'Doctor Do-Good'?

Charles Duguid and Aboriginal Politics, 1930s-1970s

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DOCTOR DO-GOOD?

'I feel that your name should be spelt "Doo good" for it is so much loved by the Aboriginal people of Australia', wrote Joan Strack to Dr Charles Duguid in 1940. An activist on behalf of Aborigines in New South Wales, Strack longed to see more people like Duguid, an Adelaide based campaigner, involved in the struggle for justice for Aborigines: 'Honest and understanding people who have only the welfare of the Aborigines at heart—and no personal axe to grind, no religious [quirk] or mania, as so many unfortunately do appear to have'.

Charles Duguid (1884-1986) 'lived up perfectly to his name'; much of his century-long life revolved around 'doing-good' for others, especially Australia's Aborigines. From the 1930s onwards, Duguid was a constant and untiring advocate on their behalf, initiating countless campaigns 'to bring them into equal enjoyment of Australian life'. Was he, therefore, a 'do-gooder'? The *Macquarie Dictionary* defines 'do-gooder' as 'a well-intentioned, but often clumsy social reformer'. It is a colloquialism laden with negative connotations as the following 'do-gooder' definitions reveal:

> a person who actively tries to help other people, esp. one regarded as unrealistic or officious; a naive idealist who supports philanthropic or humanitarian causes or reforms; a well-meaning, active, but unrealistic philanthropist or reformer; one who tries to do good.

The 'do-gooder' label has always been pejorative. It is generally used to dismiss, and sometimes to ridicule, the social reformer whose efforts are not appreciated by the objects of their attention, and/or by the wider society. In an article entitled 'Beyond the do-gooder' (1982), Pat O'Shane, then head of the New South Wales Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, Wrote:

1. Joan Kingsley Strack to Charles Duguid, 8 May 1940, Duguid Papers, National Library of Australia MS 5068 (hereafter Duguid Papers: 1), Series 1 (original spelling). Following Heather Goodall and others, I use the words Aborigines or Aboriginal people as nouns and Aboriginal as an adjective. For reasons of consistency, and in recognition of their status as the indigenous people of Australia, I capitalise these words throughout this thesis. See Heather Goodall, *Invasion to Embassy. Land in Aboriginal Politics in New South Wales, 1770-1972*, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, p. xii.
2. Strack to Duguid, 8 May 1940.
3. Ashley Montague to Duguid, 13 March 1973, Charles Duguid Papers, Private Collection, Adelaide, since deposited at the National Library of Australia (hereafter Duguid Papers: 3).
7. From the 1920s onwards, the term 'do-gooder' was linked in the United States to 'parlour socialists' and 'uplifters'. See Oxford English Dictionary online.
declared that 'misguided white support'—or 'do-gooders'—had set the Aboriginal cause 'back generations'. In this context, 'do-gooder' literally means 'do-badder'; it describes the person who 'sees Aborigines as materially and culturally deprived, hence imperfect, human beings who need to be pulled up and out of their misery and shown the right path.' The person who sets out to 'do-good' in the hope of gaining in personal prestige—wealth, fame, status—is also described as a 'do-gooder'; another label would be 'hypocrite' or 'pretend humanitarian'.

In the early 1960s, Diane Barwick, a doctoral student from the Department of Anthropology at the Australian National University, found that Aborigines in Victoria were deeply suspicious of any white person who claimed to want to help them:

The [Aboriginal] adults in Melbourne have met do-gooders of every shade of political and religious belief, and in a few unjust but telling phrases they can describe among themselves the various types of sympathisers: 'she is the social workers type. You know—"very interested in all coloured people"'; 'the church people think it is their duty to be kind to Aborigines'; 'she's got no children, so she goes out to help people'; 'all the white people who want to meet kuris are mad!' Some feel justified in exploiting the sympathy of white acquaintances because 'so many come round us; they are religious or queer or University people. Nobody ever comes round just to be friends, to talk to us as if we were people instead of Aborigines'.

Whether Charles Duguid was a 'do-gooder' depends on who you ask. In 1988, Jean Blackburn, a former member of the South Australian Aborigines Advancement League (SA AAL), told Peter Read that the Aboriginal community in Adelaide 'was really oppressed and very patronised by do-gooding whites' like Duguid who was president of the SA AAL from 1951-1961. However, James Pierson, a doctoral student from the Department of Anthropology at Washington University, found in the late 1960s that '[o]lder Aborigines in the Adelaide area who knew Duguid admire[d] him for "standing up

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8 Stafford Sanders, 'Beyond the do-gooder', Australian Society, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1982, p. 3.
9 Victims of Victors? The Story of the Victorian Aborigines Advancement League, Hyland House, South Yarra, 1985, pp. xiv-xv. In this work, it is further stated that: 'When guilt and good intentions become obtrusive paternalism or a desperate, almost cringing bonhomie, then the more cynical Aborigines are apt to label their bearers 'do-gooders' or 'groupies', and to reject their advances in ways which often create anger, frustration and resentment'.
12 Peter Read, Interview with Jean Blackburn, Peter Read Collection, National Library of Australia, Oral History Collection, 21 July 1988, TRC 2303/17.
for them when no one else would". One of Pierson's younger Aboriginal informants, John Moriarty, has recently stated that he 'had a ton of respect for ... Dr Duguid and a few others' who saw 'the value of Aboriginal culture and were giving it support in Adelaide'.

In making the distinction between Duguid's 'honest' intentions and the less honourable motivations of others, Joan Strack implied that one could do good (or try to do good) without being a 'do-gooder'. And yet, as Henry Reynolds has observed, such "friends of the blacks" were seen to gratuitously assume an air of moral superiority, to consider themselves as more virtuous than the rest' and were called 'do-gooders, bleeding hearts, nigger lovers and may other more abusive epithets' by their white contemporaries.

It seems that almost anyone concerned with the 'plight of the Aborigines' could be called a 'do-gooder'. At its most indiscriminate and ungenerous, it is label that probably accounts for the reluctance of some white people to become involved in Aboriginal causes today. Moriarty, for one, sees it as ironic that 'more white people were involved [in the past] than are now. Whites are not generally accepted, or invited to participate in Aboriginal affairs, and I think that's a real shame, because I think such complex issues need talented and qualified people, regardless of race'. Charles Duguid would have agreed. The disparaging 'do-gooder' label also probably underlines what has, until very recently, amounted to a paucity of historical scholarship on the important roles that white people have played in Aboriginal politics.

In their documentary history of Aboriginal peoples' political activism, *The Struggle for Aboriginal Rights* (1999), Bain Attwood and Andrew Markus make the simple, but nonetheless astute, observation that 'white activists and organisations ... both helped and hindered the cause of Aboriginal campaigners'. They explain that although white support was crucial since many Aborigines lacked the necessary financial resources and/or freedom to engage in political activity, the presence of white people 'often led to government claims that Aboriginal protests were inauthentic or unrepresentative, the work of outside, non-Aboriginal agitators'. Even more problematic, Attwood and Markus contend, is the fact that many white activists failed to listen to or respect the wishes of the Aboriginal people they claimed to represent, and instead imposed their own political ideals on them. Whether for good or ill, the role of white people in Aboriginal rights campaigns cannot, however, be ignored.

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19 The value of this support has been acknowledged in the memoirs of prominent indigenous activists such as Joe McGinness and Oodgeroo Noonuccul (Kath Walker). In his autobiography, McGinness registered his 'gratitude' for the 'foresight' and 'untiring' efforts of non-Aboriginal
**Remembered forever**

In 1933, the Aboriginal leader and activist, William Cooper, posed the following challenge to historians:

> Of course, all whites are not destroyers of natives. And not all whites give no consideration to them ... They who devote their lives to the preservation and uplift of the Aborigines will be remembered forever, and given [an] honoured place in the history books of the future.  

The last five to ten years have witnessed a burgeoning of scholarship about the role of white people in Aboriginal politics: feminists, missionaries, anthropologists, humanitarians, administrators and others. Together with studies which focus on Aboriginal political leaders and movements, and works such as Bain Attwood's *Rights for Aborigines* (2003) which 'seeks to emphasise the roles played by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal activists', this growing body of scholarship shows as false the idea that political activity by and for Aboriginal people is a relatively recent phenomenon, comprising events such as the 1967 referendum, the Aboriginal tent embassy and land rights campaigns. Another important feature of this work, according to Reynolds, is that it shows 'that an alternative agenda was aired, a more humane course projected, was listened to, understood and then...
comprehensively rejected, often with derision'. With particular reference to white humanitarians, Reynolds' work demonstrates that

there always were people who objected to the course of events, who stood out against conventional and accepted views and who proclaimed the cause of justice and equality, reparation and regret and who often paid a high price for their principled dissent.

Echoing William Cooper, Reynolds maintains that it is important for indigenous Australians to appreciate that all Europeans were not hostile to their rights. He acknowledges that humanitarians were 'often paternalistic/maternalistic' and that some of them 'undoubtedly were racists in the way we understand that term now', but he argues that 'if inquiry and understanding stops there we miss the passion for justice, the anger about cruelty and indifference which drove humanitarians along lonely, thankless paths'.

This study, which focuses on Dr Charles Duguid's campaigns on behalf of Aborigines from the 1930s to 1970s, picks up where Reynolds' *This Whispering in Our Hearts* (1998) leaves off. Reynolds' book examines humanitarian activity during the nineteenth and early twentieth century in Australia. It ends during the inter-war period and includes an analysis of the Caledon Bay affair in 1933-34 which, in addition to threatened punitive expeditions, saw the trial, acquittal and subsequent disappearance (presumed murder by police) of Dhakiyara Wirrpanda or Tuckiar, an Aboriginal man accused of killing a police trooper in Arnhem Land. The tragedy of Tuckiar, and the earlier Coniston massacre in 1928, altered the course of Charles Duguid's life: he 'stuck his nose into the Aboriginal question' and there it remained.

