowley’s argument there were little changes in Governments’ Aboriginal policies.\textsuperscript{64}

Hostility continued to grow between the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the NACC, and the Commonwealth Government withheld the transfer of ‘decision making power’ to NACC.\textsuperscript{65} Martin argues that the NACC ‘launched headlong into what it saw as a massive and urgent backlog of wrongs to be righted.’\textsuperscript{66} The way that NACC members went about addressing this backlog, Martin argues, ‘alarmed both the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the A.L.P. [Australian Labor Party] executive’.\textsuperscript{67}

The NACC engaged in what Martin describes as a ‘conflict which ended in debacle and the inevitable political witch-hunt in the form of the Hiatt Report’.\textsuperscript{68} The Commonwealth hoped to work with NACC, but, as Martin argues, the Commonwealth was alarmed by the demands put forward by NACC members. While the Commonwealth Government’s establishment of the NACC would have gained mileage from both UN and Aboriginal organisations, it simply could not deal with the range of demands that the national representative body made. The Federal Government’s inability to deal with the issues raised by NACC members and refusal to fund a secretariat or newsletter, indicates the Commonwealth was not serious about consulting with its national Aboriginal elected representative body. The Commonwealth DAA was also insincere in its attempts to address Aboriginal affairs issues. While appearing to consult with Aboriginal people, I argue that the Commonwealth Government’s policy of self-determination was merely a more acceptable method of colonisation aimed at averting criticism. As well as averting criticism, the establishment of the NACC helped

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{64} Rowley, 1971, p. 383.
\item\textsuperscript{65} PMS 2805, Martin, 1978, pp. Synopsis-p. 2.
\item\textsuperscript{66} PMS 2805, Martin, p. 4.
\item\textsuperscript{67} PMS 2805, Martin, p. 5.
\item\textsuperscript{68} PMS 2805, Martin, p. 5.
\end{itemize}
the Commonwealth quieten growing Aboriginal activism of other national organisations like the National Tribal Council or FCAATSI. As Rowley observed, the Aboriginal situation' had become a ‘matter for political actions’ and the Government needed to ‘develop a national strategy’ with local practice to avoid ‘sourness of frustrated aspirations’. The ‘frustrated aspirations’ referred to by Rowley were clearly being aired internationally and across Australia by organised groups.69

**DSS Benefits**

As well as appearing to be in consultation with Aboriginal people, the Commonwealth also needed to be seen to be ensuring that Aboriginal people gained access to the same Commonwealth benefits as non-Aboriginal people. In 1973, Hewitt, the Queensland Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs wrote to Bjelke-Petersen suggesting the Premier write to the Prime Minister conveying Torres Strait Islander Councillors’ concerns about the non-payment of unemployment benefits in the Torres Straits.70

Despite establishing DAA offices in Queensland and threatening to overtake Queensland Government reserves, the Federal Government knew that Aboriginal people’s access to Commonwealth benefits on Government reserves was blocked. On 14 March, 1973 Bill Hayden, the Minister for Social Services, wrote a memorandum about the restrictions surrounding DSS payments of unemployment benefits to Aboriginal reserve residents. Aboriginal people who had never worked outside of that reserve and were not prepared to move were not eligible for unemployment benefits.71

In 1974, Prime Minister Whitlam wrote to Premier Bjelke-Petersen concerning reserve

---

residents’ entitlement to unemployment benefits and notified the Premier of the Commonwealth Government’s concession that Aboriginal people no longer had to leave reserves to qualify for entitlements.\textsuperscript{72} As the distribution of food rations ceased in Queensland in 1968, people who were unemployed on Government reserves without access to DSS benefits suffered.\textsuperscript{73} Despite the 1967 referendum, the Commonwealth helped prolong Aboriginal starvation, poverty and suffering by deliberately excluding residents on Queensland Government reserves access to Commonwealth benefits until 1974.

\textbf{Housing and Accommodation}

As discussed earlier, in 1973, as a way of dealing with the needs of Aboriginal people moving off reserves and pastoral properties into Queensland towns and cities, the Commonwealth funded and established a national organisation to provide accommodation for Aboriginal people. Aboriginal Hostels Limited (AHL) presented suburbs in cities with the prospect of large numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents. The primary object of the company was to provide accommodation for Aboriginal people throughout Australia.\textsuperscript{74} As well as acquiring accommodation for AHL, the Commonwealth provided funding for the purchase of buses for transport for Indigenous people.\textsuperscript{75} The Commonwealth Government’s attempts at dealing with the influx of Aboriginal people into Queensland towns and cities is highlighted by the DAA commitment in 1973 to house all Aboriginal families within 10 years.\textsuperscript{76} The bold commitment would have addressed Aboriginal activists’ concerns and averted criticism.

\textsuperscript{72} Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 8, Gough Whitlam, Prime Minister to Premier Bjelke-Petersen, copy of letter dated 8 January, 1974.
\textsuperscript{73} Queensland Annual Report, 1969, pp. 1-7.
\textsuperscript{74} Department of Aboriginal Affairs Report 1972-1974, pp. 22-23.
\textsuperscript{75} Department of Aboriginal Affairs Report 1972-1974, pp. 22-24.
\textsuperscript{76} Department of Aboriginal Affairs Report 1972-1974, p. 7.
In 1975, DAA reported that it had made ‘substantial progress’ towards housing all of Australia’s Aboriginal families within 10 years. This program also encouraged Aboriginal involvement in establishing Aboriginal Housing Society schemes and reported that many had been funded throughout Queensland with $15.5 million available to 30 corporations nationally.\(^77\) Despite these efforts the Commonwealth did not manage to house all Aboriginal families within 10 years. The need for housing for Aboriginal people was raised in the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in the 1990s, twenty years after this initial commitment.\(^78\)

**Health and Education**

As well as dealing with the accommodation needs of Aboriginal people into towns and cities, the Commonwealth was concerned about poor health and education statistics of Australia’s Aboriginal populations and needed to implement strategies to address these issues. In 1974 in the DAA Annual Report, the Commonwealth disputed the assertion that Aboriginal infant mortality rates were the highest in the world.\(^79\) In contrast, in 1973, the Henderson Commission of Inquiry into Poverty revealed that 50% of the Aboriginal population had ‘horrendous health standards’ and poor education opportunities and that Aboriginal health standards were the worst in the world.\(^80\) The Commonwealth was concerned but also deliberately played down the extent of poor health and education opportunities amongst Aboriginal people in Australia in an attempt to avoid both UN and domestic embarrassment and criticism. It was difficult to understand why Australia, a successful settler colony, would be unable to alleviate measurable suffering of such a small proportion of the Australian population. The


\(^79\) *Department of Aboriginal Affairs Report 1972-1974*, p. 33.

\(^80\) Whitlam, 1985, p. 472.
Commonwealth had to find ways to address UN, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal critics and implement practical solutions to address the impact of settler colonisation on Indigenous minority groups.

As well as increases in funds to States for Aboriginal health in the 1973/74 financial year, the DAA also provided funding for the establishment of Aboriginal community health services in Brisbane, Townsville, Sydney and Melbourne.\(^{81}\) DAA reported that there was nothing ‘insoluble’ about the Aboriginal health problems which existed and that these problems reflected the universal health pattern of depressed minorities throughout the world and was a pattern set on a vicious circle of poverty, ignorance, unemployment, loss of identity, lethargy and excessive alcohol intake.\(^{82}\) Indigenous people throughout the world were subjected to colonisation and dispossession which was at the root of the cause of ill health and poverty but noticeably missing as a reason for poor health. Similarly, once it became extremely difficult to improve Aboriginal health statistics, the Commonwealth leaned towards blaming Aboriginal people themselves with the words ignorance, unemployment, excessive alcohol intake etc. incorporated into explanations associated with high infant mortality rates. Poor health, particularly on Queensland reserves, was more attributable to enforced poverty, starvation, inadequate health care, housing and hygiene, over-taxing of under-reward wages, restrictions on visitors and political lobbying as well as movement and controls over property. Furthermore, access to alcohol on Queensland Government reserves was forbidden until 1972 when the provisions of the 1971 Act

\(^{81}\) *Department of Aboriginal Affairs Report 1972-1974*, pp. 34-35.

\(^{82}\) *Department of Aboriginal Affairs Report 1972-1974*, pp. 36-37.
were gazetted. This suggested it could hardly be used as a cause of ill health, especially for Aboriginal people on Queensland Government reserves.\textsuperscript{83}

The Commonwealth’s DAA acknowledged that British settlement in Australia disturbed Aboriginal learning at a time when public education was being developed throughout Europe and in Britain in the context of the industrial revolution.\textsuperscript{84} The Commonwealth DAA was also aware that the colonial education system was not the only way of educating Aboriginal people. In an attempt to address this, the Commonwealth Government established the South Australian Institute of Technology Aboriginal Leadership Training in April 1973 as an initial major experiment in adult Aboriginal education.\textsuperscript{85} The Commonwealth acknowledged that States had failed in the provision of education for Aboriginal people and attempted to address this by funding Aboriginal kindergartens and providing financial support for Aboriginal adults to access education.

\textbf{Police Harassment}

The influx of Aboriginal people into Queensland towns and cities led to complaints about police harassment. Police harassment and over-representation in the criminal justice systems in Queensland saw the Commonwealth provide increased funding to Aboriginal legal service organisations to ensure Aboriginal people were represented in the criminal justice process. The McMahon Government as highlighted earlier, opted for Aboriginal Legal Service funding rather than challenge the Queensland Government concerning its over-representation of Aboriginal people within the criminal justice system. Commonwealth respect for the Queensland Government’s

\textsuperscript{83} This is not to say alcohol was not entering reserves. However, by-laws which facilitated house searches and restrictions on earnings and property would have made it difficult for Aboriginal inmates on reserves to purchase alcohol.


jurisdiction remained strong despite the outcome of the 1967 referendum and serious over-representation of Aboriginal people and children in the criminal justice and Children Services systems in Queensland.\textsuperscript{86} The Commonwealth simply did not deal with the issues that created Aboriginal over-representation in the Queensland criminal justice system despite concerns expressed by NACC as raised earlier. At the same time, conscious of its commitment to the UN and the need to have conventions ratified, the Commonwealth was embarrassed about the Queensland Government’s refusal to remove racist legislation from its statutes.

**The Racial Discrimination Act 1975**

In 1973, Lionel Murphy, the Federal Attorney General wrote to William Knox, Queensland Government’s Minister for Justice and Attorney General concerning the introduction of the Federal Racial Discrimination Bill. The Attorney General referred to matters that needed to be discussed which included Indigenous people’s liberty of movement on to reserves and legal representation during reserve hearings.\textsuperscript{87} By 1974 the Commonwealth was growing increasingly more concerned about the racist provisions within the Queensland Government’s 1971 legislation, and the State Government’s refusal to amend legislation or discuss its provisions. The

\textsuperscript{86} Fitzgerald estimates that Aboriginal people were 200 times more likely to be arrested for drunkenness than non-Aboriginal people and that 40\% of people arrested in Queensland between 1968 and 1971 were Aboriginal, Fitzgerald, 1984, p. 529 and Chris Cunneen argues that the 1960s and 1970s saw the ‘significant criminalization of Indigenous people’ through the formal processes of the criminal justice system’, Hocking, 2005, p. 49. Also, over-representation of Aboriginal children in Children’s Service institutions in Queensland raised by Minister for Aboriginal affairs in Queensland, Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 7, Hewitt, Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs and Herbert, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Welfare Services, Confidential Cabinet Submission No. 15611, Copy No. 23, 31 August, 1972, Brisbane.

\textsuperscript{87} Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File part 8, copy of letter from Lionel Murphy, Attorney General to W. Knox, Minister for Justice and Attorney-General in Queensland dated 15 January, 1974. Sir William Knox was born in 1927 and served as a Member of the Queensland Legislative Assembly as member for Nundah from 1956 to 1989. Knox was the Queensland Attorney-General. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Knox and Lionel Murphy QC. was a Jurist and was elected to the Australian Senate in 1967. Murphy served as Whitlam’s Attorney General as well as the Minister for Customs and Excise in 1972. Murphy orchestrated the Family Law Act of 1975 – http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lionel_Murphy.
Commonwealth was under pressure from the UN to implement the Racial Discrimination Act but had to have discriminatory legislation removed or over-ridden before this could happen.

In 1975, the Commonwealth Government passed the *Aboriginals and Islanders (Queensland Discriminatory Laws) Act*. This Act was introduced specifically to over-ride all discriminatory legislation and by-laws imposed on Aboriginal people by the State Government in Queensland. Manfred Cross, MHR, Federal Member for Brisbane argued that the relationships between the Commonwealth and the State Governments in relation to Aboriginal affairs was ‘complex’ and that there were ‘...substandard and degrading circumstances in which many people live in every State of the Commonwealth and in some parts of our Northern Territory’. He also raised concerns about rights to privacy for Aboriginal people and the need for removal of bureaucrats’ control over Aboriginal people’s earnings and property in Queensland under the 1971 Act provisions.

In 1975, Mr Enderby, Attorney General commented about the Commonwealth legislation introduced to over-ride Queensland’s discriminatory 1971 Act. Enderby, noted that ‘Everyone has conceded that this is a serious attempt to do something about

---


90 Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) 1975, *House of Representatives, first session of the twenty­ninth Parliament, from 11 February to 9 July 1975*, The Government Printer of Australia, Canberra, 1975, pp. 1423-1424. Manfred Cross was born in Brisbane in 1929, attended the University of Queensland and became a public servant. In 1961 he was elected to the Australian House of Representatives as the Labor member for Brisbane and held the seat until 1975. He was re-elected in 1980 and remained in the seat until his retirement in 1990 – http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manfred_Cross.

racial discrimination’. Ralph Hunt, the Federal Member for Gwydir noted that the people of Queensland (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) did not ‘trust its policies’. Manfred Cross, MHR, argued that the stage had been reached in Queensland when all ‘discriminatory laws against the Aboriginal or Island people should be removed and at which the normal laws in this country that protect people who might in some way be disadvantaged could apply to them to no more or less a degree than they apply to other Australians’. Cross expressed disappointment and challenged people to visit Queensland Aboriginal reserves to ‘realise the substandard and degrading circumstances in which many people live’. The new Commonwealth Bill provided Aboriginal people with rights of privacy. It also ensured that police on reserves would require warrants and would cease to operate under the Queensland Government’s discriminatory by-laws. Award wages should be paid to Aboriginal workers, Cross argued and the new legislation was ‘vital to Australia’s standing in the world and to our own integrity as a nation’. The Commonwealth had waited too long and UN pressure to introduce anti-racism legislation and over-ride discriminatory legislation was expanding. Australia’s standing in the world and integrity as a nation, had been placed in jeopardy by the Queensland Government tactics and legislation.

---

92 Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), 1975, House of Representatives, First session of the twenty-ninth Parliament from 11 February to 9 July, 1975, Government Printer of Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (Queensland Discriminatory Laws) Bill, Canberra, 1975, p. 1416. Keppel Earl Enderby QC was born in 1926 and was a member of the House of Representatives for the Australian Labor Party between 1970 and 1975. Enderby was a senior cabinet minister in the Whitlam Government. Enderby studied law at the University of Sydney and was admitted to the NSW bar in 1950. Enderby worked as a barrister in London and studied at the University of London. After politics, Enderby was appointed as a Justice of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kep_Enderby.

93 Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) 1975, 11 February to 9 July, 1975, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (Queensland Discriminatory Laws) Bill p. 1417.

94 Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) 1975, 11 February to 9 July, 1975, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (Queensland Discriminatory Laws) Bill p. 1423.

95 Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) 1975, 11 February to 9 July, 1975, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (Queensland Discriminatory Laws) Bill p. 1423.

96 Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), 1975, 11 February to 9 July, 1975, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (Queensland Discriminatory Laws) Bill, pp. 1424-1426.
Clarrie Miller, Federal Member for Wide Bay in Queensland, noted that the Commonwealth had addressed the ‘Racial Discrimination Bill which flowed from a resolution of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination from the United Nations’. Because of Australia’s agreement in the 1960s to this convention, it was keen to have this ratified but the position regarding the removal of all racist legislation from its statutes and to introduce anti-racism legislation was compounded by the need to have Queensland Government legislation amended. Furthermore the Commonwealth could not implement the Racial Discrimination Act until discriminatory State legislation had been removed, or, in the case of Queensland, over-ridden. As early as 1973, DAA had announced that the Commonwealth Government was going to implement anti-discrimination legislation.

The need for legislation to outlaw racism was in line with the UN Charter based on the principle that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, that any doctrine of superiority based on racial differentiation was ‘scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust, dangerous and without justification’. In 1975, Lionel Murphy QC described Australian racism as a ‘blot on our civilisation’ that needed to be removed and ‘greater understanding brought about by education of our peoples’.

There were three Bills drafted before the final Racial Discrimination Act was passed in 1975. The third and final Bill was amended to place emphasis on education,

---


101 BF S471.45/11, Neil, 1976, pp. 4-5.
information, cultural development and research rather than punitive measures. There was debate about criminalising racism but this could not be agreed upon by the Commonwealth Parliament. Punitive provisions were removed and a conciliatory arrangement was eventually agreed. The RDA made provision for a Community Relations Commission which would identify injustices and means to seek damages but the Commissioner had to have exhausted the processes of conciliation without success and issue a certificate to the Court before action could be taken.\textsuperscript{102} Despite the Commonwealth intentions, UN or Aboriginal expectations, the \textit{Racial Discrimination Act} was debated within the framework of colonial relations and systems. As Rowley argues, what was really at the heart of the problem in relation to Aboriginal people was not only the ‘resistance of the majority of the Australian town dwellers’ to the ‘integration’ of Aboriginal people but that Governments’ policies had differed little in philosophy from those developed during the protection and segregation eras.\textsuperscript{103}

While the Commonwealth had to introduce legislation to outlaw racial discrimination, it also had to ensure it had the support of voters. Clearly representatives believed there was no need to make discrimination a criminal offence but had no other methods of breaking down the long standing colonial mindset. Compromises were made so that the Act could pass through the Senate. Had it not been for UN pressure Australia would not have been as amenable to changes such as the removal of discriminatory legislation and implementation of anti-discrimination legislation. This suggests that the Commonwealth’s priority was about averting UN criticism and not about dealing with the impact of settler colonisation on Aboriginal people. The \textit{Racial Discrimination Act} came into effect on 31 October, 1975. This, together with the introduction of overriding legislation in Queensland in the same year, consequently ratified the International

\textsuperscript{102} BF S 471.45/11, Neil, 1976, pp. 23-24. Presentation by Al Grasby, Community Relations Commissioner, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination for Australia. While the RDA failed to include punitive provisions against racism, it did guarantee equity before the law.

To sum up, by 1975, the Commonwealth had established the NACC, introduced legislation to over-ride Queensland Government’s discriminatory 1971 Act, funded Aboriginal representative legal, health, housing and accommodation services, reviewed DSS guidelines to ensure Aboriginal reserve residents had access and set up DAA offices in Queensland. In 1975, as a way of meeting UN expectations, the Commonwealth also passed the *Racial Discrimination Act*.

However, regardless of the Commonwealth mandate after the 1967 referendum, it failed to protect Aboriginal people from the over-representation in the criminal justice system. Instead of dealing with the Queensland Government concerning this matter, the Commonwealth provided funding for Aboriginal legal services to represent people when they inevitably came in touch with the criminal justice system instead. In spite of the Commonwealth attempts at ensuring Aboriginal people participated in bauxite mining in Queensland, the Commonwealth commitment to economic development and Aboriginal land rights proved difficult in Queensland. Despite espousing a policy of self-determination, the Commonwealth failed to address NACC concerns because it raised issues the Commonwealth either did not agree with or could not address. The Commonwealth was mindful of the need to quieten Aboriginal activism, notify the UN of the facilitation of a national Aboriginal representative body, but also, appease the majority of the Australian voting population. This balancing act seems to have been tipped against Aboriginal people because of the very nature of Government. This

---

106 A5039, Item 1, DAA.
chapter demonstrates the predicament UN pressure presented for the Commonwealth. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal individuals and lobby groups continued to urge Governments to address change. Arguably these issues would not have been seriously considered or taken up by the Federal Government had it not been for its need to become part of the UN and also avert criticism.
CHAPTER 8

White Support, White Concerns

This chapter first examines the activism and resistance undertaken by Churches, Trade Unions, academics, professionals as well as the objections of members of the public to the treatment and conditions of Aboriginal people. It then considers the nature of white concerns about Aboriginal policies in Queensland in the 1970s and highlights both the strength of the colonial mindset throughout Queensland and the difficulty the Queensland Government had in attempting to uphold its policy of assimilation.

