Community Participation Agreements: A model for welfare reform from community-based research

D.E. Smith

No. 223/2001

ISSN 1036-1774

ISBN 0 7315 2658 9

Diane Smith is a Fellow at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, The Australian National University.

Table of contents

List of Tables and Figures....iv
Abbreviations and acronyms v
Summary viii
Acknowledgments ix
Introduction 1
The scope and conduct of the research.... 2
Background to the research.... 2
The terms of reference 2
Research methodology 3
Some caveats.... 5
Community Participation Agreements: the national policy context 5
The 2001 budget initiative 5
The policy trail leading to Community Participation Agreements 6
Community Participation Agreements: the community context.... 10
The Mutitjulu community: an overview 10
The welfare economy and employment at Mutitjulu 11
Factors that will facilitate or impede community participation 13
Participation: from policy to community practice 15
Why participation? The impetus from the community level 16
Anangu values and views.... 16
Defining participation for the purposes of an Agreement.... 17
The strategic framework for the Mutitjulu Agreement.... 18
'All in': an optimal, inclusive community model.... 20
The 'active participation' strategy.... 22
The 'tailored assistance' strategy.... 22
Supporting an 'All in' community model.... 23
Key component goals of the Mutitjulu Agreement 23
Goal 1. A community gateway for participation and management 24
Goal 2. A delegation under the *Social Security (Administration) Act 1999* 25
Goal 3. A consolidated block funding and acquittal package 26
Goal 4. A Community Participation Program and Individual Participation Agreements 27
Goal 5. Individualised intensive assistance and support 30
Goal 6. Coordinated training and supervision 30
Goal 7. Community enforcement and appeals procedures: partnering with Centrelink 31
Goal 8. Community financial advice and banking services 32
Goal 9. A Community Transaction Centre and networked information technology.... 33
Goal 10. Community governance and capacity-building.... 34
Goal 11. Forging local Participation Partnerships.... 34

Goal 12. National coordination and partnerships 36
Goal 13. An ongoing evaluation of process and outcomes..... 36
Implications and challenges for national policy and programs..... 37
Policy imperatives 37
National departmental coordination 38
A program funding platform..... 38
A more widely relevant model? 39
A program only for remote communities? 40
Program and policy linkages to the CDEP scheme 40
Education and training linkages 41
Jurisdictional devolution: a road to community governance and capacity-building..... 41
The early challenges and implications for Indigenous communities..... 42
The community view of welfare 42
Community management and decision-making..... 43
Community development issues..... 43
Participation or mutual obligation? 44
Realistic timeframes..... 44
Conclusion 44
Appendix 1. Individuals and agencies consulted 46
Notes 46
References 47

Tables

Table 1. Aggregate social security income and payment type, Mutitjulu, 2001 12

Figures

Fig. 1. 'All In': The optimal model for the Mutitjulu Community Participation Agreement 21
Fig. 2. The proposed flow of consolidated welfare funding to the Mutitjulu Community Council 28

Abbreviations and acronyms

Abstudy	Aboriginal Study Assistance Scheme
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
ANU	The Australian National University
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
CAEPR	Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research
CDEP	Community Development Employment Project
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CGC	Commonwealth Grants Commission
COA	Commonwealth of Australia
DEWRSB	Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business
DFACS	Department of Family and Community Services
EFTPOS	Electronic Funds Transfer at Point of Sale
HRSCAA	House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs
HRSCFCA	House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs
NARU	North Australia Research Unit
NPY	Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara
NSA	Newstart Allowance
RCIADIC	Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody
RDA	*Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
TANF	Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (USA)
YA	Youth Allowance

Summary

In its June 2001 budget, the Federal Government announced a new framework for welfare reform, *Australians Working Together*. One component of the framework is the proposed development of Community Participation Agreements in remote Indigenous communities, to deal with welfare income payments, mutual obligation and related service delivery. This paper presents the results of community consideration and the author's field research between March and August 2001 at Mutitjulu, Central Australia, regarding what such an Agreement might look like on the ground.

Mutitjulu presents a microcosm of many of the issues currently affecting remote Indigenous communities. As Mutitjulu residents struggle daily to come to terms with substantial economic and social difficulties, they find their culturally-based forms of social and cultural capital are being undermined by external factors seemingly beyond their immediate control. These include:

- the continuing failure of governments to develop a comprehensive approach to planning and service delivery, reflected in a band-aid approach to addressing welfare dependence;
- the debilitating impacts of inter-generational dependence on welfare income; and
- the multiplicity of local corporate structures and institutions with ill-defined roles and poor accountability to the Mutitjulu community.

The failure to adequately address welfare dependence and major community problems of substance abuse, family breakdown, domestic violence, and low levels of education is viewed by Anangu (local Aboriginal people) as directly contributing to a noticeable deterioration in the wellbeing of individuals, their families and the community at large. There is growing frustration over the failure, at all levels, to deal effectively with these matters. The Mutitjulu Community Council has formally decided to proceed with the development of a Community Participation and Partnership Agreement (the 'Mutitjulu Agreement'), in partnership with government and other stakeholders, as one means to begin addressing these matters. The development of practical partnerships with key government departments and local agencies will be a critical factor in the overall success of the proposed Mutitjulu Agreement. It is for this reason that the name of the proposed Agreement has been expanded to include the strategy of 'partnership' and well as 'participation'.

The paper begins with an overview of the background to the community-based research, terms of reference and research methodology. The proposed Mutitjulu Agreement is then placed in its national policy context to identify the factors that have generated this particular initiative. The paper goes on to describe the community context for the Agreement, including the nature of the local welfare economy, and Anangu views about the impacts of the welfare system. Consideration is given to the nature of contemporary Anangu social and economic

relations, and how the term 'participation' might be most relevantly defined for the purposes of a community agreement about participation.

The key components, principles and objectives of the model proposed for the Mutitjulu Agreement are described. The optimal model proposed for participation—one that is overwhelmingly recommended by Anangu themselves—is based on an inclusive 'All in' model that would cover all social security recipients resident at Mutitjulu, under a dual strategy of providing *active participation* and/or *tailored assistance* to different categories of participants.

The model is based on an integrated package that aims to address welfare dependence in its real-life community context. Its proposed key components are described in detail. These are:

- a community gateway for participation and administration;
- a delegation under the *Social Security Act 1999*;
- a consolidated block funding and acquittal package;
- a Community Participation Program;
- Individual Participation Agreements;
- a menu of participation activities;
- individualised intensive assistance and support;
- coordinated training and supervision;
- enforcement and appeals procedures—partnering with Centrelink;
- community financial advice and banking services,
- a Community Transaction Centre and networked information technology;
- reformed community governance and targeted capacity-building;
- the forging of local participation partnerships;
- national coordination; and
- an ongoing evaluation process.

The paper argues that, while Indigenous communities display important economic and cultural differences which will require the development of a local content for each Community Participation Agreement, every community will have to address the same broad issues in respect to reforming welfare at the local level. The key component goals considered at Mutitjulu will therefore have relevance in other communities.

There are significant factors at the community level which may impede the establishment of the Mutitjulu Agreement. There may also be resistance from institutions with vested program and service-delivery interests, who may argue against entering a credible partnership that requires devolving genuine decision-making responsibilities to the community level. However, there are important community and corporate strengths that, if realistically built upon, may assist the process of implementing the Agreement. These various internal and external factors are considered.

The proposed Mutitjulu Agreement represents a demonstration project for government's new welfare policy—a litmus test for its ability to provide a comprehensive approach to delivering the necessary funding and program support for a community-managed model, and for its willingness to establish a practical partnership with the community. Development and implementation of the Agreement will be a complex matter. It has taken many decades for welfare dependence to become entrenched in Indigenous communities, and the issues will not be addressed overnight. They will require a sustained 5 to 10 year period of commitment by all the parties.

The paper concludes by discussing the key policy and program challenges, and some old recurring lessons, that have arisen during the course of the research. These matters will have to be addressed if a sustainable community-managed Agreement is to be developed. They are relevant not only to implementation of an Agreement at Mutitjulu, but to the possible extension of this new initiative to other remote Indigenous communities.

Acknowledgments

The consultancy research has drawn upon the goodwill and resources of numerous agencies and individuals. The Mutitjulu Community Council and its Chairperson, Graham Calma, approved the conduct of the research and provided significant assistance by making community office space and resources available for meetings and interviews, by participating in workshops, and by employing a local Anangu interpreter and facilitator, Mr Kuminara Forrester, to work with the consultant. Mr Forrester's expert assistance and knowledge was critical to the discussions with Anangu families. I am grateful also to the many Anangu who generously made time available, often on several occasions, to discuss their concerns and ideas about the welfare issues affecting the community.

Special thanks are due to Karen Aucote, Chief Executive Officer to the Mutitjulu Council, who provided invaluable assistance in facilitating interviews, community meetings and Council workshops; writing an overview paper of community issues and options; making community reports and data available; and providing helpful insights on local issues. The consultant also received valuable information and assistance from Bruce McPherson, the Mutitjulu Employment Officer; from Brooke Watson, the Uluṟu–Kata Tjuṯa National Park Manager who provided input and facilitated meetings with Park staff; from David White, General Manager of Ayers Rock Resort; and from Paul Josif and staff from the Office of Joint Management. Parks Australia and community staff made accommodation available.

Many other staff from community and local agencies generously participated in interviews and gave their serious attention to the issues involved, including Trish Blundell and staff (Cultural Centre), Toni Bonney (Mutitjulu Child Care Centre), John Bonney (Parks Training Officer), Fiona Forrester (Mutitjulu Council Office), Steve and Lil Fox (Maruku Arts), Kevin Frances (Community Liaison Officer, Ayers Rock Resort), Liz Knight (NPY Women's Council), Naomi Lennon (Office of Joint

Management), Mike and Josie Meeks (Ininti Store and Kiosk), Dave Oakes (Nyangatjatjara Aboriginal Corporation), Bruce Mackay, Jeff Stewart and staff (Mutitjulu Health Clinic), Emmanuel Pavlou and staff (Mutitjulu Primary School), Bob Randall (Director, Health Council), Diane Shanahan (Principal Nyangatjatjara College), Rose Wallis (Walkatjara Arts), Gerry McKeegan and Greg Wiley (Centralian College), and Tina Bain, Robbie Renner and Lynette Liddell (Parks Australia). Discussions were also held with the Indigenous Policy Unit (Department of Family and Children's Services), Greg Clatworthy (Manager, Centrelink Office, Alice Springs), Kevin Kerrin (Manager, ATSIC Regional Office, Alice Springs), Gavin Robbins (Sovereign Health Care), and Peter Cochrane (Director, National Parks, Environment Australia).

CAEPR provided significant administrative support, coordinated by Jon Altman, Ilona Crabb and Jelena Kovac. Agency assistance was provided by ATSIC and thanks are due to Jane Whyte, William Johnstone, Ben Johnson, Richard Preece and Mike O'Ryan. John Taylor kindly made Mutitjulu household data available. Valuable comments on various drafts were provided by Bill Arthur, Karen Aucote, Will Sanders, Neil Westbury, and Jane Whyte. Proofreading has been carried out by Sally Ward, and final formatting and editing by Wendy Forster and Frances Morphy.

Introduction

This paper presents an overview of field-based community research conducted between March and August 2001 at Mutitjulu, Central Australia, in relation to the proposed development of a Community Participation Agreement. In the June 2001 budget, the Federal Government announced a new welfare reform framework *Australians Working Together* (Commonwealth of Australia (COA) 2001), one component of which is to develop Community Participation Agreements for remote Indigenous communities.

At the heart of government welfare reform is the principle of mutual obligation and the objective for welfare recipients 'to be active and involved in their communities, to be using their skills and potential and to be looking for work when they can' (Department of Family and Community Services (DFACS) 2001). According to government statements, Community Participation Agreements will involve Indigenous communities 'in identifying practical ways people can contribute to their families and communities in return for their income support' (DFACS 2001). This practical contribution is now referred to by government as 'participation'—a form of mutual obligation, but one defined and planned by communities under each Agreement. Government hopes to see 100 of these Agreements eventually signed in remote communities.

Apart from the budget announcement, there is little detailed information concerning the form and content of these Agreements. The proposed model for a Participation and Partnership Agreement developed at Mutitjulu (the 'Mutitjulu Agreement') is the first community-based initiative that attempts to give substance to the new government initiative. The development of practical partnerships with key government departments and local agencies will be a critical factor in the overall success of the proposed Mutitjulu Agreement. It is for this reason that the name of the proposed Agreement has been expanded to include the strategy of 'partnership' and well as 'participation'.

This paper presents the results of community consideration and the author's field research regarding what an Agreement might look like on the ground. The background to the research, the consultancy terms of reference and field methodology are first described. The proposed Mutitjulu Agreement is then placed in its national policy context to identify the factors that have generated this particular initiative. The paper goes on to describe the community context, including the nature of the local welfare economy, and Anangu views about the impacts of the welfare system. Consideration is given to the nature of Anangu social and economic relations, and how the term 'participation' might be most relevantly defined for the purposes of a community agreement. The factors that might either assist or impede implementation of an Agreement are considered.

The key components, principles and objectives of the model proposed for the Mutitjulu Agreement are then described. The paper concludes by discussing a range of policy and program implications, and some old lessons that have arisen during the course of the research. These matters will need to be addressed if a sustainable community-managed Agreement is to be developed. They are relevant

not only to implementation of an Agreement at Mutitjulu, but to the possible extension of this new initiative to other remote Indigenous communities.

The scope and conduct of the research

Background to the research

The research on which this paper is based is the product of a consultancy commissioned by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) in conjunction with the Mutitjulu Community Council. For several years, the Mutitjulu Community Council, Council staff, and residents have been engaged in discussions with ATSIC, Centrelink, the Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business (DEWRSB), Parks Australia and other government agencies about their concern over the negative impacts of welfare payments and service delivery, as well as other community issues which they see as related.

Over the past decade a multitude of studies on community and economic development have been conducted at Mutitjulu (including Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service 1991; Barry 1996; COA 2000a, 2000b; Ditton 1990; Durnan & Wynter Hill 1997a, 1997b, 1997c; Holden 1999; Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council 1991, 1997; Parakeelya Pty Ltd 1999; Savage 1997; Sinclair Knight Merz 2000; Woenne-Green 1995). The research documents a growing frustration amongst Anangu leaders and community staff with the perceived failure of government coordination of welfare and employment services at Mutitjulu, and the lack of follow through (Aucote 2000). Mindful of this, ATSIC undertook in late 2000 to commission the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) to document the specific concerns of the community in respect to welfare dependence and related service delivery, in order to develop proposals to address them.

The consultancy research was funded in major part by ATSIC's newly formed national Policy and Program Reform Unit in Canberra; though the project was initially developed out of its Alice Springs regional office. A contribution to travel costs was also met by DFACS, and additional financial and administrative support for the research has been made available by CAEPR. The Mutitjulu Council approved and facilitated the conduct of the research, and also employed a local Anangu interpreter and facilitator, Mr Kuminara Forrester, to work with the researcher to consult with local Anangu people. The Council and its Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Karen Aucote, made a significant contribution to the conduct of the project at Mutitjulu by writing an overview of community issues and options (Aucote 2000), and by making office space, community documents, resources and substantial time available for the research process.