In distinguishing her thesis ('Saving the Aborigines'. The White Woman's Crusade. A Study of Gender, Race & the Australian Frontier, 1920s-1960s') from Reynolds' work, Alison Holland points out that Reynolds is primarily concerned with male humanitarians (even though he earmarks Mary Bennett's inter-war crusade and similarly acknowledges her feminist counterparts). Likewise, Andrew Markus' discussion of inter-war humanitarians in *Governing Savages* (1990) pays insufficient attention to the feminist contribution, according to Holland, and completely overlooks the work of Mary Bennett. Holland also suggests that stronger 'connections between [the women activists'] analysis of the 'problem' and the wider humanitarian one' could have been drawn in Russell McGregor's *Imagined Destines* (1997), particularly since he discusses the work

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23 Reynolds, *This Whispering*, p. 249.
of Mary Bennett and two of her contemporaries.\textsuperscript{28} Holland sees her work as expanding on, and departing from, the work of Fiona Paisley and Marilyn Lake.\textsuperscript{29} I provide a detailed analysis of Holland's position and Paisley and Lakes' work in chapter three. For now it is suffice to note that these historians' resurrection of a white middle-class feminist activism during the inter-war years, and in the case of Holland, up to the 1960s, have made a significant contribution to the historiography of white activism in general, and the role of white women in particular. Victoria Haskins' work on Joan Strack, Peter Sekuless and Peter Read's work on Jessie Street, and my own on Anna Vroland have also contributed to this growing discourse.\textsuperscript{30}

In \textit{An Attitude of Respect: Anna Vroland and Aboriginal Rights, 1947-1957} (1999), I commended feminist historians such as Paisley and Lake for redressing an imbalance in the historiography that, like Holland, I saw as favouring male humanitarians. I still commend them, but if there remains an imbalance, I am no longer convinced that it favours white men. Hence, this study is unashamedly about a 'great white man'—possibly (and proudly) the greatest 'do-gooder' of them all.

I first came across Charles Duguid during my research on Anna Vroland, a white campaigner in Victoria who urged that the 'greatest possible publicity be given to views of Dr Donald Thomson and Dr Charles Duguid' because both men had 'proved their ability to understand the needs of the Australian Aborigines'.\textsuperscript{31} During my research on Vroland, I

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\item \textsuperscript{28} Ibid., pp. 7-8. See Andrew Markus, \textit{Governing Savages}, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1990, pp. 158-72.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Anna Vroland to radio compare, Radio Rodeo (ABC Adelaide), 25 June 1948, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Papers, State Library of Victoria, La Trobe Collection, MS 9377, Box 1726, Folder 3.
\end{itemize}
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became interested in the networks that existed between white campaigners such as Vroland and Thomson in Victoria, Duguid in Adelaide, Mary Bennett in Western Australia and A.P. Elkin in Sydney, and I commenced my doctoral research with the intention of examining these networks. I started with Duguid and soon discovered that he was a central—if not the central—and leading figure during the middle-third of the twentieth century. In making this claim, I am conscious that others might, and probably will, disagree. They might point out that Elkin, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Sydney and author of The Australian Aborigines: How To Understand Them among other widely read works, had far greater influence with government, missionary societies, lobby groups and the public in general. However, whereas Elkin benefited financially from his work with Aborigines—it was, after all, his job—Duguid did not. Whether warranted or not, this raised doubt in the minds of some about Elkin’s objectivity. When Duguid and Elkin came head to head over the federal government’s proposed rocket range in 1947—Duguid opposed the project and Elkin supported it—Elkin was accused of subordinating Aboriginal welfare to the demands of government.

In the hotly contested arena of Aboriginal politics, perceptions mattered. Duguid was perceived as 'one champion of the black man's cause who [was] entitled to talk'. This was because Duguid did 'not [confine] his crusade to mere criticism', but instead actively sought to find and implement solutions. It was because he was 'not an armchair reformer', but instead made frequent trips to remote parts of Australia to see the conditions under which Aborigines lived (see Plate 2). Duguid was perceived as a man of high moral integrity: he was an elder in the Presbyterian church, the first lay Moderator of the South Australian Assembly, a medical doctor and family man. In an era when the slightest hint of communist sympathy, let alone support, could ruin reputations, Duguid's remained


See chapter two.

'A place in the sun', The Sun News Pictorial, 8 September 1936, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 3, Clipping Book 1, p. 68.

Ibid.

unblemished. Politically, he described himself as 'a strong supporter' of the Australian Labor Party, but he was prepared to support any government that promised 'justice for the Aborigines'.

Six-foot tall with a shock of red-hair and strong Scottish brogue, Duguid was intelligent, articulate and, most of all, he was passionate. In 1951, *People* magazine described Duguid's approach to the Aboriginal question as

an honest, straightforward, down-to-earth one that plunged straight to the heart of the problem and trod on innumerable political and some theological, toes. He didn't ask for justice, he demanded it. He didn't stand hat in hand, he pounded tables and shook threatening fingers. And, he was heard ...

When the final chapter is written, Duguid will probably stand out as the most colourful, the most insistent, and perhaps the most successful of them all. He gets results because he stubbornly refuses to give way.

According to a reporter for the Adelaide *Advertiser*, people liked Duguid 'because he [was] a fighter' and 'they admire[d] him because he [was] dedicated': 'State government officials say he is pepperish and puckish; Federal government officials say he is fiery and fervent but they all like him'. Duguid's fellow campaigners also admired him, appointing him the first president of the Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement (FCAA) in 1958.

During his lifetime, Duguid was described as 'the most active champion of the Aborigines in Australia today' and 'Australia's best known campaigner for Aboriginal causes', yet surprisingly little is known of his activism. Apart from this study, the only detailed histories of Duguid's involvement in Aboriginal causes have been penned by Duguid himself. In 1963, Duguid published *No Dying Race*, a work which documented his efforts on behalf of Aborigines since the 1930s. This was followed by his autobiography *Doctor and the Aborigines* in 1972. Where Duguid is mentioned in scholarly works, autobiographies, biographies and other histories, he is usually dealt with in a line or two, and is often described as 'a prominent white campaigner for Aboriginal

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37 As with most Aboriginal rights activists, the Australian Security Intelligence Office (ASIO) kept a file on Duguid. ASIO did not consider Duguid a threat, recording in 1953 that: ‘Dr Duguid’s main interest in life, outside his profession, is the protection, education, and general welfare of the Australian Aborigines. He has spent a great deal of time and money on this work and has undoubtedly done a great deal to improve the living conditions and general standard of members of that race, as well as to bring the whole subject very much before the public. Dr Duguid is a highly educated and apparently very religious man. There is no evidence to show that he was ever a member of the C.P. of A [Communist Party of Australia]’. Memorandum on Dr Charles Duguid, 23 March 1953, National Archives of Australia, A6110/78, 1081.


41 Reg MacDonald, 'Day by Day'; 'Aborigines and Rockets', *Smiths Weekly*, 12 October 1946.
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He is most commonly referred to as 'the Presbyterian founder of Ernabella mission', and is sometimes misrepresented as a Presbyterian minister, missionary and/or anthropologist. Those works which devote more than a few lines to Duguid's activism tend to be focussed on a single campaign or 'event' such as the establishment of Ernabella mission, Duguid's disagreement with the Reverend John Flynn or the rocket range controversy, with the result that Duguid often appears in the historiography as a single issue campaigner. Moreover, like Duguid's entry in the Northern Territory Dictionary of Biography, it is often the case that the principal, and sometimes the only, sources consulted are No Dying Race and/or Doctor and the Aborigines. Although these works provide an invaluable and otherwise unobtainable overview of Duguid's activism, like all autobiographical works, their usefulness as a primary source is limited. I examine the implications of an over-reliance on Duguid's autobiography in relation to his role in the establishment of Ernabella mission in chapter one.

This thesis is based on manuscript and archival sources. Duguid kept wonderful records: letters, diaries, published and unpublished articles, addresses and broadcasts, volumes of annotated newspaper clippings, official reports and photographs. In addition to Duguid's personal papers at the National Library of Australia and the State Library of South Australia, I was granted access to a private (and previously unexamined) collection of Charles and Phyllis Duguid's papers held by their children, Andrew Duguid and Rosemary Douglas, in Adelaide. This private collection has since been deposited with the National Library, however, at the time of writing it was not yet open to researchers. These three collections of Duguid's personal papers serve as the backbone of this thesis, and are supplemented by other personal, organisational and institutional papers, and state and federal government records.

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Public—Private—Assimilation: a thesis in three parts

Charles Duguid is the central character of this thesis; his ideas and activism act as a lens through which the changing scene of Aboriginal politics, attitudes towards Aborigines, and policy are explored over four decades. Other important figures including Elkin, Bennett, Thomson and Phyllis Duguid, Charles' second wife, feature prominently, but Duguid is the thread that holds this study together. Reflecting both the manner in which Duguid's campaigns on behalf of Aborigines have been remembered, and the various distinct aspects of his campaigning, this thesis is divided into three parts: public, private and assimilation. Each part comprises an introduction and two chapters. They are arranged thematically and chronologically, with parts one and two focussing on the period 1930-1950, and part three on the period 1950-1970. Historiography is embedded throughout this work. Broadly put, there are two main historiographical arguments and approaches. The first concerns the practice of biography (using an individual or group of individuals to illuminate an age) and the second centres on assimilation (the policy as well as historical and popular misconceptions about the term).

In part one, I examine the campaigns for which Duguid was (and is) best known, the public aspects of his advocacy that saw him become a well known figure in South Australia. Beginning with the Reverend John Flynn's alleged disparaging remarks about Aborigines, I reveal the connection between Duguid's anger at Flynn, a fellow Presbyterian, and the establishment of Emabella mission in 1937. In chapter one, I also examine the intellectual antecedents of Emabella mission, and show how Duguid's thinking about this important mission—his mission—was influenced by contemporary anthropologists and missionaries of long experience. In chapter two, I examine Duguid's campaign against the rocket range in 1946-47, demonstrating through a close analysis of Duguid's views on the vital importance of land to 'tribal' Aborigines, why he was so opposed to this project. Subtitled 'Rockets, Reserves and Detribalisation', chapter two documents a succession of real and imagined threats to the Aboriginality of the Aborigines who frequented Emabella during its first ten years, and examines Duguid's determined efforts to 'save them from extinction' by preserving their 'tribal' integrity.