The Supporters

Churches

The Churches were particularly proactive in opposing Queensland Government Aboriginal policies, especially after the special UN years in 1968 and 1971 which in Queensland, coincided with the rapid movement of Aboriginal people into towns and cities. Churches were no doubt aware of the huge task associated with changing the colonial mindset that existed in Australia since settlement, but, advocated for Aboriginal land rights.

In 1967, the Australian Presbyterian Board of Missions wrote to Killoran about the need to secure land tenure for Aboriginal people on Queensland’s reserves. The Board of Missions argued that Aboriginal land rights would offset the payment of under-award wages and subsequently give Aboriginal people on reserves some ‘incentive’ and ‘justify’ exploitation.\(^1\) Compensation was demanded by the Church for

\(^1\) Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 4, copy of letter from the Australian Presbyterian Board of Missions, Sydney, to the Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs Queensland concerning Aurukun and Mornington Island Aboriginal Reserves, dated 22 February, 1967, Reference: AQ/42/SGE/IT.
the deliberate alienation of over 601,000 out of the 648,000 hectares of Aboriginal reserve land in North Queensland for Comalco’s bauxite mining. The Church argued that, as a consequence, less land was available for economic development activities on Government reserves.

In 1968 the Australian Council of Churches noted that, while the amendment to the Australian Constitution righted a wrong, it provided nothing of practical worth to Aboriginal people. The Council of Churches urged the Government to pay Aboriginal people compensation for the loss of their lands associated with the colonisation process.

Church representatives and members argued for Government support for Aboriginal land rights and economic development for Aboriginal people. In 1969, the World Council of Churches (WCC) wrote to politicians and urged them to recognise the importance of land rights for Aboriginal people. The WCC argued that the granting of land rights was a condition without which Aboriginal culture could not be ‘adequately preserved or developed’, Aboriginal ‘self-respect enhanced’, Aboriginal ‘humanity properly acknowledged’, and that without these rights ‘justice and compassion’ would be no more than ‘travesties’. The WCC acknowledged that the early settlers in Australian society ‘understandably’ did not realise the importance of the land to Aboriginal people for they saw them simply as a nomadic race who might as well wander ‘over there’ rather than ‘here’.

Churches also provided strong support for Aboriginal people particularly after the 1968 International Years for Human Rights and the 1971 International Year to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. In 1971, the Presbyterian Church of

---

4 MS 3759, Series 6, Item 6, Abschol Conference, 1969, World Council of Church’s Submission.
Queensland argued that Aboriginal people should be given secure land tenure and ownership of their tribal lands, compensation for lands lost, and that there should be no more alienation. In 1971, the Quakers Community wrote to Bjelke Petersen concerning the need for Aboriginal land rights, equal pay and freedom of movement off reserves. In November the same year, the Australian Council of Churches prepared a submission to the Ministerial Committee on Aboriginal Affairs supporting Aboriginal Land Rights. In 1975, the Presbyterian Church of Queensland wrote to Premier Bjelke-Petersen about support for the Mornington Island Aboriginal community as they took initiatives for legal recognition of their rights to their traditional tribal lands. The Presbyterian Church asked the Premier to receive a deputation in relation to the need for Aboriginal land rights.

The Churches’ observation that the nature of colonisation created the need for redress or compensation to Indigenous peoples for loss of lands was not entertained by the State Government. The Australian Council of Churches highlighted comments made by anthropologist and academic William Stanner that no English words were adequate to give a sense of the links between Aboriginal groups and their homelands. As 1971 was the International Year to Combat Racism, Church groups approached officials about the need to alter Queensland’s legislation and to grant land rights to

5 Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 5, Queensland Cabinet Minute dated 10 March, 1971 in response to Presbyterian Church of Queensland’s demands.
7 MS 3759, Series 6, Item 6, Papers of FCAATSI, Abschol Conference on Attitude Change of Europeans Towards Aborigines – Aborigines Towards Themselves 1969.
8 Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 9, copy of letter from A. Laurie, Clerk of Assembly, the Presbyterian Church of Queensland to Premier Bjelke-Petersen dated 2 June, 1975.
9 MS 3759, Series 6, Item 6, Abschol Conference, 1969, World Council of Church’s Submission.
Indigenous people. The Church also argued that Aboriginal elected representatives should have control over Aboriginal reserves.10

As well as lobbying State and Commonwealth Governments about the need for Aboriginal land rights, Church representatives also challenged Queensland and Commonwealth Governments about the treatment of Aboriginal people and the need for the prevention of exploitation and discrimination. In 1972, Reverend Tony Edwards, Anglican Minister at Normanton stated that there were 340 Aboriginal people in the area who were covered by the old Act and received very little financial assistance from the State. Reverend Edwards claimed that once they [Aboriginal people] left the mission stations [reserves] they did not get assistance.11 Clearly the Churches were concerned that Aboriginal people's access to Commonwealth benefits was not being provided, particularly throughout Queensland.

Churches upheld the social needs of Aboriginal people in Queensland towns and cities. In 1972 FCAATSI's Acting General Secretary replied to the Archbishop of Brisbane about his enquiry into the regulations of the 1965 Act and enclosed a copy.12 In 1973, the Presbyterian Chaplain of the Aurukun Community, Mr Robert Bos, wrote and informed the Premier of Queensland that it was 'immoral' for one racial group to exercise pressure to 'scatter another racial group against their wishes'. Bos observed that 'individual aboriginal families living in a predominantly white society feel excluded and often ashamed'. Bos argued that 'Aboriginal people needed their own

11 IA/345 Queensland State Archives, copy of Notes of Public Meeting Held by the Premier at Normanton Shire Hall dated 6 April, 1972.
12 MS 3759, Series 2, Item 14, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, copy of letter from Jack Horner, Acting General Secretary of FCAATSI to the Archbishop of Brisbane, Mr Felix Arnott, dated 5 May, 1972.
history and culture for the sake of their own identity’ and that ‘Aboriginal culture can only be preserved in aboriginal communities’.

Churches continued to openly condemn discrimination, especially on Government reserves. In 1973, the second Vatican Council condemned racial discrimination in all forms. In 1973, Reverend Sweet wrote to the Premier of Queensland, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, and brought to his notice a copy of the Mission Education and Community Action Group’s resolution passed that ‘Aboriginal people of Queensland should not suffer through different policies being expressed by their respective Governments’.

Churches knew and understood the need for Aboriginal land rights and, even though they failed to convince the Australian community, continued to pressure Government. The Church also knew that merely excluding barriers for Aboriginal access to education was not enough. In 1972, the Methodist Church of Australia wrote to Hewitt the Queensland Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and conveyed its resolutions for consideration. These included suggestions that ‘teachers’ and ‘others who deal with’ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders ‘anywhere in the State’ have ‘special training’ to ‘equip them in this field of work’. The Methodist Church also recommended that ‘major Aboriginal languages’ and the ‘study of Aboriginal culture’ be included in education curricula.

In 1973, Frank Roberts, a representative of the Australian Board of Missions, Anglican Church in Australia, argued that ‘at present Aboriginals operate at a level

16 1A/345 Queensland State Archives, copy of letter from D. Kirkup, Secretary of Conference, Methodist Church of Australasia, to Hewitt, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Queensland, dated 15 November, 1972.
which no non-Aboriginal would tolerate for 24 hours’ and that Australia must ‘speedily rectify a situation which brands Australia as a racist nation’. Roberts argued that ‘the United Nations was pointed to strong pockets of racial intolerance in English speaking countries; in Australia first and foremost’. ‘No matter in what direction you turn today, you find strong anti-Aboriginal attitudes expressed in political and spiritual discrimination’, Roberts argued. The Church could not ‘appease their consciences’ by looking at what has been done and noted that, on the reserves that the Church administered that not ‘one Aboriginal doctor, lawyer, chemist, psychiatrist (you write the list) has been produced, and I criticise the Churches because they have monopolised the education field for the last 80 years’ Roberts argued.\(^\text{17}\)

Churches continued to be very supportive of Aboriginal rights to land and the need for economic development. They attempted to address racism which was clearly rife amongst its parish members. In 1973, Archbishop Loane contrasted the benefits which the colonisation of Australia had brought to European settlers and to the native population. The archbishop argued that in the case of the white settler, colonisation meant that ‘a vast share of the world’s last vacant lands fell into his hands’. The ‘gain was immense’ and, as their ‘descendants’, ‘we enjoy these advantages’ to the full today. Archbishop Loan noted that it was ‘otherwise’ with ‘the Aborigine’.\(^\text{18}\) Churches challenged the very core belief which is central to any argument between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal from the arrival of European colonisers, settlement and the subsequent deliberate dispossession and subjugation of Indigenous minority groups. Conditions that Aboriginal people were subjected to by the Queensland Government attracted Church surveillance and criticism.

\(^{17}\) 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, copy of article by Frank Roberts in the Catholic Leader dated 15 July, 1973.

Trade Unions

Trade Unions were also important, both individually and collectively. As early as 1967, the BWIU highlighted the NT pastoral award and the need to grant compensation for Aboriginal lands lost as examples of areas of policy that needed urgent redress. The BWIU noted the ‘heavy responsibility’ and ‘urgent need for action’ for not only the cause of Aboriginal people but for the ‘prestige’ of Australia as a nation.  

In 1968, the Trades and Labour Council of Queensland wrote to the Acting Premier and urged the Queensland Government to introduce anti-discrimination legislation. In the same year, the Amalgamated Engineering Union expressed horror at the treatment and conditions on Aboriginal reserves and described conditions on Palm Island as a ‘scandalous situation’ with segregated schools, curfews and the generally low morale of the 1500 residents. Union officials described this Queensland Government reserve system as a ‘blot on Australia’s conscience’.  

Living conditions of Aboriginal people as well as rights of access to public places were also issues taken up by Trade Unions. In mid 1969 the North Australian Workers Union complained that the living quarters of Aboriginal pastoral workers were ‘shocking’.  

In 1974 Brisbane Waterside Workers wrote to Premier Bjelke-Petersen and condemned Queensland Government’s treatment of Aboriginal people and that current

---

19 MS 3759, Papers of FCAATSI, Series 2, Item 2, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, letter from F. Purse, Federal Secretary of Builders’ Workers Industrial Union, Sydney, dated 6 October, 1967, to FCAATSI concerning the ACTU Congress decision.


legislation was a complete denial of human rights. Unions were aware of the need to convince the international community about Australia’s treatment of Indigenous populations. Unfortunately, Queensland bureaucrats failed to share these concerns about either the exploitation of Aboriginal peoples or how that was a violation of human rights watched closely by the UN. BWIU lobbied both Commonwealth and State Governments in relation to Aboriginal people. The Builders’ Workers’ Industry Union (BWIU) complained about the Commonwealth’s lack of ‘outward signs’ of improving Aboriginal working and living conditions after the referendum. Trade Unions were aware of the situation of Aboriginal people in Queensland and supported activist groups.

**Academics, Prominent People and Members of the Public**

Academics lobbied Governments in relation to the poor treatment and appalling conditions of Aboriginal people. Academics urged Governments to address these situations and were aware of the criticism from outside of the country.

In 1969 the Commonwealth Bureau of Statistics provided an analysis of Aboriginal people and noted their second-class status. The report highlighted that Aboriginal people were three times more likely to be unemployed. In the same year, Colin Tatz reported to the Abschol Conference that Australian Aboriginal people were the most totally ‘conquered’ people in the world. Tatz noted that nowhere else was the subjugation of a native culture by white Europeans and the ‘demoralization’ of a whole race so ‘complete’. Tatz criticised the legacy of disrespect for Aboriginal people by

---

23 Queensland Aboriginal Welfare Part 9, copy of telegram from Secretary Waterside Workers Union to Premier Bjelke-Petersen dated 5 December, 1974.

24 MS 3759, Papers of FCAATSI, Series 2, Item 2, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, letter from F. Purse, Federal Secretary of Builders’ Workers Industry Union, Sydney dated 6 October 1967, to FCAATSI concerning the ACTU Congress decision.

European Australians and argued that it survived to the present day.\(^\text{26}\) *The Australian* also reported in 1969, that, due to the ‘ignorance, prejudice and greed’ of white people, Aboriginal people of Australia have been ‘disgracefully’ treated.\(^\text{27}\) Anthropologist Professor Frederick Rose, announced that Australia’s treatment of Aboriginal people was a ‘slur’ on the country’s reputation.\(^\text{28}\) Academics offered solutions, one of which was that Aboriginal people needed an ombudsman.\(^\text{29}\)

The need to address Aboriginal poverty and economic development highlighted by census data prompted academics to urge Governments to address the condition of Aboriginal populations. *The Australian* reported in 1969 that the Aboriginal birth rate had exploded but that poverty continued. Cawte, a New Zealand Psychologist, noted that white Australians were trying to adjust to the idea that Aboriginal people were no longer a dying race.\(^\text{30}\) *The Australian* also reported that, according to the census, nearly 55% of the Aboriginal population was under 21 years of age.\(^\text{31}\) These statistics were of concern to the Commonwealth because of the need to plan and cater for the growing populations of younger Aboriginal people.

Given an estimated half of Queensland’s Aboriginal population had been segregated on reserves, academics urged Australians to mix with Aboriginal people.\(^\text{32}\)

In 1969, A. D. Ward, Lecturer in History at Melbourne’s La Trobe University, noted the


\(^{27}\) *The Australian*, 29 April, 1969.

\(^{28}\) *The Australian*, 14 April 1965.

\(^{29}\) *The Australian*, 4 January 1965.


\(^{31}\) *The Australian*, 18 April, 1969.

\(^{32}\) de Plevitz, 1998, pp. 143-158.
'horrifying distrust and fear' which characterised the Australian approach to black people and suggested that it could be broken down only through personal contact.  

Academics publicly highlighted the facts of poor conditions of Aboriginal people to embarrass officials in the hope that Governments would commit resources to address Aboriginal suffering. According to a National Inquiry into Poverty, Professor Ronald Henderson stated that Aboriginal people are the most poverty stricken group in Australia. Professor Henderson argued that many poor Aboriginal people did not know of the availability of welfare payments and services and others were too far away from them to enjoy access. 

By 1973, non-Aboriginal academics were conducting historical research in North Queensland. Noel Loos, lecturer on the policy of the Queensland Government towards Aboriginal people under review delivered a public lecture at James Cook University in Townsville. In the same year, Lorna Lippmann delivered a public lecture 'Black and White Attitudes in Australia' in Townsville at James Cook University. Similarly, Henry Reynolds, specialist in Australian history and race relations, lectured on Aboriginal studies at the same University. Academics were eager to inform the public of what happened in the past in relation to Aboriginal people as a means of addressing current day issues and dispelling long-held colonial beliefs about the inferiority of Aboriginal people particularly in North Queensland.

33 The Australian, 31 May, 1969, Mr A. D. Ward, Lecturer in History at Melbourne’s La Trobe University.
As well as urging the Queensland Government to amend legislation and delivering lectures about Aboriginal people, academics also conducted research. The Department of Social Work at the University of Queensland carried out a survey of poverty amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Brisbane in 1974. Findings included that nearly 48% of Aboriginal people were very poor as compared to 10% of the non-Indigenous community. One in four adults did not finish primary school with one in ten adults finishing grade 10 or higher. Nearly all Aboriginals and Islanders living in houses that were rented with only 12% renting from the Queensland Housing Commission. Nearly four-fifths of the men and one-fifth of the women were employed (and receiving $20 per week or more). About one in three people aged 15 to 20 had ‘no activity’, yet no man under 30 was getting any Government money such as unemployment or sickness benefit. Racial discrimination and lack of qualifications were given as the main reasons for high unemployment amongst Aboriginal people. Health statistics proved difficult for academics to ignore, particularly since the research was undertaken by non-Aboriginal health professionals.

Some non-Aboriginal citizens challenged the Queensland Government about its Indigenous policies and legislation. In 1972, for example, J. Hine wrote to the Queensland Minister for Aboriginal Affairs seeking clarification about the distribution of rations, under-award wages, and shortages of electricity. Hine also questioned ‘how can they [Aboriginal people] learn to live in our community if they are treated like this. Does it not degrade the man (sic) reduce them to a standard of living which would not be tolerated by anyone else in the nation’. In the same year, Elizabeth Chapman argued that ‘Australia on her mission station and reserves falls to dismal disgrace in the

---

38 MS 3759, Series 6, Item 15, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, *Black News Service*, Number 6, October 1975, University of Queensland Poverty Enquiry summary by Cheryl Buchanan.

treatment of our Aboriginal’. Chapman noted that the shame is incurred by ‘neglecting to observe even basic wages, land rights, justice, social services, education, general health, infant and child survival and nutrition’. \(^{40}\) Others freely offered advice. In 1972, Laurel Hall wrote to the *Cairns Post* suggesting that officials tackle the [Aboriginal] problem starting with the young children. Hall argued that it was ‘absolutely imperative that assimilation should be begun at kindergarten level’. Hall also suggested ‘distribution of free vitamin C for Aboriginal children and appointment of a social worker’. \(^{41}\) In a letter to the editor in the *Cairns Post*, E. Fitzroy noted that ‘we could have learned a lot from our now-despised aboriginals’. Fitzroy went on to state that ‘they [Aboriginal people] were ‘fortunate to have been able to lead relatively carefree lives in a land of plenty before we came and tried to put collars and ties on them and attempted to turn them into ulcerated clock-watchers like the rest of us’. Fitzroy concluded ‘I heartily applaud their reluctance to be ‘uplifted’ in this highly questionable way’. \(^{42}\)

In 1973, Carole Dunn wrote an article in the *Sunday Mail* titled ‘Are we Prejudiced? Just ask an aboriginal’. According to Dunn, the withdrawal of two debutantes from the Nanango ball because they were to be presented to an Aboriginal Senator (Neville Bonner) ‘made most Queenslanders feel uneasy’. Another dispute in Brisbane concerning the opening of an Aboriginal Hostel in Hill End Brisbane and personal survey found people guilty of racism but only because [Aboriginal people] were ‘aggressive, unclean, rowdy, drunken, promiscuous, etc. etc.’. Most of these had kinder things to say about Papua New Guineans (intelligent, head strong, progressive) and Asians (refined, more civilized, industrious). Responses such as ‘I wouldn’t want

\(^{40}\) 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, copy of *The Australian* article dated 1 November, 1972.

\(^{41}\) 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, copy of letter from Lauren Hall to the *Cairns Post* dated 8 June, 1972.