The terms of reference

The terms of reference for the research were developed between ATSIC (involving staff from the newly formed Policy and Program Reform Unit and the Community Development Employment Project (CDEP) Program area) and executive staff of the

Mutitjulu Community Council, with input from the Indigenous Policy Unit of DFACS, and the author.

The research objectives were:

- to ascertain local views about the possibility of developing a community-wide Participation Agreement at Mutitjulu;
- to identify the range of activities which individuals might be able to undertake, which would be acceptable and possible within the community;
- to identify the possible factors which might assist or limit people in participating in such activities;
- to identify the key factors that might assist or limit the successful development, implementation and management by the community of a Participation Agreement; and
- to report to ATSIC and the Mutitjulu Council on these issues and present a range of options for consideration by the community, ATSIC and other stakeholders on how such a strategy could be developed and managed at the community level.

The research was to be based, in the first instance, on consultations with the Mutitjulu Council, Anangu people resident at Mutitjulu, local Indigenous leaders, community service organisations, and with local non-government organisations and private sector stakeholders.

Research methodology

The research presented in this paper is based on extensive community consultations and fieldwork carried out between March and August 2001, over four separate trips totalling a period of approximately nine weeks. The research was informed by an initial literature and policy review, followed by community research during which a mix of research methods was used. The author attended an initial Community Council meeting to discuss the overall project, key issues and preferred ways of proceeding (on 20 March 2001). Council members wanted to ensure they and community residents had the time to consider the different issues. For that reason, they suggested the best approach was for the consultant to talk to as many local individuals and family groups as possible. That process was facilitated by the local Anangu interpreter.

Lengthy discussions were held with members of the main family groupings at Mutitjulu and surrounding outstations. The researcher endeavoured to cover a range of age groups, both males and females, and single and married people. Welfare recipients and Anangu who were already employed (full-time and casually) were interviewed. Some Anangu participated in several discussions—individually, as part of family groups, and in wider community meetings. In total, over 50 separate interviews were held with Anangu residents. Interviews were also conducted with Anangu and other Aboriginal staff working for Parks Australia. Lengthy discussions were held with the Community Council CEO about many aspects of the community.

In addition, the researcher regularly attended Community Council meetings to present progress reports and discuss key issues arising from them. A special workshop was also convened (on 3 May 2001) by the researcher for Council and senior community members to discuss welfare participation and related cultural, social and economic issues. At this workshop, the CEO and researcher also staged various hypothetical scenarios for family savings and money management in the community, and for expenditure planning. The scenarios also highlighted the total amounts of combined welfare and wages monies flowing to hypothetical, but representative, family groups in the community. These scenarios generated considerable interest and many family members subsequently approached the researcher to discuss income savings and expenditure options.

After a lengthy period of consultation with individuals and family groups, a community-wide public meeting was held (on 10 May 2001) to discuss welfare and participation issues. Direct observation and analyses of aggregate community welfare and demographic data were also a feature of the research methodology. Demographic data was provided by Dr John Taylor (see Taylor 2001) and by the Community Council housing records.

In addition to consultations with Anangu, interviews were carried out (and in several instances, repeated) with management and key staff of all Mutitjulu service delivery agencies (see Appendix 1a). These meetings focused on the nature of possible participation activities, and factors that might facilitate or impede participation. Discussions were also held with management and staff of local and regional agencies, and private sector interests (see Appendix 1b). The focus was on participation and implementation issues, and on the potential for constructive partnerships between the community and certain agencies.

A draft report was presented for comment to ATSIC and the Community Council CEO in April 2001. In mid June, a set of preliminary recommendations was provided to ATSIC and the CEO for their consideration and feedback. That interim report and preliminary recommendations were then refined to reflect feedback. The researcher subsequently made a lengthy presentation to the Community Council outlining community views, and a range of final options and recommendations (on 26 June 2001). That meeting was also attended by ATSIC staff (Canberra office) and the Manager of Ayers Rock Resort (Yulara).

At the conclusion of the 26 June meeting, the Mutitjulu Council unanimously decided to proceed with the model for a Community Participation and Partnership Agreement. ATSIC national office staff present at the meeting undertook to proceed with the further negotiation and planning that would be required at a national level in order for an agreed model to be implemented.

The researcher wrote a final report on the basis of the Community Council's formal decision to proceed into an Agreement, and provided it to the Community Council and ATSIC on 18 July 2001. That report was then extensively circulated by ATSIC to relevant government offices and departments, and by the Community Council to local service deliverers and stakeholders.

In August, the researcher carried out a follow-up period of two weeks' research at the request of the Council and ATSIC, to identify the specific participation activities that could be provided by community and local agencies, and likely resource issues and barriers that would need to be addressed in order for those activities to be provided on a sustained basis. A further report on those matters was provided to the Council and ATSIC at the end of August. A timetable was also developed by the researcher and the Council CEO and Chairperson, and approved by the full Council, covering subsequent stages, including the development of a Heads of Agreement, negotiation of terms and conditions for a Final Agreement, and an action plan for implementation to commence by mid 2002.

Some caveats

The research faced some familiar constraints. Ceremonies were being conducted, and a number of deaths occurred in the months preceding and during the fieldwork. A senior traditional owner for Uluru passed away, leading to the closure of the Rock climb and restrictions on many community activities. This and other deaths led to some residents travelling away to participate in 'sorry business', or confining themselves to 'sorry camps' set up at Mutitjulu. However, the staged approach to consultations meant the researcher was able to catch up with these people at one time or another.

Not surprisingly, young teenagers were shy in discussing issues with an older stranger. They were the most problematic age group to interview. To facilitate their input, teenagers and young adults were consulted in small 'focus-type' discussion groups.

Overall, the consultation process was extensive and a good coverage of family and individual views was obtained. The options and issues presented here are the product of that process, and are current for the people consulted between March and August 2001. The consultation process at Mutitjulu and in the local area generated considerable momentum and goodwill as Anangu and community staff became increasingly engaged with the issues, and with the idea that positive action might be possible. That momentum and commitment has led to a local expectation that government will respond as decisively and with the same goodwill as the community.

Community Participation Agreements: the national policy context

The 2001 budget initiative

In some ways, the launch of the Community Participation Agreement initiative appeared to be policy made on the run, with little by way of policy documentation available. In the July budget, the Federal Government announced that it would be allocating $32 million over four years to ATSIC to assist potentially 100 communities to 'develop and manage' the Agreements and 'plan for better service delivery at the local level'. The funding includes ATSIC support for related

activities such as 'leadership, strengthening culture and community governance'. Each Agreement 'will involve the community in identifying practical ways people can contribute to their families and communities in return for their income support'. In practice, ATSIC is expected to 'coordinate each stage of the design of the Community Participation Agreements through negotiation with the communities and key agencies' (DFACS 2001).

The stated impetus for the initiative is that 'there are few opportunities in some remote Indigenous communities for people on income support to meet activity test requirements. In others, people have been exempt from activity testing'. The Agreements purport 'to help Indigenous Australians to develop their own practical solutions to the challenges they face' (DFACS 2001).

The research at Mutitjulu actually commenced before the budget initiative was announced. The commissioning and early conduct of the research undoubtedly contributed to thinking in government circles about the need for such a participation mechanism in remote communities. With no other policy guidelines publicly provided other than those outlined above, the Mutitjulu research provides a preliminary model developed out of the process of community consultation, of what such an Agreement might look like on the ground. Accordingly, it raises a number of national policy and program issues that will need further clarification.

The policy trail leading to Community Participation Agreements

While their initial policy content appeared slight, the idea of Community Participation Agreements was not created out of thin air. The policy trail leading to the budget initiative can be traced back to a number of influential sources.

The writings of Noel Pearson (2000a, 2000b, 2001) have had considerable influence on government and Indigenous thinking about the effectiveness of the social security system for Indigenous Australians. Pearson has argued forcefully that welfare payments and their mode of delivery have served to undermine Aboriginal economies and social relationships in Cape York Peninsula, creating a debilitating dependence. He recommends the rejuvenation of subsistence economies, the replacement of government welfare programs with community managed reciprocity programs, the development of stronger regional Aboriginal economic development, and the formation of social partnerships to effect change in communities. He points to the need for Aboriginal communities and their representative organisations to take the lead role in welfare policy formulation and service delivery. Other writers, however, have argued an alternative perspective: that welfare payments provided a valued citizenship entitlement and a base-level income (see Altman & Sanders 1995; Arthur 2001). Both perspectives raise challenging issues for policy reform.

At the same time, there has been a growing critique of the continuing low levels of Indigenous employment. In that context, CAEPR research by John Taylor and Boyd Hunter (1998, 2001) has been widely influential in highlighting an 'anticipated crisis for public policy' (2001: 96) as a result of the ongoing and

projected poor results in addressing high Indigenous unemployment levels because growth in jobs, especially mainstream jobs, has failed to keep up with the substantial growth in the Indigenous working-age population.

A perception has also developed in some circles that the CDEP scheme is flagging in effectiveness.[1] Since the scheme's establishment in the mid 1970s, it has undergone many changes in respect to its objectives, strategies and administration. The last major examination of the scheme was by Ian Spicer in 1997. The Spicer Review emphasised the scheme's scope and socio-cultural significance, but also recognised that it provides mostly low-paid and part-time work. Spicer recommended that the commercial potential of CDEP be maximised, and participants provided with 'a conduit to other employment options' (Spicer 1997: 5, 56–7).

Government policy has steadily moved in the direction of Spicer's recommendations, and CDEP organisations in urban and rural communities have been encouraged to expand the number of participants moving into mainstream employment. However, approximately 63 per cent of CDEPs are in remote areas where reliance on welfare is high, facilities and services are often rudimentary, the availability of staff is restricted, and operating costs are usually extremely high. The trend in policy thinking since 1997 seems to emphasise the potential usefulness of streaming CDEP organisations into an urban and rural category, where employment and enterprise outcomes are the priority, and a remote category where the cultural and social objectives of CDEP would continue to be facilitated, or where other mechanisms might be developed for dealing with welfare reliance.

These various developments have occurred in the context of a series of influential government inquiries over the last three years that have further prodded government thinking about Indigenous welfare reform and the linkages to community management and governance issues. In 1999, an inquiry was undertaken by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs (HRSCFCA) which recommended in its report *Health is Life* (2000), that where Indigenous communities wished to volunteer to manage welfare payments and services the Commonwealth should 'facilitate innovative models of income support and funding to Indigenous communities … [and] must increase resources and practical assistance to participating Indigenous communities in consultation and cooperation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission' (HRSCFCA 2000: 95).

In 2000, the Commonwealth Grants Commission (CGC) undertook an inquiry into the distribution of funding for programs that affect Indigenous Australians. A CGC Discussion Paper circulated in 2000 stimulated considerable comment. It addressed the issue of service delivery at the community level, arguing that:

> As far as possible, Indigenous people should have authority to make decisions about the services they receive both at the State and local level. Ideally this would be accompanied by control over the funds necessary to provide the services …

> Indigenous people should also be involved in decision-making for mainstream services … the principles for changes to the funding arrangements could be to: …
>
> (iii) enable community control of service provision as far as practicable;
>
> (vi) allow for the pooling of resources from as many sources as possible to address needs in a multi-jurisdictional and cross-functional context (CGC 2000: xiii, xv–vi).

In its subsequent final *Report on Indigenous Funding*, the CGC noted that local and regional agreements about service delivery and program funding, 'have the potential to move decision-making closer to grassroots Indigenous communities and to further promote community control of service provision … [and] provide a dynamic link between joint decision making at higher levels and local community control over service delivery' (2001: 74).

Over the same period of time, the Federal Government commissioned a major review of the Australian social security system by a Reference Group on Welfare Reform chaired by Patrick McClure. The McClure Report *Participation Support for a More Equitable Society* (McClure 2000) provided a blueprint for welfare reform, advocating a radical overhaul of Australia's social security system.

Arguably, the McClure committee gave inadequate attention to Indigenous welfare service delivery and policy issues.[2] It did note CAEPR research by Will Sanders (1999) indicating significant differences in the impact of breach rates—with Indigenous clients of Centrelink being 1.5 times more likely to incur an activity test breach and twice as likely to incur an administrative breach than other clients. ATSIC submissions to the review also emphasised the need for culturally-informed solutions that are generated at the local level.

The final McClure Report briefly recommended, in respect to Indigenous people, that:

> innovations be trialed in service delivery in consultation with communities (Recommendation A10);
>
> mutual obligation would require consultation at the local level to ensure that requirements and their application act to strengthen existing family and community structures including expanding the current menu of acceptable activities for jobless people to include other forms of social or cultural participation (Recommendation D7); and
>
> that activity test breaching should be reduced by fostering community involvement, providing better recognition of individual circumstances and ensuring that sanctions are culturally appropriate and responsive to the needs of the community (2000: 42).

The report also recommended that business 'has an obligation to work with government, communities and individuals to generate more opportunities for economic … and social … participation' (2000: 5), but did not suggest how this might be achieved for Indigenous communities.

In the same year, the *Indigenous Families and Communities Roundtable* was convened by the Commonwealth Minister for Family and Community Services

with a brief to consider solutions for Indigenous welfare and economic development. The Roundtable stated forcefully that:

> Relevant Government programmes should be delivered on a strategic, coordinated and whole of government basis. Programmes should be based on the views and aspirations of whole communities and Indigenous people themselves should have a central role in the design, planning and delivery of services (Commonwealth Minister for Family and Community Services, Media release, 24 October 2000).

In combination these various policy trails and public commentary provided an influential backdrop for government's consideration of welfare reform options, and its eventual initiative known as Community Participation Agreements. In its response to the McClure Report, in late 2000, the Federal Government announced that, 'consistent with the report', it is 'seeking to develop a system that engages all people of working age in active social and economic participation' (COA 2000b: 4). In its more detailed budgetary initiative of June 2001, *Australians Working Together: Helping People to Move Forward*, the stated policy objective is that 'wherever possible, people should receive appropriate assistance and incentives to stay involved with their communities and regain their financial independence' (COA 2001: 5).

The key elements of the Federal Government's current welfare reform agenda include:

- continued financial support;
- expanded job search support;
- intensive assistance and a new personal support program;
- transitional support into work;
- additional assistance in the form of training and working credits, and literacy and numeracy supplements;
- improved remote servicing;
- the facilitation of community-business partnerships; and
- community participation agreements and support.

The principles of 'mutual obligation' and 'community participation' are seen as a 'key underpinning' to welfare reform, and have been described as being:

> about building a resilient and supportive society that depends on a web of supportive relationships between individuals, families, communities, business and government. It is about generating opportunities for individuals to help themselves and help each other. It also means recognising and supporting the social contribution people make through caring for children, people with disability or frail elderly, and recognising voluntary participation in other community activities (COA 2000b: 8).

In accordance with these principles, new policy guidelines stipulate that all job seekers aged under 40 years on unemployment payments for more than six months will be required to do work-for-the-dole or another mutual obligation activity. Those aged between 40 and 49 years will be required to take up some

form of activity, but not work-for-the-dole. People aged 50 years or more who receive unemployment payments will continue to be subject to the existing activity test. Parenting Payment recipients will be subject to a progressive set of requirements linked to the age of their youngest child, and ranging from annual interviews to engagement in part-time work or some other equivalent activity. These new arrangements will commence from July–September 2002 (DFACS 2001).