In part two, I focus on the lesser known aspects of Charles and Phyllis Duguid's campaigning, including their fostering of an Aboriginal child. Chapter three examines the Duguids' domestic and working relationship. It looks at Phyllis Duguid's activities on behalf of Aboriginal women, and introduces the issue of 'stolen' and/or 'rescued' Aboriginal children paying close attention to the importance of 'race' in Charles and Phyllis Duguid's conceptualisation of the 'Aboriginal problem', and its various solutions. In chapter four, I examine the Duguids' understanding of what it meant to 'be Aboriginal' with particular reference to their foster son, Sydney James Cook. Cook lived with the Duguids for six years, from 1944-1950. In 1950, the Duguids sent Cook, aged twelve, to live with Aborigines at a remote Christian mission in the Northern Territory. As well as
investigating the extent to which Cook's 'race'—he was an Aboriginal of full-descent—informed this decision, chapter four explains why Charles and Phyllis Duguid did not view Cook's relocation to Aboriginal society as contrary to the aims of assimilation.

Part three brings the public and private aspects of Charles Duguid's campaigning together under the heading 'Assimilation'. In its various guises of 'uplift', 'development' and 'advancement', assimilation is one of the constant, and most important, themes of this thesis. In chapter five, I examine Duguid's views on the assimilation of Aborigines of full-descent in the Northern Territory and Central Australia, and in chapter six I look at the same process at work among Aborigines of mixed-descent in Adelaide and the settled south. Duguid was a strong supporter of assimilation and of Paul Hasluck, Minister for the Territories from 1951 to 1963, but he was not supportive of all that was done in the name of assimilation. Understanding what Duguid and others meant by assimilation at different times and in different contexts allows for a detailed analysis of this promiscuous, and much maligned, term. Terminology, or the different meanings attributed to words, plays an important role in this thesis. Terms such as 'assimilation', 'absorption', 'tribal', 'detribalised', 'full-blood' and 'half-caste' need to be understood as having had shifting meanings and significance. Duguid, for example, was particularly concerned to prevent Aboriginal detribalisation, but what he meant by detribalisation was not necessarily what others meant. Duguid's meaning flowed from his appreciation of 'full-blood tribal' Aborigines, which in turn flowed from his understanding of pre-contact Aboriginal life.

Another person undertaking research on Duguid might have chosen to structure their thesis/book differently. They might, for example, have emphasised the international—perhaps even 'transnational'—dimensions of Duguid's campaigning. Although, in this thesis, I refer to works that Duguid published in Scotland and England, and show his interest in organisations such as the London-based Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, I decided to emphasise Duguid's Australian campaigns. It was not a difficult decision to make. Duguid tended to use his United Kingdom connections as a threat to prompt the Australian government into action. In 1937, for example, Duguid warned the Minister for the Interior, Thomas Paterson, that if the Haast's Bluff country west of Alice Springs was turned over to pastoralists he would 'leave no stone unturned here and at home to sheet home the crime': in this instance, the threat of adverse publicity had the desired result. To judge the effectiveness of Duguid's other quite modest efforts to educate the British public about Australia's Aborigines would

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47 As Attwood has observed, terms such as 'rights', 'Aborigines' and 'race' are well known, 'yet their meaning cannot be taken for granted'. See Attwood, Rights for Aborigines, p. xi.

48 See chapters two and four.

49 Duguid to Thomas Paterson, 8 February 1937, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1. See also Markus, Governing Savages, p. 67; Henson, A Straight-out Man, p. 109; Barry Hill, Broken Song, pp. 333-34; M.A. Smith, Peopling the Cleland Hills, Aboriginal History Monograph, Canberra, (forthcoming, 2005).
require research overseas that I considered (and still consider) unnecessary for this project. The other, and I suspect more important, international dimension of Duguid's campaigning concerned his attempt to educate white Australians about 'the native inhabitants of other lands'. However, since this amounted to one published address in which Duguid briefly contrasted the Australian situation with several African countries, New Zealand and the Soviet Union—the latter was a positive but entirely unfounded portrayal based on communist propaganda—I decided against giving it prominence.50

In researching and writing about Charles Duguid, I found his moral passion and conviction of empirical certainty a constant source of inspiration and irritation. While I admired his dedication, I found myself agreeing with critics who called him 'arrogant'.51 Eventually, and thanks largely to Tim Rowse's insightful observations, I realised that one way to understand Duguid is to view him as an 'experimenter' because anyone who attempts to change a society—for better or worse—is invariably an experimenter: the outcome is always unknown.52 The public sphere demands of such people a full measure of moral passion and empirical certainty: they must talk and act as if they know what they are doing. Personality and other factors make this an easy or a difficult persona to adopt. In Duguid's case, his moral passion easily included a constant presumption of empirical certainty: he did not doubt that he was right. This arrogance, for want of a better word, was an essential element of Duguid's success as a campaigner on behalf of Aborigines. Whether Duguid was 'right' is not a judgement this thesis seeks to make. Judged by the standards of today, many of Duguid's statements and actions appear misguided, or worse, abhorrent, while others appear insightful, progressive and 'modern'. While it can be difficult to avoid such teleological interpretations, and in certain circumstances they can be helpful, they tend to obscure the historical specificity of a period. In this thesis, I leave it to the reader to decide whether Dr Duguid 'did-good'.

51 Personal communication with Dr Basil Hetzel, 27 January 2000.
52 Personal communication with Tim Rowse, January 2004.
PART I: PUBLIC
Part 1 Introduction

A 'GREAT MAN' (OF HISTORY)?

'You are a great man and an immortal. It may be that more people have heard of Winston Churchill than have of you, but you are by far the greater man', wrote Ashley Montague to Charles Duguid in 1973.1 An American, Montague presided over an international award for writing related to the improvement of race relations, the Ainsfield Wolf Award. Duguid received this award for his autobiography, Doctor and the Aborigines, in 1974.2 Having been made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1970, it seemed to those who knew him that Duguid was finally receiving the recognition he deserved for his services to Aboriginal welfare. While many of Duguid's admirers felt that his OBE—a 'long over-due award'—should have come much earlier (and was 'inadequate recognition' for all that he had done for Australia and its Aborigines), others felt that Duguid's highest reward was the satisfaction he could take in having 'aroused[ed] the conscience of a Nation'.3 The letters and telegrams Duguid received on the occasion of his one-hundredth birthday expressed similar sentiments. Robert James Gilchrist, former headmaster at Scotch College, Adelaide, captured the congratulatory mood when he wrote: 'What a great man you are. So long ago you saw clearly your destiny and pursued it with a purpose and tenacity that has been a shining example to all of us. Your contribution to your day and age has been inestimable'.4

It is one thing to acknowledge that Charles Duguid was a great man or a great person. It is quite another to suggest that he was a 'great man of history'. Often linked to the nineteenth-century Scottish philosopher and historian Thomas Carlyle, who declared that 'The history of the world is but the biography of great men', the great man theory of history has generally, and with good reason, fallen out of fashion.5 Carlyle believed that history was made by 'great men'—through the vision of their intellect, the beauty of their art, the prowess of their leadership and, most importantly, their divine inspiration: men who mostly appeared to be white Anglo middle-class heterosexuals.6 This view not only ignores and obscures the contributions of women, people of different ethnic, racial, class

1 Ashley Montague to Charles Duguid, 13 March 1973, Charles Duguid Papers, Private Collection, Adelaide, since deposited at the National Library of Australia (hereafter Duguid Papers: 3).
2 'US award to Dr Duguid', Advertiser, 2 February 1973.
4 Robert James Gilchrist to Duguid, 3 April 1984, Duguid Papers: 3.
6 Carol Ferrier, 'Resisting Authority' in Ian Donaldson et al. (eds.), Shaping Lives: Reflections on Biography, Humanities Research Centre Monograph No. 6, Australian National University, Canberra, 1992, p. 104.
and religious backgrounds and sexual orientation, it presumes that people (usually men) are capable of making history. According to Robert Skidelsky, 'most historians now reject the Great Man theory of history—the view that historical events are caused by, or bear the imprint of, or would have been different but for, the unique personalities of leading actors. The most common view is that the hour produces the man—not the other way round'. Alternatively, Frank E. Vandiver has argued that '[w]hether or not you agree with Thomas Carlyle and the "great man" theory of history, you must concede that people do make history; people even shape some of the so-called great forces that seem immutable'.

Do people shape history (the hour) or does history shape people? In a recent article addressing Charles Duguid's public denunciation of the Reverend John Flynn, 'Inland Flynn. Pioneer? Racist? Or product of his time?', Brigid Hains has described Flynn as 'a man who was quick to point out injustice to Aboriginal people, and slow to do anything about it'. In Flynn's defence—and against Duguid's characterisation of him as a racist—Hains asks, 'How many of us would have had the imagination and boldness to do more, were we children of his time? Flynn was born in 1880, four years before Charles Duguid. They were born in different countries, and into different socio-economic and family circumstances—Flynn's mother, for example, died in 1883—but they were both children of the same time. Recognising this, Nancy Sheppard, a friend of Duguid's, cautioned me against judging Flynn too harshly: 'John Flynn was a man of his times', she told me, and 'Charles Duguid was a man ahead of his times'. Outside academia, such explanations are commonplace; they help people make sense of the past. However, it is only from the vantage point of the present, with knowledge of later intellectual and political discourses, that such claims can be made. On a deeper level, they imply that human thought and action is confined within predetermined boundaries of time and space and that people are not responsible for their actions, as Gillian Cowlishaw has observed:

To argue that beliefs and activities are merely products of their time is to see human action as some automatic playing-out of an inevitable history that is created elsewhere, and to see our own part in oppressive relations as beyond

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A 'great man' (of history)?

our recognition. It denies the existence of ideological struggles, and precludes the study of the dynamics of changing discourses or a critical assessment of individuals or groups in relation to their times. Such teleological interpretations are an easy and complacent way of dealing with historical vicissitudes.\textsuperscript{12}

The key word in Cowlishaw's argument is 'merely'. People are not merely products of their time. Nor can they simply shape history. The answer lies somewhere in between.