\(^{42}\) 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, copy of letter to the editor *Cairns Post* from E. Fitzroy dated 21 September, 1972.
to live next door to them’ or, ‘But they do make me feel uncomfortable I feel I have to watch what I say to them’ prevailed. 43 The presence of what Peter Read terms the ‘savage in the city’ seems to have created unease amongst many non-Aboriginal people. 44 In 1973, in letter to the editor, the following response demonstrates the remnants of that belief as follows:

Bearing in mind the fact that the average Aboriginal is the smallest of any race and that culturally the Aboriginals are the least advanced of any race there can be little doubt that Aboriginals are innately less intelligent than the rest of the Australian population. 45

Not only did an Aboriginal presence spark criticism from non-Aboriginal people but the way in which Aboriginal groups became organised, made demands for not only equal rights but rights as Indigenous people to be autonomous. In 1973 Noel Hawkin, Courier Mail journalist, reported that blacks wanted political power and warned that ‘what drives them to action and may spill over into violence if it is badly handled or not understood’. Hawkin also commented on the ‘total refusal of the white majority to recognise their case’. Hawkin argued that ‘Black Power’ had ‘begun to put us [non-Aboriginal people] ‘on a spot already’. Hawkin concluded that black power was a ‘challenge that looks like being here to stay’. 46

In 1974, Chris Cowles wrote to the Premier and complained about the situation for Aboriginal people on Palm Island. 47 K.F. Fraser wrote to the Premier of Queensland supportive of the proposed Federal takeover of Queensland’s Government reserves and expressed support for the Commonwealth proposal since Queensland

43 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, copy of Sunday Mail article by Carole Dunn dated 1 July, 1973.
46 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, copy of article in Courier Mail dated 1 November, 1973.
47 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, copy of letter from Chris Cowles, Hobart to Joh Bjelke-Petersen, Premier of Queensland dated 10 September, 1974.
Government authorities refused to grant Aboriginal land rights. Dr Everingham complained of a separate school at Woorabinda Government reserve for the children of non-Aboriginal staff. People like Mr and Mrs Gamlin from Bundaberg wrote to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Neville Hewitt about the management of Aboriginal people’s income at Coen in North Queensland. When they met another teacher at Coen, they were notified of the Queensland Government’s treatment of Aboriginal people while in attendance at a teachers’ function.

Even some conservative politicians complained about the State police’s treatment of Aboriginal people. In 1973, Don Cameron (Liberal member for Griffith) wrote to the newspaper about the treatment of Aboriginal people he witnessed by Queensland Police officers, ‘A black or white drunk can be a nuisance anywhere, but even if that Aboriginal man had been told a thousand times not to drink alcohol at public places he still retained a right to dignity.’

While different views were expressed, some parts of the media were supportive of change in Aboriginal policy. On 14 July 1969 The Australian reported that just two years after the referendum Australia still had a poor record in the treatment of its Aboriginal people. The referendum had not released a flood of Government action and it was difficult to detect a measurable improvement in the treatment and condition of Aboriginal people. The Australian questioned whether it was expecting too much just

---

49 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, copy of Notice of Question for Thursday 26 September, 1974, Mr Ahern to ask the Premier, copy dated 25 September, 1974.
50 1A/345 Queensland State Archives, copy of letter from Neville Hewitt Queensland Government Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to Mr and Mrs K. Gamlin dated 26 March, 1974.
51 1A/345 Queensland State Archives, copy of letter from Mr and Mrs K. Gamlin to N. Hewitt, Queensland Minister for Aboriginal affairs dated 13 March, 1974.
two years after the referendum.\textsuperscript{53} Later that year, \textit{the Australian} described the Queensland Government’s 1965 Act as a ‘cruel law’ that needed to be repealed.\textsuperscript{54}

In 1974 Current Affairs commentator Mike Willesee openly criticised Premier Bjelke-Petersen’s treatment of Queensland’s Indigenous peoples and stated that his main political ambition was to get rid of Bjelke-Petersen as Queensland’s Premier. Willesee said that Bjelke-Petersen offended him as an Australian and noted that ‘you only have to look at his treatment of Aboriginals to see why’.\textsuperscript{55} In 1973, Ward McNally published a book ‘Goodbye Dreamtime’ in 1973. McNally’s appalling and frightening disclosures of the shameful manner Australia and especially Queensland had treated and was treating Aboriginal people created concerns.\textsuperscript{56} Gordon Bryant, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, commented that McNally’s book was ‘all too true’. The book made serious charges against the Queensland police and allegations including rape of young Indigenous women by police and bashings of young men.\textsuperscript{57}

\textbf{Health professionals}

The results of evidence-based health research conducted by academics and professionals in Queensland illuminated the situation for Aboriginal people. It was no longer the case that the general public was unaware of the treatment and condition of Aboriginal people and particularly those on Queensland reserves. In 1968 \textit{The Australian} described Aboriginal infant mortality rates as ‘disastrous’.\textsuperscript{58}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{53} \textit{The Australian}, 14 July, 1969.
\item \textsuperscript{54} \textit{The Australian}, 11 November, 1969.
\item \textsuperscript{55} 1A/345 Queensland State Archives, copy of \textit{The Australian} article dated 21 March, 1974.
\item \textsuperscript{56} 1A/345 Queensland State Archives, copy of article in \textit{Cairns Post} by Don Whitington, dated 24 May, 1973.
\item \textsuperscript{57} 1A/345 Queensland State Archives, copy of article in \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} copy dated 15 May, 1973.
\item \textsuperscript{58} \textit{The Australian}, 17 August, 1968.
\end{itemize}
Medical professionals contacted authorities concerning the poor health of Aboriginal people in Cloncurry. Representations were made to the Premier by Dr Harvey Sutton during a visit to Cloncurry. The Premier’s response outlined what steps had been taken to increase the numbers of Department of Aboriginal and Islanders’ Advancement welfare staff in Mount Isa and asserted that current services were adequate.  

During an interview with current affairs host, David Frost, Dr Kalakarinos noted that ‘amongst Aborigines we have the worst health problem in the world’. Kalakarinos explained that there were ‘probably more Aboriginal babies dying than in any part of the world and the health of Aboriginal adults has to be seen to be believed’. Kalakarinos argued that Aboriginal health was so bad and that the ‘incidents (sic) of blindness alone is astonishing’. Kalkarinos added that all of the diseases were ‘treatable and it’s all preventable blindness’. In response to Frost’s question whether a revolution involving violence would be suicidal, Kalakarinos argued that ‘we know the answers to the problems it’s just the question of getting the wherewithal and the power and authority to handle…….’ Kalkarinos noted that ‘… It could get to a stage where there will be no alternative because is a person going to see his father his brother his son perhaps going blind. ….. Is he going to see his children dying and put up with it year after year after year when he knows that something can be done and nothing was being done every time attempts are made to do something the officials in the Department of Health and the Department of Aboriginal affairs grossly misrepresent the truth.’

Kalkarinos conclude that ‘ … No. I am quite convinced myself that the aborigines are going to have no alternative to violence and it’s going to be fairly soon’.  

---


61 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, copy of transcript of Frost interview with Barrie Dexter, Office of Aboriginal Affairs, Dennis Walker, Charles Perkins, Gary Foley, Naomi Mayers and
In 1973 in an address given at the Annual Meeting of the Brisbane Branch of Opal, Dr. Jean McFarlane, Director of Maternal and Child Welfare in Queensland, stated that the problem of Aboriginal people was not uncommon and that the 'problems of the Australian aboriginal are no different from those faced by the indigenous people and the minority groups in most of the overseas countries'. McFarlane explained that these problems were 'problems of poverty, of malnutrition, of high infant mortality, of drunkenness, of unreliability, of teenage delinquency'. McFarlane argued that 'these problems are in fact, the problems of all communities today, but appear to be more marked in the minority groups who have difficulty in adjusting to a way of life foreign to their upbringing'. McFarlane concluded that 'the pressures and the priorities of the life of the majority of people living in a community are different and the difficulties of the minority groups to adjusting to this are the same the world over'. McFarlane's argument identified the impact of colonialism on Indigenous peoples throughout the world as similar, and, as Smith argues, colonialism brought 'complete disorder' to colonised peoples. McFarlane argued that solutions needed to be implemented that secured economic development and addressed poverty amongst Aboriginal people to improve health and well-being. It was more than 'adjusting to the way of life foreign to their upbringing' and more to do with the deliberate, determined and rapid dispossession, limited access to health and education and exploitation of Aboriginal workers by the State Government. Furthermore, Australia was unlike other nations that were decolonised as it was a settler state within which Aboriginal people were a minority. As argued by Mbembe in relation to living conditions of colonised peoples in

---

62 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, Are the Problems of the Aboriginal Unique to the Aboriginal, copy of an address given at the 1973 Annual Meeting of the Brisbane Branch of Opal by Dr. Jean McFarlane, Director of Maternal and Child Health.

63 Smith, 1999, p. 28.
South Africa, the towns where natives are forced to reside were described as a ‘... hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal of light’ and that the nature of sovereignty means that colonisers have the ‘capacity to define who matters and who does not, who is disposable and who is not’. Despite the concerns of academics, the situation for many Aboriginal people did not change, especially on Queensland reserves.

Other organisations

A range of organisations expressed their concerns about Queensland’s Aboriginal policies. In 1973, the Australian Council of Social Services stated that non-Indigenous bureaucrats have ‘dictator’s’ power over Aboriginal people on Queensland reserves. Aboriginal people, the council said, were ‘trapped in the culture of poverty’. With an Aboriginal population of 140,000 expected to be 500,000 by the turn of the century, the Council urged the Government to help Aboriginal people to become economically self-sufficient.

The Apex Club notified the Queensland Government of its intention to survey and scrutinize Indigenous affairs and requested advice for the identification of areas of need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In 1974, the Under Secretary of the Premier’s Department replied to an inquiry made by Mr Cleaves, International Vice-President of the Association of Apex Clubs about the formation of a Committee for the purpose of addressing any areas of need pertaining to Aboriginal welfare, education, cultural and general development.

---

64 Mbembe, Archille, Necropolitics, publicculture.dukejournals.org’cgi/content/citation/15/1/11., p. 27.
In 1974 the Union of Australian Women wrote to Premier Bjelke-Petersen calling for the total repeal of the Aborigines Act of 1971 and the responsibility of Aboriginal Affairs in Queensland to be handed over to the Commonwealth.\(^68\)

**Concerns**

While many Queensland citizens were supportive of Aboriginal people, some were clearly challenged by having to share their public spaces, many for the first time in Queensland history. Until 1965 the Queensland Government had been successful removing any unwanted Aboriginal presence in towns, cities or pastoral properties and provided the non-Aboriginal community with unlimited access to cheap Aboriginal labour. The continued movement of populations off reserves and into Queensland towns and cities unsettled many town and city dwellers. Rowley observes that policies differed from practice in Aboriginal affairs and that and that the majority of the Australian population was not ready to integrate Aboriginal people.\(^69\)

There was a wide gap between what the UN and international community expected and what Queensland populations thought should happen in relation to Aboriginal people. Compared with the rest of Australia, Queenslanders were less likely to be educated and urbanised and more likely to be Australian born. In the mid 1960s, only 26% of Queensland High School teachers had degrees, with only 10% having completed standard minimal training.\(^70\) Since rural areas of Queensland had limited access to a narrow range of print media, Fitzgerald argues that this meant these Queenslanders were also less likely to encounter ‘dissident views’.\(^71\) Allan Patience observes that the absence of a ‘large concentrated alert, educated middle class’ also

---


\(^69\) Rowley, 1974, p. 125 and 136.

\(^70\) Fitzgerald, 1984, p. 240.

\(^71\) Fitzgerald, 1984, p. 251.
provided an ‘inadequate testing ground’ for ideas, an ‘ineffective forum for debate’ and ‘insufficient scrutiny of parliamentary behaviour’. 72

As Patience argues, because of particular social, political and psychological dispositions, Queenslanders deviated from an acceptable norm of political and social behaviour during the 1960s. 73 Furthermore, in the absence of debate or exposure to different views, non-Aboriginal people maintained beliefs that dated back to convict times. These were reinforced by the ‘disappearance’ of Aboriginal people caused largely by protection legislation that facilitated the segregation and incarceration on reserves or pastoral properties. The absence of an Aboriginal presence in Queensland towns would have perpetuated the myth about Australia being a white nation. As well as being unwilling to share benefits with Aboriginal people, when Aboriginal people moved freely into Queensland towns and cities, the appearance challenged many Australians particularly in Queensland.

A University of Queensland survey of Aboriginal people residing in Brisbane in 1965 indicated that non-Aboriginal residents did not welcome the arrival of Aboriginal people in their city. Moreover, the report related, Aboriginal people in Brisbane did not enjoy free and equal opportunity or access to social, political, educational, occupational or residential institutions. According to the University of Queensland’s research findings, Aboriginal people’s access to all services available to non-Aboriginal people was denied either through discriminatory laws and customs and in some cases simply through low expectations about the abilities of Aboriginal people. 74

During the debate surrounding the passing of the 1965 Act when Pizzey advised that Aboriginal people would be voting in State Government elections, requests were

72 Patience, 1985, pp. 29-33.
73 Patience, 1985, p. 18.
74 Smith and Biddle, 1975.
immediately made to amend electoral boundaries. This would have ensured that Aboriginal people could not hold a majority within electorates. Since the Indigenous population was substantial in some parts of Queensland, non-Indigenous residents lobbied officials, fearful that Aboriginal people could 'take over' their electorates, with Burke, Cook and Carpentaria Shires a notable example.

As discussed in chapter 3, Queensland officials reacted by disqualifying all eligible Aboriginal voters from participating in the local Government election. Clearly the State Government was reluctant to upset non-Aboriginal people, but fully prepared to deprive Aboriginal people of their democratic rights. Many non-Aboriginal Queenslanders appeared comfortable with Queensland Government bureaucrats exhibiting racist behaviour and acting in direct conflict with the State's assimilation policy.

In 1969, white residents sent a petition to Queensland Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen concerning plans to build houses for Aboriginal people adjacent behind and opposite their own in Normanton in North Queensland. They expressed concerns about Aboriginal people's 'health' and 'hygiene' as well as 'habits' and 'strong odours'. The petition stated that the Aboriginal adults had hardly any education in any of the white man's ways of living and to effectively assimilate them into the white community they must first have that education. Clearly the understanding of professionals and academics as discussed earlier had limited influence over substantial sections of the non-Aboriginal population.

77 Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 5, Unsigned copy of petition from Normanton residents to Premier Bjelke-Petersen, letter undated but received in Premier’s Department on 1 July, 1969.
In May 1969, the *Courier Mail* printed the result of a survey in the Premier’s home town of Kingaroy and noted that 55% of the people interviewed did not want Aboriginal people living next door. Kingaroy citizens clearly did not support the State Government’s policy of assimilation. In 1968, non-Aboriginal people were quoted: ‘We already have one Aboriginal family and they’re very nice. I wouldn’t like our street to be turned into an Aboriginal settlement. I’ve got nothing against them but I don’t want them next door to me’. While the Queensland Government espoused assimilation and the Commonwealth supported integration, the presence of Aboriginal people created fear and loathing as well as numerous complaints from some non-Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal families living near non-Aboriginal families was virtually unheard of in Queensland’s settler history and clearly difficult for many non-Aboriginal people to adapt to. In 1969, a Normanton cleric reported the need to take action to protect Aboriginal people after a ‘dirty racial’ meeting in the town. The meeting opposed the movement of Aboriginal families into Queensland towns and cities.

The presence of Aboriginal people in new homes created much concern for non-Aboriginal people, particularly in country areas like Cloncurry. In 1972, the Mayor of Cloncurry, Jim Johnson said that there should be a Government scheme to help poor whites in the town. He explained that it must be ‘upsetting for a white family living on a small income in a cheap home’ to see an ‘expensive home built next to them and handed over to an aboriginal family’ for a ‘cheap weekly rental’. In the space of less

---

78 *Courier-Mail*, 27 May 1969.
81 The Queensland Government nevertheless rejected the protestors’ petition and proceeded to build eight houses especially for Aboriginal families *The Australian*, 28 May, 1969.
82 Commonwealth funding to the Queensland Government after the referendum for Aboriginal housing is discussed in Chapter 4.
83 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, copy of *Courier Mail* article dated 19 October, 1972.
than 10 years, non-Aboriginal people had lost the ability to prompt officials to move Aboriginal families by compulsion to be segregated on reserves and out of sight of town residents. Rather than express concerns about the treatment of Aboriginal people simply because it was concerning Cloncurry residents, it is difficult to understand why Johnson would not have lobbied for housing for white people.

Commonwealth funded housing programs for Aboriginal people in provincial centres throughout Queensland continued to create concern amongst neighbouring non-Aboriginal residents. The Cairns Post published a letter from W. Whittle who asked why white people ‘object to black people living next door?’ ‘In the majority of cases they are uncivilized, unhygienic, lazy, often drunk and abusive’. Whittle also complained that ‘their houses and gardens are neglected junkyards and they have too many relatives living in the one house’. Whittle also noted that ‘Some white people may live like this I agree, but unfortunately this mode of living is a way of life for the majority of blacks in all countries’. 83

In 1973, E. Rice wrote to the Premier’s Department stating that ‘... good houses have been provided for them [Aboriginal people] and in numerous cases, the floors and doors have been used for firewood’ and demanded that these cases be documented. Rice described how after giving two Aboriginal people employment for two weeks, they got their pay and left to spend it on ‘plonk’ and he [Rice] had to use ‘strong phenyl mixture twice to get the stink out’, after they left. 84 Furthermore, the Commonwealth Government’s commitment to housing all Aboriginal people (in towns and cities) within 10 years would have added to this. 85 Again, with Aboriginal people residing in larger provincial centres non-Aboriginal people proved unready to support assimilation. In

83 1A/345 Queensland State Archives, copy of letter to Cairns Post from W. Whittle dated 12 September, 1972.
Toowoomba in 1974, a group of four non-Aboriginal neighbours signed a petition to the Premier of Queensland objecting to an Aboriginal family residing in their area.\textsuperscript{86} Obviously residents hoped that the Queensland Government could ‘remove’ Aboriginal families from their neighbourhood.

**Opposition to funding**

The bitterness and unease that non-Aboriginal Queenslanders voiced during the influx of Aboriginal people into the States’ towns and cities was compounded by the post 1967 referendum provision of funding for housing and other services specifically for Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people being left in poverty and appalling conditions kept a lot of non-Aboriginal people ‘safe’. As soon as it appeared that this was changing slightly, in the 1970s, objections to the provision of assistance to Aboriginal people arose.

In 1972, *The Australian* reported that according to a Queensland Methodist Minister, poor white Australians were becoming ‘increasingly bitter’ about the amount of Government aid being provided to Aboriginals.\textsuperscript{87} Barrie Pittock, then FCAATSI Councillor for Land and Legislation, wrote that same year about Aboriginal people and the ‘white backlash’ that had emerged once Government programs of assistance for Aboriginal people were considered, became known or obvious to non-Aboriginal people. Pittock noted ‘increasing resentment by poor and often rural whites at the apparent preferential treatment meted out to Aboriginal people by Government and other bodies’. Pittock observed that, this was becoming the case as the funding provided by the Commonwealth became more obvious. Pittock argued that for non-Aboriginal people, arguments in favour of special treatment for Aboriginal people were

\textsuperscript{86} Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 9, copy of letter from Alice Kanowske, Daphne Larsen, Merle Larsen and Joyce Garbutt to Premier Bjelke-Petersen dated 27 November, 1974.

\textsuperscript{87} 1A/345, QSA, copy of *The Australian* article dated 19 October, 1972.
not convincing to many ‘normal people and poorer whites who are themselves facing economic difficulties in a declining economic situation’. Pittock also pointed out that the concept of Aboriginal land rights offended many non-Aboriginal people. 88

Opposition to Aboriginal people’s access to Commonwealth entitlements as Australian citizens grew as Indigenous people’s access to DSS benefits accelerated. In 1972, the *Sunday Sun* reported R.D.H. of Ipswich who wrote that, as a general rule, the ‘attitude of today’s Aboriginal is that we the workers should break our necks to help them and we should give them pensions, concessions, homes to lie in, unemployment benefits and in general all of the privileges that a hard worker should be entitled to’. ‘They have little or no desire to work’, ‘they rarely look after homes when they get them’ and ‘they live on widows’ pensions’, ‘deserted wives pension’ and ‘child welfare benefits and unemployment funds’. They have ‘no desire to curb the number of children they have because child endowment for a large family is a good boost also’. Outrage against a Government that would ‘feather a layabout’s nest’ was also expressed. 89

Governments, both State and Commonwealth, were in a bind. The Commonwealth Government’s admission of the oppressed situation of Aboriginal people would have attracted unwanted UN scrutiny or criticism. However, the provision of assistance to Aboriginal people provoked criticism from non-Aboriginal people (who constituted the majority of the Australian population). Given the nature of Government and democracy, the dilemma shifted between doing as much as possible to provide fair treatment to all Aboriginal peoples and ensuring that this assistance did not create distress or unease amongst the non-Aboriginal constituents they represented.