In respect to Indigenous welfare reform, the Federal Government appears to have taken up the issue of community managed service delivery, and argues that: 'A fundamentally new approach is needed to increase the social and economic participation of Indigenous people … [and that] under this approach, community-based providers of welfare services … will have a key role in the whole gamut of welfare reform—policy advice, programme design, programme implementation and service delivery' (COA 2000b: 8, 10–11).

Community Participation Agreements have considerable potential for remote communities where opportunities for mainstream employment are limited, but where opportunities for community participation may be considerable. The proposed Mutitjulu Community Participation and Partnership Agreement is partly the product of several policy trails leading to the Federal Government's recent welfare reform initiatives. But the Mutitjulu model is also the product of repeated community initiatives to address concerns about welfare over several years. As the first community proposal of its kind, the Mutitjulu Agreement will represent a litmus test for the Federal Government's new welfare policy and service delivery approach.

Community Participation Agreements: the community context

The Mutitjulu community: an overview

Mutitjulu community is situated within the world-famous Uluṟu–Kata Tjuṯa National Park and as such has no discrete boundary other than that of the Park itself. It lies approximately 450 kilometres from Alice Springs and 25 kilometres from Ayers Rock Resort at Yulara. An area for the Park was first excised from the Aboriginal South-West Reserve in 1958 by the Commonwealth Government, and in 1977 it was declared a National Park covering an area of approximately 1,300 square kilometres.

Two years later traditional Anangu owners lodged a claim to the land under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. In 1985 the land was declared to be Aboriginal inalienable freehold and vested in the Uluṟu–Kata Tjuṯa Land Trust which represents traditional owners residing at Mutitjulu and elsewhere in the surrounding region. On the same day, the Anangu owners leased back the Park for a period of 99 years, for an annual lease consideration and a percentage of gate takings under a joint-management arrangement with Parks Australia North. The relevant organisation cited in the lease-back arrangements

between traditional owners and the Commonwealth for the purposes of managing the Park is Mutitjulu Community Inc. (COA 2000a). The Park was listed for its World Heritage natural values in 1987 and for its cultural values in 1994.

In 1983, the Ayers Rock Resort at the town of Yulara was constructed on land transferred by the Northern Territory Government as freehold to Ayers Rock Resort (now owned by Voyages Hotels and Resorts Pty Ltd). Yulara is essentially managed as a company town and there are no Anangu resident there, though there were at the time of its construction (Altman 1988: 130–1). The Park is a major tourist destination: it is estimated that approximately 400,000 visitors per annum currently come to the Park and it is anticipated that these numbers will increase in the years ahead. Visiting tourists must stay at Yulara, and Mutitjulu community is closed to tourists.

Mutitjulu is home to a population of around 380 Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara people who are often referred to as Anangu. Like many remote Indigenous communities, the population at Mutitjulu is not homogenous. It comprises both traditional owner families for the Park as well as other Anangu families who might not be classed as traditional owners, but who are nevertheless often related to them. Mutitjulu is a fairly recently established community, and many residents retain close cultural and family ties to other places in the surrounding region. However, Anangu evince a growing attachment to Mutitjulu as their home base, especially younger people who have been born and 'grown up' in the community. Approximately 85 non-Anangu staff reside in the Park, of whom approximately 60 are Park staff, the remainder being Mutitjulu community staff.

The community is developing into a regional service provider and serves as the base for a number of regionally-focused agencies. According to John Taylor's recent demographic research at Mutitjulu (2001), the community has a highly mobile and expanding population. Its projected annual population growth rate of 12.5 per cent is far higher than the rate of 3.1 per cent per annum recorded for the wider Central Australian region (Taylor 2001). With its growing population, Mutitjulu's role as a regional hub is likely to widen, and on current projections, the number of people reliant on welfare will continue to increase.

The welfare economy and employment at Mutitjulu

Approximately 61 per cent (230 persons) of the community's population are of working age (Taylor 2001). Centrelink aggregate data for the beginning of 2001 indicates that 69 per cent of those adults are in receipt of some form of welfare payment (61% of welfare recipients were female and 39% were male). The regular fortnightly income of most Anangu households at Mutitjulu is reliant on social security transfers. In total, an estimated $1.5 million in social security income payments was delivered to Mutitjulu residents over the 2000–01 financial year; though this total will fluctuate annually according to the mobility of local Anangu (see Table 1). Over one fortnight in January 2001, a total of 196 welfare payments were received by 160 welfare recipients. Of the estimated total annual welfare

income flowing to Mutitjulu residents, approximately 39 per cent of payments (worth $606,000) was paid by Centrelink via cheque, and 61 per cent (worth $915,00) was paid via direct credit. In the absence of any banking agency at Mutitjulu, the community store and Council Office are forced to hold a substantial weekly float of money in order to cash cheques and provide an EFTPOS service at the store.

Table 1. Aggregate social security income and payment type, Mutitjulu, 2001

Payment type	Total estimated annual income, 2000–01 ($)	Annual income (% of total)	Total payments per fortnight (no.)	
			male	female
Newstart	667,791	43	38	37
FAO (Family Allowance)	334,732	22	7	56
Disabled Pension	192,683	13	9	11
Aged Pension	119,946	8	6	8
Parenting Payment (single)	73,886	5	1	6
Parenting Payment (partnered)	88,342	6	2	8
Youth Allowance	34,296	2	4	2
Carers Pension	10,475	1	1	0
Total 2001	1.52m	100	68	128

Source: Aggregate Centrelink data, Mutitjulu Community, January 2001.

Most employment at the community is part-time or casual. There is no CDEP scheme at Mutitjulu. Of a total of 230 adults of working age, the Council and community agencies employ approximately 30 Anangu in casual positions, seven in part-time positions, and four in full-time employment at different agencies and offices. There are potentially significant employment and economic opportunities associated with the community's niche tourism location and their joint management of the Park. However, Anangu seem to have remained marginal to many of the economic developments taking place on their lands. A small number have taken up employment within the Park workforce as Rangers and casual staff. Out of approximately 60 full-time Park staff, 18 are Aboriginal (9 of whom are local Anangu). A small number of senior traditional owners resident in the community are retained on a casual basis as 'cultural consultants' by Parks Australia North. However, little progress has been made in moving more Anangu into full-time employment and management positions over the Park's 15 years of joint-management operation. The Park does, however, contribute substantial funding (estimated by management to be in the order of $1 million per annum) for casual and project-specific employment within the Park, and for providing infrastructure improvements and municipal services to the community (including water, sewage, electricity and rubbish removal).

Ayers Rock Resort employs over 1,000 people, none of whom are Anangu. The Resort's substantial landscaping and maintenance work is all outsourced to contracting firms which do not employ any local Anangu. A potentially major contribution to community development is currently being discussed by the Resort's owners and Community Council. This is the proposed establishment of a Charitable Fund which would be based on a voluntary bed tax on tourists, and used for the purposes of community and economic development initiatives.

A number of Anangu work as artists selling their products through the community's two successful art centres; Maruku Arts and Crafts and Walkatjara Arts Uluṟu Pty Ltd. And a small pool of mainly middle-aged Anangu are engaged in the tourism industry as artists-at-work at the nearby Cultural Centre and as guides for Anangu Tours (operated by Nyangatjatjara Aboriginal Corporation). Apart from Anangu Tours, which has established a strong relationship with the community, no Anangu are employed by any of the tour operators or retail businesses operating out of the Resort. It is said by some locals that Anangu are reluctant to take up employment in situations where they will have close daily interaction with tourists (for example, at the Resort, or serving behind the counter at the Cultural Centre). However, the early history of the area suggests that Aboriginal people actively engaged with tourists; indeed, that their forced removal by government officials was partly to minimise their interaction with tourists (see Altman 1988: 99–106; Harney 1963). Another view is that the flow of welfare payments and other untied monies into the community acts as a disincentive to Anangu to seek employment in the local economy. The Nyangatjatjara College—a regional Indigenous high school established on sub-leased land at Yulara—has recently established a school-to-work program with the Resort to encourage young Anangu to see employment at the Resort as a viable future pathway, but also simply to provide them with valuable work experience.

Factors that will facilitate or impede community participation

There are a number of well-documented factors operating at the community level—confirmed by the research—which might either impede or facilitate the successful development and operation of a Mutitjulu Agreement.

A number of factors that could impede an Agreement, include:

- the demographic trend for rapid expansion of the community population and the high levels of mobility;
- multiple health problems and high levels of substance abuse experienced by many community residents, which in combination contribute to poor physical stamina, domestic violence and family breakdown;
- entrenched reliance on welfare payments and significant flows of untied monies through the community (including from royalty, art and 'gate' rental monies). These arrive in sudden bursts that are met by conspicuous, immediate consumption on food, travel, vehicle repair, alcohol and gambling. These poorly targeted flows of money act as a major disincentive to taking up available employment and getting off welfare;

- low levels of work experience and skills, especially amongst the younger generation who regard employment as a casual activity to be engaged in to acquire 'pocket money'. They become reliant on family members when their welfare incomes run out, and maintain a demanding pressure on them for cash and resources;
- low levels of educational attainment, with census data indicating that 86 per cent of the Mutitjulu population have no educational qualifications at all, and staff at Nyangatjatjara College reporting the average educational skills of incoming Anangu high-school students as being at Grade 3 primary school level. Many adults at Mutitjulu simply do not have the education levels and life-skills needed for full-time employment in the local labour force at this point in time;
- poor coordination and planning amongst the several local training providers, and by Parks Australia with the community, in respect to Anangu employment, training and supervision;
- the undermining of community governance structures and decision-making by the multiplicity of corporate structures associated with the joint-management of the Park, and with the plethora of regional Indigenous bodies, all protecting vested interests. On occasion, the roles and powers of those structures, lack direct accountability to the community and its legally representative Council; and
- the failure of government and its relevant departments to adopt a comprehensive and coordinated approach to the delivery of welfare and employment services at the local level, and the imposition by departments of unrealistic program objectives and timeframes.

The research confirms the previously documented assessments that the factors outlined above have served to undermine community initiative and trust. Council members, traditional owners and other community elders have made it clear that the existing 'stop-start' funding approach to employment and training is unsatisfactory.

There will be no short-term solutions to many of the problems listed above. They are evident in many Indigenous communities—remote, rural and urban—and will need a 'whole-of-community' approach, backed by sustained government program support and capacity-building. Program guidelines, community indicators and objectives developed for an Agreement will have to take these factors into account.

But there are also a number of factors that will facilitate the implementation process. These include:

- community momentum and Council support 'to those Mutitjulu leaders who advocate taking a hard line against welfare dependency, aiming to persuade as many Anangu as possible to get off the dole, put aside substance abuse, and take advantage of the opportunities for education, training and employment which are on offer at Mutitjulu' (see Durnan & Wynter Hill 1997a);

- the community's locational and cultural niche in the midst of a thriving tourist-based economy that is significantly based on selling a 'cultural experience' to tourists, and its location in a world-heritage Park subject to joint management, from which major employment opportunities could flow to residents;
- the wide range of viable employment and participation activities that could be undertaken in the community. Given the strong local economy, sustainable pathways to employment and small enterprise development could be generated;
- access to significant local infrastructure and institutional support from a wide range of experts, Park staff, and local service agencies;
- access to a near-by independent and well-resourced Indigenous high school, delivering residential care and tuition;
- considerable potential for developing mutually-beneficial participation partnerships with both Ayers Rock Resort and Parks Australia; and
- a national policy context which purports to support a coordinated inter-departmental approach to welfare service delivery in communities, and the associated governance and capacity-building needed for a Community Participation Agreement.

These positive factors need to be supported and further strengthened. The Community Council and those residents who have been consulted are realistic about the extent of problems to be overcome. For that very reason, they are strongly of the opinion that the process must be properly planned and carried out at a pace which allows people's active engagement. The Council is keen to build on local opportunities and establish a community-managed employment and participation strategy, in collaboration with government. It is seeking a comprehensive response in return, from government, to assist the community to move beyond the seemingly never-ending planning, to secure practical outcomes.

Participation: from policy to community practice

A national strategy for Indigenous welfare reform that seeks to facilitate participation at the community level must address four key questions:

- why participation;
- who participates;
- how do they participate; and
- what is required for participation to occur?

The policy framework for participation has been described earlier. The following sections examine the range of factors that give rise to a desire amongst Mutitjulu residents to generate more sustained participation in community life, and discuss how participation might be conceptualised at the community level.

Why participation? The impetus from the community level

> Sit-down money is killing our young people.
>
> When the welfare money come in it really killed the work; started slacking off.
>
> Now young ones don't know work, they welfare trained. No more sit down money, cut it out. Level-im up, everyone gotta work.
>
> (Anangu residents at Mutitjulu)

Anangu frame their concerns about welfare in a deeply personal style, and in terms of issues they see to be connected: entrenched health problems, substance abuse amongst young and middle-aged people, the breakdown of family relationships, and domestic violence.

A focus of concern amongst older residents are young people who appear to be alienated from family life, and reluctant to take up work—whether that work is for their family, community organisations or in the local economy. Older community members who have a long work history lament that their skills are not being passed on to the younger generation. Another perspective expressed to the researcher by young people, is that the older generation are caught in a cycle of powerlessness, tied to old ways, and are neglecting their children. There is widespread concern in the community that these problems are increasing. Repeatedly, a number of people simply state that 'sit-down money is killing Anangu'. But what does 'participation' and 'community' mean for Anangu at Mutitjulu?

Anangu values and views

From one perspective, participation at Mutitjulu simply consists of people's involvement in everyday life. Anangu broadly construe it to include individual and peer group activities, family life, community life, and what many call *tjukurrpa*—the Dreaming and 'Anangu culture'. It is also seen to include joint-management arrangements and employment with Parks Australia, as well as daily interactions with local non-Anangu people, agencies and institutions. There are complex conjunctions between these domains of participation, and both Anangu and non-Anangu attempt to mould the nature of the interaction according to their preferred purposes and outcomes.

Anangu residents at Mutitjulu emphasise, within their own system of social relationships, the injunction that individuals should fulfil a range of obligations to kin—including sharing resources, 'caring for' and 'looking after' younger and older relations, and 'working for' their close family. Anangu interactions continue to be moulded by the expectation of what Peterson (1993) has called 'demand sharing', known locally by the Pitjantjatjara term *ngapartji ngapartji* (literally translated as 'give give', the phrase means 'to cooperatively give resources to each other; to take one's turn'). *Ngapartji ngapartji* comprises a two-way system of sharing by demand, rather than unsolicited giving. Anangu also apply this ethic to their interactions with local agencies and staff, where it takes on different permutations and outcomes.

However, the ethic of demand sharing and the family obligations central to Anangu social and economic systems are under substantial stress. Demand sharing operates under constraints in subsistence hunter-gatherer economies, where there is a scarcity of resources. But at Mutitjulu today, the volume of cash and other resources now outweighs kin obligations, so that the classical system of demand sharing is now much less constrained.

In the contemporary Anangu economy, the capacity of money to abstract individuals from their embedded relationships appears to have considerable force. While reciprocal obligations to kin still provide the context in which economic decisions are made and social relations are reproduced, the considerable benefits to Anangu families of their culturally-based forms of social and cultural capital are being undermined and eroded by the high and erratic flows of cash through the community; unrestrained and sometimes physically intimidating demands for cash and resources; the maximisation of individual access to, control and immediate consumption of cash and resources; the sheer velocity of daily transactions and exchanges surrounding access to cash and resources; the mentality of 'spoon-feeding' perpetuated within some local service delivery agencies and institutions; and a perception amongst many able-bodied adults that welfare income is 'private money' received without the need for any reciprocal obligation to anyone.