For his efforts on behalf of Australia's Aborigines, Charles Duguid 'earned the respect and gratitude of many people, not only for beginning the struggle, but in the more strenuous aspect of keeping on with it, even when the odds must have seemed almost impossible'. In Gilchrist's opinion, 'no man could have stuck to the task more indomitably'.\textsuperscript{13} It is clear that many of Duguid's contemporaries saw him as a 'great man of history'; as someone who tried to change Australian society, enjoyed a certain amount of success, and thus helped to make history happen. Duguid also saw himself this way. He was proud [of] the fact that for half [his] lifetime [he had] publicly assailed the apathy and indifference of Australians towards Aborigines, and that [he had] lived to see white attitudes come much closer to [his own] viewpoint.\textsuperscript{14} But more than Duguid's personality and persistence was responsible for this change. It was equally about the times in which he lived.

From dilettante to public crusader:
Charles Duguid's narrative of involvement

In 1973, an interviewer for ABC radio, Janet Robertson, asked Charles Duguid about his involvement in Aboriginal causes: 'What led you to become involved?', she inquired, to which Duguid replied—'What led me to become so involved'. The correct emphasis established, Duguid explained that 'there were three factors really':

The first was the massacre, the last massacre happily of tribal Aborigines—quite defenceless—a good many miles west of Alice Springs in 1928 ... That shook me to my marrow. Then, in 1930 a lady missionary from Goulburn Island off the northern coast of Arnhem Land consulted me. It was quite evident that she was suffering from leprosy. I'd seen her for three and a half years and she told me of the appalling things that happened [to Aborigines] ... I didn't believe it and I said to her, "These things couldn't happen as late in the day as this in a Christian country." She said, "Why don't you go up and see for


\textsuperscript{13} Gilchrist to Duguid, 6 February 1974, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.

\textsuperscript{14} Stewart Cockburn, 'There's no way round a lie', \textit{Advertiser}, 26 October 1971.
A 'GREAT MAN' (OF HISTORY)?

yourself." Well, in 1934 I did, and it was the inhuman, I would almost say unchristian attitude of everybody in Alice Springs ... that finally made me come out into the open.\(^{15}\)

Unsolicited versions of this story can be found in Duguid's published articles, books, broadcasts and addresses from 1936 to 1978. It was Duguid's signature story—his narrative of involvement.

Over the years, and through constant re-telling, Duguid's story changed in slight, but significant ways. The massacre in 1928, known as the Coniston massacre, was a late addition to Duguid's narrative. Doubtless the killing of at least 31 Aborigines by Constable George Murray and others pricked Duguid's conscience—it caused considerable disquiet among white Australians in the settled south—but it was not until 1933 that Duguid made any kind of public statement about Aborigines, and it was not until the 1960s that Australia's last official punitive expedition gained a prominent place in Duguid's narrative.\(^{16}\)

The 'lady missionary', by contrast, was there from the beginning. She was the central and most important figure in Duguid's story. Accordingly, Duguid confessed to having 'only a dilettante's' interest in Aborigines prior to meeting her: 'I was interested in the customs of the Aboriginal inhabitants of the land but not moved beyond pity for the people themselves', he explained. Then in 1930 a lady suffering from leprosy consulted me'.\(^{17}\) Her tales of injustice, exploitation and cruelty fired Duguid with 'a human interest in the Aborigines'; 'she troubled my conscience and awakened my sense of responsibility, and sent me out to see for myself'.\(^{18}\) In early versions of this story, Duguid found his patient's tales 'difficult to believe': in later versions he 'could not believe' and 'refused to believe' them.\(^{19}\)

Janet Robertson, Interview with Charles Duguid, ABC radio (now in retirement series), broadcast 1 April 1973, audio cassette, State Library of South Australia, OH 561/31. Duguid's three factors were: (1) the massacre in 1928, (2) the lady missionary, (3) visiting Alice Springs.


Duguid, *The Australian Aborigines*, *Aborigines Protector*, p. 11; Duguid, 'Voices from Overseas', transcript of radio broadcast, 30 May 1954, Duguid Papers: 3; Duguid, 'White Doctor'.

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Together with his professed naivety, the question of belief was Duguid's hook. He wanted his readers to see themselves in his story—to identify with his refusal to believe. More importantly, Duguid wanted his readers to examine their own disbelief, to suspend it, and then to follow him on his journey to 'prove that all this talk about the ill-treatment of the natives is a lot of rot'.20 According to Duguid, Alice Springs in 1934 signified the moment his life changed. What he found there convinced him that his patient had not exaggerated the situation: 'The interior is not the land of romance pictured to us by some people who have travelled to and fro. It is a land of stark realism', he explained.21 The Aborigines [live] in utter degradation—clad in dirty rags and sheltered in kennel-like arrangements put together with old bags and bits of disused galvanised iron picked up at the village dump'.22 Through images such as these, Duguid hoped to shock his readers into understanding. He wanted them to 'incur the upset which follows a revelation of the situation' as he himself had done, and act accordingly.23 Viewed as a clever tactic of a skilled campaigner, Duguid's narrative of involvement reveals as much about him as an activist as it does about his reasons for becoming involved in the Aboriginal cause. For as well as a kind of 'call to arms', in telling and re-telling his story, Duguid sought to distinguish himself from other less credible campaigners, and probably also strengthened his own resolve to keep fighting.24

Duguid was wise to the importance of a good story, cleverly and convincingly told. In reality, however, he was far from naive or unbelieving in 1934. Seeing the situation for himself merely cemented views already held. According to A.P. Elkin, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Sydney, '1934 witnessed a great stirring of public interest in Aboriginal matters' for that was the year that saw the 'sequel to the Caledon Bay killings'.25 In September 1932, five Japanese trepang fisherman were killed by Aborigines at Caledon Bay in the north-east corner of Arnhem Land. In June 1933, a member of the police party sent to apprehend the culprits was fatally speared. The death of Constable Steward McColl resulted in a call for strong and swift revenge: newspapers throughout the country reported that a punitive expedition 'to punish [the] blacks' was planned. Following a torrent of unprecedented opposition from around Australia and overseas, government agreed to send a party of missionaries—a 'peace expedition'—instead. The missionary party returned triumphant with four self-confessed killers of the fishermen, and a fifth man, Tuckiar, who admitted to spearing McColl. In Darwin, harsh sentences were handed down: twenty years imprisonment to each of the killers of the fishermen, and for Tuckiar, a

20 'Dr Duguid—champion of the dark-skinned underdog', People, 14 February 1951, p. 42.
22 Duguid, 'White Doctor'.
24 Having a clearly defined, sane and respectable reason for becoming involved in the Aboriginal cause set Duguid apart from the 'outsiders, eccentrics [and] obsessive personalities'. See Reynolds, This Whispering, p. xiv.
sentence of death. Another outpouring of protest saw Tuckiar's conviction quashed. He was released from prison, but disappeared soon after and was never seen or heard from again.26

From his home in suburban Adelaide, Charles Duguid did more than watch these events unfold. He clipped newspaper articles on Caledon Bay and pasted them into a journal: this was to become a regular habit for Duguid who filled three such journals, each containing up to 1000 articles, between 1933 and 1966. With alarming headlines such as 'Punitive Expedition May Be Sent Out', the first articles in Duguid's collection date his active involvement in Aboriginal causes to September 1933. Duguid made his first public statement on Aborigines at a meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Melbourne that month. He delivered a 'scathing attack' on government policy with particular reference to its 'Vengeance is mine' attitude at Caledon Bay, and appealed 'for a nation-wide effort by Christians to put an end to the appalling injustices the Aborigines were suffering'.27 Completing his transformation from dilettante to public crusader, Duguid made his first trip to Alice Springs in July 1934, thereafter becoming 'widely known throughout Australia ... as a leading champion of the Australian Aborigines'.28

Charles Duguid actively participated in the cultivation of his own 'great man' image; an image which enhanced his ability to win support from government and other influential institutions, which in turn enabled him to better help Aborigines. Equally important, however, was the existence of a body of people thinking and saying similar things; a critical mass of ideas and intellectual paradigms that made the emergence of new political discourses (and individual 'greatness') possible, as the following two chapters demonstrate.

26 Ibid.; Reynolds, This Whispering, pp. 201-15. According to Reynolds, it was widely believed in Darwin that Tuckiar was shot by police and that his body was dumped in the harbour.
28 Mount Barker Courier and River Murray Advocate, 21 January 1937, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 3, Clipping Book 1, p. 73.
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ESTABLISHING ERNABELLA

An elder of St Peters Church in Adelaide, Dr Charles Duguid became the first lay Moderator of the South Australian Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in March 1935. For Duguid, the honour of such an appointment was matched only by the responsibility it entailed:

That I am unworthy to hold the high office of Moderator no one is more conscious than myself, but I go forward to the responsibilities of the year, knowing that God has called me as I am and the Ministers and my brother elders are behind me in the work to which I now set my hand.

With exploitation as his theme, Duguid used his inaugural Moderator's address to deliver a powerful indictment on Australia's treatment of its Aboriginal population. From poor wages and conditions to the inappropriateness of government laws on rations, from dispossession to the lack of education, from cultural misunderstandings to the health of Aborigines, Duguid drew his audience's attention to some of the more insidious, yet authorised, forms of exploitation suffered by Aborigines at the hands of white people. Perhaps the most shocking of all, Duguid implied, was the Presbyterian Church's own misappropriation of money intended for Aborigines. Long entrusted with a Bequest in the name of Mrs Smith of Dunesk intended 'entirely for the education and evangelisation of the Aborigines', the Presbyterian Church, having transferred the proceeds of this Bequest to the Australian Inland Mission (AIM)—a mission that 'is, and has always been, for the white pioneer population; never at any time in the interests of the natives'—was arguably as guilty of 'misused power' as any white settler. Yet it was not too late to right this wrong, Duguid assured his audience, for he had devised a plan 'to honour the wish of Mrs Smith'. 'My plan', he announced, 'is for the Presbyterian Church to lead the way ... by starting a mission ... in the vicinity of the Musgrave Ranges'.