89 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, copy of article in *Sunday Sun* dated 26 November, 1972.
Perhaps it was fear of backlash from non-Aboriginal people that led Bjelke-Petersen to oppose the implementation of the Commonwealth’s Aboriginal policies in Queensland.

Local newspapers printed racist letters particularly since there was no anti-discrimination legislation in existence. In 1973 in the *Goondiwindi Argus* the following poem was published:

Oh say can you see by the dawn’s early light,  
How we sits be de creek for dem fishes to bite,  
We is non-working Abos wid nary a care,  
Cause de Government send dat lovely welfare ....

Day pays us to vote, an’ rewards us for sin,  
While dem sweet Laborites keep de cheques rollin’ in,  
We wait every month for de slips wid de figgers,  
An’ dats’ all we do ... we damn lucky we niggers. Signed Apartheid,  
Goondiwindi.90

Non-Aboriginal residents felt so strongly about an Aboriginal presence that they wrote to newspapers to share their opinions with the public. In 1973, John Cox of Hughenden wrote how he was ‘sick and tired of hearing what the Aboriginals want’. He argued that ‘if they got off their backsides and work people wouldn’t mind’. Cox added that a lot of people were ‘fed up with all the rot going on at the moment’. Cox concluded that if Aboriginal people want something for nothing the Government should ‘give them 20,000 acres of Northern Territory and put [Senator] Neville Bonner in charge and make them all self-supporting.’91

The 1973 Central Council conference of the Professional Officers Association of the Commonwealth Public Service, which met in Brisbane, accused the Federal Government of practicing reverse apartheid toward Aboriginals.92 In 1974, Mr

90 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, copy of article titled Situation is just getting verse and verse, *Goondiwindi Argus* dated 18 October, 1973.


92 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, copy of article in *The Australian* dated 31 August, 1973.
Nicholas wrote to the Premier complaining about Senator Cavanagh’s comment on the National News that the members of the Country Party were interested in maintaining Aboriginal workers on Government reserves as cheap sources of labour.  

In addition to concerns over Aboriginal housing and benefits, many people also objected to other aspects of Federal Government policy. The Aboriginal land rights concept sparked opposition from Joh Bjelke-Petersen and the National Party. In 1974, The Secretary of the National Party of Australia’s Linville Branch wrote to Bjelke-Petersen to convey their ‘wholehearted support’ of the Premier’s stand against the Federal Government’s proposals in respect of Aboriginal land rights... and insisted that land rights be granted under ‘precisely the same terms as would apply to other citizens.’

It is our considered opinion that the greatest hope for the happiness and well-being of most people of Aboriginal descent lies in their ultimate assimilation into a homogeneous Australian society and all efforts should be directed towards this goal.

The Linville Branch of the National Party of Australia anti- Aboriginal land rights stand suggests it was not mindful of the ways in which Australia and Queensland were settled. Also, concerns suggest fear that Aboriginal land rights could jeopardise Queensland colonisers’ unlimited access to lands. As Moreton-Robinson argues, the core values of Australian national identity are located within ‘the house that Jack built’; a nation that in its denial of Indigenous sovereignty is perceived to be a white possession. Australian national identity is predicated on retaining the benefit of colonial theft. ‘Britishness’ had ‘metamorphosed’ into Australian national identity and

---

93 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, copy of letter from Mr Nicholas, Paynes Lagoon Station to Premier J. Bjelke-Petersen dated 12 September, 1974.


culture but Indigenous sovereignty continues to haunt the ‘house that Jack built’, ‘shaking its foundations’ and ‘rattling the picket fence’. 96

The influx of Aboriginal people into towns and cities made many non-Aboriginal people uncomfortable, particularly with increased Aboriginal presence at alcohol outlet sites. 97 In 1974, hotels which refused service to Aboriginal drinkers were threatened with having their beer supplies stopped. Dennis Murphy, the Secretary of the Trade Union stated that the union had received several complaints which it was investigating. ‘Hotels which indulge in racism will find themselves without beer’, he said. 98 The days of excluding Aboriginal people from hotels were over. In areas of high Aboriginal populations, this proved particularly difficult for many non-Aboriginal people to deal with. Many believed the old policies should continue. As an article in the North Queensland Register in 1974 noted, ‘we cannot be truly advancing them [Aboriginal people] when ‘the road to the new paradise is flanked by empty flagons’. 99

Clearly, 10 years of State Government’s policy of assimilation had not mustered much support from sections of the non-Aboriginal community particularly in Queensland.

Some claims by non-Aboriginal people were ludicrous and ridiculous. In 1974, the Courier Mail reported that Aboriginal people were getting ‘rifle’ and ‘grenade’ training in the Brisbane valley. The Police Minister (Mr Hodges) was told that racial

96 Moreton-Robinson, 2005, p. 27.
tension in Brisbane had reached a critical point and noted the alleged existence of an ‘extremist’ group.\textsuperscript{100}

Many supporters of Aboriginal rights were concerned by the backlash which became evident from the early 1970s. Church representatives expressed concerns about racism and backlash against Aboriginal people. Methodist Minister Reverend Allan Lanham of Cloncurry reported that poor white Australians were becoming increasingly bitter about the amount of Government aid provided to Aboriginal people.\textsuperscript{101} Despite this concern, the Church continued to fight for equal wages for Aboriginal workers, legislative reform in Queensland, land rights, economic development and access to education. Churches were keen to be seen to be liberating Queensland Aboriginal people but at the same time remained conscious of the need to ensure they alleviated worries, fear or apprehensions of non-Aboriginal Australians.

In conclusion, the objections by non-Aboriginal people revealed some enduring features of white Australian attitudes towards Aboriginal people. While the Commonwealth was prepared to change policy concerning Aboriginal people, sections of the Australian and Queensland community were simply not ready. The influx of Aboriginal people into towns and cities in full view of non-Aboriginal settlers challenged strong beliefs about both colonial superiority and the view that Australia was a white nation.

As Smith argues, previous policies and tactics had dehumanised Aboriginal people in the eyes of colonisers. In her words, ‘To consider Indigenous peoples as not

\textsuperscript{100} 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, copy of article in \textit{Courier Mail} dated 23 January, 1974.
\textsuperscript{101} 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, copy of \textit{The Australian} article dated 19 October, 1972 and University of Queensland (UQ) reports indicated that Aboriginal people were not accessing DSS benefits or Queensland Housing Commission assistance. UQ survey estimated that nearly 50% of Aboriginal people lived in poverty compared to only 10% of non-Aboriginal people. \textit{Black News Service} Number 6, October 1975, University of Queensland, Poverty Enquiry, Summary by Cheryl Buchanan figures quoted from University of Queensland Department of Social Work’s report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Brisbane which showed that 48% of Aboriginal people were extremely poor compared to only 10% of non-Aboriginal people.
fully human, or not human at all, enabled distance to be maintained and justified various policies of either extermination or domestication. The liberation of Aboriginal people, freedom of movement off reserves, Governments’ funding of Aboriginal community-based organisations, housing in provincial centres, participation in local Government elections and support for Aboriginal land rights created the need for what Moreton-Robinson defines as ‘recentring white possession’. Non-Aboriginal people continued to enjoy the benefits that flowed on from settler colonisation, and many still remained unable to bring themselves to share these benefits with Aboriginal people.

---

CHAPTER 9
FCAATSI Activism and Resistance

After World War II FCAATSI and QCAATSI had developed huge global networks which included Churches, Trade Unions, Women’s groups, Jurists, Health Professionals and many other organisations. Many non-Aboriginal people in Australia have joined various national groups to lobby Government. By the 1960s FCAATSI had built strong relationships with many of these groups which meant two things. Firstly that these groups were fully briefed on the inadequacies in Governments’ policies in relation to Aboriginal people and, secondly were able to take these matters into the international arena to keep pressure on the Australian Government. During the period examined by this thesis Aboriginal people infiltrated FCAATSI and became part of its methods of protest. As the opposition mounted against Queensland Government’s 1965 and 1971 Acts by FCAATSI and QCAATSI is examined earlier, this chapter looks more closely at the activism for not only land rights, award wages and human rights for Aboriginal people in Queensland, but access to services available to non-Aboriginal people. This examination looks at the calls for Aboriginal land rights and economic development, and highlights the need for anti-racist laws, elimination of discriminatory legislation as well as health and education services. As early as 1965 FCAATSI was using the UN for support. Changes occurred as the influence of the UN and the world decolonisation process that followed World War II began to take effect in Australia. FCAATSI wrote to the UN about demands for compensation from both Federal and State authorities for lands taken from Aboriginal people.1 FCAATSI also demanded Governments address economic development for Aboriginal people.2

---

1 The Age, 19 April, 1965.
FCAATSI criticism of DAIA's tactics resulted in accusations of communism from the Queensland Government. QCAATSI also produced a newsletter that it distributed throughout Australia and overseas, outlining the Queensland Government's poor treatment of Aboriginal people. Because of these actions and the extent of QCAATSI's resistance and networks, the organisation was subsequently labelled as 'pro-communist' by the Queensland Government's Department of Native Affairs' bureaucrats. Labelling QCAATSI worked as a deterrent to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal supporters at a time when there was much fear about communism.

As well as conditions on Queensland Government reserves non-Aboriginal members of FCAATSI were aware that the levels of education available to Aboriginal people were inadequate. Pittock proposed that teaching in primary schools should be undertaken in Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages as well as English. Professionals knew that addressing the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal people meant not only removing barriers to formal education, but paying workers equal wages and ceasing deliberate exploitation.

In 1968, Pittock, Quaker and FCAATSI member urged the Commonwealth to develop an Aboriginal land rights policy. In 1969 he argued that nowhere in the world was the contrast in power between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people more accentuated than in policies over land. In the same year, Pittock proposed the

---

3 Cochrane, 1994, pp. 33-34.
4 During the Cold War fears about communism surfaced and became the vehicle for discrediting anti-Government critiques.
5 MS 3759, Series 11, Item 5, FCAATSI Annual Conference, Canberra, 12-14 April, 1968, A. Barrie Pittock, Convenor, Legislative Reform Committee Report 1967-1968.
6 After 1972, the Queensland Government upheld controls over Aboriginal workers' wages, confiscated up to 90% of earnings and implemented discriminatory legislation and draconian by-laws.
7 MS 3759, Series 11, Item 5, FCAATSI Annual Conference, Canberra, 12-14 April, 1968, A. Barrie Pittock, Convenor, Legislative Reform Committee Report 1967-1968.
establishment of an Indigenous marine industry in the Torres Straits as a means of enhancing economic development for Indigenous peoples within that region.⁹

Additionally, sudden dispersals of Aboriginal people by Queensland Government bureaucrats to make way for bauxite mining highlighted the need for secure tenure and brought Aboriginal land rights in Queensland to the forefront. In 1969, Jack Horner, the General Secretary of FCAATSI, wrote to Gough Whitlam, the then leader of the Opposition, and urged action that prompted greater consideration by bauxite companies for the Indigenous inhabitants at Yirrkala in the Northern Territory and Weipa in North Queensland.¹⁰

In 1971 Joe McGinness wrote to each State Government and highlighted racist policies. McGinness outlined issues that needed to be dealt with such as the recognition of prior ownership of land, Indigenous people being driven off lands, unacceptable Aboriginal infant mortality rates, the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice systems as well as limited access to any formal education.¹¹

According to Faith Bandler, Kath Walker argued that the Federal Government ‘held the key to reform’ concerning the treatment and condition of Aboriginal Queenslanders for the biggest problem preventing improvement was the need to ‘educate’ the politicians first. In 1966 while lobbying in Canberra on behalf of QCAATSI and FCAATSI, when Kath Walker finally received an audience with Prime Minister Menzies, she was offered a drink of alcohol. She pointed out to the Prime Minister that if he were to make that offer in Queensland he could be jailed. Clearly

---

⁹ MS 3759. Series 11, Item 5.
¹⁰ MS 3759, Series 2, Item 5, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, Jack Horner, FCAATSI General Secretary to Gough Whitlam, Leader of the Opposition, 24 April, 1969. Jack Horner joined the Aboriginal Australian Fellowship in 1957. Between 1958-1966 Jack Horner was the Honorary Secretary in the AAF. Horner was the Vice-President of Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement (FCAA) from 1959-1960. Horner was the Secretary of FCAATSI and spent many years as the Treasurer.
Menzies would have realised the draconian nature of Queensland laws which had to change. Since FCAATSI convinced the Commonwealth to hold the referendum and then the Australian public to vote yes, it expected the Commonwealth to immediately intervene and relieve suffering of Aboriginal people in Queensland.

Dr A. Barrie Pittock, Convenor of the FCAATSI Legislative Reform Report for the 1969-1970 financial year, attempted to ensure Aboriginal people’s rights were dealt with within the realm of Queensland Government justice and, as a way of addressing these issues, suggested an Ombudsman and access to legal advice for Aboriginal people.

In 1966, FCAATSI not only submitted a copy of Queensland’s *Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders’ Affairs Act 1965* to the United Nations’ Human Rights Committee as evidence of the violation of the rights of Queensland Aboriginal peoples ensured the UN was kept aware of human rights breaches especially in Queensland.

Patience argues that FCAATSI’s lobbying of the Commonwealth as well as the United Nations angered Queensland authorities. FCAATSI also highlighted the need for consultation with Aboriginal people in relation to Indigenous policy. In 1969, Kath Walker noted that Commonwealth

---

13 MS 3759. Series 11, Item 5, Report of Legislative Reform for 1968/1969, A. Barrie Pittock. Pittock had been questioning government approaches to Indigenous communities since joining Abschol as a student at the University of Melbourne in the late 1950s. A hitch-hiking tour of New South Wales Aboriginal settlements in 1958 impressed upon him the serious consequences of discrimination, Aboriginal poverty and a widespread apathetic response to these problems. In 1959 Pittock joined the Society of Friends (Quakers) an organisation with a record of active opposition to slavery and racial discrimination. A Fulbright Scholar in 1964, Pittock went to Colorado and worked with American Indian sociologist. On his return to Australia Pittock was ready to become an activist for Aboriginal rights and joined FCAATSI and did much work for legislative reform and national land rights campaign. [http://www.indigenousrights.net.au/person/asp?](http://www.indigenousrights.net.au/person/asp?)
15 Patience, 1985, p. 119.
Government’s Office of Aboriginal Affairs was using the term ‘integration’ as Indigenous policy. Kath Walker demanded that Aboriginal people be consulted about any future policies impacting upon themselves. Whether Aboriginal people would like to integrate into the European society was unclear, but any such integration must be on Indigenous people’s terms, and not on the terms of ‘unqualified Aboriginal Welfare department officials’ who, to a large extent, ‘cared nothing’ for Aboriginal people, Kath Walker argued. Walker also asserted that only a minority of politicians were prepared to interest themselves in Aboriginal affairs which was not surprising since Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were a minority group of voters. She also criticised William Wentworth for his use of pet phrases such as ‘our Aborigines’. Walker stated that FCAATSI must educate him to realise they were not ‘his Aborigines’, and that they were Aboriginal people trying to ‘uphold dignity’ and ‘pride of race’. In 1969, Kath Walker also complained that Federal and State Governments were leaving Aboriginal people to ‘die on the fringe’.

In 1971 McGinness again drew attention to Gorton’s commitment to eliminate racist legislation within two years and the Commonwealth’s promise to draft legislation if the Queensland Government was not prepared to amend its 1965 Act. McGinness reported Gorton’s ‘tardiness’ in removing racist legislation. McGinness also described Gorton as ‘gutless’ since Queensland’s legislation was the most discriminatory in Australia.

---

16 MS 3759, Series 6, Item 6, Papers of FCAATSI, Abschol Conference on Attitude Change, May 1969, speech by Kath Walker, QCAATSI.

17 The Australian, 7 April, 1969.

18 MS 3759, Series 11, Item 8, FCAATSI Annual Conference 9-11 April 1971, Presidential Report by Joe McGinness.

19 MS 3759, Series 2, Item 10, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, Reports and Proceedings, for the Annual conference on Aboriginal Affairs held at Pimlico Hall, James Cook University, Townsville, Queensland, 9-11 April, 1971,
In a press statement released in 1971, FCAATSI noted that it had been four years since the referendum, and acknowledged that while there had been some improvements in housing, education and job opportunities, the Government had backed down on Gorton’s earlier commitment to eliminate racist legislation from Australia’s statutes.\(^ {20} \)

FCAATSI held its National Conference in Townsville in 1971 with racism as the theme.\(^ {21} \) In the same year, during the Springbok Rugby Union tour of Australia, FCAATSI also outlined examples of the form of apartheid that Indigenous Australians lived under.\(^ {22} \)

In 1973, the *Townsville Daily Bulletin* reported that FCAATSI urged the Commonwealth Government to introduce anti-discrimination legislation and argued that discrimination should be a criminal offence, particularly in relation to restricting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s access to public places.\(^ {23} \)

Aboriginal people’s access to DSS benefits was an issue FCAATSI raised with the Commonwealth Government. In August 1975 at the FCAATSI Conference, Aboriginal women from Mornington Island demanded that the Commonwealth urgently investigate allegations that the Presbyterian Board of Missions’ were receiving DSS benefits on their behalf and had made deductions to recover costs without their permission.\(^ {24} \)

---

20 FCAATSI Presidential Report 1971. (Report of these proceedings held in two places at AIATSIS collection – MS 3759, Series 11, Item 8 is one, and Series 2, Item 10 is another).
21 MS 3759, Series 13, Item 4, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, Press Statement, 31 May, 1971. Gorton’s commitment to removal of racist legislation from Australian statutes is discussed in Chapter 4.
24 MS 3759, Series 2, Item 22, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, copy of Aboriginal and Island Women’s Conference Press Statement dated 31 August, 1975.
The United Nations and International Connections

As well as lobbying the Commonwealth about the treatment and condition of Aboriginal people in Queensland, FCAATSI also liaised closely with the UN between 1965 and 1975. In 1965 FCAATSI wrote to the UN about demands for compensation from both Federal and State authorities for lands taken from Aboriginal people.25

1968 was the International Year for Human Rights and FCAATSI was mindful of the UN’s declaration.26 In 1971, the International Year against Racism and Racial Discrimination, FCAATSI invited the General Assembly of the United Nations to visit Australia and participate in the examination of racism and racial discrimination as a way of embarrassing the Australian Government.27 Arguably, having Australia’s racism highlighted both nationally and internationally created problems, pressured the Commonwealth Government to not only address its own policies but also urge Queensland to amend its discriminatory Aboriginal legislation.

FCAATSI members had been presenting papers to international audiences since the 1950s with the UN Convention for the International Labour Organisations 1957 Convention 107 with a particular focus directed at the rights of Indigenous and Tribal populations. Mary Montgomerie Bennett from the South Australian Women’s non-party of South Australia delivered an address to the London Anti-Slavery Society conference which targeted Queensland Government legislation which was publicised and distributed globally.28 In 1971, FCAATSI had established a committee for action to combat racism and prepared and forwarded a declaration to the UN General Secretary and the General Assembly on the main forms of racism and racial discrimination.