The balance negotiated between demand and sharing in the classical Anangu system of *ngapartji ngapartji* is shifting towards unbalanced, unrestrained demanding. This places substantial stress on Anangu relationships and on Anangu interactions with local agencies.

Participation at the community level involves individuals not as social isolates, but as family members connected by webs of kin relations and personally negotiated ties. The nature of these ties will have to be addressed as core aspects of any participation strategy in the community. It was emphasised by residents on several occasions that participation is viewed as legitimately covering a wide range of family, community, cultural, education and training, land management, and economic activities. A number of these have been identified by Anangu and their agency staff in the course of the research. Particular groups were identified as potentially benefiting from undertaking different forms of participation. They include young and able-bodied adults, school-age people, young parents, the disabled, and carers. A mix of voluntary and mandatory conditions were thought to be relevant to these different groups. Some were targeted as needing additional support, especially the aged, disabled and carers. Anangu stressed that a community framework should be tailored to the particular and changing circumstances of each individual, their family, and these target groups.

Defining participation for the purposes of an Agreement

Community participation will be a dynamic process that demands flexibility. Policy makers and service deliverers will need to be wary of assuming that motivation and the capacity to participate—even in locally valued activities—is

uniformly distributed amongst community residents. They should also be wary of ascribing to 'the community' a homogenous level of cooperation and unified objectives. As in any Australian community, be it Indigenous or non-Indigenous, Mutitjulu residents have differing expectations that change over time. Many retain close cultural and familial allegiances to other places. Neither should it be assumed that all senior leaders necessarily share the same objectives, or always act in ways that benefit the entire community population. Individual motivation and capacity to participate will always remain a primary variable—as it would in any community agreement. For that very reason, a successful participation agreement will rely upon local knowledge to inform policies and target support (Rahnema 1999: 119; Rifkin 1986).

The problems that will be encountered in trying to rise above internal factionalism and vested institutional interests, in order to develop community frameworks for concerted action, are well-documented for Indigenous communities (see Martin & Finlayson 1996; Peters Little 2000). Peters Little has highlighted the need to move away from romantic views of 'community', and has stressed the important role that local Indigenous organisations could play in promoting the process of 'community self-definition' and development of accountable structures of representation. Mutitjulu has been subject to such a romanticising process, both by the bureaucracy and by local agencies. A concerted effort to overcome the debilitating creation of isolated silos of power (among both Anangu and non-Anangu), and a commitment to developing a more unified 'whole-of-community' approach will be required from community leaders and agencies. Parties to any eventual agreement about community-managed participation need to be aware that addressing dependence on welfare will not necessarily mean that other problems such as family breakdown and substance abuse will be simultaneously resolved. It has taken many decades for welfare dependence and its associated problems to become entrenched in Indigenous communities; the issue will not be resolved overnight.

Anangu hold strongly to the view that participation should be defined to include government and key institutional stakeholders in the region. These are seen by Anangu as being another class of participants. In this wide sense of participation, for the purposes of the proposed Agreement, people at Mutitjulu have expressed a desire to participate not only in a program of activities, but in:

- the *choice* of activities;
- accessing the *benefits* flowing from the program;
- the *planning* and *management* of the program;
- *decision-making* about program objectives and guidelines; and
- *monitoring* the process and outcomes.

The strategic framework for the Mutitjulu Agreement

The agreement model developed out of the community-based research, and formally endorsed by the Community Council, seeks to establish an enabling

policy and funding framework for a 'whole-of-community' approach to participation. The model endorsed by the Council effectively provides for a new 'participation safety net'. It adopts an approach advocated by current government policy: that of developing feasible participation at the community level, and facilitating direct involvement by community-based representatives and providers 'in the whole gamut' of 'policy advice, programme design, programme implementation and service delivery' (COA 2000b: 10–11).

The model has been constructed as an integrated package aimed at addressing the impacts of welfare in its real-life community context. The strategy for implementation emphasises the need for a planned transition to community control and management, within the existing legislative framework, and in a real partnership between the Mutitjulu Community Council, the Federal Government and other key stakeholders. For realistic outcomes to be achieved, development and implementation of the Agreement will need a long-term commitment from government over a 5 to 10-year period; ongoing consultation and capacity-building with Mutitjulu residents; and planned implementation in stages.

The community participation objectives developed for the Agreement include the provision of:

- active participation, by all able-bodied recipients of welfare income, via a menu of community activities;
- individualised and family-focused strategies to enhance welfare service delivery and participation;
- a streamlined system of weekly participation income payments to eligible individuals;
- community-based enforcement, dispute resolution and appeal processes to ensure individual entitlements and rights are protected;
- a community plan for vocational and life skills training;
- intensive assistance and support to individuals;
- a skilled and job-ready labour pool;
- where possible, realistic stepping stones into the local economy; and
- financial advice and access to community banking services to individuals and families.

The potential benefits to all parties include an enhanced capacity for:

- transparent financial management by the community;
- community economic development planning;
- the reconciliation of sources of individual income, thereby assisting individuals to avoid welfare breaching and debt;
- providing timely financial information and feedback to welfare recipients and to Centrelink;
- streamlining administrative guidelines to suit local circumstances;

- locally-informed assessments of individual participation needs and capacities;
- developing participation activities that are purposeful, feasible and which lead to sustained outcomes;
- developing locally-relevant community indicators;
- effective evaluation of individual progress;
- intensive case-management to encourage transitions, where possible, into local employment; and
- enhanced service delivery and outcomes for individuals and their families.

It is recommended that the Agreement should be formalised in writing, setting out the respective commitments, responsibilities, and areas of authority of all parties. As such, it would need to be negotiated between the Community Council, as the legal representative of the Mutitjulu community, and the key government departments undertaking a role in its ongoing implementation. These parties would minimally comprise ATSIC, Centrelink and DFACS. In this way, the Agreement would represent a real partnership with government rather than a 'top down process … of unequal status' (CGC 2001: 74). It is further recommended that parties such as Parks Australia and Ayers Rock Resort should negotiate specific commitments to address identified participation needs. These could be facilitated through supplementary protocols.

'All in': an optimal, inclusive community model

On the basis of the community consultation process and the Council's decision of 26 June 2001, the optimal model proposed for developing a new community 'participation safety net' is an 'All in', inclusive approach (see Fig. 1). This would effectively constitute a coverage of all social security recipients resident in the community, though under the model they would be subject to different requirements and strategies.

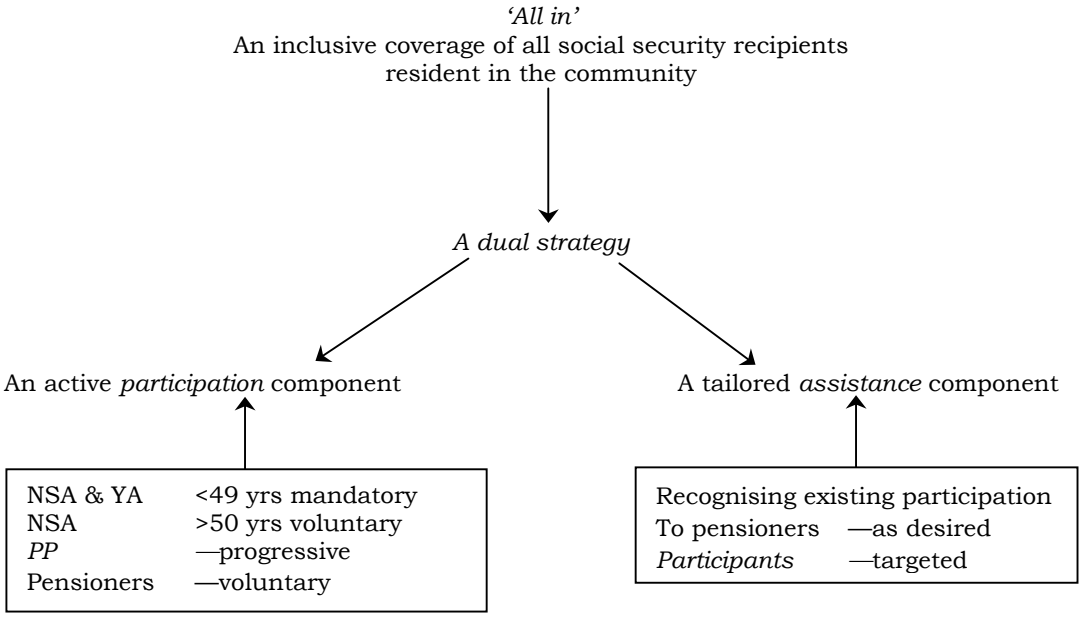
An 'All in' approach recognises both the collective and individual bases for Anangu participation and income support under the social security system. An important feature of the model is that it would be based on implementing a dual community strategy of:

- active participation, and
- tailored assistance.

Under this dual strategy, the Community Participation Program would seek to differentiate between:

- those social security recipients who would have a mandatory requirement to undertake an agreed form of activity and who thereby receive Program support to do so; and
- other social security recipients in need of identified forms of tailored assistance, but not required to undertake mandatory participation.

Fig. 1. 'All In': The optimal model for the Mutitjulu Community Participation Agreement



An 'All in' approach recognises both the collective and individual bases for Anangu participation and income support under the social security system. An important feature of the model is that it would be based on implementing a dual community strategy of:

- active participation, and
- tailored assistance.

Under this dual strategy, the Community Participation Program would seek to differentiate between:

- those social security recipients who would have a mandatory requirement to undertake an agreed form of activity and who thereby receive Program support to do so; and
- other social security recipients in need of identified forms of tailored assistance, but not required to undertake mandatory participation.

Participants in the first category would have their ongoing receipt of their social security income entitlement—to be paid as a 'participation income'—linked to their fulfilment of agreed participation activities. In other words, the overall strategy for an 'All in' model would effect mutual obligation as a form of both participation and support.

The 'active participation' strategy

Under the proposed 'All in' model, all able-bodied adults under 49 years and in receipt of unemployment payments (including Newstart Allowance (NSA) and Youth Allowance (YA)) for more than six months would be required to do some form of agreed participation activity. Those able-bodied persons aged 50 years or more who receive unemployment payments would be afforded the opportunity of undertaking some form of activity, but this would not be mandatory. Parenting Payment recipients would be subject to a progressive set of requirements linked to the age of their youngest child, ranging from annual community interviews and assessment, through to active engagement in participation activities, including training or education. These parameters are generally in line with current government reforms.

Under the 'All in' model, it is envisaged that other social security recipients who are Disabled Pensioners could also be encompassed in voluntary participation activity. Community aggregate data indicate there are increasing numbers of young persons in receipt of Disabled Pensions, and it is estimated that 10 per cent of those are young petrol sniffers. The increasing number of youth suffering severe disabilities associated with petrol sniffing will require targeted and intensive support under the Participation Program. Anangu at Mutitjulu express the strong view that disabled people, especially petrol sniffers, would benefit from inclusion in a program of participation activities, while also receiving assistance tailored to their particular circumstances.

A current requirement of the *Social Security Act* is that all NSA and YA customers of Centrelink are informed of their requirement to enter a Preparing for Work Agreement (ss. 605(1) and 544(1)). Under the community 'All in' model, those persons resident at Mutitjulu would be required to be referred by Centrelink to the Community Participation Program (under ss. 605(3), NSA and 544(4), YA of the *Social Security Act*) in order that they negotiate and sign an Individual Participation Agreement in the community. Targeted Parenting Payment recipients would also sign an individual Agreement.

The 'tailored assistance' strategy

Some categories of welfare recipients at Mutitjulu are regarded as already making a valued contribution to their personal, family and community wellbeing. For example, there are 'grannies' in receipt of Aged Pensions who regularly look after young grandchildren, people who help care for the disabled at Respite House, mothers on Parenting Payment who attend the Child Care Centre to look after young children, and older people on pensions who teach young adults Anangu law, Dreaming, art, and other aspects of Anangu culture.

Under the proposed 'All in' model, those persons in receipt of social security incomes on the basis of age, disability, frailty, ill-health or caring duties, and those who are already undertaking voluntary responsibilities would not be required to undertake participation. The Mutitjulu Agreement should ensure that

the aged, disabled and carers continue to receive their individual social security entitlements according to their assessed Centrelink eligibility. In their case, the community's program would seek to provide them with tailored assistance to support their existing responsibilities. This strategy would facilitate the recognition of culturally-important roles that many people continue to play in family and community life.

Supporting an 'All in' community model

The research consultation process indicated that Anangu and the Council strongly advocate the need for an inclusive 'whole of community' approach, based on 'Anangu rules', that addresses real-life circumstances. The 'All in' model is informed by the central role played by Anangu kin-based relationships at Mutitjulu, and the fundamental importance of socially embedded individual rights and responsibilities that are entailed in family and community networks.

There is also some precedent for such a 'whole-of-community' approach in the form of the 'special measures exemption' or 'reasonable differentiation' cited under the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (RDA) (see also Jonas 2001). Such exemptions have been obtained by Indigenous communities when they collectively seek to restrict alcohol and be declared a 'dry' community (which is currently the case at Mutitjulu). As the Racial Discrimination Commissioner noted in a 1995 review of the RDA and its implications for individual and collective Indigenous rights in Australia: 'Any debate, policy or legislative development about restrictions and prohibitions on the sale of alcohol in Aboriginal communities must accept and recognise indigenous notions of collective rights' (COA 1995: 39, and see 137–49). Arguably the same recognition could be applied to a community's desire to exercise the right, through its representative Council, to declare itself a 'welfare free' or 'welfare participation' community.

Community management of an 'All in' model would need to be supported by:

- Centrelink's lifting of the remote area exemption from the community;[3]
- a relatively open-ended participant level to accommodate high levels of mobility;
- its official recognition as an approved program of activity for the purposes of all government programs;
- staff training in relevant service and administrative procedures;
- an ongoing community education and consultation process; and
- the building of community governance structures and capacities.

Key component goals of the Mutitjulu Agreement

The development and implementation of a Community Participation and Partnership Agreement at Mutitjulu—or in any remote Indigenous community—will be a complex matter. The model developed out of the Mutitjulu research project is an integrated package of goals and underlying principles. Some are

structural, others deal with policy and financial matters. Each is critical to creating a workable community-managed Agreement that achieves realistic outcomes.

The key component goals proposed for the Mutitjulu Agreement include:

- a community gateway for participation and management;
- a delegation under the *Social Security Act 1999*;
- a consolidated block funding and acquittal package;
- a Community Participation Program;
- Individual Participation Agreements;
- a menu of participation activities;
- individualised intensive assistance and support;
- coordinated training and supervision;
- enforcement and appeals procedures, in partnership with Centrelink;
- community financial advice and banking services;
- a Community Transaction Centre and networked information technology;
- reforming community governance and targeted capacity-building;
- forging local participation partnerships;
- national coordination and partnership; and
- an ongoing evaluation process.

Goal 1. A community gateway for participation and management

In line with the direction of government policy outlined in the first part of this paper, the Agreement model is based on the Community Council acting as the gateway into the community for the purposes of brokering and managing the local components of the Agreement. An Agreement which focuses on an entire community, and which promotes an inclusive community approach to participation, training and employment must be coordinated through the legal representative of that community; namely, its Council.