This address marked the beginning of Duguid's campaign to establish Ernabella mission, and his campaign to wrest the Smith of Dunesk Bequest from the AIM, the flagship of the Presbyterian Church in the outback. With the opening of Ernabella at the end of 1937, the first part of Duguid's campaign was met with rapturous applause. The

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1 According to Reverend A. Irving Davidson, Dr Charles Duguid was the first lay person in Australia, and only the fourth in the world, to become a Moderator of the Presbyterian Church. See 'Treatment of Aborigines', Argus, 13 May 1936, Duguid Papers, National Library of Australia, MS 5068 (hereafter Duguid Papers: 1), Series 3, Clipping Book 1, p. 60.


3 Ibid., pp. 6-10.
second part, in contrast, caused nothing but controversy within the Presbyterian Church and was never fully resolved to Duguid's satisfaction. Whereas the establishment of Ernabella was Duguid's first, and arguably his greatest success as a campaigner for Aboriginal causes, his frustrated efforts to secure the full proceeds of the Smith of Dunesk Bequest left his spiritual life severely impoverished, his faith in the Church undone.

'Until I advocated a mission to Aborigines my life in the Church was most happy', Duguid told the Reverend David Chapman in 1941; 'since, it has been the very reverse'.

The mission itself was not the cause of the problem however, for had Duguid advocated a mission without reference to the Smith of Dunesk Bequest, there would have been no cause for controversy. In his autobiography, *Doctor and the Aborigines* (1972), Duguid signalled his appreciation of this fact by separating his account of Ernabella's establishment from the Smith of Dunesk saga; the former being portrayed as the result of miraculous inspiration attendant upon seeing the Pitjantjatjara people of the Musgrave Ranges in June 1935, and the latter as a source of funding with an 'unusual history'. Only by leaving his Moderator's address out of his autobiography could Duguid sustain this carefully—and deliberately—constructed narrative, for his Moderator's address, delivered several months before he visited the Musgrave Ranges, revealed a connection between his inspiration for the mission and the Smith of Dunesk Bequest that Duguid sought to obscure. The implications of that omission are considered in the first section of this chapter; the remainder being devoted to an alternative account of Ernabella's establishment thus far effectively obscured.

I. 'A man of vision'?

'How is the success or failure of a mission to be defined?', Tony Swain and Deborah Bird Rose ask in their introduction to *Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions* (1988). Taking up the challenge, Bain Attwood, in his entry on 'Aboriginal Missions' in *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, suggested that:

The most successful missions were those in which Aborigines were agents in their foundation and management, the missionaries learned and respected Aboriginal cultural practices and the authority of the traditional landowners,

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4 Duguid to Reverend David Chapman, 10 March 1941, Charles Duguid Papers, Private Collection, Adelaide, since deposited at the National Library of Australia (hereafter Duguid Papers: 3).
and relationships developed in which the imperatives of Aboriginal kinship and religion co-existed with those of white paternalism and Christianity.\textsuperscript{7}

Although Attwood did not name any specific mission, he could have been describing Ernabella. Widely regarded as one of the least oppressive and most culturally sensitive missions ever established in Australia, Ernabella has been hailed by Richard Broome as 'possibly the greatest tribute to missionary endeavour in Australia'.\textsuperscript{8} My question, therefore, is different to Swain and Rose's. With regard to Ernabella, I ask: how has the success of this important mission been explained?\textsuperscript{9}

Reflecting the view of most historians and other chroniclers of Ernabella's establishment, Robert Scrimgeour has argued that the 'name of one man stands out in the founding and development of [Ernabella mission], that of Dr Charles Duguid': he was 'the driving force behind Ernabella's establishment'; he was the one who believed the mission 'should act as a 'buffer station' to cushion the cultural shock' of contact with white society; and he was the one who devised the 'revolutionary' principles on which the mission was founded.\textsuperscript{10} With the exception of Broome's observation that Ernabella was 'founded in an era of new thinking', and Russell McGregor's suggestion that Ernabella 'operated along lines similar to those advocated' by the anthropologist, Professor A.P. Elkin, little thought has been given to the context in which Duguid's ideas for the mission were formed.\textsuperscript{11} The persuasiveness of Duguid's autobiographical account of Ernabella's establishment is such, it seems, that few historians have sought to look beyond it to explain Ernabella's success.

In \textit{Doctor and the Aborigines}, Duguid set the scene for Ernabella's establishment by recalling a conversation he had with Pastor F.W. Albrecht, superintendent of Hermannsburg mission, following his tour of Alice Springs and surrounding regions in July 1934.

[Albrecht] asked, "What do you think about the situation in the Centre now that you've seen it?"

"Ashamed," I told him. "But next year I mean to go further afield, to make contact with Aborigines before station-life overtakes them."

\begin{itemize}
  \item Bain Attwood, 'Aboriginal missions', in Graeme Davison et.al. (eds.), \textit{The Oxford Companion to Australian History}, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1998, p. 8.
  \item The question of whether Ernabella was 'successful' during its first ten years, and how its success or failure was defined, is examined in chapter two. An account of Ernabella/Pukatja in the present is given in the epilogue.
\end{itemize}
"Then I suggest you go to the Musgrave Ranges, in your own State", [Albrecht] said. "Nobody's quite sure what's happening there." 12

Taking Albrecht's advice, Duguid travelled to the Musgrave Ranges in the north of South Australia in June 1935. Of his first meeting with the Pitjantjatjara people of that region, Duguid wrote:

They were a fine people with a striking dignity, living naked and with few possessions amid the rocky hills and escarpments of the Ranges, wandering their tribal territory in the constant search for food and water, and yet contented and virile. 13

Despite their contentment, '[it] was ominously clear', Duguid continued, 'that one could not expect them to be left in peace for very much longer':

The boundaries of civilisation were being extended every year, and already white men were in the area to scratch a living from "dogging" ... I was deeply concerned for their future. They were on the edge of a civilisation which had no understanding of them and no feeling of responsibility for them. 14

It was during the long journey back to Adelaide, according to Duguid, that the 'important project' that became Ernabella began 'taking shape in [his] mind':

I had seen that the Pitjantjatjara people of Musgrave Ranges were so far uncontaminated by contact with the white man and I was determined that they should be given a chance to survive in their own country. It seemed that the best way to do this would be to establish a Christian mission at the Eastern end of the Ranges, possibly close to the spot where we had stayed and that this mission should act as a buffer between the Aborigines and the encroaching white man. 15

Back in Adelaide, Duguid shared 'the many disturbing experiences of [his] trip' with his wife Phyllis, and together they formulated the 'principles which [they] felt fundamental to the establishment of the Mission':

12 Duguid, Doctor and the Aborigines, p. 104.
13 Ibid., p. 110.
14 Ibid., pp. 110-11.
15 Ibid., p. 115 (emphasis added)
There was to be no compulsion nor imposition of our way of life on the Aborigines, nor deliberate interference with tribal custom. We believed that medical help should be offered at the outset, that only people trained in some particular skill should be on the mission staff, and that they must learn the tribal language. As the economy of the mission developed responsibility should be passed to the Aborigines as soon as possible. With the setting up of a school the acceptance of the native tongue would be vital and all teaching for the first years should be in Pitjantjatjara tongue.

There followed a period of intense campaigning and fund-raising, the outcome of which was agreement on the part of the Presbyterian Church and the South Australian government to back Duguid's mission proposal. At the end of 1937, Emabella mission was established.

The 'elaboration of personal myth is part of every autobiography', Paul Eakin has argued, and Duguid's is no exception. This seamless narrative, perfected by Duguid during the thirty-five years between Emabella's establishment and the publication of his autobiography, is the final expression of Duguid's personal mythology. For the insight it provides into Duguid's commitment to a notion of his own posterity it is invaluable, yet this is not how it has been read. Instead, historians and others have used it as evidence of how Emabella—'the outstanding Christian Mission to Aborigines in Australia'—came to be established. Whether Emabella mission was 'outstanding' is not the issue here. The perception that it was, and the attribution of that success to Duguid via his autobiography is where the problem lies, for while historians and others have observed that Duguid's 'idea of what the purpose of a mission should be was not the traditional one', and that his ideas were 'very advanced', few have sought to explain, or even ask, how it was that Duguid—a medical doctor with minimal experience or knowledge of Aborigines—came to formulate his ideas.

According to Duguid, he saw the Pitjantjatjara people, became inspired and through his actions Emabella mission was born. Devoid of any reference to the intellectual antecedents of his ideas, and in light of Emabella's success, one interpretation of Duguid's account has been that he was a 'visionary'. Several former teachers at the mission have described Duguid this way. Nancy Sheppard, for example, nominated Duguid's 'visionary

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16 Ibid., pp. 115-16.
17 Paul John Eakin, 'Writing Biography: A Perspective from Autobiography', in Ian Donaldson et.al. (eds.), Shaping Lives: Reflections on Biography, Humanities Research Centre Monograph Series No. 6, Australian National University, Canberra, 1992, p. 199.
19 'Outstanding' is the word most commonly used to describe Emabella mission. See Scrimgeour, Some Scots were here, p. 195; John Harris, One Blood: 200 years of Aboriginal encounter with Christianity: A story of hope, Albatross Books, Sutherland, 1990, p. 883.
20 Peter Morton, Fire Across the Desert, p. 70; Scrimgeour, Some Scots were here, p. 193.