25 The Age, 19 April, 1965.
practised by Australian Municipal, State and Federal Governments. FCAATSI received a financial grant from the World Council of Churches to carry out its research work on Australian racism and racial discrimination. The paper outlined the workings of the Queensland Government’s 1965 Act highlighting the payment of under-award wages, confiscation of property, earnings and income of people on reserves as well as restrictions on visitors and political lobbying. Suggestions were made by the UN General Assembly that the Australian Government be urged to eliminate discrimination. FCAATSI formed strong alliances with organisations such as Womens International League for Peace and Freedom, Union of Australian Women, National Commission of Jurists and Peace, and the National Council of Jewish Women in Australia to name a few. Homer discusses FCAATSI’s links with Martin Luther King and the US Civil Rights Movement. Horner also mentions how the London Anti-Slavery Society was interested in working with FCAATSI to bring the position of Aboriginal Australians to the attention of the UN.

FCAATSI was invited to tour China by the People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and while visiting, Aboriginal members screened footage of the dismantling of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy highlighting the clash with Police in 1972. FCAATSI enhanced its UN partnerships and awoke the world to the Queensland Government’s harsh Indigenous legislation at a time when, as Chesterman

---

33 MS 3759, Series 6, Item 5, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, China Report by Gerry Bostock.
argues, Australia was 'particularly sensitive' to world opinion and UN scrutiny. As well as working with the UN, Aboriginal FCAATSI members worked with international organisations like the World Council of Churches (WCC) to highlight the plight of Aboriginal people in Queensland. FCAATSI also co-ordinated its anti-racism campaign with the World Council of Churches.

In 1973 FCAATSI had enhanced its relationship with the World Council of Churches (WCC). Faith Bandler noted that FCAATSI had learned much from Dr. Spivey, the WCC Commissioner on the Program to Combat Racism, who had met with FCAATSI representatives in Sydney. Dr Spivey was very experienced in the ways of inducing ‘white folks to take their feet off the necks of the blacks’ as he put it. Dr Spivey advised FCAATSI to focus on the root causes of bad race relations and stressed the importance of finding good ‘allies’. FCAATSI used these 1968 and 1971 international years to inform the world about the Queensland Government’s 1965 Act’s discriminatory provisions. FCAATSI’s relationship with groups overseas, as well as the UN, pressured the Commonwealth about Australia’s treatment of its Indigenous minority groups. The UN also expected Australia to remove discriminatory legislation from Australia’s statutes, introduce the racial discrimination act, implement land rights and enhance economic development for Aboriginal people.

**Bicentenary**

FCAATSI organised a campaign to protest the Australian bicentenary celebrations. In 1970 Australia celebrated the landing of Captain Cook in 1770 who took possession of lands that we now know as Australia. The 1970 Australian

---


35 MS 3759, Series 13, Item 1, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, copy of FCAATSI letter to all affiliates dated 31 October, 1972, signed by Faith Bandler, General Secretary, and Jack Horner, Secretary to the General Secretary.
bicentenary celebrations proved an opportune time for Aboriginal people to bring the
treatment and conditions on Queensland reserves to the world’s attention.

In 1970 Joe McGinness’ Presidential Report noted that the forthcoming
bicentenary celebrations would mark the continuation of a further 200 years of
‘European misrule’. He also noted that 1970 marked 200 years of ‘degradation’,
‘humiliation’ and almost ‘total annihilation’ of a people. FCAATSI also designed and
sold a bicentenary car sticker stating that Captain Cook was ‘bad news for Aborigines’
which was sold as a fundraiser. In a press statement on 6 March 1970, FCAATSI
referred to the re-enactment of the landing of Captain James Cook in Australia 200
years before as an official ‘Day of Mourning’. Aboriginal protests occurred during the
Queen of England’s participation in the bicentennial celebration and her arrival in
Australia. Organised public demonstrations became common-place during this period
and particularly in relation to Aboriginal issues. Issues associated with the 200 year
anniversary of non-Aboriginal possession of Australia without treaty or agreement was
also raised as well as the need for Aboriginal land rights, economic development and
anti-discrimination legislation.

Police Harrassment

FCAATSI lobbied the Queensland Government about the high incidence of
police harassment of Aboriginal people which coincided with their influx into
Queensland towns and cities. In 1971, McGinness reported that Aboriginal people still

36 FS/24/1, FCAATSI Reports and Proceedings for the Annual Conference on Aboriginal Affairs,
Canberra 27-29 March, 1970, President’s report, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.
37 MS 3759, Series 11, Item 8, FCAATSI Annual Conference 9-11 April, 1971, Presidential Report
by Mr McGinness.
38 MS 3759, Series 13, Item 4, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.
feared injustices, and at times ‘armed police’. McGinness argued that both legal and social discrimination were widely practised by police and others in authority.40

In 1972, McGinness reported that arrests of Aboriginal people were made by police in Queensland that were unnecessary. McGinness noted that this occurred in Townsville, Normanton and generally across the State.41 In the same year, the Queensland Minister for Works and Housing replied to Faith Bandler, General Secretary of FCAATSI about the Council’s complaint of police intimidation of Aboriginal people in Townsville and denied allegations of over-policing.42

The over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system saw Lambert McBride the Queensland State Secretary of FCAATSI highlight the work of QCAATSI and the advances made after a long campaign negotiating day release for Aboriginal prisoners in Queensland.43

Paul Richards, former solicitor for the Brisbane Aboriginal Legal Service noted how Aboriginal people in Brisbane were arrested by police if they loitered in the city and were subsequently sentenced to six months jail. He also noted that in the 1960s and 1970s it was also an offence to be seen in the company of an Aboriginal person.44 Similarly, Michael Mace highlighted his fear of Queensland police in the 1960s. He

40 MS 3759, Series 11, Item 8, FCAATSI Annual Conference 9-11 April 1971, Presidential Report by Joe McGinness.
41 MS 3759, Series 11, Item 9, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, resolutions of Alice Springs Conference, 1972.
42 MS 3759, Series 2, Item 14, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, copy of letter from Minister for Works and Housing to Faith Bandler, General Secretary of FCAATSI, dated June 5, 1972.
43 MS 3759, Series 11, Item 13, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, FCAATSI 1975 Annual Conference Canberra, Lambert McBride, Queensland Secretary’s Report 1975.
noted at best he would expect to be 'bashed' or 'kicked up the arse' and, at worst, jailed for six months.\(^{45}\)

Once Aboriginal people escaped poor treatment and close surveillance on reserves and pastoral properties, this was replaced by alternate tactics utilised by police services to control, intimidate and subjugate Aboriginal populations. Despite the Queensland Government espousing its policy of assimilation, it was clear that police did not welcome an Aboriginal presence in Brisbane.

**Anti-Discrimination Legislation**

In 1968, FCAATSI's acting Secretary, Faith Bandler, stressed the need for anti-discrimination legislation throughout Australia.\(^{46}\) In 1971, McGinness not only urged the Government to take immediate steps to honour Gorton's promise concerning the removal of all racist legislation from Australia's statutes, but attempted to impress upon the general Australian public the need for and importance of anti-discrimination legislation.\(^{47}\)

In 1972, resolutions passed at the 15th Annual FCAATSI Conference in Alice Springs called for the introduction of anti-discrimination legislation immediately.\(^{48}\) As mentioned earlier, in 1973, the *Townsville Daily Bulletin* reported that FCAATSI urged Federal Government officials to introduce anti-discrimination legislation and argued that discrimination should be a criminal offence.\(^{49}\) FCAATSI knew that the


\(^{46}\) MS 3759, Series 11, Item 5, Papers of FCAATSI, Faith Bandler’s Report, 1968.

\(^{47}\) MS 3759, Series 11, Item 8, FCAATSI Annual Conference 9-11 April 1971, Presidential Report by Joe McGinness.

\(^{48}\) MS 3759, Series 11, Item 9, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, Resolutions adopted at the 15th Annual FCAATSI Conference in Alice Springs, 1-3 April, 1972.

requirement for anti-discrimination legislation was in line with UN expectations and was being debated in the Federal Parliament.

In 1975, at the FCAATSI Annual Conference, Terry O’Shane, the organisation’s Aboriginal President and Trade Union activist reported that Aboriginal affairs had ‘taken a new turn’ under the administration of the Commonwealth Labor Government. O’Shane also mentioned how the 1975 Racial Discrimination Bill still had not been enacted and raised questions about the link between the Queensland Government’s discrimination and how that would rest under the Commonwealth’s anti-discrimination provisions.50

Between 1965 and 1975 FCAATSI liaised with the UN and international bodies and highlighted the need for Commonwealth intervention, it argued for the removal of Queensland Government’s discriminatory legislation and the implementation of national anti-discrimination legislation.

**Economic Development and Land Rights**

In the 1960s QCAATSI circulated an information paper which formed part of a Trade Union report on bauxite mining development in North Queensland. FCAATSI arranged for Jack Fitzgerald, the State Secretary of the Australian Seaman’s Union, to embark on a five week tour of existing and potential ports in the Gulf of Carpentaria. As a FCAATSI supporter, Fitzgerald observed that North Queensland was viewed as the ‘last stronghold’ for Aboriginal people, with reserves scattered throughout the area. He also mentioned the competence of many Aboriginal workers.51

---


51 pQUE, FCAATSI paper, Eye Witness in the Gulf, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra (undated).
FCAATSI expressed concern over the mining industry in Northern Australia, and how Aboriginal people stood to lose land. The Council’s President, Joe McGinness reported to the FCAATSI Easter 1968 Conference that the post-war growth of mining, military, and pastoral activity had resulted in the confiscation of millions of acres of Aboriginal reserve lands and he stated that more excisions were threatened.⁵² In 1968, McGinness argued that mining activity threatened the livelihoods of Mapoon, Weipa and Mona Mona reserve inmates in North Queensland and consequently stressed the urgent need for Indigenous land ownership and autonomy.⁵³

In 1968, in a QCAATSI information flyer, the Council complained about Comalco mining activity at Weipa and the Queensland Government’s plans to build a dam on the Mona Mona reserve area where at least 100 Aboriginal people still resided. QCAATSI argued that international precedents had been set with land rights recognised in New Zealand and the United States but that Australia had only recognised land rights in relation to Nauru and Papua New Guinea. QCAATSI observed that, in Northern Australia, Aboriginal people comprised a substantial fraction of the population who had pleaded for the remnants of their land for over 100 years.⁵⁴ Given this logic, QCAATSI wondered why Australia would not recognise Aboriginal land rights.

Compensation for mineral extractions within an overall national land rights policy was advocated by FCAATSI and included the following issues:

Aboriginal ownership of existing Aboriginal Reserves; recognition of Aboriginal ownership of traditional tribal land ... owned and leased by the Crown;
Aboriginal consent for and benefit from mining and other development on all Aboriginal land; [the] establishment of an Aboriginal Land claims Court to facilitate the awarding of compensation to Aborigines, wherever Aboriginal land [was] alienated [and] setting up a National Aboriginal Lands Trust fund to accept and allocate

---

⁵⁴ pQUE, Queensland Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, Aboriginal Land Rights, 20 June, 1968, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.
compensation for all the land of Australia which [had] been alienated for all the former Aboriginal owners. 55

Land rights became FCAATSI's constant demand, ramped up largely by the dispersal of Aboriginal people in North Queensland to make way for bauxite mining combined with the influence of UN expectations. In 1969, Faith Bandler, FCAATSI Vice President, described the situation whereby companies profited from land and resources in Australia as 'shocking'. 56 The question of land rights for Aboriginal people assumed prime importance in the minds of both FCAATSI and many Aboriginal people. 57

In September 1969 when FCAATSI wrote to Bjelke Petersen suggesting that the time had come to recognise Aboriginal people as Australians and to receive rights to own land, the Queensland Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Neville Hewitt, recommended that there be no response to the FCAATSI letter. 58

Settlement in Queensland and all activities associated with economic development involved the deliberate exclusion and suppression of Aboriginal people. The continued dispossession of Aboriginal people of their lands without treaty, agreement or compensation ensured that traditional owners on bauxite-rich lands remained impoverished. In 1969 The Australian highlighted recent examples of not only the absence of economic development policy by the Queensland Government, but the deliberate marginalisation of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from

55 MS3759, Series 13, Item 4, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, FCAATSI Land Rights Policy July 1969.
56 MS 3759, Series 11, Item 6, Secretary's Report, April, 1969.
it.\textsuperscript{59} In theory, bauxite mining in North Queensland would have brought employment opportunities for Aboriginal people. Evidence suggests that this was not the case. Clearly Aboriginal labour was only required when it could be easily exploited.

In 1970, McGinness reported that the granting of land rights would play a significant role in the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.\textsuperscript{60} In 1971 McGinness wrote to each State Government and highlighted issues that needed to be dealt with such as the recognition of prior ownership of land. McGinness also challenged the Queensland Government’s forced removal of Aboriginal people from their lands especially in North Queensland.\textsuperscript{61}

In 1972 Pittock discussed the opposition of most non-Aboriginal people to the recognition of prior Aboriginal ownership of lands colonised. Pittock argued that Convention 107 article 11 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) stated that ‘the right of ownership, collective or individual, of the members of the populations concerns over the lands which these populations traditionally occupy shall be recognised’. The recognition of Aboriginal peoples’ rights to lands or being compensated was raised and that the past ‘cannot be forgotten, for it determines the present, and may well determine the future’.\textsuperscript{62} The opposition of non-Aboriginal Australians to the recognition of pre-colonial ownership indicates how secure the majority population were in their roles as colonisers.

\textsuperscript{59} The Australian, 20 November, 1969 reported that in 1967 there were only 14 Aboriginal workers in the mining industry at Weipa despite undertakings by the miners to employ local Aboriginal workers – refer Chapter 9.

\textsuperscript{60} MS 3759, Series 11, Item 8, FCAATSI Annual Conference 9-11 April 1971, Presidential Report by Joe McGinness.

\textsuperscript{61} MS 3759, Series 14, Item 4, Report of Australian Committee for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination 1971.

\textsuperscript{62} A. Barrie Pittock, Aborigines and Land Rights, pPIT, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.
By 1974, FCAATSI President, Terry O’Shane, expressed optimism that the Whitlam Labor Government would implement Aboriginal land rights. In the same year, O’Shane, urged Aboriginal people to get ‘ahead of the game’ and have Indigenous organisations incorporated and ready to facilitate land claims and work with Commonwealth Government officials. In anticipation of Woodward recommendations on Aboriginal land rights, Terry O’Shane wrote to committee members advising them of his intention to convene a land rights conference in Cairns with the hope for setting up Land Councils throughout Queensland. O’Shane argued that, in doing this, Aboriginal organisations would also be ready to receive funding. On 16 August 1974, in response to FCAATSI concerns, Evelyn Scott was advised that the Senate had received the Council’s request for support for land rights and the establishment of a Commission to compensate Indigenous peoples but that it could not debate this issue at this time. The Commonwealth Government’s attempts at addressing UN expectations included implementing Aboriginal land rights, removing discriminatory legislation from Australian statutes and introducing the Racial Discrimination Act. These were bold moves by the Commonwealth and were not supported by the Queensland Government. These moves also reflected the strength of the Commonwealth’s need for Australia to be seen by the UN as a multi-cultural nation dealing fairly with its Indigenous minority groups.

In 1975 at FCAATSI’s Annual Conference, Senator Bonner stressed the importance of the recognition of prior Aboriginal lands ownership. Bonner referred to

63 MS 3759, Series 11, Items 12, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, Terry O’Shane, FCAATSI President’s Report, 1974 FCAATSI Annual Conference on Aboriginal Affairs, Townsville, 12-14 April, 1974.

64 MS 3759 Series 2, Item 20, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, letter from Terry O’Shane to Committee Members, copy dated 16 September, 1974.

65 MS 3759 Series 2, Item 20, letter from Terry O’Shane to Committee Members copy dated 16 September, 1974.

66 MS 3759, Series 2, Item 20, letter from Senator Keeffe to Evelyn Scott, Secretary of FCAATSI, copy dated 16 August, 1974.
both the Blackburn decision at Gove and Justice Furnell's decision in Western Australia. Both judgements concluded that Australian law held no provision for Aboriginal people to claim lands, and Bonner argued about the importance of Cavanagh continuing with the recognition of Aboriginal land rights. Bonner asked for an amount of money to be set aside from the Annual National Budget which would become the 'true entitlement' of the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, so that Aboriginal people 'may recapture our dignity and our pride as human beings'. The need for economic development and the importance of land rights was again stressed by Senator Bonner. The Senate, Bonner and even Queensland authorities knew the need for lands was vital in any economic development equation. The State Government's refusal and the Commonwealth Government's reluctance saw Indigenous suffering and pauperization continue and economic development activity deliberately stifled in Queensland. As well as the objections to the Australian bicentenary, the need for land rights and economic development as well as anti-discrimination legislation in Australia, FCAATSI highlighted the need for Aboriginal education.

As a way of stressing the need for Aboriginal land rights, Pittock highlighted 'the simple economic facts' in relation to Aboriginal people which he described as 'staggering':

The current Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal population numbers some 150,000 and it will double in about twenty years, which means an average increase of about 7,000 people per year. On a conservative estimate this will require about 1,200 new houses at about $12,000 each, 2,000 new jobs at a capital investment of some $10,000 per job, a couple of new schools and a new hospital every year. Add that up and you get an annual expenditure, to keep up with the growth of population, of some $40 million per annum ....

67 MS 3759, Series 11, Item 15, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, FCAATSI Conference Canberra, 1975, address by Senator Neville Bonner & MS 3759, Series 11, Item 12, Papers of FCAATSI, FCAATSI 1974 Annual Conference speech by Senator Neville Bonner about Aboriginal people entering politics.

68 MS 2759, Series 11, Item 15, Papers of FCAATSI, FCAATSI Conference Canberra 1975, address by Senator Neville Bonner.

69 Identity, Volume 1, No. 3, January, 1972, article by A. Barrie Pittock.
To summarise, FCAATSI not only argued about the rights of Aboriginal people to access the same privileges as non-Aboriginal people but rights as Australia’s first peoples. Between 1965 and 1975 Aboriginal and Islander members of FCAATSI and QCAATSI lobbied strongly for removal of discriminatory legislation and changes to both the Queensland 1965 and 1971 Acts as well as equal wages for Aboriginal workers. Both organisations worked tirelessly for Aboriginal land rights, economic development, anti-discrimination legislation and for an end to police harassment and injustice. FCAATSI continued to work closely with Indigenous groups within Australia and overseas and objected strongly during Australian bicentenary celebrations in 1970.

In 1974, an Aboriginal QCAATSI representative was nominated to serve on the United Nations Committee for the International Women Year 1975 and provide advice about Aboriginal people for International Women’s Year. The Commonwealth funded an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women’s Conference in Townsville with a woman Sekai Holland from Zimbabwe as guest speaker in relation to women’s role in the black liberation movement.

As well as working internationally, Aboriginal people fought for Aboriginal control over FCAATSI which led to not only the demise of the organisation but the establishment of other national state and local organisations with all Aboriginal governance. FCAATSI also lobbied the Commonwealth Government for a national elected representative organisation which resulted in the establishment of the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee (NACC) in 1973.

---

70 MS 3759, Series 14, Item 7, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

71 MS 3759, Series 11, Item 42, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.
FCAATSI lobbied for legislative change in Queensland, for the referendum, for Commonwealth involvement in Aboriginal affairs and the need for Aboriginal autonomy. The influence of black power and the UN combined with the International Years for Human Rights and Anti-Racism as well as the Australian bicentenary was clear between 1965 and 1975. FCAATSI focused on the need for economic development and demands for Aboriginal land rights grew stronger and became more influential and focussed during the period examined by this thesis. By the early 1970s, black power and the Black Panther Party had infiltrated the Aboriginal movement throughout Queensland. Both FCAATSI and Aboriginal organisations were no longer reliant on the good will of well-meaning non-Aboriginal people for support. The shift to majority Aboriginal membership of FCAATSI by the 1970s highlights how Aboriginal involvement in their own affairs took place during this period. FCAATSI’s relationships with the UN and members of decolonised nations influenced the Aboriginal groups’ expectations and methods of protest in Australia and Queensland.
CHAPTER 10

Black Power

Free the Blacks and Smash the Act! What Do We Want? Land Rights! When Do We Want It? Now! What Have We Got? Fuck All!