In this role, the Community Council would need authority to:

- develop and manage a Community Participation Program;
- negotiate, approve, monitor and enforce conditions specified in Individual Participation Agreements;
- administer and deliver participation income and support;
- act as the legally representative community authority for the community stages of breaching, dispute resolution and appeals procedures for the Participation Program;
- formulate and administer appropriate participation policies and procedures at the community level;
- implement an 'All in' collective model of community participation;

- receive block social security entitlement funding, and consolidated program funding for the purposes of doing so; and
- report on, and acquit, consolidated government block funding on the basis of a single acquittal process and a single set of performance indicators negotiated with government.

The potential benefits of the Community Council acting as broker and community gateway include:

- the development and adoption of more appropriate activity testing at the community level;
- establishing more realistic and workable criteria for non-compliance;
- more accurate monitoring of individual income levels;
- assisting participants to avoid incurring debts and minimisation of administrative breaches; and
- the development of set of locally relevant policies, participation activities, review tools and communication mechanisms based on accurate local knowledge of the community, family and individual circumstances.

Goal 2. A delegation under the *Social Security (Administration) Act 1999*

A fundamental condition for putting the Mutitjulu Agreement on a solid footing will be the need for a formal delegation of specified powers to be given to the Community Council under the *Social Security (Administration) Act 1999* ('the Act'). Under subsection 234(1) of the Act, the Departmental Secretary may delegate to an 'officer' all or any of the powers of the Secretary under social security law. An 'officer' is very widely defined in s. 23(1) to include a person performing duties, or exercising powers of functions under or in relation to the Act. Under a Community Participation Agreement, that officer would be a newly-created position of 'Community Participation Manager' employed by, and responsible to, the Community Council, and having its authority to implement a Participation Program and related policies.

Under the Agreement, a delegation should include authority to:

- require a person resident in the community to enter into an Individual Participation Agreement for the purpose of undertaking activities and receiving their social security income;
- negotiate Individual Participation Agreements;
- approve the terms of such an Agreement;
- assess circumstances in respect to a participant's reasonable excuse for failing to comply with those terms;
- recommend and impose community criteria and stages of breaching where those terms are not met; and
- undertake a community phase of appeal procedures.

There is a very wide power to delegate under the Act, but the power to breach has not so far been extended outside Centrelink. The issue of whether such a delegation will be provided down to a community level seems more a political than legal one. In particular, there appears to be some initial concern on the part of government departments about providing a specific delegation that includes powers to manage community stages of breaches. However, a delegation to the community level, via its legally representative Council, establishes not only the statutory grounds for identified functions, but also identified areas of statutory responsibility and accountability at the Council level. A formal delegation would reinforce the equitable treatment of participants, and enhance administrative effectiveness and transparency.

The Council is aware of the complex cultural and administrative issues that would need to be addressed. It has asked for a measured transition to community management of the delegated authority, during which it would be actively supported by Centrelink and assisted by the full-time secondment of a Centrelink staff member to assist and train Council and staff to establish the necessary administrative procedures. Furthermore, in order to positively address any potential bias, it is recommended that:

- community stages of breaching and appeals be fully documented and directly linked to Centrelink regional office procedures, as well as to Administrative Appeals Tribunal procedures;
- regular participation reports be provided to the Centrelink regional office; and
- that the Council and its delegate be assisted in its role by the establishment of an independent Participation Advisory Group.

Goal 3. A consolidated block funding and acquittal package

Under a community-based Agreement, the Council will need to deliver a range of welfare services, training, and personalised support, as well as participation income. The Agreement will need to be underwritten by a consolidated funding package, drawn together into one incoming financial stream. This recommendation has its own policy trail leading back over a decade.

In 1990, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs (HRSCAA), in its report *Our Future, Our Selves* (1990: 92), noted the considerable problems facing Aboriginal communities as a result of funding coming from a multiplicity of agencies with predetermined priorities which did not necessarily reflect local requirements. It recommended that the Commonwealth implement a system of block funding to communities and organisations. A year later, the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) took up the Committee's advice and made a similar recommendation, advocating that a system be implemented 'whereby Aboriginal communities and organisations are provided with a minimum level of funding on a triennial basis' (1991: 21,

Recommendation 190) and that all sources of funds … be allocated through a single source with one set of audit and financial requirements but with maximum devolution of power to the communities and organisations to determine the priorities for the allocation of such funds' (1991: 21, Recommendation 191). Devolution should be based upon 'appropriate performance indicators' with those organisations and communities (1991: 29, Recommendation 194).

A decade later, government inquiries are making essentially the same recommendation for innovative methods of funding and the 'pooling of resources from as many sources as possible to address needs in a multi-jurisdictional and cross-functional context' (CGC 2000: xv–xvi; see also HRSCFCA 2000).

The proposed Mutitjulu Agreement is based upon implementing just such a pooling of funds, with a single flow of funding, a single financial acquittal process, and a single set of agreed performance indicators. The Agreement will require funding contributions from relevant welfare, training and employment program areas currently administered out of different Commonwealth departments. A consolidated budgetary package needs to be negotiated and drawn together at the national level. The flow of such a funding package is set out in Fig 2. It should comprise two major components:

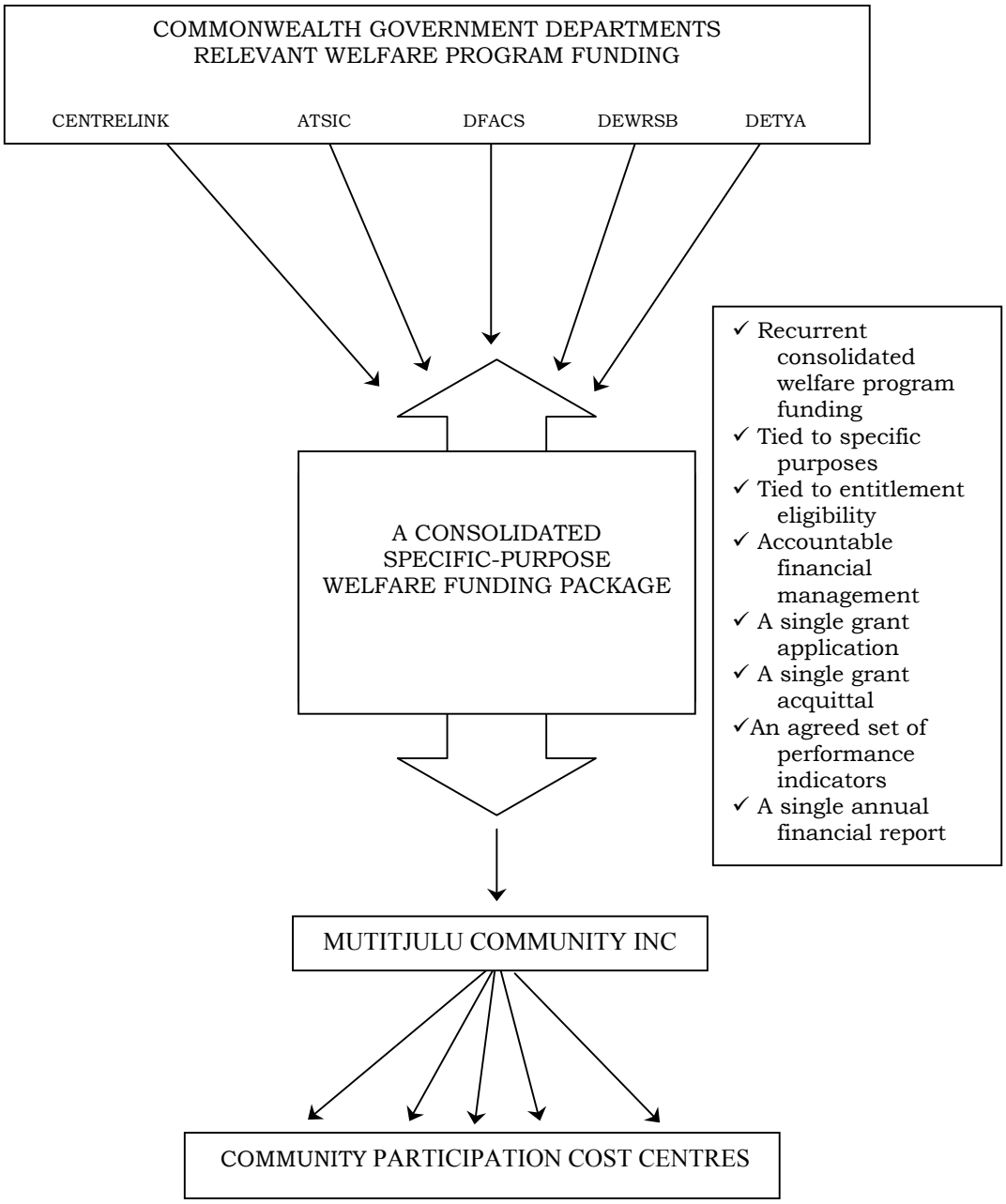
- the recurrent block release of Centrelink entitlement funding comprising the social security incomes of recipients resident at Mutitjulu; and
- a consolidated block of cross-departmental program funding relevant to welfare administration and services, training, capacity-building and related welfare infrastructure (see below), sourced from different government programs.

Once consolidated funding is established, there is a clear opportunity for State and local governments to contribute relevant welfare program funding to the block fund.

Goal 4. A Community Participation Program and Individual Participation Agreements

The McClure Report declared that 'There are a number of ways that indigenous income support recipients in any location could satisfy mutual obligation requirements, and these activities may be in addition to, or alternatives to, conventional means of satisfying the activity test such as job search or training' (2000: 42). At Mutitjulu, there is a need for a Participation Program which can provide a menu of purposeful participation activities that can realistically be developed in the short term. Mutitjulu residents and agencies, in consultation with the researcher, have already identified a wide range of such activities, suitable for different age and sex categories, which could form the core of such a program. Categories of activities could include cultural, family, community development, land management, educational, training, health, and economic.

Fig. 2. The proposed flow of consolidated welfare funding to the Mutitjulu Community Council



It has also been suggested within the community that the Program could develop modes of participation and other community measures aimed at encouraging school retention and re-entry by young teenagers. For example, some Anangu have suggested that for children of approximate school-age currently in receipt of YA, participation should consist of attending high school, and that their ongoing receipt of YA be made conditional upon that attendance. This raises some wider program and policy issues. The nearest high school is the Nyangatjatjara College, a residential school established close by at Yulara. The school is reliant on the receipt of Abstudy payments to cover the boarding and tuition costs of their students. In normal circumstances YA entitlement would cease once a student re-entered school. A number of Anangu students have left high school in order to obtain the Allowance. Some flexible accommodation may need to be made in order to use YA as a participation incentive to return to school.

Interviews with Anangu and a range of local employers and educational providers have highlighted the factors that will influence participation outcomes (see also Aucote 2000; Durnan and Wynter Hill 1997a, 1997b, 1997c; McPherson 2000; Parakeelya 1999). These include an Anangu preference for:

- personalised work environments;
- a positive and close daily working relationship with supervisors;
- a mentoring approach to work, based on a local *malpa* ('adviser' or 'helper') system of providing one-to-one advice and support;
- working in small family or friendship based 'work crews' or groups;
- working in same sex and age groups;
- direct transmission of skills and knowledge by learning on-the-job;
- instruction that can be reinforced in the Indigenous language; together with
- a high degree of individual autonomy and flexibility.

A Community Participation Program that aims to maximise participation needs a strategic capacity to accommodate these preferences, at the same time as encouraging the acquisition of fundamental work skills. Participation activities will need to be sustained by on-the-job vocational training, and by daily supervision and mentoring.

Participation will be implemented using the mechanism of an Individual Participation Agreement. These would be negotiated with each person and entered into with the community Council (via the delegated officer). An Individual Participant Agreement would specify each individual's entitlement to an identified level of social security income to be paid weekly as a 'participation income', upon their fulfilment of activities that have been identified and agreed to in their Agreement.

A major advantage of the community negotiation, development and approval of these IPAs is that they can be tailored to address each participants' circumstances and capacities. They could therefore include personalised conditions for compliance. These would have to be negotiated and identified in

each individual Agreement. To maintain a transparent pathway between community management and Centrelink administration, a copy of each Agreement should be forwarded to the regional Centrelink office, in case any subsequent community breaching or appeals processes required recourse to Centrelink follow-up.

Goal 5. Individualised intensive assistance and support

A Community Participation Program should be able to assess and facilitate each individual's capacity for participation, and the type of tailored assistance they require in order to participate. The McClure Report recommended that, under a reformed welfare model, three broad levels of service intervention and assistance would be required by social security recipients:

- 'self-help and information provision';
- 'low-level brokerage' to link people with available services; and
- 'high-level brokerage' or 'individualised assistance for people who are not job ready or who have multiple barriers to participation' (2000: 13).

McClure anticipated that, nationally, around 75 per cent of recipients would need only to be provided with information about self-help facilities. These recommendations have informed current government welfare policy concerning the level of personalised support and intensive assistance to be provided to recipients.

Mutitjulu—like many Indigenous communities—requires McClure's levels of service to be graded in reverse. Given the known low supply-side skills of Anangu, and on the basis of consultations with staff currently operating the community's work program, it is clear that the great majority of Anangu welfare recipients will require the highest level brokerage of intensive assistance.[4] Intensive individual assistance at Mutitjulu is likely to be at least at the level of Centrelink's Job Seeker Classification Index score of 50+, which activates the highest level of Community Support Program assistance. This will necessarily include the provision of ongoing case-management, personalised support, close supervision, and training for the great majority of participants—if not all. Individual progress and outcomes will have to be closely monitored. This high level brokerage suggests a significant workload on the ground and a high level of per participant service costs. Many other remote communities will undoubtedly require the same level of service support for participants.

Goal 6. Coordinated training and supervision

Given the current disarray amongst local training providers, and the substantial deficits in Anangu work experience and educational skills, a critical component of the Community Participation Program will be the provision of training and supervision. A major vocational, literacy and numeracy initiative, backed by regular supervision of participants, will be required over the long term.

The advantage of the participation model proposed here is that it encourages a 'whole of community' approach to training, rather than focusing on separate training proposals by different community agencies. An umbrella Community Training Plan should be developed to support the Participation Program. This plan could then form the basis for the Community Council to act as the purchaser and overall coordinator of training for participants. A Community Training Plan should:

- set out a process for auditing individual training needs;
- identify the pool of local resources for training, supervision and mentoring;
- establish linkages with key local and regional training providers; and
- link participation activities to on-site and vocational training.

Goal 7. Community enforcement and appeals procedures: partnering with Centrelink

One of the most critical components of the Mutitjulu Agreement will be the implementation of community-based stages of compliance, breaching and appeal for participants. Those Anangu consulted by the researcher suggested that a community system of enforcement and breaching would need to be flexible to reflect individual circumstances such as age, capacity, health status and family circumstances. An advantage of community stages of enforcement and appeal is that rules can be informed by local knowledge and personal familiarity with each participant's situation.

An equitable community process to ensure individual rights and entitlements, could include the following steps:

- negotiation of an agreed compliance process to be part of each Individual Participation Agreement;
- monitoring participation activities through timesheets, periodic interviews and reports;
- management of non-compliance by way of personalised support and dispute resolution;
- the progressive application of a series of tiered sanctions, as set out in publicly available guidelines and in Individual Agreements; for example, ranging from the recorded accumulation of hours not worked in order that they may be acquitted through participation, making alternative activities available, through to warnings, and progressive implementation of a 'no-participation, no income' policy; and
- failing any resolution, application of a breach to be applied to a person's participation income, at the standardised rates used by Centrelink.