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establishment of Ernabella' as his 'greatest achievement', while Alison Elliot claimed that Ernabella was established 'because of [Duguid's] vision'. Replete with notions of mystical-grandeur or super-natural foresight, 'visionary' is not a comfortable concept for historians. Nor is the idea of 'vision'—pertaining to something 'apparently perceived otherwise than by ordinary sight'—especially persuasive, yet in considering the factors behind Ernabella's success, Scrimgeour likewise paid homage to 'Duguid's vision, his understanding of the needs of the Pitjantjatjara people, his enthusiasm and his enlightened thinking.' More than the product of an uncritical mind, Scrimgeour's hagiographical tribute is the product of an over-reliance on Duguid's autobiography. Looking further afield, Broome has argued that Ernabella's success owed much to Duguid's determination 'to avoid the errors of other missionaries'. In much the same way, William Edwards and B.A. Clarke have claimed that 'Duguid was aware that where missions had followed a policy of seeking to eradicate traditional customs, Aborigines had suffered'. Although apparently more considered than Scrimgeour's view, the idea that Duguid may have learned from the mistakes of others and/or that he was a 'visionary', are both variations on a theme first propounded by Winifred Hilliard, another former teacher at the mission, in 1968.

Hilliard's history of Ernabella The People in Between was published before Duguid's autobiography, and cannot therefore have been influenced by it. However, because her source was Duguid himself, the same basic problem applies. In this work, Hilliard portrayed Duguid as 'a man of vision and purpose' whose 'vital concern' for Aborigines came 'from God': 'In his vision of a Mission in the Musgraves', she explained, 'Dr Duguid had the knowledge and wisdom to see where the earlier missionary efforts had gone astray'. Since divine intervention is not generally accepted by historians as an acceptable explanation for why change occurs, the question remains: from where did Duguid gain his knowledge and wisdom? If, as seems likely, Duguid learned from the mistakes of others, from whom did he learn?

Next to Duguid, Hilliard and Scrimgeour provide the most detailed, if not the most accurate, accounts of the events preceding Ernabella's establishment. Both agree that Duguid's inaugural Moderator's address was a key moment in this history, for it was

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21 Personal communication with Nancy Sheppard, 17 January 2000; Alison Elliot, 'To whom it may concern', 26 June 1972, Nancy Barnes Private Collection, Adelaide.
23 Broome, Aboriginal Australians, p. 117.
25 Winifred Hilliard, The People in Between: The Pitjantjatjara people of Ernabella, Rigby, Adelaide, 1968, pp. 86, 93. See also transcript of interview with Ron Trudinger, 11 August 1995, Ara Iritijja Archive, Item sl511. In this interview, Trudinger, a former superintendent at Ernabella, expressed the view that 'God ... direct[ed] Dr Duguid to the site of Ernabella'.
during this address, delivered in March 1935, that Duguid first proposed the establishment of a mission in the Musgrave Ranges. Given that Duguid, by his own account, did not visit the Musgrave Ranges until June 1935—that is, several months after he gave this address—the premise underlying Duguid’s account of Emabella’s establishment should have crumbled with its disclosure. He proposed the establishment of a mission in the Musgraves before he visited the area: his inspiration must, therefore, have come from somewhere else. That Hilliard and Scrimgeour managed to remain true to Duguid’s ‘vision’ despite this anomaly owed much to Hilliard’s belief that Duguid first visited the Musgraves in 1934.26 Scrimgeour, while maintaining that the critical visit occurred in June 1935, also implied that Duguid had made earlier journeys to the Musgraves in 1933 and 1934.27 There being no evidence, whatsoever, to support the occurrence of these earlier journeys, it seems that Hilliard and Scrimgeour, persuaded by the emphasis that Duguid placed on seeing the Pitjantjatjara people for himself, assumed that he had visited the Musgraves before he gave his Moderator’s address.

Duguid’s decision to leave this critical address out of his autobiography suggests that he was aware of the fragility of his own story. He may have come to believe his own mythology, but he was not about to upset it by including his Moderator’s address. The larger problematic of memory and its tendency to change over time notwithstanding, there are several other problems with Duguid’s account. The term ‘buffer’, for example, so important in Duguid’s articulation of the mission’s purpose, and in historical accounts of Emabella’s success, was not used by Duguid until after the mission was established. Of the principles that Duguid claimed to have formulated prior to Ernabella’s establishment, only the first two appear in his initial mission proposals; the third was developed in the early 1950s and the fourth with the opening of the Emabella school in 1940. Considered separately, these indiscretions appear minor—even trivial. Doubtless Duguid was inspired, if not formatively, by seeing the Pitjantjatjara people; Emabella did become a ‘buffer mission’; and the principles, although developed over time, were developed by Duguid. The point is not to condemn Duguid for these indiscretions, but to read them as revelatory of his abiding sense of self. An understanding of how Duguid’s account deviates from the ‘truth’ is, therefore, essential.28

As is the case with most, if not all autobiographies—and, it could be argued, with history writing in general—the choices that Duguid made in deciding which events, people and places to include, and conversely exclude, is representative not of the past, but of the story he wanted to tell. In the case of Ernabella’s establishment, Duguid simplified the story so that his initial ideas for the mission and what the mission became were one. He made it appear as if he had indeed had a ‘vision’ and that vision became Ernabella. While an important part of Duguid’s motivation, as indicated previously, was his desire to

26 Hilliard, *The People in Between*, p. 94.
27 Scrimgeour, *Some Scots were here*, p. 193.
distance Ernabella's establishment from the Smith of Dunesk controversy, other factors were also at work.

In the early 1980s, Phyllis Duguid warned an overly inquisitive interviewer not to press her aged husband too hard with abstract questions about his philosophy of life: 'He's always been a doer, a worker, rather than a philosopher'—or thinker—she explained. 'Getting on with the job', Phyllis implied, was what Duguid did best.29 In terms of Aboriginal politics, 'getting on with the job' meant being listened to by those in authority; it meant having, and maintaining, a public profile with newspaper and other reporters; it meant being known and preferably respected, or at least tolerated, by government. For Duguid, 'getting on with the job' meant being known as the founder of Ernabella. Even before the mission opened, he received wide acclaim for devising 'one of the biggest schemes ... in South Australia, and probably Australia, for assisting the Aborigines'.30 Since ours is a society that values originality of thought, Duguid also wanted it known that he alone had 'shaped [Ernabella's] early policy—a policy almost unique among missions'.31 Towards this end, Duguid began re-writing the history of Ernabella's establishment soon after the mission opened, excluding all reference to outside influences on his thinking, and to the many transformations the mission went through before it opened, thereby implicitly casting himself in the role of visionary. Occasionally he was more explicit. Writing to the Reverend J. MacDonald Webster, general secretary of the Church of Scotland's Overseas Department in 1940, Duguid explained that '[it] was on [his 1935] patrol [that he] got the vision of the ... Mission to the Musgraves'.32 Over time, and by methods such as these, the mythology of Duguid's 'visionary' establishment of Ernabella slowly developed, culminating in Doctor and the Aborigines.

The great casualty of this process has been context. While it may have benefited Duguid (and his cause) to be considered a visionary, given Ernabella's status as an exceptional Christian mission, the benefit to history has been severely limited. Rather than 'a man of vision', Duguid is better understood as 'a man of action'—a man who had little time for 'arm-chair reformers', or scientists who studied Aborigines for the sake of science, or missionaries who saved souls at the expense of bodies—but who borrowed ideas from all these people and put them into practice at Ernabella.33 Viewed in this way, by his very lack of originality, Duguid serves as an ideal window onto his age, his plans for the mission providing new perspectives on the politics of inter-war debates about the 'future of

29 Stewart Cockburn, 'Power of a selfless love', Advertiser, 2 December 1981.
32 Duguid to Reverend J. MacDonald Webster, General Secretary of the Church of Scotland, Overseas Department, 14 February 1940, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 9.
33 W.H. Fenwick, 'A Scalpel That Cut to Size', Newcastle Morning Herald and Mines Advocate, 30 June 1962, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 3, Clipping Book 3, p. 155. In this article, Duguid is described as 'A man of action'.

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the Aborigines', and rare insight into the exchanges between ideas, and between ideas and actions, that were productive of the type of innovation witnessed at Ernabella.

But first, the question of inspiration: if not from seeing the Pitjantjatjara people of the Musgrave Ranges, from where did Duguid's initial inspiration for the mission come?

'Damned dirty niggers'?
Duguid's initial inspiration for the mission can be traced back to his first encounter with the harsh realities of outback life in Alice Springs in July 1934. After three and a half weeks investigating the condition of Aborigines in and around Alice Springs, Duguid returned to Adelaide deeply ashamed and determined to do all he could to change the deplorable circumstances under which Aborigines lived. As a medical doctor, his first concern was with the health of the Aborigines he encountered, many of whom were severely malnourished and suffering from venereal and other introduced diseases. While in Alice Springs Duguid learned that the town's only medical facility, the AIM hostel, refused to admit Aborigines, and so he arranged a meeting with the Reverend John Flynn, founder of the AIM, to discuss the matter immediately upon his return to Adelaide.