These were the chants during Aboriginal street marches in Brisbane from the early 1970s in protest over the need to eliminate the Queensland Government’s 1971 Act and implement Aboriginal land rights. According to Michael Aird, traditional owner from what we now know as the Gold Coast, defining political activism is difficult:

Aboriginal people find it impossible to define political activism. Is a parent trying to protect their children from racist taunts in the schoolyard regarded as a political activist? Or is an Aboriginal family engaging in political activism when they attempt to convince a landlord that they will be good tenants? Even today, many Aborigines have to fight for basic rights that other Australians take for granted .... Since the 1800s Aborigines have fought to become part of the European economic system, while also fighting to retain aspects of their traditional customs and beliefs. ... For many years Aborigines were not in a good position to be outspoken about political issues, as many aspects of their lives were under the control of government officials. While some Aborigines managed to secure a degree of control over their lives, if they publicly criticised the Government they ran the risk of having their children taken from them and sent to missions and reserves. Several generations of Aborigines were well aware that the broader community generally did not approve of them being vocal about Aboriginal rights, although that did not stop Aborigines discussing political issues among themselves. ...............1

This chapter discusses what it was about this period in Queensland that brought Aboriginal resistance to the forefront and how this movement did much to highlight the vast gap between the policies espoused by both State and Commonwealth Government politicians and the discriminatory and draconian practices of bureaucrats in Queensland. Concepts of Aboriginal autonomy, activism, black power and the Black Panther Party all emerged in this period and changed the Aboriginal rights movement in Queensland.

1 Aird, Michael, Brisbane Blacks, Keaaira Press, Southport, 2001, p. 104.
Not only did certain individuals, both on and off reserves, become more militant during this period, but Aboriginal community-based organisations were radicalized. As Read argues, the change from only three Aboriginal members of FCAATSI in 1961 to demands for Aboriginal autonomy of the organisation by the 1970s indicates the extent of the involvement of Aboriginal people in the politics of their own affairs.²

Global decolonisation, newly shaped UN expectations, and a post World War II international anti-racism push as well as the US civil rights movement were all issues that surrounded and influenced Aboriginal people between 1965 and 1975. Enhanced communication, television and print media spread the word about expectations, rights and resistance amongst growing numbers of Aboriginal people in Queensland. Freed up from the threat of DAIA powers, many Aboriginal people now had their expectations shaped by UN and international examples. Confidence grew as Aboriginal people’s international travel and communication enhanced relationships with and knowledge about other nations’ struggles against colonisation and oppression.³

By 1965, the situation that had existed since colonisation whereby Aboriginal people had been ‘spoken for’ and ‘spoken about’ by non-Aboriginal people was changing.⁴ An Aboriginal assertiveness evolved whereby organisations and individuals were no longer reliant on the assistance of sympathetic non-Aboriginal people or groups. Aboriginal individuals and groups demanded autonomy over all Indigenous issues as well as equal wages, justice, human rights, land rights, compensation for lands lost in the colonisation process and the need to outlaw racial discrimination.

As newly decolonised nations were aware of the crippling impact that settler colonialism had on Indigenous minority groups, between the 1960s and 1970s was time

³ Lake and Reynolds, 2008, p. 349.
to bring Aboriginal issues to the forefront. As Broome comments, a younger and more assertive Aboriginal leadership willing to ‘take to the streets and use the tactics of mass protest’ emerged at this time.\(^5\) Political scientist Robert Young argues that Aboriginal people throughout the world were increasingly in touch with each other in the 1960s.\(^6\) Organised radical Aboriginal resistance flourished during the period examined by this thesis. Aboriginal people worked together to challenge discrimination and address needs and were not only arguing for equal rights to those enjoyed by non-Aboriginal people but for rights as Australia’s first peoples.

**Aboriginal Autonomy**

The expansion of Aboriginal membership of FCAATSI saw a shift away from the need for alliances with non-Aboriginal people to demands for Aboriginal autonomy. According to Horner, upon her return from a conference on racism in the UK, Kath Walker, QCAATSI and FCAATSI member, Aboriginal poet and activist, advocated ‘self-reliance’ and refused to have the newly formed NTC or the Brisbane Tribal Council affiliate with FCAATSI because the Federal Council did not have all Indigenous governance. Kath Walker also argued that white people were responsible for racism.\(^7\) According to Horner, as early as 1962, during QCAATSI meetings, Kath Walker and Joe McGinness held ‘all Aboriginal discussion’ sessions.\(^8\)

Within FCAATSI, the Aboriginal membership increased and demands for Aboriginal autonomy continued and created internal strains. The change from equal rights for Indigenous people to specific Indigenous rights was reflected in comments by

---

\(^5\) Broome, 2001, p. 188.
\(^6\) Young, 2001, p. 10.
\(^7\) Horner, 2004, pp. 150-151.
\(^8\) Horner, 2004, p. 73.
FCAATSI's Queensland State Secretary, Kath Walker. When asked whether the Aboriginal lobby ever recovered from the break-up of FCAATSI, Walker noted that:

FCAATSI was not meant to go on anyway. It was full of Labor party people who helped build it. But when we [Aboriginal people] asked our white friends not to vote but to support us on our decisions, they refused. What they said to us was 'we have no confidence in you shaping your own destiny'. ... the FCAATSI movement was manipulated by the Australian Labor Government, who supported it and gave it every help. But they wanted to control it. And, this is when we woke up to it.\(^9\)

One of the first Aboriginal organisations was the National Tribal Council (NTC) which was established in the late 1960s by Kath Walker and Pastor Nichols.\(^10\) Kath Walker also established the Brisbane Tribal Council in the late 1960s.\(^11\) In 1969 Kath Walker stated that:

Black Australians must strengthen themselves into a solid, determined, fighting unit, and dictate their own terms for their own advancement. They must define what is best for their own advancement and then they can determine where white Australians can be of assistance.\(^12\)

Land rights, access to education, housing, employment and rights to non-Aboriginal public spaces were all strongly asserted by Aboriginal people. Rights to equity, justice and land were also called for by both the National Tribal Council and the Brisbane Tribal Council. Paul Richards argues that Kath Walker’s establishment of both the National Tribal Council and the Brisbane Tribal Council had a strong influence on the Aboriginal movement in Brisbane.\(^13\) On 13 September 1970, NTC issued its policy manifesto. The manifesto included statements that Aboriginal people had been 'shamefully treated at the hands of white settlers and Governments right up to the


\(^10\) Aboriginal organisation had all Aboriginal governance and membership. Elections were exclusively for Aboriginal people.


\(^12\) Horner, 2004, p. 151.

present day’. NTC also noted that it was ‘solemnly’ committed to the struggle to achieve ‘equity and justice’ and that it stood for ‘self-reliance’. The Tribal Council also called for ‘an indigenous national administration, elected by the indigenous people of Australia, and responsible for the administration of all government monies to be spent on Aboriginal and Islander Affairs’. NTC urged the Federal Government to ‘adopt immediately a policy of full recognition of the right of Aborigines and Islanders to the ownership of their traditional land, of just compensation for all land taken from them, and for royalties to be paid to those communities which are affected by mining’.\textsuperscript{14}

The NTC also called for a full Federal Government enquiry into the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people, control over Commonwealth funds for Aboriginal affairs, land rights, compensation for lands lost and mining royalties as well as protection of sacred objects and sites. A ‘massive attack’ was launched by the NTC on all the factors leading to unsatisfactory education outcomes of Aboriginal people. The NTC demanded consultation with Aboriginal people as well as establishment of Councils to make decisions and manage funding for Aboriginal affairs. The NTC called for lawyers in preference to welfare workers and for health funding to deal with infant mortality rates, elimination of racial prejudice and discrimination, as well as justice for Aboriginal people in the Courts.\textsuperscript{15}

In 1971, the National Tribal Council demanded the resignation of Patrick Killoran the Director of Queensland DAIA for allowing Aboriginal children to starve on Government reserves.\textsuperscript{16} As well as demanding Aboriginal autonomy over Aboriginal organisations, the NTC also called for self-government on Queensland reserves. The comprehensive range of demands by the NTC reflects the assertiveness of groups and

\textsuperscript{14} Attwood, and Markus, 1999, pp. 246-252.
\textsuperscript{15} Attwood & Markus, 1999, pp. 246-252.
\textsuperscript{16} Kidd, 1997, p. 248.
aims of addressing the impact of colonialism on Aboriginal people in Queensland. Demands from many Aboriginal groups were numerous, clearly argued and articulated to both state and Commonwealth Governments.

In 1969, Kath Walker argued that: 'white Australians were 'fooling themselves'; that they were 'doing for black Australians'. Kath Walker also argued that the 'shock of black Australians deciding their own policies demoralises white Australians' because they have 'brain-washed themselves into believing their own superiority'. She also added that black reformers know they must 'unite their own people' and allow them to 'elect their own councillors to speak and negotiate on their behalf' and only then would 'black and white Australians' be able to form a 'coalition and work together for the good of both sides'.

Kath Walker alerted Commonwealth and Queensland Governments’ bureaucrats and challenged many members of the public across the country and especially in Queensland and Brisbane where she resided. The NTC influenced other organisations and individuals. Aboriginal people claimed rights to lands stolen by colonisers. As argued by Michael Aird, the 1960s and 1970s was a time when increasing numbers of Aboriginal people were becoming 'involved' in a broad range of political issues. Aird observes how in 1969, a seventeen year old first year University student, Marcia Langton, made a ‘bold political statement as part of an Australia-wide protest in support of land rights’ and staked out a miner’s claim in the centre of Brisbane. Aird also notes how the Queensland police told her she was not allowed to speak and ‘bodily carried the young student out of the park’.

In the 1970s, Pastor Brady issued a press statement that Aboriginal people were ‘ready’ for ‘self-government’ and prepared to show the people of Australia that they

---

Aboriginal people were ‘capable of looking after their own affairs’\(^{19}\). This Aboriginal assertiveness was clearly bothering authorities, and, as mentioned earlier, in 1975 the Queensland Police Force’s Special Branch prepared a report concerning Pastor Brady’s activity in North Queensland and included the names of people who attended a meeting in Townsville to discuss conditions on reserves.\(^{20}\)

Aboriginal people were previously reliant upon Governments to change legislation and to provide justice and solutions to address the impact of colonialism. As mentioned earlier, in 1965, the University of Queensland conducted a survey of Aboriginal people in Brisbane and ascertained that 81% of people interviewed had moved to Brisbane from a Government reserve.\(^{21}\) In 1974, the Department of Social Work at the University of Queensland carried out a survey of poverty amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Brisbane. The survey findings concluded that 48% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people in Brisbane were extremely poor compared with only 10% of non-Aboriginal people. It also found that 20% of Aboriginal men and 90% of Aboriginal women were unemployed. Nearly all Aboriginal people in Brisbane resided in rented accommodation with only 12% renting from Queensland Housing Commission. No men under the age of 30 years were receiving any assistance from the Department of Social Security, which included unemployment and sickness benefits.\(^{22}\) While living in Brisbane constituted an improvement to life on Queensland Government reserves, many Aboriginal people were still in need of assistance and support. During this period, there was nowhere for

\(^{19}\) Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 5, press clipping, *Townsville Daily Bulletin* article (unable to ascertain date).


\(^{21}\) Smith and Biddle, 1975, pp. 42-43.

Aboriginal people to gain support other than from each other. Aboriginal people organised themselves in cities to address the lack of services, high levels of need and to combat police brutality, racism, poor health, education and discrimination in housing. Aboriginal people also held ‘black theatre’ which is discussed later in this chapter. Black theatre performances were well attended and espoused a lot of politics.

Paul Richards observes how Pastor Don Brady’s trip to the United States in the late 1960s and his subsequent discussions with black Americans about the civil rights movement had an impact on Denis Walker and others. This combined with Kath Walker’s participation in international racism conferences overseas influenced the way in which they responded to the impact that settler colonialism was having upon Aboriginal people in Queensland. Aboriginal people not only identified issues but fearlessly implemented their own solutions. As Michael Aird highlights, Tiga Bayles recalls efforts made by local Aboriginal people in Brisbane:

> The Open Door Club, or the Open Doors as we used to call it, was our regular nightspot every Friday and Saturday night. … a number of the elders were down there looking after the kitchen. They had hot dogs or curry and rice that we would pay for. The police would regularly raid the place. We are talking the days of the Adelaide Hotel, the Manhattan and the Grand, all those places where the police were regularly parked out the front door or the side door with their paddy wagons and the blacks were just chucked in. No reason whatsoever. I remember on a few occasions being chased up George Street by the police.

As a way of avoiding racism and police harrassment, Aboriginal people in Brisbane continued to organise their own social events. As Patricia Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, Ann McGrath and Marian Quartly note

> … Aboriginal people continued to nurture each other … new European skills, knowledge and resources were often turned to political advantage in the continuing battle for survival.

---

Aboriginal people also demonstrated publicly about issues such as Queensland Government discrimination. In August 1970, Pastor Don Brady organised a protest in King George Square in the heart of Brisbane to bring attention to the *Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders’ Affairs Act 1965*. As Aird notes:

> Pastor Brady played the didgeridoo while his children performed traditional dances and students handed out pamphlets criticizing the Government. 26

Public demonstrations had become the most effective method of protest. As Michael Aird notes, Aboriginal people were active in various ways, particularly by the 1970s.

Jane Arnold is one of many people who have devoted their lives to fighting for Aboriginal rights. ... It was in her backyard at Northey Street, Windsor that the first Aboriginal kindergarten was established in 1970. ... Jane Arnold attempted to help her niece find a flat to rent in May 1972, but was told by the owner, Sorry, we won’t take blacks. A demonstration was quickly organised to highlight the racist attitude of the property owner. 27

Many Aboriginal people actively rallied in defence of this type of racism. Numbers in solidarity proved an effective deterrent. Organising social events and banding together in Brisbane in numbers certainly alarmed police and would have deterred some people’s shameless acts of discrimination. The numbers of Aboriginal people in Brisbane grew rapidly which coincided with complaints about police harassment and brutality.

As a way of dealing with police brutality and harassment that coincided with the rapid influx of Aboriginal people into Brisbane, Aboriginal men like Denis Walker, Don Davidson and Pastor Brady set up police or ‘pig patrols’ around inner city Brisbane, particularly at night. The ‘pig patrols’ consisted (wherever possible) of a religious person, a law student and an Aboriginal person and they observed police harassment

---

and brutality in the hope of deterring police. Paul Richards mentions how ‘pig patrols’ sometimes worked as an effective deterrent to police. Members of the patrols recorded police identification or car registration numbers, however, Paul Richards also noted that in those days there was no-one to complain to about police. 28 Again, Michael Aird highlights Ronald Eatts’ recollection on the racism suffered in the 1970s in Brisbane:

We had our racism, even walking the streets back in the early ’70s. When I was 13 and trying to walk from West End to go over to Red Hill to go skating they [police] picked me up, dragged me all the way over to the City watch-house, then let me go and made me start walking all over again. I got picked up three times in one night like that. Just trying get to the skating rink. ... I asked them, take me home. They said, walk ya black c... I was 13 when that happened. 29

As a further way of avoiding racism and police harassment, Aboriginal people boldly implemented their own solutions. According to Ross Watson, an Aboriginal man who grew up in Brisbane:

The police used to physically bust them upon the street. It was a regular thing, whenever the blackfellas used to drink, the paddy wagon would be there. That’s just how things were .... 30

Aboriginal people took action against discrimination and injustice after experiences like these. As reported in the Sunday Sun on 14 May, 1972, Michael Aird highlights comments about discrimination against Aboriginal people in housing by Lilla Watson, who said at the time:

This is only the start. We will picket every landlord and landlady like this in Brisbane from now on. And we will be back tomorrow with twice the number of today. 31

29 Aird, 2001, p. 106.
31 Aird, 2001, p. 111.
Michael Aird notes how in 1972 an Aboriginal couple was refused service in the lounge bar of the Terminus Hotel in South Brisbane. Members of the Aboriginal community in Brisbane came together to oppose this act of discrimination.

A few weeks later a group of 35 demonstrators staged a sit-in and demanded services. … The hotel management responded by calling the police, turning off the lights and declaring the lounge bar closed.32

When Aboriginal people protested or gathered in numbers socially, lawyers and priests attended venues and functions to protect Aboriginal people from police. Support between local, state and national levels was strong. During a speech in 1975, Charles Perkins argued that Aboriginal people could not tolerate the death of another Aboriginal child and that they must become more organised and ensure the Labor Party implemented its Indigenous policy.33

On a national level, issues were raised about the need for national representation and structures. In January 1972, the National Council of Aboriginal and Island Women presented papers to the second annual conference in Canberra. Paul Coe, a Wiradjuri man, addressed the conference and stressed the need for the establishment of a National Congress of Black Australians, Aboriginal kindergartens and the cessation of the exploitation of Aboriginal artists. Coe also argued that Aboriginal funding should be channelled through Aboriginal controlled organisations.34 While the Commonwealth was keen to fund organisations and States’ Governments for Aboriginal services, control over the funding process was not what the Commonwealth had in mind (either ALP or other) for a national consultative body. Aboriginal demands for control over Aboriginal funding became evident and grew stronger in the 1970s.

33 MS 3759, Series 23, Item 7, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, copy of speech by Charles Perkins to 1975 FCAATSI Conference.
34 MS 3759, Series 6, Item 31, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, paper ‘positive action’ presented by Paul Coe to the Second Annual Conference of the National Council of Aboriginal and Island women, 30 January, 1972.
Aboriginal people became autonomous, organised, critical and vocal. Both radical groups and individuals challenged the myths held by non-Aboriginal people about the virtues of settler colonisation and the subsequent impact of dispossession. Aboriginal people openly highlighted State Government tactics, lobbied Commonwealth authorities and established Aboriginal community-based organisations to support the growing numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families moving into towns and cities throughout Queensland.

As well as control over funding, Aboriginal people’s calls for Aboriginal land rights, protection of sacred sites, compensation for lands lost and other more radical demands grew stronger. In early 1972 and in response to Prime Minister McMahon’s attempts at implementing national Aboriginal land rights policy, Aboriginal people established the Tent Embassy on the lawns of Australia’s Parliament House in Canberra, in protest over the Government’s decision not to grant tribal land rights. Michael Anderson, who was one of three Aboriginal men responsible for the establishment of the Embassy, warned that the Government’s decision on land rights would ‘lead to violence’. Anderson noted that if Aboriginal people ‘destroyed a church’ they would be put in prison, but when white men destroy a ‘spiritual place like Arnhem Land we can’t put them into prison’. \footnote{Attwood and Markus, 1999, p. 257.} Demands for compensation for lands lost and the establishment of a trust fund so that Aboriginal lands could be bought back were made by Aboriginal people from the Embassy. \footnote{Attwood and Markus, 1999, p. 257.} The Embassy demanded full State rights to the Northern Territory under Aboriginal ownership and control with all titles to minerals, ownership of reserves and settlements throughout the country, preservation of sacred sites, ownership of parts of cities, mineral rights and compensation. \footnote{Attwood and Markus, 1999, pp. 257-258.}
The Embassy was torn down on 20 July 1972 with a clash between approximately 60 police and 60 Aboriginal people. The Embassy was re-erected in a demonstration of approximately 1500 people. Despite this, however, the Embassy was removed again in September 1972. This subsequently attracted much media attention and many Aboriginal people travelled to Canberra in support of the Tent Embassy. Aboriginal demands for land rights and self-determination evolved from the Embassy. The Aboriginal Tent Embassy is still in existence today and remains a strong symbol which reflects the relationship between settler colonialism and Aboriginal people.