The Community Council's delegated officer would assume responsibility for formally implementing these community processes, and administer them according to Council policies and guidelines. Community management of these stages of breaching and appeals processes would be based on a clear desire to do

so in partnership with Centrelink. The Council has noted that community stages will need to be reinforced by, and linked to, Centrelink breach rates and appeals processes. Community procedures, policies and guidelines would have to be documented in written form and made available to all participants and to government. A community-wide education process would be needed to ensure wide dissemination and understanding of these measures. Centrelink could provide regular feedback to the community on the ongoing standard of procedural decision-making in regard to community stages of breaching.

In other words, community stages of breaching should be established as a system integrated with that of Centrelink, but enabling community representatives to respond quickly to local situations in the light of local knowledge. That is the essence of community management.

In regards to appeal procedures, an Individual Participation Agreement should include community-based mechanisms by which participants could make their first point of appeal to the delegated officer of the Council. All appeals processes should be fully documented and participants provided with an explanation of the cause for a breach and the outcome of their appeal. All community decisions should be provided in writing to Centrelink. Every participant should be fully informed of their right of appeal beyond the Council to an independent arbitrator (for example, the proposed Participation Advisory Group), to Centrelink, or to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, and should be assisted by the delegated officer to make their appeal.

The community and Council members are aware that there will be difficulties in developing transparent and equitable community process for breaching and appeals. These constitute important areas of responsibility and will require the development of strong community governance structures, accountable decision-making, and rigorous enforcement mechanisms. Ongoing discussion within the community will also be a necessary part of the process. But the fact that there may be initial social and cultural difficulties is not a good enough reason for refusing a delegation of responsibility. The Council is asking for a measured transition to community management. More than anything else, this particular issue highlights the need for:

- a strategic national approach between government departments to delivering the ongoing support and training in governance capacities that will be needed in every community; and
- an educational curriculum to be developed for young Anangu, carried out at local schools, to deal with governance issues such as decision-making processes, the nature of Council functions, conflict of interest, local government, and so on.

Goal 8. Community financial advice and banking services

An integral part of any strategy to transform welfare dependence will be the provision of financial information, services, and income management options that are currently lacking in the community.

An important component of the community strategy is to pilot a Money Management Project with individuals and families. The project would best be conducted as a demonstration trial over a twelve-month period. It should aim to develop a model of money flows to individuals from all sources of income, and to develop options for individual and family financial management. The Project should also develop financial educational resources for community use; identify individuals and families who would like to trial receiving information on their weekly and fortnightly flows of monies; explore options with them for savings and expenditure (including 'chuck-in' saving accounts for families). The project could be greatly assisted by training a nominated 'family money *malpa*' to assist interested members of their family to interpret their income data, and discuss deduction and savings options with them. This *malpa* role could eventually be developed as a form of participation under Individual Participation Agreements.

To facilitate the streamlined administration of the Community Participation Program, and to provide participants with urgently needed access to financial services, a community banking agency or credit union should be established in the community, with the capacity to:

- immediately provide an automatic teller machine in the community;
- provide for small loans;
- enable frequent transactions;
- encourage the transfer to full electronic banking;
- promote savings and deductions for the regular payment of accounts; and
- provide ongoing training and employment for local Anangu.

Goal 9. A Community Transaction Centre and networked information technology

The range of welfare services and functions involved in a Community Participation Agreement would require the support of a Community Transaction Centre. The Centre could operate as a 'one-stop' service delivery centre, and provide a convenient shopfront from which visiting departmental officers could make the most effective contact with the community and its leadership.[5] Existing Council infrastructure could be expanded and refurbished for this purpose.

Efficient administration of a Community Participation Program will depend on the development of an integrated information technology system encompassing all community agencies involved in the Program. The existence of a Transaction Centre would enable computerised networking to be established between all co-located agencies and cost centres.

The efficient operation of an administrative and financial system for the Program would be greatly facilitated by establishing an electronic linkage to the Centrelink database, covering recipients resident at Mutitjulu. This would necessitate some transfer of Centrelink electronic data to the community. Privacy criteria should be maintained in a manner standard for other Centrelink data systems (see also

Smith 2000: 77–8, 117). A Community Participation Program database should use Centrelink's Client Reference Number as the unifying individual identifier (currently also used by CDEP organisations). This would streamline communication between Centrelink and the community.

Goal 10. Community governance and capacity-building

At the community level, the most fundamental component of the success or otherwise of the proposed Mutitjulu Agreement would be strong governance structures and accountable decision-making processes. At the moment, community governance structures and decision-making are undermined by the multiplicity of other local and regional corporate structures. A number of these agencies compete for service delivery, and are seemingly bent on protecting their particular relationships with key Anangu from the community, rather than attempting to deliver better outcomes for all residents. There is a history of poor coordination between local agencies and a lack of shared commitment to community development goals. The Council is daily forced to negotiate these tensions and unclear lines of decision-making.

Governance capacity does not arise out of thin air—nor should lack of a solid community foundation be used to excuse inaction on the part of government. Good governance will require sustained building of community capacity at a number of different levels. ATSIC has been provided with a budget for this purpose. Other departments such as Centrelink and DFACS also have program areas that are directly relevant to supporting the development of community governance capacities. A specialist governance training program should be developed by ATSIC and carried out at Mutitjulu over a sustained period. Training will be needed in areas such as:

- the formulation and implementation of policy frameworks for community participation;
- the separation of policy making and day-to-day management and decision-making functions;
- community leadership skills;
- administration and organisational management;
- board processes and conflict of interest issues;
- dispute resolution, mediation and appeals processes;
- the conduct of high-level welfare case management and brokerage;
- project development and evaluation; and
- business and economic development planning.

Goal 11. Forging local Participation Partnerships

> Business has a vital role to play in creating opportunities for participation and in ensuring disadvantaged people a fair access to those opportunities. … social partnerships need to underpin the expansion of participation support and opportunities (COA 2001: 10).

The development of practical partnerships with key local agencies and the private sector will be a critical factor in the overall success of the proposed Mutitjulu Agreement; as it will in future with other Agreements. Indeed, the Mutitjulu model provides an excellent opportunity to check whether substance can be given to recommendations by the McClure Report (2000), subsequently transferred into the government policy cited above, to encourage greater business and local agency partnerships with communities. It is for these reasons, as noted earlier, that the name of the Mutitjulu Agreement was expanded to include the notion of both 'participation' and 'partnership'. In a very real way, the Council and Anangu residents see local agencies and government departments as being 'participants' in the proposed Agreement, by virtue of being potential partners.

A community approach to participation will need to be supported by the negotiation of a specific Participation Partnership with Parks Australia. There is a debilitating lack of forward planning activity between Parks Australia and the community. This deficit is exacerbated by the ambiguous status of relative rights of Anangu residents and traditional owners in the community. Mutitjulu is not the exclusive residential province of traditional owners; though those owners have important statutory and Park lease powers. Nevertheless, all Mutitjulu residents have the right to be equitably represented by the Community Council and by Park management. Also, the community effectively has one Anangu workforce. A Participation Partnership with Parks Australia would assist in clarifying these matters. Importantly, it would also ensure the better coordination of employment, training and supervision requirements for a community-wide Participation Program that will inevitably draw in Park operations.

A specific Participation Partnership should also be negotiated with Ayers Rock Resort. There are significant unrealised opportunities for Anangu in relation to the operation of the Resort. Barriers to achieving these need to be clearly identified and addressed where possible. A Participation Partnership would enable better coordination of work experience, employment and training at the Resort with the community's Participation Program. It should also provide for specified Resort services and contracting to be undertaken by the Community Council as a preferred supplier. Both these local Participation Partnerships could be formalised through a signed protocol.

The research indicated that community agencies will be critical providers of a range of participation activities and other forms of support for the proposed Program. Areas where considerable support for participation could be provided include the community store, clinic, garage, school, the recreation hall, Respite House, Child Care Centre, Cultural Centre, community arts and craft organisations (Maruku Arts and Walkatjara), and NPY Women's Council. The Community Council and its executive staff will need to forge active 'community partnerships' with all key agencies. These could perhaps be underwritten by a service delivery protocol, and by the inclusion of key clauses in employment contracts, to commit agencies and staff to the identified delivery of participation activities, training and supervision.

Housing for Anangu residents and community staff is a key issue that needs to be urgently addressed in order for a Community Participation Program to be established. The Council is keen to keep the possible influx of additional non-Anangu staff into the community down to a minimum and to maximise the training and employment of Anangu in the Program. It has strongly supported the option of establishing a partnership with an external aid agency (such as Oxfam) to deliver expert advice and to assist the Council, as needed, with the recruitment of experienced professional staff.

Goal 12. National coordination and partnerships

The Indigenous Families and Communities Roundtable, a committee established by the Federal Government, has stated that 'Relevant Government programmes should be delivered on a strategic, coordinated and whole of government basis' (Commonwealth Minister for Family and Community Services, Media release, 24 October 2000). The recently released final report of the CGC (2001: 74) declared that local and regional agreements about service delivery and program funding 'provide a dynamic link between joint decision making at higher levels and local community control over service delivery'. The issue of national coordination is a critical factor for the Mutitjulu Agreement.

The Agreement will require a range of welfare service and program funding support that is currently distributed across different departments and agencies. Immediate cross-departmental coordination and planning of the type referred to by the Roundtable and the CGC are needed at the national level—in particular from ATSIC, DFACS and Centrelink. A 'whole of government' approach is needed to ensure:

- the pooling of resources from relevant welfare program sources in a multi-jurisdictional and cross-functional context;
- coordinated planning for effective community management of service delivery; and
- orderly formulation of an enabling national policy framework for implementation of the Agreement.

Goal 13. An ongoing evaluation of process and outcomes

Implementation of Community Participation Agreements could have substantial impacts on the ground for communities. It will be important to ensure that the process of implementation is monitored and evaluated from its very beginning, not simply at the end the financial year when outcomes need to be reported. Evaluation should be carried out at every phase of implementation.

Ongoing evaluation will facilitate informed community planning, and assist Council and staff to rectify operational problems, and address any disincentives and access issues. It will also provide an invaluable benchmark for accurate reporting on outcomes both to the community at large, and to government and other stakeholders.

This will require at the very outset:

- the development of a baseline community profile covering relevant local indicators that are also linked to agreed national reporting indicators; and
- ongoing maintenance and analysis of that community database, in a form that can be immediately used by Council and staff.

The set-up phase of a community evaluation process and related database will require external assistance, but once it is up and running it should be possible for the Agreement to be fully administered by the community, with appropriate training.

Implications and challenges for national policy and programs

Translating current welfare reform policy into workable practice for Indigenous Australians will be a challenging and complex task. As the first proposed model of its kind, the Mutitjulu Community Participation and Partnership Agreement represents a litmus test for the Federal Government's new welfare reform agenda. It is also a litmus test for the community in terms of its capacity and commitment over the longer term. Currently fashionable policy jargon will need a solid dose of substance if such Agreements are to deliver just, durable and effective outcomes on the ground. The community-based research carried out at Mutitjulu has already raised a number of policy and service issues—some new and some familiar—that must be addressed at the national, regional and community levels.

Policy imperatives

Firstly, the policy framework for Community Participation Agreements is to be found in the *Australians Working Together* manifesto (COA 2001) which presents the Federal Government's new national welfare reform initiatives and objectives. Apart from that policy framework, there is currently no program or policy flesh on the bones of this initiative. The policy and potential funding components of an Agreement are scattered across key departments, and it is unclear what imperative there is to create a unified policy or funding platform from which to launch what arguably comprises an important new initiative.

There is clearly the potential for policy and program linkages to be established between the Agreement mechanism and Centrelink's 'hub and spokes' decentralisation of service delivery to Indigenous remote communities, and its newly introduced personalised support services. Arguably these Agreements could enhance Centrelink's service and partnership role with Indigenous customers; rather than being viewed as taking away 'business'. Integration is also needed with DFACS' 'Stronger Families, Stronger Communities' and 'Local Solutions' Programs, with DEWRSB's Indigenous Job Network providers, and with ATSIC's CDEP scheme. There is also a potential role for State and Territory governments in these Agreements and this requires further policy facilitation.

National departmental coordination

ATSIC has asserted a lead agency role to assist communities 'to develop and manage the Agreements and support activities such as leadership, strengthening culture and community governance' (DFACS 2001: 1). ATSIC's establishing legislation gives it the mandate 'to ensure coordination in the formulation and implementation of policies affecting Aboriginal persons and Torres Strait Islanders by Commonwealth, State, Territory and local government' (see Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) 2001: 49). As this paper demonstrates, there is a vital coordination role which could be undertaken by ATSIC at the national level. But this lead agency role will require capacity and a sustained commitment from within ATSIC's own organisational structure, down to Regional Office levels. It will also require considerable capacity and goodwill from Centrelink, DFACS and DEWRSB. The Mutitjulu research has highlighted the continuing negative impact on communities of entrenched departmental boundaries and politics—both internally and across departments. Unfortunately, both history and the research suggest that departmental capacity at the national level to develop a comprehensive and collaborative approach to welfare planning and service delivery is hard to generate, and even harder to maintain.

Departmental coordination has been an oft-stated government policy objective that has worn thin from overuse and under-implementation. One has to question whether it is a real possibility, or whether it merely serves as a convenient placebo for lack of capacity to deliver on the part of government and its departments. These Agreements will constitute a challenge to the capacity of ATSIC, DFACS, Centrelink and DEWRSB, in particular, to formulate the coherent enabling policy and consolidated program platform that are needed.

A program funding platform

The community views and options documented in this paper highlight the fact that while ATSIC has been provided with an initial budget for some 100 remote Community Participation Agreements, there is no longer-term funding base for their ongoing implementation. The Agreements arguably constitute a new hybrid welfare program—part 'special' and part 'mainstream'. The initiative is not entirely ATSIC owned; other government departments are expected to play a significant role.

As the proposed Mutitjulu model demonstrates, the program funding needed for development and implementation of an Agreement is scattered across Commonwealth department programs and, potentially, State or Territory government welfare-oriented programs as well. The Mutitjulu Council has asked that these welfare program funds be brought together in a single line of delivery, with a single set of audit and performance reporting requirements. This suggestion makes sense not only for the purposes of effective community administration, but also for creating a viable program platform for future Agreements. Again, the test will lie in the ability of government and its

departments to deliver block welfare funding in a regulated and transparent manner, after years of inquiry recommendations to do so.

Bureaucratic concern about the potential of increased program costs associated with the implementation of Community Participation Agreements, and the related provision of intensive assistance to participants, should be balanced against the opportunity cost of continuing with the current high levels of welfare reliance and poor economic development outcomes in many Indigenous communities. Taylor and Hunter (1998: 29 and see also Taylor & Hunter 2001) argue that to 'continue business as usual is clearly insufficient in the face of [Indigenous] population growth'. They estimate that the direct cost to government of the growing numbers of Indigenous people who are unemployed or not in the labour force will increase from approximately $800 million in 1996 to $1.1 billion by 2006. There will likely also be serious social, health and economic costs to Indigenous people themselves. Given this future scenario, the potential costs associated with enabling Indigenous welfare recipients to engage in purposeful participation, education and training, and community economic development under the Agreement framework arguably represent a longer-term cost saving in welfare, health, and other program areas.