Held at the Commercial Travellers' Club, this interview of fifty minutes duration has been the cause of continuing debate among Presbyterians, academics and other interested observers from 1934 until the present. Only Duguid's account of what was said at this important meeting remains, hence the debate: did Flynn say what Duguid said he said? In Doctor and the Aborigines, Duguid claimed that Flynn had been 'utterly frank': "The AIM is only for white people", [Flynn] told me. "You are only wasting your time among so many damned, dirty niggers." As Brigid Hains has argued, this quote,


35 Duguid, Doctor and the Aborigines, p. 100. On the basis of Duguid's statement, Sir Marcus Oliphant, then Governor of South Australia, delivered a speech in August 1972 in which he claimed that Flynn had 'refused absolutely to have anything whatever to do with the black people'. This, together with Oliphant's further assertion that Flynn had said 'the black people should be allowed to die out as rapidly as possible', brought shocked denials from Flynn's former colleagues in the Presbyterian Church. Oliphant's statements were a [perversion] of factual history', the Reverend Fred McKay, Moderator General of the Presbyterian Church, tersely responded: 'People who knew Flynn would never say that he had contempt for Aborigines'. Yet Oliphant's strongest defenders were themselves former acquaintances and colleagues of the legendary 'Flynn of the Inland'. Congratulating Oliphant for 'telling the truth about John Flynn', Justice Howard Zelling wrote: 'I knew Dr Flynn. Whatever Flynn might have said on public platforms, he left no one in doubt in private conversation that his view were: (a) that the Aborigines were dying out (b) that they were lazy, shiftless good for nothings. 'Flynn of the Inland attacked', Advertiser, 1 September 1972; 'Quick retort to Flynn critic', Advertiser, 2 September 1972; 'Presbyterians angry over Flynn remarks', Sydney Morning Herald, 2 September 1972; 'Flynn Row', Advertiser, 6 September 1972; Howard Zelling to editor, Advertiser, 6 September 1972; Charles Perkins to editor, Advertiser, 7 September 1972;
attributed to Flynn by Duguid in a memoir written nearly forty years after the event, is a 'flimsy piece of evidence indeed for condemning Flynn'.\(^{36}\) If there were no evidence from the time to support Duguid's claim, it could be read as yet another of Duguid's autobiographical indiscretions—an indiscretion with serious consequences, but an indiscretion nonetheless. The weight of evidence suggests otherwise.

In October 1934, Duguid wrote to the Minister for the Interior, J.A. Perkins, urging the dire need for a public hospital in Alice Springs that would treat Aborigines as well as whites. The situation, Duguid explained, was that:

The AIM Hostel is not suitable for more than giving social service to the white station people. Flynn, too, definitely told me it was not intended for the "hobo white, the half-caste or the nigger". I, a member of the executive of the AIM in Adelaide, am ashamed of the attitude of John Flynn and of [Kingsley] Partridge, the missioner of the AIM for Central Australia, towards the native problem. It is not human let alone Christian, and I not only tackled Flynn but brought the matter before the executive of the AIM.\(^{37}\)

In May 1935, Duguid told George Simpson, a retired AIM Board member, that he had recorded Flynn's 'exact words' following their meeting, and added that 'if what [Flynn] said of the natives [was] the viewpoint of the AIM, God help the AIM'.\(^{38}\) These references, together with Duguid's further assertion in February and September 1937 that Flynn had told him that he was 'wasting [his] time among so many damned, dirty niggers' at their meeting in 1934, prove that Duguid had been attributing such remarks to Flynn long before he wrote his autobiography.\(^{39}\) While this is not the same as proving that Flynn said them, it does take the onus off Duguid's autobiography and return the debate to its proper time.

In a recent article 'Inland Flynn. Pioneer? Racist? Or product of his time?', Hains has argued that while it is 'impossible to know what Flynn said in private', his writings 'contradict Duguid's account'. Citing extracts from Flynn's published writings on Aborigines from 1915 onwards, Hains makes a strong case for understanding Flynn as a man whose views on race were more complex than indicated by Duguid's hearsay remarks. Much of Hains' defence of Flynn rests on the word 'niggers', a 'repugnant' word

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\(^{36}\) 'Governor was not misled', Advertiser, 13 September 1972; 'Aborigines not his job', News, 2 October 1972, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 3.


\(^{38}\) Duguid to J.A. Perkins, 2 October 1934, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.

\(^{39}\) Duguid to George Simpson, 21 May 1935, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1; Duguid to MacDonald Webster, 3 September 1937, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
that Hains insists she has 'never seen ... in any AIM files, [or] Flynn's correspondence'.
It is there, however, in a letter from Flynn to the Reverend Andrew Lennox of Otago, New
Zealand, in 1919. After explaining, somewhat laconically, that the AIM cared 'only for the
whites' because it was 'only by specialising' and looking 'after our own side' that the AIM
could 'get satisfaction', Flynn reflected on the Presbyterian Church's tendency to send
nurses overseas, rather than employ them in Australian missions:

Sister Simpson is particularly interested in the Aborigines, as you will know
already; but trained nurses are apparently only for niggers outside of
Australia, if the invariable practice of the past is any guide. We should say,
however, "It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good", for in consequence We
got Miss S., and she is worth having!41

The casual manner in which Flynn used the word 'niggers' to refer to people of non-
European origin both inside and outside Australia suggests that it was probably a part of
his normal vocabulary, as it was for many white Australians. That the AIM was 'only for
white people', Flynn was irrefutably adamant.

Taking Hains' defence of Flynn to its logical conclusion, if Flynn did not describe
Aborigines as 'damned, dirty niggers' in 1934, then Duguid must have been lying. Again,
an incident which occurred at the end of that year suggests otherwise. On the morning of
27 December 1934, Duguid delivered an address on 'Our Duty to the Aborigines' at a
Presbyterian Fellowship Conference which, later that afternoon, was reported in the
Adelaide News under the heading 'Blacks Shot Like Animals'. The article claimed that
Duguid had made sweeping allegations concerning the callous treatment of Aborigines by
the federal government and private individuals which Duguid hotly denied.42 Expressing
himself 'hurt beyond measure by the misrepresentation in spirit and in word' of what he
had said, Duguid called for an immediate apology to be printed.43 Not receiving one,
Duguid threatened legal action, the News article having 'done harm not only to [his]
reputation for sound judgment, but also to the cause' on which he had spoken.44 With the
printing of a full apology and retraction on 10 January 1935, Duguid let the matter drop,
however, he considered it nothing 'short of a scandal that a paper could so misrepresent a
public man'.45 Having suffered the indignity of being misquoted and misrepresented

2003, pp. 31-34.
41  Reverend John Flynn to Reverend Andrew Lennox, 28 April 1919, Australian Inland Mission
Collection, National Library of Australia, MS 5774 (hereafter AIM Collection), Box 196, Folder
8 (original emphasis).
42  Extract from News, 29 December 1934, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
43  Duguid to editor, News, 28 December 1934, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
44  Duguid to editor, News, 31 December 1934, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
45  Extract from News, 10 January 1935 and Duguid to editor, News, 7 January 1934, Duguid
Papers: 1, Series 1. Duguid received terse requests for 'evidence' in support of his alleged
statements from the Commonwealth and Western Australian governments. See, J.A. Carrodus,
himself, it seems unlikely that Duguid would have knowingly and wilfully misrepresented Flynn, the legendary 'Flynn of the Inland' whose status as a 'public man' was far greater than Duguid's own.46

Whether Flynn told Duguid that he was 'wasting his time among so many damned, dirty niggers' is ultimately an unresolvable question, there having been only two parties at the meeting, both long since deceased. While I believe that Duguid quoted Flynn correctly, the only uncontestable facts are that Flynn used such terms—'nigger' was not an uncommon word, even amongst those sympathetic to Aborigines, and particular amongst the 'squatters' Flynn worked with—and that Duguid reported the comment shortly after it was made, as well as in distant recollection. Whatever was said at the Commercial Travellers' Club that day, something upset Duguid enough to complain about Flynn in September 1934 in a letter to Mary M. Bennett, a fellow Aboriginal rights campaigner in Western Australia. In reply Bennett wrote:

I have met [Flynn]. And he certainly works in with the squatters in everything. Mr [J.R.B.] Love told me at Kunmunya, (and doubtless you know all the facts of the case) that the AIM was originally founded by the misappropriation of the legacy left by Mrs Henrietta Smith of Dunesk to found a mission to the Aboriginals. This large sum of money was left to the Presbyterian Free Church of South Australia. The Presbyterian Church of South Australia sent Mr Mitchell to institute a mission, NOT TO THE ABORIGINALS, but to the squatters, who by taking all the natives' country, and working it often under compulsion, with unpaid native labour, have done more to compass the extermination of the Aborigines than any other agency.47

Although Duguid had heard the name 'Smith of Dunesk' at Assembly meetings, he had paid the Bequest no heed, not knowing its true purpose, or that it had been misappropriated. With his ire already raised over Flynn and the AIM's apparent antipathy towards Aborigines, Bennett's revelation concerning the true purpose of the Smith of Dunesk Bequest, combined with Albrecht's injunction that he visit the Musgrave Ranges, prompted Duguid to propose the establishment of a mission there during his Moderator's address in March the following year. Thus, somewhat ironically, it was Flynn, or more precisely, whatever Flynn said at that meeting, that helped set in action the chain of events that led to Ernabella's establishment.

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46 Department of the Interior, to Duguid, 3 January 1935 and Deputy Chief Protector of Aborigines, Western Australia, to Duguid, 3 January 1935, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
47 Ion Idriess' best seller Flynn of the Inland was first published in 1932. It is possible, even likely, that in condemning Flynn Duguid was seeking greater status for himself, but this does not mean that he invented the allegations against Flynn.
48 Mary Bennett to Duguid, 7 October 1934, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 11.
II. From 'Christian Anthropological Mission' to 'Medical Mission' to 'Buffer Mission': Unravelling Ernabella's intellectual origins

Although undeniably linked, Duguid's campaign to establish a mission in the Musgraves, and his campaign to secure Smith of Dunesk funding for that mission, were largely conducted separately; the latter was a matter for the Church of Scotland to decide and much time was lost due to delays in overseas correspondence. Since there was also the risk, keenly perceived by Duguid and others, that the AIM's reluctance to part with the Bequest could jeopardise his plans for the mission, Duguid focussed first on establishing the mission before renewing his efforts to have the Bequest used in the manner its donor intended.48 As will be discussed later, in order to gain full access to the Smith of Dunesk Bequest, Duguid portrayed Ernabella as Smith's ideal mission, describing it in 1941 as 'purely for the education and evangelisation of the Aborigines of South Australia', as Smith had intended.49 Misreading this as the basis of Duguid's policy at Ernabella, Hains has argued that the 'rationale of Ernabella was not, of course, the preservation of Indigenous culture, but the 'education and evangelisation' of the Aborigines'.50 Although present in Duguid's early mission proposals, 'education and evangelisation' was not conceived as the main purpose of the mission until after it was established, and then only with reference to the Smith of Dunesk Bequest. As for the 'preservation of Indigenous culture', this was an essential part of Duguid's mission ethic from the outset: he wanted to '[help] the natives to maintain their identity' while gradually introducing them to white ways of living.51

Duguid's ideas for the mission were formed in a climate of changing ideas about the role of missions and missionaries in Australia. Upon entering the highly contested arena of Aboriginal politics in the mid 1930s, Duguid was immediately faced with a barrage of conflicting and often contradictory ideas about the 'future of the Aborigines', whether Aborigines had a future and, if they did, what that future might look like. Although noticeably in decline, the previously dominant theory of inevitable extinction still held sway with missionaries, anthropologists, government authorities and other interested observers who argued that if something was not done to save Aborigines of full-descent, they would die out. Aborigines of mixed-descent, or 'half-castes' as they were known, were generally considered exempt from extinction; their numbers being on the rise, they posed a different, though no less difficult problem. How best to save the 'remnant' population of

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48 H.C. Matthew, Secretary Presbyterian Board of Missions, to Duguid, 1 December 1936, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1. Regarding Duguid's proposed mission, Matthew advised that: 'We have not, of course, said anything to [Kingsley] Partridge or to any of the AIM Rep[resentative]s, and we have made the matter quite vague in our minutes, lest they should get into the hands of any of them before we have got where we want to get'.