By 1973, Aboriginal over-representation in the criminal justice system required some form of intervention by the Commonwealth. The over-policing of Aboriginal people was one of the first issues of concern raised by the NACC according to the Government’s 1976 review. The Australian reported that Aboriginal Legal Services would be seeking more funding from the Federal Government to ensure legal representation was provided to all Indigenous people appearing before the Court. Interestingly also that there was no argument put forward by Commonwealth or Queensland Governments that police were being over-vigilant, particularly in cities in Queensland. In 1973, the Aboriginal Born Free Club of South Brisbane alleged that Aboriginal people were being bashed by police. The Aboriginal Legal Services’ Aboriginal Field Officer, Sam Watson, alleged that police had a ‘quota’ of ‘black drunks’ that had to be arrested each week. This was disputed by police.

---

38 Attwood and Markus, 1999, p. 264.
42 MS 3759, Series 6, Item 17, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, copy of press clipping, Courier Mail dated 3 October, 1973.
In 1975 an advertisement for a demonstration at the Supreme Court of Australian in Brisbane on 24 February 1975 was distributed. The paper mentioned the 'political annihilation' of the 'black resistance' movement of the Queensland 'racist regime' and was distributed throughout the community.\(^{43}\) Denis Walker fought his extradition back to Queensland on the grounds that Queensland’s racist legislation would be unfairly applied.\(^{44}\) Given the 1971 Act, life on Queensland Government reserves, deprivation of human rights and over-representation in the criminal justice system, racism would not have been difficult to demonstrate.

Justification of the need to fund the Aboriginal Legal Service in Brisbane was a Commonwealth solution to clearly what was a State Government issue in Queensland, Aboriginal people could challenge and appeal reserve legislation, by-laws and police before magistrates in Brisbane. Police treatment of Aboriginal people was ingrained, imperative and importantly, it is a sad reflection that Aboriginal Legal Services have grown into national and state-wide bodies with responsibility for the representation of many Aboriginal people appearing before the Courts. In Brisbane during the period covered by this thesis the Aboriginal Legal Service worked closely with other Aboriginal organisations including FCAATSI and the Black Community Centre.

**Black Community Centre**

In the early 1970s, Pastor Don Brady also established the Black Community Centre in inner city Brisbane which was formerly a Methodist Church. Paul Richards states that Pastor Brady was heavily influential in setting up various organisations and services for Aboriginal people in Brisbane. Paul Richards mentions the moving speech

---

\(^{43}\) MS 3759, Series 23, Item 9, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, Demo Supreme Court 24 February, 1975, signed by Denis B. Walker and dated 13 February, 1975.

\(^{44}\) MS 3759, Series 23, Item 9, copy of pamphlet signed by Denis B. Walker and dated 13 February, 1975.
that Don Brady made in 1971 in Brisbane during the Springboks anti-apartheid demonstrations. Pastor Brady’s speech combined with the anti-Vietnam war influenced many Aboriginal people’s active involvement in their own affairs and methods of protest.⁴⁵

The Black Community Centre was referred to as ‘the Church’ by many members of Brisbane’s Aboriginal community. Aboriginal people came to the Black Community Centre for spiritual guidance, assistance in the form of allocation of Methodist Church food orders or advice, and to meet or gather information. Street marches and public demonstrations to highlight the Queensland Government’s oppression and demands for land rights commenced from the BCC. The newly formed Black Community Housing Service was initially established at and worked from the Centre in the 1970s with funds provided by the Commonwealth Government to purchase houses in Brisbane to lease to Aboriginal families. As mentioned earlier, Black Theatre in the 1970s was also held at the Centre. This involved traditional and contemporary Aboriginal dance performances, where politically sensitive matters were clearly depicted in live theatre and Aboriginal bands played Aboriginal music. Regular telephone conversations were also held with Black Panther Party members in the United States. Furthermore, people from Palm Island and other areas were able to phone the BCC to speak to Aboriginal people and seek advice and gain support. The Black Community Centre also publicised information about oppression and discrimination received from people on reserves.

In April 1970 Pastor Don Brady was actively involved in the organisation of demonstrations to mark the bi-centenary of Captain Cook’s landing in Australia. Michael Aird notes how at the time this must have ‘surely shocked’ many people who were not used to such ‘radical behaviour’. As Don Brady stated in March 1970:

We are not being unpatriotic ... We have nothing to rejoice about the coming of Captain Cook. Because of him we lost our dignity, our rights and our lands.\(^6\)

As well as turning the former Methodist Church in Leichhardt Street, Red Hill, into the Black Community Centre, Pastor Don Brady also gave other organisations the opportunity to operate from the ‘church’.

**Act Confrontation Committee**

In the early 1970s, Denis Walker and Pastor Don Brady established the Act Confrontation Committee with its office in the Black Community Centre. The Act Confrontation Committee (ACC) worked hard on the elimination of both the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Act 1965* and later, after 1972, the *Aborigines Act 1971* (gazetted in 1972). As well as developing a proposed structure for a representative Indigenous body to provide advice to Australian and Queensland officials, the ACC suggested that it should consist of six electorates with four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members from each. The Committee also stipulated that Government settlements and mission lands should be owned by Indigenous people instead of the Government. A flyer produced by the Committee warned Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living on Queensland Government reserves that the Department of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs could do the following:

> Send you from one part of Queensland to another even if you do not want to go. Refuse to let you travel away from home; Refuse to allow your friends and relations (if they live elsewhere) to visit you; Decide what job you go; Decide what wages you get; Decide how you spend your money; Keep you in a dormitory for as long as they want to without a trial’ [And] put you in jail when you have not done anything wrong. THEY CAN DO ALL THIS BECAUSE OF THE ABORIGINES AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS’ AFFAIRS ACT OF 1965’ [the flyer asserted].\(^7\)

The Act Confrontation Committee also liaised closely with the Australian Council of Trade Unions and encouraged Aboriginal people who were former reserve

\(^6\) Aird, 2001, p. 108.

\(^7\) MS 3759, Series 27, Item 7, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, Queensland Act Confrontation Committee Paper (undated).
inmates and lived in Brisbane to share their stories and experiences with Trade Union members to raise funding to continue to fight the Bjelke-Petersen reserve regime.

Lionel Fogarty and Carol Duncan who both worked for the Black Community Centre in 1974, spoke frequently and wrote about their experiences on Government reserves. 48

**Black Panther Party**

In 1972, Denis Walker set up the Black Panther Party (BPP) in Brisbane. Denis also extended the Black Panther Party to Melbourne. 49 The Black Panther Party called for freedom, employment, restitution of lands taken, mineral rights, housing, and an end to police brutality, juries with peer groups presiding over Aboriginal people in courts, peace and justice and a UN supervised plebiscite over a black colony. As Attwood and Markus outline, the Australian BPP platform and programme called for freedom, power to determine the destiny of the community, employment, housing, exemption from military service, cessation of police brutality and murder of Aboriginal people, freedom, legal rights, justice and land rights. 50

Dennis Walker was described as ‘probably the foremost guiding spirit of Black Power’. 51 Gary Foley, Aboriginal activist and Black Panther Party member, noted that Aboriginal people identified more with American Indians but took the American name Black Panther for the ‘glamor’ surrounding it and noted that the Party was ‘working on finding a fully Aboriginal name and symbol..’. Foley noted how the Black Panther Party did not have a rule like the American Panthers forbidding fraternisation with whites but did have a ‘very strict ruling that no one be drunk or on drugs when carrying

---

48 I also worked for ACC at the Black Community Centre along with Lionel and Carol as trainee field officers and accompanied them to Union worksites to lobby for donations to continue to oppose the Queensland Government’s 1971 Act regime.

49 Attwood and Markus, 1999, p. 256.


51 Attwood and Markus, 1999, pp. 252-256.
The Black Panther Party described itself as ‘a political education and self-defence group’ and stated that while members could not carry guns, noted that the police could, which put Aboriginal people ‘at a distinct disadvantage’. Dennis Walker warned about the danger of the ‘Panthers becoming black racist’ and added that ‘going out and killing people haphazardly would make us just a terrorist group and noted that the Party had to be ‘strategic’.

As Leslie Collins, Aboriginal man and Black Panther member, notes:

The Brisbane Chapter of the Black Panthers Party was formed in January 1972 with Denis Walker as leader. ... At the time Denis Walker, who was living on donations and the sale of Black Panther literature, claimed that ‘he could command 300 black men on the streets of Brisbane at short notice’... Rules of the party required that all members learn to operate weapons and the handling of captives.

Fear associated with the rapid influx of Aboriginal people into Brisbane is evidenced in Denis Walkers’ threat that he could rally 300 black men in Brisbane. Leslie Collins also recalls how the Queensland Government was ‘extremely fearful of the Black Panthers’ and that this fear was reflected by the mainstream press. Michael Aird observes how Charles Wright of The Australian, reported on a rally at the University of Queensland:

Black Panther leader Denis Walker spoke of a frightening vision of Queensland locked in a terrorist bloodbath. The slim black revolutionary preaches a gospel of hatred. He spoke of ‘pigs’ and ‘whitey’ and his voice was almost a snarl.

---

52 Attwood and Markus, 1999, p. 256.
53 Attwood and Markus, 1999, p. 256.
54 Attwood and Markus, 1999, p. 256.
Michael Aird observes that Denis was well aware that the ‘police and other government representatives were keeping a close watch on his activities’. Michael Aird also notes:

In fact, it was difficult for Denis to drive his own car without being constantly stopped by the police, as it was for other people associated with the Black Panthers.57

As Leslie Collins, former Cherbourg resident and Black Panther Party member recalls:

Denis had a white Ford Fairlane, he loved his Fairlane. He always had two or three people with him. It was a precautionary measure to have witnesses around him all the time. ... I had an old Valiant, I got pulled up that many times, a couple of times when I was giving fellas a lift home from football or something like that. One night Ronnie Bird was in the car with me, I was taking him home, and the coppers pulled me over. I said, ‘What’s up’. The said, ‘We heard you guy have got guns’. I said, ‘Don’t be stupid’. That used to happen all the time to us involved with the Black Panthers and the Tribal Council. 58

Paul Richards recalls how Denis worked closely with Bruce McGuinness, Victorian Aboriginal activist and Black Panther Party member in Melbourne in relation to the Party and also liaised with the Black Panthers in the United States. Paul Richards notes how Denis and other members of the Black Panther Party addressed a group of students at the University of Queensland in the early 1970s about police harassment and brutality and mentioned the ‘pig patrols’. From this address by the Black Panther Party, another meeting emerged and non-Aboriginal law students from the University of Queensland volunteered their time to provide legal representation to Aboriginal people who were charged by police for loitering in Brisbane.59 This voluntary service led to the establishment of the Brisbane Aboriginal Legal Service in 1972. Law students like Wayne Goss worked as volunteers and later became Premier of Queensland. Other

57 Aird, 2001, p. 115.
volunteers were sons of judges and went on to serve on the Supreme Court in later years.\textsuperscript{60}

Black Power

Don Brady’s Black Community Centre and Act Confrontation Committee as well as Denis Walker’s involvement with the Black Panther Party could all be defined as the black power movement. It is difficult to ascertain when the black power movement commenced in Brisbane. Many of the tactics mentioned like public demonstrations staged by Marcia Langton, Lilla Watson, Don Brady, pig patrols, calls for Aboriginal land rights, the formation of NTC, organisation of social events could all be classified as black power. However, I have attempted to extract and examine this concept using evidence from resources which specifically mention the concept of black power.

As early as September 1969, The Australian commented that it was a mistake for white Australians to think that black power would not reach Australia.61 In the same year, Kath Walker advocated her support for black power. Kath Walker commented that violence in black power only came from the white population and mentioned the ‘hostile’ and ‘suspicious’ white neighbours in cities as examples.62 Kath Walker reported that black power was a monster made by white people and that anti-discrimination legislation was necessary because people had to be forced to abandon discrimination.63 Kath Walker argued that Aboriginal people had to ‘set the scene’ for Indigenous policy.64 Aboriginal examination, analysis and public criticism of both Commonwealth and State Government policies proved an effective form of resistance and attracted media attention while the UN remained watchful and influential. Many interpreted this Aboriginal assertiveness as black power. As outlined by Russell

---

61 The Australian, 15 September, 1969.
63 The Australian, 10 July, 1969.
64 The Australian, 10 July, 1969.
McGregor, Bruce McGuiness, Black Panther Party member, defined Black Power as ‘Koorie power, Aboriginal autonomy’. 

Similarly Charles Perkins spoke about black power in the late 1960s. Perkins knew that Australia was beginning to be heavily scrutinised by the United Nations. Perkins who had travelled overseas, commented that race relations at the best of times was a ‘most difficult and complex exercise’. Perkins considered that the Aboriginal question in Australia would become one of the ‘significant factors’ in the ‘progress’ and ‘future of the country’. The majority of Aboriginal people in Australia had sub-standard access to formal education and one-third were living in ‘slum’ or ‘shanty dwellings’ Perkins argued. Prejudice and discrimination persisted amongst what Perkins described as an ‘ignorant’, ‘apathetic’ and ‘complacent’ population. Perkins predicted worsening race relations in Australia.

In 1969, Perkins saw the solution as Aboriginal people having the right and the opportunity to organise for their own benefit and that ‘black power’ in Australia would be used as an ‘instrument for social change’. Perkins explained that Australia needed radical social change within the context of the political system and he viewed black power as being the political power of Aboriginal members in electorates.

In 1972 John Newfong, editor of Identity Magazine, wrote about black power and highlighted how Aboriginal people set up and administered Aboriginal
organisations throughout Australia and Queensland. These Aboriginal organisations were established to provide culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal people and communities in cities and provincial centres throughout Queensland. The focus of black power and Aboriginal autonomy emanated predominantly from cities and in the case of Queensland mostly in Brisbane. However, news about Aboriginal resistance spread throughout the State. By the 1970s, information about Aboriginal resistance from interviews of Aboriginal activists on television and the distribution of pamphlets throughout Queensland reserves shaped expectations and increased awareness throughout the State. Power of support, autonomy and of sheer numbers of Aboriginal people could easily be defined as black power. While this movement grew strong in Brisbane, it also spread throughout regional parts of the State.

The spread of Aboriginal autonomy and activism throughout Queensland

Aboriginal people at Boggabilla on the border between Queensland and New South Wales reportedly complained to Prime Minister Whitlam over racism and in particular a bigoted poem printed in the Goondiwindi Argus newspaper. In 1973, Gordon McIntosh challenged an earlier comment made in the Goondiwindi Argus that both criticized funding of Aboriginal organisations and accused the Government of implementing a system of apartheid. In 1973 Albert Geia, an Aboriginal man from North Queensland wrote to the Australian about four freedoms:

...freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom of speech and freedom of worship.... We know the feeling of job being lost, or ourselves and our families being shifted around if we speak our minds. How can you say we have freedom of speech or

69 Identity Magazine, Volume 1, No. 6, November 1972, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.
70 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, copy of newspaper article dated October 26, 1973.
71 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, copy of press clipping, Goondiwindi Argus dated October 25, 1973 letter to the Editor from Gordon McIntosh of Boggabilla.
freedom from fear? And if you walk among our people on the fringes of your towns and on reserves, how can you say we have freedom from want?  

Statements published in local newspapers marked the beginnings of a new era where media coverage about Aboriginal resistance became newsworthy and Aboriginal people in North Queensland were demanding rights similar to those of the Black Panther Party and the Black Community Centre.

In 1973 non-Aboriginal workers on Queensland Government reserves complained about black violence and stated that ‘violence against whites at aboriginal communities would have to cease or competent staff would not persevere in aboriginal welfare work’. The bashing of the manager at Lockhart River Government reserve and stoning of staff houses on Palm Island indicate the extent of Aboriginal discontent. In 1974 Palm Island Council invited Denis Walker and Aboriginal Legal Service workers to come to meet them to provide advice. Fear of this situation was the foundation for the poor treatment, under-award wages, control over children, visitors, earnings and movement which ensured most Aboriginal people were never in a position to openly or effectively object. Unhealthy, hungry pauperized people were easier for DAIA bureaucrats to manage and less likely to object to draconian reserve tactics. Furthermore, DAIA attempts at isolating reserve inmates from Aboriginal people with dissident views were clearly failing. Whenever Aboriginal people on reserves were able to object, they did.

The Aboriginal movement which started mostly in Brisbane had thus spread throughout the State and on to State Government reserves in Queensland. In 1974, Charles Perkins’ demanded Premier Bjelke-Petersen’s resignation over the depressed

---

74 Watson, 2010, pp. 128-129.
state of Queensland’s Indigenous populations reports which had been published in _The Australian_ newspaper.\(^{75}\) In 1975, the Aboriginal publication, _Black News Service_ produced an article by Garth Nettheim concerning his report to the International Commission of Jurists (Australian Section) about the Queensland Government’s 1971 Act.\(^{76}\) The newsletter outlined the ways that the 1971 Queensland Aborigines Act deprived Aboriginal people of their human rights. By-laws, including making it an offence to carry tales about any person or cleaning one’s bin, leaving gates open or shut and restrictions on the acquisition of electrical goods, were raised as examples.\(^{77}\) Information about the Queensland Government’s 1971 Act continued to be distributed throughout Australia, amongst Aboriginal organisations and Queensland reserves across Australia, throughout the world and to the UN. Aboriginal organisations were exposing the Queensland Government’s deliberate, oppressive and discriminatory tactics nationally and internationally.

Bauxite mining had an impact on Aboriginal people in Weipa with the mining company providing lower standards of housing for Aboriginal people, separate schools and unemployment, it is no surprise that by 1973 Aboriginal people were responding to the presence of non-Aboriginal people in an aggressive way. According to Mr R. P. Moore, Aboriginal people at Weipa reportedly smashed all plate glass at the Albatross Hotel in 1973.\(^{78}\) Bauxite mining and economic development in North Queensland together with the Queensland Government’s exclusions and dispossession at Mona

---

\(^{75}\) 1A/345, Queensland State Archives copy of press clipping, _The Australian_ dated 29 August, 1974.

\(^{76}\) MS 3759, Series 6, Item 16, Papers of FCAATSI, _Black News Service_, Volume 1, No. 2, 1975, p. 13.


\(^{78}\) 1/A 567, File No. 5, QS 505/1, Box 103, QS 505/1, Queensland State Archives, Questions in the House 7 March 1973 to 11 December, 1973, Queensland Legislative Assembly, Wednesday 21 November, 1973, Mr F.P. Moore to ask the Minister for Conservation, Marine and Aboriginal Affairs. There was not title or reference provided on the file in relation to Mr F.P. Moore.
Mona, Mapoon and Weipa to name a few reserves, enhanced Aboriginal people’s need to focus on Aboriginal land rights.

Aboriginal Land Rights

Aboriginal people questioned the rights to lands throughout the colonisation process. By the 1970s the land rights movement had spread throughout Australia. The land rights movement was also enhanced by the Tent Embassy struggle mentioned earlier in this chapter.

By 1974 the push for land rights grew stronger as the Commonwealth undertook the Woodward enquiry. In 1974 during an interview between Frost, Denis Walker and Barry Dexter, head of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs discussed the recommendations of the Woodward Aboriginal Land Rights Commission Enquiry.

Perkins explained the land rights concept as follows:

Yeh, well let's say that the whole of Australia belongs to us, that's our country anybody who came here after 200 years ago is a new Australian that's without a doubt. Australian people, the white people have a debt to pay to Aborigines and they have got to pay it and they can't be dismal about it and I've said that before they were saying that you are getting hysterical and emotional about if, but if they can repay that debt by giving the land back all over Australia where it is possible if not buy and give it back to the people that are living in the urban situation too, there's no division between the tribal and the urban blacks, the only division that has been caused there is by white people who have a vested interest in maintaining that division so that they can exploit the situation and that's it in a nutshell as done by the press in certain sections of the press and the editors who hide behind their close secrecy, the television stations, certain members of them and so on, and the Public Service in certain areas and I think the land should be given back to Aboriginal people and they can take it over again and do what they want to it.79

In 1974 Perkins discussed compensation and noted that ‘whites have got no guts’ and they are ‘scared bludgers’ in Australia. Perkins argued that Australians give Aboriginal people blankets or tobacco but wont give any land because they are ‘jealous’

79 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, copy of transcript of interview on Frost concerning Aboriginal people in Australia and involving Barry Dexter Commonwealth Bureaucrat, Denis Walker, Charles Perkins and other Aboriginal people, 1974, pp. 8-15.
and do not like to be told ‘whole truths’ in relation to rights to lands. As well as demanding land rights, Perkins also addressed the need for lands taken by colonisation and the impact that had on Aboriginal people. Perkins raised land rights as an important issue for all Aboriginal people. Perkins noted a political lobby was needed to persuade and pressure politicians.