A more widely relevant model?

The research has produced one suggested model—albeit one with considerable detail and integrated components. The question is whether the model has relevance for other remote communities. Community Participation Agreements should, and will, vary according to the different economic and other circumstances of each community. However, it is strongly argued here that while every Indigenous community displays degrees of economic and cultural difference, and will therefore require local content to any Agreement, each community will have to address the same broad issues in respect to reforming welfare. The core issues that are relevant to all communities include the need for:

- national funding and policy coordination;
- the delegation of identified welfare administrative and service delivery functions down to the community;
- community-managed participation, policies and guidelines;
- a menu of participation activities;
- the negotiation of individual participation agreements;
- community enforcement and appeals procedures;
- intensive assistance, training and support to participants;
- additional infrastructure and staffing;
- access to financial advice and services;
- local and national partnerships; and
- an ongoing community evaluation process.

Every Agreement is also likely to raise the central issue of community governance structures, and the need for ongoing capacity-building at that level.

A program only for remote communities?

Community Participation Agreements are specifically designed for remote Indigenous communities. However, one only has to look at the historical development of the CDEP scheme to envisage likely future scenarios. The CDEP scheme also commenced in remote communities, but quickly spread to rural and urban contexts as the benefits of local community control and outcomes became apparent. Community Participation Agreements have considerable potential, not only with respect to individual outcomes, but in respect to community management and development. They may begin to appear increasingly attractive to rural and urban communities as a way of securing a more coordinated approach to dealing with welfare services and funding. A relevant matter then, is what will happen when an urban community asks to enter into such an Agreement. There is currently no policy response to that question.

Program and policy linkages to the CDEP scheme

The extent of the policy vacuum currently surrounding Community Participation Agreements suggests that there has been little consideration given to what might be the links between these Agreements and the CDEP scheme.

In some ways, the Agreement mechanism could be seen to represent an evolution from CDEP. Unlike the CDEP, the first community-based model presented here is premised on a 'whole-of-community' approach to welfare payments and services. This should facilitate local administrative effectiveness and planning, and decrease costly service duplication. It is based on a community having access to block funding sourced from all relevant welfare-oriented programs, with a single set of audit and reporting requirements, rather than having to fight for erratic sources of dispersed, short-term funding; as is the case for CDEP organisations. It is also based on generating, where possible, active links to local work experience and employment outcomes. The community agreement approach also suggests a return to more flexible community definitions of work, participation, and compliance which have become increasingly restricted under CDEP guidelines.

A related issue is what would happen if a remote community with a CDEP scheme asked to enter into a Community Participation Agreement. If viewed constructively by policy makers, these Agreements could afford a significant positive opportunity for CDEP organisations to reinvigorate aspects of their operation in remote communities and to become more widely representative of welfare recipients in their communities. That is, an Agreement could serve to enhance the CDEP scheme, not undermine it.

Education and training linkages

The Mutitjulu research identified the delivery of education and training as a core issue for community participation. The success of a Community Participation Agreement will be underwritten by the coordination of the efforts of local providers of training and education, who will need to follow an 'integrated learning' approach which emphasises on-the-job vocational training. Community-wide participation will have to be matched by the development of a single, community-wide training and education plan. There is a national facilitation role which could be played here by the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, as well as a State or Territory education department role.

Another issue raised is the potential for using participation to encourage return and retention at school among teenagers. This immediately highlights policy issues in respect to Abstudy and Youth Allowance payments, and the need for more innovative ways of delivering these payments as incentives to support education return and retention.

Jurisdictional devolution: a road to community governance and capacity-building

The design and implementation of Community Participation Agreements raises an issue noted by several recent government inquiries; namely, the possibility of creating effective and durable community management in the area of welfare. This paper suggests that Agreements should be based on a form of jurisdictional devolution of welfare policy and service delivery to the community level. Frameworks for this process have been developed overseas, but none so far in Australia.

In the USA, 30 native American tribal-run welfare programs (encompassing 155 tribes) have been established since 1996, the year in which Federal welfare reform legislation, known as the *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act*, was passed (Smith 2001). Passed with bipartisan support, the legislation established a national welfare reform program designed to move welfare recipients into work, and replaced existing national welfare programs with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program (TANF). The legislation enabled not only State Governments, but also federally-recognised Indian tribes and consortia of tribes, to apply for block Federal funding to directly operate their own TANF welfare programs.

Tribal participants must perform some work for the receipt of their welfare-equivalent incomes and such work can be locally defined and culturally relevant. Tribes may elect to provide assistance other than cash to their clients; all recipients of social security within a designated region may participate; and the governing tribal body must carry out a comprehensive assessment of regional economic conditions and the demand for skills. Substantial policy formulation responsibilities have been handed over to tribes, in conjunction with service delivery, as a devolved jurisdiction. Leading up to that devolution, tribes are

required to undertake substantial training and work in governance and institution- and capacity-building, and must submit a comprehensive plan. Their subsequent administration of TANF is subject to government regulation.

In Australia, regulated jurisdictional devolution of welfare services to Indigenous communities has considerable potential to operate as an enabling framework for local and regional welfare reform. Community Participation Agreements have a potential role to play in devolving jurisdictional areas of welfare service delivery and policy to community management, in a collaborative partnership between communities and government.

The need for governance and capacity-building in Indigenous communities is much dicussed, but has perhaps lagged behind other policy developments over the last decade. The research suggests that community management and devolved planning functions under Community Participation Agreements will have to be solidly based on stable and transparent community governance structures and decision-making processes. These are critical factors that will need to be systematically addressed in any community wishing to undertake an Agreement. And they will need to be addressed over a sustained period of time. These developments cannot take place without a coordinated national strategy to address the practical issues of community governance. Such a strategy is yet to emerge.

The early challenges and implications for Indigenous communities

The community view of welfare

Mutitjulu represents a microcosm of many issues currently affecting Indigenous communities. Welfare income is tightly integrated into the community economy and all aspects of community life. The 'welfare economy' is undoubtedly viewed by many Anangu—especially by older people with a life experience outside the welfare system—as having created and compounded social and economic dysfunctions in the community. It is regarded as playing a key role in undermining the work ethic and kin responsibilities of young adults. The research has highlighted the fact that untied flows of cash through the community, in the form of royalties, rental and welfare monies, are having a negative impact on family life, social relations, and Anangu interaction with local agencies.

But that is not the only Anangu view of welfare. It is also valued as an entitlement and a regular source of money—a source that is enmeshed in the community cash economy, and that helps to support family and cultural obligations (see also Finlayson & Auld 1999; Henry & Daly 2001; Musharbash 2001; Smith 2000). From this perspective, welfare payments contribute to what Arthur has referred to as 'a degree or form of autonomy', enabling individuals 'to live where they want and in places where there is little or no paid work' (2001: 1) and, via programs

such as the CDEP scheme, enabling the transfer of 'some power or autonomy to communities and organisations' (2001: 7).

The policy reality is that receipt of welfare is both a form of entrenched dependence related to poverty entrapment from which it is difficult to escape, *and* a citizenship entitlement that provides a valued base-level income for many. The experience of Anangu families at Mutitjulu is that these economic imperatives operate simultaneously. But they do so in the context of high flows of other untied monies which become a source of daily conflict and which trigger immediate consumption. In other words, welfare payments are a double-edged sword, over which many Anangu wish to exercise more effective control.

Community management and decision-making

In Mutitjulu as in other Australian communities, the social security system is not only about money. It is also about services and having to negotiate official guidelines, regulations and communications. Anangu are keen to develop 'Anangu rules' for local service delivery. Community Participation Agreements provide the opportunity for doing so, under the umbrella of community management. The Mutitjulu model could represent an important mechanism for activating genuine decision-making at the local level. These Agreements will constitute important demonstration projects for local communities and their councils in terms of delivering fair and accountable administration of local policies and services.

Community development issues

The Agreement mechanisms create a renewed focus on community development. For example, the research at Mutitjulu highlighted the varying extent to which community and regional agencies are actually delivering their services. Some are clearly coasting on the fact that they are poorly monitored; others provide excellent service. The research also revealed the debilitating impact on community initiatives and governance processes of vested non-Aboriginal and other Aboriginal stakeholders who give only lip service to consultation and cultural relevance, seek to establish their own silos of independent power, and create factionalism within the community.

The age-old problem faced by communities in securing the services of professional staff was highlighted. In the context of discussing local options for an Agreement, Mutitjulu Council was keen to review the adequacy of its staffing structure and employment contract conditions, as well as its own powers and functions, to ensure these would contribute to the effective administration and outcomes for Anangu. It also saw a potential role for external expertise, such as could be provided by Oxfam, to assist in the transition to community management and in setting up the subsequent monitoring processes.

An important early challenge is the generation of a shared vision amongst community residents of how an Agreement should operate. This issue will be relevant in every community. The Mutitjulu research suggests it will be a time consuming process that must be based on ongoing discussions within the

community. Inevitably, Community Participation Agreements will be as much about community governance, development and management, as about individual and collective welfare rights and needs.

Participation or mutual obligation?

The McClure Reference Group on welfare reform supported a very wide definition of mutual obligation, especially in respect to Indigenous Australians (McClure 2000: 42). Their final report also recommended that any implementation of mutual obligation should be based on consultation at the local level, be culturally relevant in its application, and be based on better recognition of individual circumstances. It also recognised that many Indigenous Australians have been undertaking a form of mutual obligation since 1977 with the implementation of the CDEP scheme.

Under the Federal Government's new framework for welfare reform, *Australians Working Together* (COA 2001), mutual obligation for remote communities is to be given its substance and definition under Community Participation Agreements. These Agreements are supposed to enable communities to identify 'practical ways people can contribute to their families and communities in return for their income support'. The Mutitjulu proposal has taken this statement at its face value and has sought to define the nature of participation in locally-relevant and feasible terms. Anangu see participation not only as a practical contribution, via a range of locally-defined activities, in exchange for income support (that is, as an obligation), but also as a form of local decision-making, policy formulation and service delivery: that is, participation is seen to be about community management of welfare. It is likely that every remote community considering the possible development of an Agreement, will take a similarly wide view of what constitutes participation.

Realistic timeframes

The welfare system has become entrenched in Indigenous communities over a period of 30 years. Change will not occur overnight. A sustained commitment by government to a community development and management approach will be necessary. This means, realistically, allowing for an implementation process of between five and ten years' duration. In terms of fundamental changes to levels of welfare dependence, it means an intergenerational timeframe.

Conclusion

The Mutitjulu research findings confirm the need for a 'fundamentally new approach' to Indigenous welfare policy and service delivery. In 1988, Altman wrote that the Mutitjulu community 'has grown in an ad hoc manner and in a policy vacuum' (1988: 105). Over 15 years later, this remains true—and it is also true, arguably, at many other Indigenous communities. The same policy vacuum will undermine the potential of Community Participation Agreements if it is not addressed.

There are factors at the community level which could impede the establishment of an Agreement at Mutitjulu. Its development and implementation will be a complex and difficult matter. The Mutitjulu Council and community residents are only too aware of these problems. However, there are important community and local corporate strengths that, if realistically built upon, could assist the process of implementing an Agreement at Mutitjulu—and conceivably elsewhere.

There may also be resistance from government institutions with vested program and service-delivery interests, who may argue against entering a credible partnership that requires devolving genuine decision-making responsibilities down to a community level. The proposed Agreement is as much a demonstration project for government, as it is for the community. For government, the Agreements represent a litmus test for its stated intention to develop a coordinated approach to delivering the necessary support and funding.

The ordinary dictionary meaning of the word agreement is 'the act of coming to a mutual arrangement; the state of being in accord'. Agreements are not one-sided. The Mutitjulu Council has stated that it wants genuine decision-making responsibilities. But importantly, it is not naive about the difficulties that are apparent within the community. Its members have stated strongly that they want a measured transition, carried out in collaboration and partnership with government. The Council has formally decided that it wants to commence the process of coming to a 'mutual arrangement' with the relevant departments, and has worked hard to consider some options and put them on the table. While a Community Participation and Partnership Agreement will not be the panacea for all the community's ills, it has served as a rallying point which community members and local agency staff have grasped as a real starting point to effect changes. At the community level a momentum has been generated.

In its early response to welfare reform, DFACS noted in 1999 that the 'complex and unique needs' of Indigenous Australians demand a 'collaborative approach' to the development of policy responses. The key to achieving outcomes for Indigenous Australians was recognised by the department as resting on the capacity to develop 'seamless connections across government programs and services that respond to priorities as identified by communities' (COA 1999: 72). That statement has been echoed by several government inquiries since 1999. The ball is now squarely in the government's court: it and its relevant departments are now challenged to rise above the policy vacuum and turf wars, in order to develop some of those 'seamless connections', and enter with good faith into a negotiation process with the Mutitjulu community and its Council to come to a satisfactory 'mutual arrangement'.

Appendix 1. Individuals and agencies consulted

a) Mutitjulu-based

Ininiti Store
Gumlake Pty Ltd (Mutitjulu and Uluru–Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre)
Maruku Arts and Crafts
Mutitjulu Child Care Centre
Mutitjulu Employment Office
Mutitjulu Garage
Mutitjulu Health Clinic
Mutitjulu Respite House
NPY Women's Council
Mutitjulu Primary School
The Mutitjulu Centrelink Agent
Uluru–Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre
Walkatjara Arts Uluru Pty Ltd

b) Other

Anangu Tours
ATSIC (Alice Springs and Canberra)
Auroha Tourism Pty Ltd
Ayers Rock Resort (Yulara)
Centralian College, Yulara Campus and Remote Area Programs
Centrelink (Alice Springs)
DFACS (Canberra)
National Parks, Environment Australia (Canberra)
NPY Women's Council (Mutitjulu and Alice Springs)
Northern Territory Education Department (visiting staff)
Nyangatjatjara College (Yulara)
Nyangatjatjara Corporation
Nyangatjatjara Indigenous Job Network Provider (Yulara)
Office for Joint Management, Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park
Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park management and staff
Yulara Primary School

Notes

1. See for example, the overview of policy reshaping of the CDEP scheme in Sanders 2001: 47–50.
2. See for example, critical comments in ATSIC submissions (2000a, 2000b) to the McClure Reference Group on Welfare reform and in response to their final report.
3. The 'remote community exemption' is operated by Centrelink and currently removes the requirement to impose any activity testing on Anangu social security recipients resident at Mutitjulu and elsewhere (see also Sanders 1999). Its removal would enable

the Council to implement a mandatory participation component for identified welfare recipients.

4. This assessment is supported by the long-term experience of NPY Women's Council in Alice Springs, which provides programs for family wellbeing, domestic violence, aged and disabled care, child care and nutrition. One staff member estimates that, of her total of 550 clients over a 5 to 6 year period, only some five clients could be regarded as being 'off the books'. The remainder continue to require intensive assistance (pers. comm. NPY Women's Council; see also Aucote 2000; McPherson 2000; NPY 1991, 1997; Woenne-Green 1995).
5. See Smith (2000) for a similar recommendation made for two remote and rural Aboriginal communities to manage welfare service delivery more effectively.

References

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) 2000a. 'Response to *Participation Support for a More Equitable Society*', ATSIC submission to the McClure Welfare Reform Reference Group, ATSIC, Canberra.