The Commonwealth Government promised land rights and advised that the recommendations of the Woodward report would be applied outside of the Northern Territory. In 1974, Mapoon people met with Senator Cavanagh in Weipa about the possibility of Commonwealth assistance for people returning to Mapoon. Iris Clay from Palm Island urged Cavanagh to use the Commonwealth’s constitutional powers to grant Aboriginal people land rights in Queensland. Clay also urged Cavanagh to set Mapoon as an Aboriginal land rights precedent.

As well as demanding Aboriginal land rights, Aboriginal people effectively publicised the Queensland Government’s discrimination and exploitation by producing and distributing newsletters throughout Australia, overseas and to the UN. The Race Relations News Letter editorial noted that the Woodward report had been finalised but that land rights had been very slow in coming. The newsletter also noted the Labor Party needed to ‘revisit’ its policies in relation to Indigenous Australians. The

80 1A/345, Queensland State Archives, copy on interview transcript of Frost interview including Dennis Walker, Charles Perkins, Members of the NACC and Barry Dexter, head of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in Canberra, pp. 12-15.
81 MS 3759, Series 23, Item 7, Papers of FCAATSI, copy of speech by Charles Perkins to 1975 FCAATSI Conference.
84 MS 3759, Series 6, Item 9, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, race relations news letter No. 7, dated 21 March, 1974.
newsletter explained that mining interests had been exerting pressure on politicians and had expressed concern about Aboriginal land rights.\(^{85}\)

In 1975 *Black News Service* highlighted the forced removal of Mapoon people in 1963 and the recent re-occupation of those lands by traditional owners. Mapoon people had returned, built themselves houses, cleared most of the airstrip and fixed the radio for Flying Doctor services. Plans were also being considered by the Queensland Government for construction of mining ports. Harry Toeboy, Ella Wymara, Mary Pitt and other traditional owners from land around Andoom which Comalco was mining had received no compensation or royalties. The Mapoon people observed:

> We have got to crawl on our hands and knees to get a piece of land – maybe enough to just put a bed or a tub on it. .....Why have we got to do these things when we own this land in the first place?\(^{86}\)

The Aboriginal movement grew more active from the involvement and influence of Aboriginal people who had travelled overseas. Pastor Brady, Kath Walker and Charles Perkins all met with other people overseas whose lives had been shaped by colonialism and influenced by either world decolonisation or the US civil rights and anti-Vietnam movements. The Brisbane Black Community Centre, Act Confrontation Committee, Black Panther Party, and police or ‘pig’ patrols led to the establishment of similar organisations throughout Queensland, all of which sought Commonwealth funding for the provision of legal, health and housing services as well as Aboriginal kindergartens. Most of these organisations are still in existence today.

This chapter has highlighted the liberation and radicalisation of Aboriginal people throughout Queensland from 1965 to 1975. The influence of the Aboriginal


\(^{86}\) MS 3759, Series 6, Item 16, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, *Black News Service, Volume 1, No. 2*, May 12, 1975, pp. 6-7.
movement in Brisbane which was shaped by world decolonisation and the US civil rights movement spread throughout Queensland. Aboriginal people were no longer fearful of repercussions from DAIA or reliant upon the good will of non-Aboriginal people or Governments for services to alleviate the suffering from the impact of colonialism. By 1975 the establishment of Aboriginal organisations attracted and secured funding and provided services to Aboriginal people. The release of press statements, production and distribution of newsletters throughout Australia and overseas and public demonstrations became Aboriginal people’s methods of protest. The concept of black power, the establishment of the Black Panther Party, the Act Confrontation Committee, the Black Community Centre and various Aboriginal organisations like the Brisbane and National Tribal Council together with greater Aboriginal autonomy and activism all influenced and shaped the struggle for Aboriginal rights in Australia and Queensland. As discussed, in Queensland Aboriginal people took action and rallied together to demonstrate against discrimination and racist hotels and landlords. They marched in public demonstrations against the Queensland Government legislation, demanded land rights, set up police or ‘pig’ patrols, the Aboriginal legal service to deal with police brutality, as well as the Aboriginal and Islander Community Health Service, Yelangi Aboriginal Kindergarten and the Black Community Housing Service to provide support for Aboriginal people in Brisbane.

Aboriginal people on reserves objected to the Queensland Government’s regime throughout Queensland. Black power, Aboriginal assertiveness and activism were effective and visible throughout Queensland by 1975. Alliances remained strong between black and white people but by 1975 non-Aboriginal people were employed and involved with Aboriginal community-based organisations in the minority. Aboriginal governance prevailed and by 1975 Aboriginal people in Queensland had clearly laid
down terms of engagement surrounding their dealings with both State and Commonwealth bureaucrats.
CHAPTER 11

Conclusion

The period between 1965 and 1975 was a time of rapid change and shifting expectations, particularly in Queensland. Australia’s need to avert UN criticism was used as leverage by organised groups like FCAATSI, QCAATSI, NTC, academics and others to urge Governments to change Queensland’s Aboriginal policy and alleviate suffering. Given Australia’s position as a relatively successful nation state, the expectation of the influential UN was not unrealistic. Post-referendum Aboriginal health research and population statistics made it more difficult for the Commonwealth to avoid involvement.

The period examined by this thesis saw the influx of Aboriginal populations from Queensland reserves and pastoral properties which challenged many town and city dwellers. This combined with enhanced communication technology broadcasting footage of demonstrations for Aboriginal Land Rights by more militant Aboriginal groups confronted people and prompted a range of responses which this thesis has captured. This is not to say there were not members of the public as well as organisations committed to upholding the human rights of Aboriginal people. This thesis has incorporated many of these responses as well.

The Commonwealth’s urgent need to have UN conventions ratified meant racist legislation had to be removed from Australian statutes, anti-discrimination legislation introduced, an Aboriginal representative elected national body set up, Aboriginal land rights process implemented and Aboriginal peoples’ human rights upheld. As a successful settler state, Australia tried to avert criticism by espousing more up-to-date modified, acceptable methods of colonisation and labeling them as new, innovative or liberating.
The population movement into Queensland towns and cities led to Aboriginal people’s enhanced involvement in their own affairs which included the establishment of Aboriginal organisations. FCAATSI and QCAATSI also saw an increase in Aboriginal membership by the late 1960s and early 1970s. The National Tribal Council, Brisbane Tribal Council, Black Community Centre, Black Panther Party and the Act Confrontation Committee had emerged and became influential throughout Queensland. As well as establishing various organisations to provide services, Aboriginal people in Brisbane staged public rallies and demonstrations against racist landlords and publicans. Aboriginal people also organised their own social and sporting events to avoid disappointment and discrimination. FCAATSI and the Black Panther Party worked with the UN and other international groups and organisations and highlighted the Queensland Government’s discriminatory tactics at a time when Australia was trying to convince the world it was committed to abolishing racism. Methods of protest used by FCAATSI and QCAATSI and affiliates provided the foundation for more radical and militant Black Power movement influenced by not only the UN but the world decolonisation and US civil rights movements as well.

Non-Aboriginal people’s fantasy that Australia was a white nation was clearly strong well into the 1960s. After a long period of social segregation on reserves, many non-Aboriginal people had never expected to share their landscapes, schools, hospitals, alcohol outlets, public spaces or economic gains with Aboriginal people in Queensland. This thesis has examined some of the responses by non-Aboriginal people throughout Queensland and accentuates the context in relation to the climate within which the concept of black power and more radical or militant activism emerged in Brisbane.

The Black News Service was one of many newsletters produced by Aboriginal groups and distributed throughout the world. As well as examining world decolonised
nation’s struggles it also exposed the oppression Aboriginal people suffered under the Queensland Government’s regime to a world audience.

Because of its colonial history, Australia still grapples with how best to deal with Aboriginal people. The early 1990s saw the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody which highlighted a range of issues in relation to the policies imposed by both State and Federal Governments. Some of the issues recommended in the Royal Commission were raised by NACC in 1973 and 1974. Indigenous people from the Torres Straits challenged the Australian Government in the High Court and won in 1992. This resulted in the *Native Title Act 1993*. An enquiry into the Stolen Generations embarrassed Governments and Stolen Wages is another issue that is alive and well in Queensland with the State Government trying to settle and eventually agreeing to place funds in a trust. The current Governments’ policy of *Closing the Gap* is an attempt to address Aboriginal statistics like shorter life expectancy and infant mortality that have proven an embarrassment for Australia especially since the collation of census data and more so when compared to the health statistics of non-Aboriginal Australians. This would seem no more ambitious than the Commonwealth’s commitment in the 1970s to house all Aboriginal families within ten years.

Again, these more recent policies are aimed at keeping the majority of voters [who are not Aboriginal] on side, minimizing spending on essential services for Aboriginal people and averting criticism in relation to ways in which it deals with the situation of Aboriginal people in Australian and particularly Queensland. This is the same situation Governments were faced with in the period examined by this thesis.

This thesis’s examination has explained the sudden disappearance of my friend at Boulia in 1965 and my family’s fear of Queensland Government legislation. I am also aware now that the period that I was experiencing racism in North Queensland from the late 1960s to the early 1970s was a time of immense change for many people.
with the influx of Aboriginal people. This coincided with the introduction of television and exposure to not only dissident views for the first time for many, but articulate, radical and militant Aboriginal resistance.

I look back at the years in North Queensland and realise that people were racist and the colonial mindset strong. There was no Racial Discrimination Act until 1975 and the State Government did not lose the ability to forcibly remove Aboriginal people from towns and cities to reserves, or, from one reserve to another by compulsion until 1965, there is no wonder people were able to espouse or practise racism, since there were no deterrents. Many non-Aboriginal people have expressed horror at what happened to Aboriginal people during the period examined by this thesis and ask me why I think this happened. I guess the very nature of the way in which this country was settled has left a longstanding legacy amongst many of those who benefited by belonging to the group that ‘colonised’. However, by the 1960s the Queensland Government’s reserve system, designed specifically to incarcerate and segregate Aboriginal populations and serve as pools of cheap labour, became an unacceptable method of colonisation.

For many non-Aboriginal people the arrival of Aboriginal people in towns and cities also coincided with younger Aboriginal women like me completing secondary education and working for the Commonwealth for award wages, challenged core settler beliefs in relation to not only the virtues of colonisation but the realisation that Aboriginal labour was no longer easily exploited.

My family’s heightened sense of justice particularly as Australia’s first people was clearly shaped by the UN, world decolonisation and anti-racism movements. However, despite these surroundings and expectations instilled, my friend suddenly disappeared and was forcibly removed to Palm Island, my Mother lived in constant fear of losing us or being moved to a reserve, Aboriginal families and workers were paid
under-award wages and subjected to draconian tactics and teachers, friends and their families openly discriminated against me because I was Aboriginal. It seems that towns in North Queensland were a long way from the United Nations and Aboriginal reserves even further.

Given that both Commonwealth and Queensland Governments’ policies between 1965 and 1975 like subsequent policies are all more modified methods of colonisation, I would like to ask, and from an Aboriginal perspective, who was going to free the blacks and smash the Act?
Bibliography

Primary resources:

Archives, Government Departments and Reports


*Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders' Affairs Bill*, Queensland Official Record of the Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard) Second Session of the Thirty-Seventh Parliament comprising the periods from the Eighteenth day of August to the Ninth day of December, 1964; and from the Second Day of March to the Eighth Day of April, 1965, Volume 240, Brisbane.


Confidential Cabinet Minute, Decision No. 215, Submission No. 1190, Copy No. 32, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Funds for National Aboriginal Consultative Committee and Departmental Consultations with Aboriginals, Series No. A5915, National Archives of Australia, 22 August, 1974, p. 1.

Confidential Cabinet Minute, Decision No. 1525, Copy No. 32, Submission No. 690, NACC, Series No. A5915, Decision No. 1479, 1508 (WEL) and 1525, National Archives of Australia.


Extract from the Register of Baptism of Mabel McColloch, St Stephen’s Cathedral Brisbane, No. 569, Date of Birth 11 October 1899, Date of Baptism, 12 November 1899, parent’s address given as ‘Asylum’.

1A/345, File No. 3, QS 505/1, Box 75, Administration General, Policy Native Affairs, Queensland State Archives.
1A/427, Administration General, State Parliamentary Visits, File No. 3, QS 505/1, Box 86, Queensland State Archives.

1A/567, QS 505/1, File Nos. 1-5, Box Nos. 101-109, Administration General, Questions and Answers in the House, Queensland State Archives.

1A/759, Administration General, Minutes Aboriginal Conference Palm Island 1967, QS 505/1, Box 156, Queensland State Archives.


A3390, Department of Aboriginal Affairs File, Control Symbol 133, CA 1489, National Archives of Australia.

A4255, Control Symbol C/14, National Aboriginal Consultative Conference, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Proceedings File, National Archives of Australia.

A5039, Department of Aboriginal Affairs File, Item 1, National Archives of Australia.

A5915, Confidential Cabinet Minute, Decision No. 215, Submission No. 1190, Copy No. 32, 22 August, 1974, p. 5, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Funds for National Aboriginal Consultative Conference and Departmental Consultations with Aboriginals, National Archives of Australia.

BF A155.48N V2, Confidential Aboriginal Welfare conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers Held at Parliament House, Perth, July 1967, Volume II (Appendix), Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

BF S471.45/11, Neil, Maurice, Seminar on the Implications of the Racial Discrimination Act, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra,
FS.24/1, FCAATSI Reports and Proceedings for the Annual Conference on Aboriginal Affairs, Canberra, 27-29 March, 1970, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.


Kunmanggur, Office of Aboriginal Affairs Report No. 5, April 1970, RS 25.1/3, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

Kunmanggur, Office of Aboriginal Affairs Report No. 6, September 1970, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

Kunmanggur, Office of Aboriginal Affairs Report, No. 8, September, 1971, RS 25.1/3, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

M5039, 2010, 1, Department of Aboriginal Affairs File, National Archives of Australia.

MS 1617, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, Brennan, M., A History of Aboriginal Communities and Education in Queensland 1939-1975, Bachelor of Arts Honours Thesis, University of Queensland, November 1975.

MS 2352, Council for Aboriginal Affairs: Policy and Correspondence on Aboriginal Land Rights including submissions to Aboriginal Land Rights Commissioner by
Department of Aboriginal Affairs incorporating Council views, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.


MS 3694, Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council [Standing Committee of Officers Meeting held in Sydney 13 and 14 February 1968 transcript of proceedings], Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3694, Gorton, John, Prime Minister, Aboriginal Affairs Address at the Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers Responsible for Aboriginal Affairs at Parliament House, Transcript of Proceedings, Melbourne, 12 July 1968, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 1, Item 5, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 2, Item 2, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 2, Item 5, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 2, Item 10, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 2, Item 12, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 2, Item 14, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.
MS 3759, Series 2, Item 19, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 2, Item 20, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

MS 3759, Series 2, Item 22, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 6, Item 6, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 6, Item 7, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 6, Item 9, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 6, Item 15, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, Black News Service, Number 6, October 1975.

MS 3759, Series 6, Item 16, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, Black News Service, Volume 1, No. 2, 1975, Black News Service, Number 6, October 1975, Black News Service, Volume 1, Number 2, May 1975 and Black News, No. 8, October, 1975.

MS 3759, Series 6, Item 17, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 6, Item 31, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.
MS 3759, Series 6, Item 37, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 11 Item 5, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 11, Item 8, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 11, Item 9, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 11, Item 11, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 11, Item 12, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 11, Item 13, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 11, Item 15, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 11, Item 40, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 11, Item 6, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 11, Item 8, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.
MS 3759, Series 11, Item 9, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 11, Item 12, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 11, Item 13, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 11, Item 15, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 13, Item 1, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 13, Item 3, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 13, Item 4, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 14, Item 2, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 14, Item 4, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 15, Item 3, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 23, Item 7, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.
MS 3759, Series 23, Item 9, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 26, Item 7, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 27, Item 7, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 30, Item 1, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

MS 3759, Series 30, Item 3, Papers of FCAATSI, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.


pNAT SF 25.4/3 Aboriginal and Islanders Affairs news, Volume 1, No. 1, November 1975, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

pNAT, National Conference of Aboriginal Advisory Councillors 1972 Canberra, Convened by the Minister for the Environment, Aborigines and the Arts at Canberra, 10-11 August 1972, Proceedings, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.
Ppit, A. Barrie Pittock, Aborigines and Land Rights, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

pQUE, QCAATSI Pamphlett, Why we ask you to stop work on Wednesday June 5, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

pQUE, FCAA TSI Pamphlett, Paper, Eye Witness in the Gulf, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

pQUE, QCAATSI Pamphlett, Aboriginal Land rights, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

pQUE, QCAATSI Copy of Petition against the Government's right to remove the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, Australian institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 4, Series 1043, Consignment 1, Box 518, Item 2964, Batch No. 275, Premier’s Department, Co-ordinator General’s Department, Queensland State Archives.

Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 5, Series 1043, Consignment 1, Box 518, Item 2964, Batch No. 275, Premier’s Department, Co-ordinator General’s Department, Queensland State Archives.

Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 6, Series 1043, Consignment 1, Box 519, Item No. 2966, Batch No. 275, Family and Community Histories Section, Queensland State Archives.

Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 7, Premier’s Department, SRS 1043/1, Item 1585, Box 519, Queensland State Archives.
Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 8, SRS 1043/1/1586, File No. 275, Item No. 539359, Queensland State Archives.

Queensland Aboriginal Welfare File Part 9, Series 1043/1589, Box 520, File No. 275, Part 9, Queensland State Archives.


Queensland Reports upon the Operations of Certain Sub-Departments of the Home Secretary’s Department, Aboriginals Department, Contained in Report for the Year Ended 31 December, 1918.

Queensland 1920 Report upon the Operations of the Sub-Departments of Aboriginals,
Prisons, Government Relief, Diamantina Hospital for Chronic Diseases (South Brisbane), Jubilee, Sanatorium for Consumptives (Dalby), Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, and Westwood Sanatorium, Government Printer, Brisbane, 1920.


Queensland Annual Report of the Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs for the Year

Queensland Annual Report of the Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs for the Year

Queensland Journals of Parliament Session of 1974, N328.943, QUE, pp. 171-172, National
Library of Australia.

Queensland Annual Report of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals for the Year 1915,
Government Printer, Brisbane, 1916, p. 5

Queensland 1918 Report on the Operations of Certain Sub-Departments of the Home
Secretary’s Department, Aboriginals Department, Contained in Report for the Year
Ended 31 December 1918, Government Printer, Brisbane, 1919.

03566, Z1608, Microfilm (M1362), COL/142, Colonial Secretary’s Office, General
Correspondence and Papers re Aboriginals 1896-1902, Queensland State Archives.

Smoke Signals – Volume 8, No.12, June 1969, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

Supplement to the Queensland Government Gazette, December 1897, No. 146, Section 4,
Brisbane.

Supplement to the Queensland Government Gazette, May 1902, No. 146, Brisbane.

The Role of the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee, Report of the Committee of
Inquiry, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Australian Government Publishing

Newspapers
Identity Magazine, Volume 1, No. 6, November, 1972, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

Identity Magazine, Volume 1, No. 3, January, 1972, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

Theses


Murphy, Lyndon, Whos Afraid of the Dark?: Australia’s Administration in Aboriginal Affairs, Master of Public Administration, University of Queensland, 2000.


Map


Secondary