—— 2000b. 'Social welfare reform', ATSIC submission, presented to the McClure Welfare Reform Reference Group, January 2000, ATSIC, Canberra.

Altman, J.C. 1988. *Aborigines, Tourism, and Development: The Northern Territory Experience*, NARU Monograph, ANU, Canberra.

—— and Sanders, W. 1995. 'From exclusion to dependence: Aborigines and the welfare state in Australia', in J. Dixon and R. Scheurell (eds), *Social Welfare for Indigenous Populations*, Routledge, London.

Arthur, W. 2001 'Welfare dependency, welfare autonomy?' Paper presented at Social Policy Research Centre Conference, 2000, University of New South Wales, Sydney.

Aucote, K. 2000. 'Mutitjulu Regional Economic and Social Participation Program', Community background paper, Community Council CEO, Mutitjulu, NT.

Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) 2001. *Municipal Services for Indigenous Communities*, ATSIC, Audit Report No. 36, ANAO, Canberra.

Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service 1991. *Sharing the Park: Anangu Initiatives in Ayers Rock Tourism*, Institute for Aboriginal Development, Alice Springs.

Australian Nature Conservation Agency and Mutitjulu Community Inc. 2001. *Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park: Tour Operator Workbook*, Australian Nature Conservation Agency, Darwin.

Barry, J. 1996. 'User pays' at Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park: Current and future directions', Paper presented to the Best Practice Ecotourism National Conference, Coolangatta, Qld.

Commonwealth of Australia (COA) 1995. *Alcohol Report. Race Discrimination, Human Rights and the Distribution of Alcohol*, Race Discrimination Commissioner, AGPS, Canberra.

—— 1999. *DFACS Annual Report 1998–99: Towards a Fair and Cohesive Society*, DFACS, Canberra.

Commonwealth of Australia (COA) 2000a. *Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park: Plan of Management*, Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park Board of Management, Parks Australia, Canberra.

—— 2000b. *Welfare Reform: A Stronger, Fairer Australia*, A statement by the Hon. J. Howard, Prime Minister and Senator the Hon. J. Newman, DFACS, Canberra.

—— 2001. *Australians Working Together: Helping People to Move Forward*, A statement by Senator the Hon. A. Vanstone and T. Abbott MP, DFACS, Canberra.

Commonwealth Grants Commission (CGC) 2000. 'Indigenous Funding Inquiry', *CGC Discussion Paper*, CGC, Canberra.

—— 2001. *Report on Indigenous Funding: Final Report*, 3 vols, CGC, Canberra.

Department of Family and Community Services (DFACS) 2001. *Fact Sheet No. 23* (http://www.facs.gov.au).

Ditton, P. et al. 1990. Mutitjulu: A Unique Community, 2 vols, Report for the Minister for Arts, Sport, Environment, Tourism and Territories, Canberra.

Durnan, B. and Wynter Hill Consultants 1997a. The Black Plan: A Community Development Plan for the Mutitjulu Community Council, Uluru, Report to the Community Council, Mutitjulu, NT.

—— and ——1997b. The Gold Plan: A Business and Enterprise Plan for the Mutitjulu Community Council, Uluru, Report to the Community Council, Mutitjulu, NT.

—— and —— 1997c. The Red Plan: A Training and Employment Plan for the Mutitjulu Community Council, Uluru, Report to the Community Council, Mutitjulu, NT.

Finlayson, J.D. and Auld, A.J. 1999. 'Shoe or stew? Balancing wants and needs in Indigenous households: A study of appropriate income support payments and policies for families', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 182*, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.

Harney, B. 1963. *To Ayers Rock*, Rigby, Adelaide.

Henry, R. and Daly, A. 2001. 'Indigenous families and the welfare system: The Kuranda community case study', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 216*, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.

Holden, A. 1999. Talking Straight and Levelling Things Up: Report on the Cultural and Social Impact of the Operation of the Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park on the Aboriginal Traditional Owners, Report for the Office of Joint Management Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park.

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs (HRSCAA) 1990. *Our Future, Our Selves*, HRSCAA, Canberra.

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs (HRSCFCA) 2000. *Health is Life: Report on the Inquiry into Indigenous Health*, HRSCFCA, Canberra.

Jonas, W. 2001. 'CDEP, racial discrimination and social justice', in F. Morphy and W. Sanders (eds), *The Indigenous Welfare Economy and the CDEP Scheme*, CAEPR Research Monograph No. 20, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.

Lackner, S. 2001. 'The unheard injustice: Young people and Centrelink breaches', Paper presented to 'Competing Visions', National Social Policy Conference, July 2001, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney.

McClure, P. 2000. *Participation Support for a More Equitable Society: Final Report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform*, DFACS, Canberra.

McPherson, B. 2000. 'The Mutitjulu Major Employment Strategy proposal', Community paper by Mutitujulu Employment Officer, Mutitjulu, NT.

Martin, D. and Finlayson, J.D. 1996. 'Linking accountability and self-determination in Aboriginal organisations', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 116*, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.

Musharbash, Y. 2001. 'Indigenous families and the welfare system: The Yuendumu community case study', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 217*, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.

Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council 1991. Looking After Children Grandmother's Way, Report to NPY Council, Alice Springs.

—— 1997. Working Happily Together: Supported Employment Services for People with Disabilities, Unpublished report to NPY Council, Alice Springs.

Parakeelya Pty Ltd 1999. Mutitjulu Community Management and Business Development: A Discussion Paper for Comment, Report to the Mutitjulu Community Council, Adelaide.

Pearson, N. 2000a. 'Misguided policies a toxic cocktail', *The Australian*, 24 October 2000.

—— 2000b. *Our Right to Take Responsibility*, Noel Pearson and Associates, Cairns.

—— 2001. 'Rebuilding Indigenous communities', in P. Botsman and M. Latham (eds), *The Enabling State: People before Bureaucracy*, Pluto Press, Sydney.

Peters Little, F. 2000. 'The community game: Aboriginal self-determination at the local level', *AIATSIS Research Discussion Paper No. 10*, AIATSIS, Canberra.

Peterson, N. 1993. 'Demand sharing: Reciprocity and the pressure for generosity among foragers', *American Anthropologist*, 95 (4): 860–74.

Rahnema, M. 1999. 'Participation', in Sachs, W. (ed.), *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power*, Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg.

Rifkin, S. 1986. 'Lessons from community participation in health programmes', *Health Policy and Planning*, 1 (3): 240–9.

Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) 1991. *National Report*, Vol. 4, AGPS, Canberra.

Sanders, W. 1999. *Unemployment Payments, the Activity Test and Indigenous Australians: Understanding Breach Rates*, CAEPR Research Monograph No. 15, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.

—— 2001. 'Adjusting balances: Reshaping the CDEP scheme after 20 good years', in F. Morphy and W. Sanders (eds), *The Indigenous Welfare Economy and the CDEP Scheme*, CAEPR Research Monograph No. 20, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.

Savage, M. 1997. The Blue Book: Town Planning and Housing Handbook, Report to the Community Council, Mutitjulu, NT.

Sinclair Knight Merz 2000. Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park Water and Wastewater Facilities: Infrastructure Review', Unpublished report for Parks Australia North, Darwin.

Smith, D.E. (ed.) 2000. *Indigenous Families and the Welfare System: Two Community Case Studies*, CAEPR Research Monograph No. 17, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.

—— 2001. 'Welfare dependence, mutual obligation, and the CDEP scheme: Lessons from community research and an overseas initiative', in F. Morphy and W. Sanders (eds), *The Indigenous Welfare Economy and the CDEP Scheme*, CAEPR Research Monograph No. 20, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.

Spicer, I. 1997. *Independent Review of the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) Scheme*, Office of Public Affairs, ATSIC, Canberra.

Taylor, J. 2001. 'Anangu population dynamics and future growth in Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 211*, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.

—— and Hunter, B. 1998. *The Job Still Ahead: Economic Costs of Continuing Indigienous Employment Disparity*, Office of Public Affairs, ATSIC, Canberra.

—— and —— 2001. 'Demographic challenges to the future of CDEP', in F. Morphy and W. Sanders (eds), *The Indigenous Welfare Economy and the CDEP Scheme*, CAEPR Research Monograph No. 20, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.

Woenne-Green, S. 1995. *They Might Have to Drag Me Like a Bullock: The Rights, Needs and Care Options of the Senior Men and Women of the NPY Communities*, NPY Women's Council, Alice Springs.

Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research Publications

For information on earlier CAEPR Discussion Papers and Research Monographs please contact:

Publication Sale, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, 0200, Telephone: 02–6125 8211, Facsimile: 02–6125 2789. Information on CAEPR, and abstracts or summaries of all CAEPR print publications and those published electronically, can be found at the following WWW address: **http://online.anu.edu.au/caepr/**

MONOGRAPH SERIES

5. *The Relative Economic Status of Indigenous Australians, 1986–91*, J. Taylor, 1993.
6. *Regional Change in the Economic Status of Indigenous Australians, 1986–91*, J. Taylor, 1993.
7. *Mabo and Native Title: Origins and Institutional Implications*, W. Sanders (ed.), 1994.
8. *The Housing Need of Indigenous Australians, 1991*, R. Jones, 1994.
9. *Indigenous Australians in the Economy: Abstracts of Research, 1993–94*, L.M. Roach and H.J. Bek, 1995.
10. *Native Title: Emerging Issues for Research, Policy and Practice*, J. Finlayson and D.E. Smith (eds), 1995.
11. *The 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey: Findings and Future Prospects*, J.C. Altman and J. Taylor (eds), 1996.
12. *Fighting Over Country: Anthropological Perspectives*, D.E. Smith and J.D. Finlayson (eds), 1997.
13. *Connections in Native Title: Genealogies, Kinship and Groups*, J.D. Finlayson, B. Rigsby and H.J. Bek (eds), 1999.
14. *Land Rights at Risk? Evaluations of the Reeves Report*, J.C. Altman, F. Morphy and T. Rowse (eds), 1999.
15. *Unemployment Payments, the Activity Test and Indigenous Australians: Understanding Breach Rates*, W. Sanders, 1999.
16. *Why Only One in Three? The Complex Reasons for Low Indigenous School Retention*, R.G. Schwab, 1999.
17. *Indigenous Families and the Welfare System: Two Community Case Studies*, D.E. Smith (ed.), 1999.
18. *Ngukurr at the Millennium: A Baseline Profile for Social Impact Planning in South East Arnhem Land*, J. Taylor, J. Bern and K.A. Senior, 2000.
19. *Aboriginal Nutrition and the Nyirranggulung Health Strategy in Jawoyn Country*, J. Taylor and N. Westbury, 2000.
20. *The Indigenous Welfare Economy and the CDEP Scheme*, F. Morphy and W. Sanders (eds), 2001.

RECENT DISCUSSION PAPER SERIES

197/2000 *Estimating Indigenous housing need for public funding allocation: A multi-measure approach*, M. Neutze, W. Sanders and R. Jones.

198/2000 *Participation and representation in ATSIC elections: A ten-year perspective*, W. Sanders, J. Taylor and K. Ross.

199/2000 *Location and socioeconomic status: Torres Strait Islanders, 1996*, W.S. Arthur.

200/2000 *Industrial relations in workplaces employing Indigenous Australians*, B.H. Hunter and A.E. Hawke.

201/2000 *A comparative analysis of the industrial relations experiences of Indigenous and other Australian workers*, B.H. Hunter and A.E. Hawke.

202/2000 *The reform agenda for vocational education and training: Implications for Indigenous Australians*, S. Campbell.

203/2000 *Surveying mobile populations: Lessons from recent longitudinal surveys of Indigenous Australians*, B.H. Hunter and D.E. Smith.

204/2000 *Social exclusion, social capital, and Indigenous Australians: Measuring the social costs of unemployment*, B.H. Hunter.

205/2000 *Job-searching and careers: Young Torres Strait Islanders, 1999*, W.S. Arthur and J. David-Petero.

206/2000 *Career aspirations and orientation to work: Young Torres Strait Islanders, 1999*, W.S. Arthur and J. David-Petero.

207/2000 *Education, training and careers: Young Torres Strait Islanders, 1999*, W.S. Arthur and J. David-Petero.

208/2000 *A case study of the Bungala CDEP: Economic and social impacts*, M.C. Gray and E. Thacker.

209/2000 *The CDEP in town and country Arnhem Land: Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation*, J.C. Altman and V. Johnson.

210/2000 *'If it wasn't for CDEP': A case study of Worn Gundidj CDEP, Victoria*, R. Madden.

211/2001 *Anangu population dynamics and future growth in Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park*, J. Taylor.

212/2001 *Indigenous Australians and the rules of the social security system: Universalism, appropriateness and justice*, W. Sanders.

213/2001 *Is welfare dependency 'welfare poison'? An assessment of Noel Pearson's proposals for Aboriginal welfare reform*, D.F. Martin.

214/2001 *Indigenous data from the ABS Labour Force Survey: What can they tell us?* J. Taylor and B.H. Hunter.

215/2001 *Autonomy rights in Torres Strait: From whom, for whom, for or over what?* W.G. Sanders and W.S. Arthur.

216/2001 *Indigenous families and the welfare system: The Kuranda community case study, Stage Two*, R. Henry and A. Daly.

217/2001 *Indigenous families and the welfare system: The Yuendumu community case study, Stage Two*, Y. Musharbash.

218/2001 *Giving credit where it's due: The delivery of banking and financial services to Indigenous Australians in rural and remote areas*, S. McDonnell and N. Westbury.

219/2001 *Implications of developments in telecommunications for Indigenous people in remote and rural Australia*, A. Daly

220/2001 *Indigenous autonomy in Australia: Some concepts, issues and examples*, W.S. Arthur.

221/2001 *Indigenous land in Australia: A quantitative assessment of Indigenous landholdings in 2000*, D.P. Pollack.

222/2001 *Valuing native title: Aboriginal, statutory and policy discourses about compensation*, D.E. Smith.

223/2001 *Community Participation Agreements: A model for welfare reform from community-based research*, D.E. Smith.

224/2001 *A regional CDEP for four remote communities? Papunya, Ikuntji, Watiyawanu and Walungurru*, W. Sanders.

WORKING PAPER SERIES

Available at no cost on WWW at http://online.anu.edu.au/caepr/

1/1999 *Three nations, not one: Indigenous and other Australian poverty*, B.H. Hunter.

2/1999 *Further investigations into Indigenous labour supply: What discourages discouraged workers?* B.H. Hunter and M.C. Gray.

3/1999 *Dealing with alcohol in Alice Springs: An assessment of policy options and recommendations for action*, M. Brady and D.F. Martin.

4/1999 *Aboriginal people in the Kakadu region: Social indicators for impact assessment*, J. Taylor.

5/1999 *Reforming the Northern Territory Land Rights Act's financial framework into a more logical and more workable model*, J.C. Altman and D.P. Pollack.

6/2000 *Governance and service delivery for remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory: Challenges and opportunities*, N. Westbury and W. Sanders.

7/2000 *What's in it for Koories? Barwon Darling Alliance Credit Union and the delivery of financial and banking services in north-west New South Wales*, N. Westbury.

8/2000 *The relative social and economic status of Indigenous people in Bourke, Brewarrina and Walgett,* K. Ross and J. Taylor.

9/2001 *Indigenous communities and business: Three perspectives, 1998–2000*, J.C. Altman