50 Hains, 'Inland Flynn', p. 32.

51 Duguid to Thomas Paterson, Minister for the Interior, 28 July 1936, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1
'full-bloods', and to what end, were the questions that occupied the minds of those interested in Aboriginal welfare at this time, Duguid included.52

In Duguid's view, the 'only way to save the remnant was along the way of Christ', as argued by the London based Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Protection Society (ASS) in an open letter to the leaders of the Christian Churches in Australia in 1932:53

As a well-known Society, working for weak and oppressed races in all parts of the world, we now venture to appeal to the Christian leaders of Australia to make a united effort in this great cause, and to do all that is possible to sweep away old wrongs and injustices, to make generous reparations for the past, and to secure not only protection, but also appropriate educational and moral uplift for the very considerable remnant of a race which is not only most ancient, but also endowed with remarkable and attractive qualities of mental and moral character.54

The ASS's 'plea on behalf of the Australian Aborigines' was Duguid's call to action; not so his contemporaries working in the field of science at the University of Adelaide and the South Australian Museum who viewed any attempt—and especially missionary attempts—to alter 'tribal' Aborigines' way of life as tantamount to signing their death warrant.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Adelaide was the home of medical scientists such as Frederic Wood Jones and John Burton Cleland who specialised in physical anthropology. Sponsored by the Medical School, the Museum and after 1926, by the newly formed Board of Anthropological Research of the University of Adelaide (BAR), scientific expeditions were regularly sent forth from Adelaide to Central Australia to collect blood samples and other physical data on the structure and function of 'uncontaminated' Aboriginal bodies.55 Their findings, as Warwick Anderson has explained, generally confirmed the view that Aborigines of full-descent were racially 'akin to the white man', but whereas an earlier generation of scientists had lamented the demise of these 'primitive'

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53 "Blacks are outlawed'—Scathing Attack on Policy—Doctor's views', [Age, September 1933], Duguid Papers: 1, Series 3, Clipping Book 1, p. 3.


dark-skinned Caucasians, and had sought to study them before they fell victim to an evolutionary logic that predicted their extinction, Wood Jones and Cleland, among others, maintained that Aborigines of full-descent could be saved from this fate.56

'If any remnants of the Aboriginal population [were] to be granted permission to survive', Cleland was convinced that Aboriginal Reserves 'must be conserved inviolate from European settlement, either religious or commercial'.57 On behalf of the BAR, in 1932 Cleland submitted a proposal to the three governments responsible for administering the Central Aborigines Reserve—South Australia, Western Australia and the Commonwealth—requesting that this reserve, having so far 'escaped European occupation', be extended by 'roughly 40 miles' on its eastern and northern borders.58 According to Cleland, this extension—or 'buffer area'—would serve a three-fold purpose. First, it would 'render the native population of the present reserve more secure from outside influence which may destroy it'. Second, it 'would help to preserve the country' around the reserve by 'prevent[ing] despoliation' attendant upon European occupation. And third, if leased to 'some responsible body such as the University of Adelaide', the 'buffer area' would facilitate 'further study' of the Aborigines.59 Unlike J.W. Bleakley, the Chief Protector of Aboriginals in Queensland, who had earlier recommended a similar extension of the Central Aborigines Reserve and the establishment of a mission there, the BAR did 'not think that missionary settlement in the reserved area should be made'.60 'Our reason for this', Cleland explained,

is that contact with European settlement causes a disorganisation of the native social system. When this goes, the tribe ceases to exist as such, and the natives are no longer adapted to their environment, and die out. The missionary settlements, which aim directly at changing the native customs and mode of life, can be in this way, even more inimical to the survival of the native, than are the cattle stations.61

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56 Anderson, The Cultivation of Whiteness, pp. 183, 194-5, 200; McGregor, Imagined Destines, pp. 113-14, 125.
57 Typescript entitled 'Memorandum from members of the Board of Anthropological Research of the University of Adelaide as to the protection and care of Aborigines' (hereafter BAR Memorandum), October 1932, J.B. Cleland Papers, Museum of South Australia, (hereafter Cleland Papers) Acc. 60.
58 Ibid.
59 J.B. Cleland to Professor A.J. Gibson, Honorary Secretary Australian National Research Council, 18 February, 1934, Cleland Papers, Acc. 60; BAR Memorandum.
60 BAR Memorandum. See also, J.W. Bleakley, The Aboriginals and Half-Castes of Central Australia and North Australia (1928), Commonwealth of Australia, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1929, p. 35.
61 BAR Memorandum.
Although the Chief Protector of Aborigines in South Australia, M.T. McLean, expressed any sympathy for Cleland's proposal, it was not successful. As will become apparent, however, the idea of a 'buffer area' stayed with McLean who later used the term 'buffer' to describe Duguid's apposite proposal to establish a Christian mission in the same area.

Even more disdainful of missionaries than Cleland, Wood Jones likened their attempts to bring Aborigines 'within the fold of Christianity' to a form of euthanasia. In Australia's Vanishing Race (1934), Wood Jones argued 'that any attempt to find a place for [full-blood' Aborigines] anywhere within the white man's scheme of civilisation [was] doomed to certain failure':

And a century of experience in three States has amply verified this conclusion. Continued racial life and adoption of the white man's ways are incompatible for the native. Racially he is inevitably doomed to death once contact has been made with our alien culture.

In an article specially written for the Adelaide Advertiser in April 1934, Wood Jones demanded a 'new regime' based on the findings of scientists like himself. 'It must be admitted', he argued, that the "'civilising" experiment has failed utterly':

Mission stations, one after another all over the southern portion of the continent, have come to the same end. Started in fervent hope and with high ideals, they have inevitably ended in the abandonment of the station when the last Christianised native was dead.

No matter how 'well intentioned', the efforts of missionaries could have 'but one end', according to Wood Jones, and that 'is inevitably death'. In his view, the only solution to the problem of the 'uncontaminated native' was to [preserve] him from contamination by the establishment of inviolate reserves for his sole occupation. By allowing onto such reserves 'no traders, no missionaries, no exploiters, not even Government police themselves', Wood Jones sought to shield Aborigines of full-descent from contact with white society, thereby preserving their cultural integrity and their racial purity: in Wood Jones' terms, their 'continued racial life'.

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62 [M. T.] McLean, Chief Protector of Aborigines, South Australia, to Gibson, 23 June 1933, Cleland Papers, Acc. 60. See also A.O. Neville, Chief Protector of Aborigines, Western Australia, to Gibson, 19 May 1933 and Cecil Cook, Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Northern Territory, to Gibson, 13 January 1934, Cleland Papers, Acc. 60.


64 Wood Jones, Australia's Vanishing Race, pp. 39-40.

65 Wood Jones, 'Black and White'.

66 Wood Jones, Australia's Vanishing Race, p. 40.

Wood Jones' characterisation of missionaries as the harbingers of 'racial death' brought a string of spirited denials from people who had spent years labouring under harsh conditions to bring the doctrine of Christ to Aborigines. In a lengthy letter to the editor of the Advertiser, J.J. Stolz, president of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church, rejected Wood Jones' verdict on the failure of missions thus:

As to the fact that the Aborigines of Australia have not survived where their country was overrun by whites, although mission work was carried on amongst them, we must not forget that other influences were at work upon the natives, either before the mission appeared upon the scene, or soon after its establishment—influences that offset the good influence of the Christian mission. ... When these evil influences had succeeded in disintegrating the racial life of the natives, when our doubtful civilisation had brought to them those dreadful diseases ... it was expecting too much of Christian missions that they should arrest the dying out of the natives.68

Reverend T.T. Webb, chairman of the Methodist Missions to the Aborigines, likewise argued that where missions had failed, it was 'mostly because the tide of white settlement [had] swept the Aborigines to destruction before their work could be effective'.69 Thus, according to Reverend H.C. Matthew, secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Missions, it was 'not the missionaries who [had] failed, but the people of Australia who [had] failed to provide for the Aborigines [those] protections and fellowship which the Christian Churches [provided]'.70 Rather than continue to criticise one another, Matthew argued that it would be 'better for all those who are interested in the Aborigines of Australia to co-operate'. His call for a combination of 'scientific and spiritual methods in dealing with the Aborigines' was matched by Stolz's advocacy of '[h]earty co-operation of missionaries and anthropologists' and Webb's conviction that '[w]hen the best anthropological science and the best missionary effort join[ed] hands, then splendid results [would] follow'.71

The Reverend J.H. Sexton, Honorary Secretary of the Aborigines' Friends' Association (AFA) in Adelaide, agreed. Having denigrated missionary endeavour and won the ear of government, the anthropologist was in ascendancy, Sexton observed in 1934, yet 'time [would] show whether science [could] meet the strivings, yearnings, and spiritual needs of the Aborigines as well as their physical necessities'. Sexton thought not, but rather than dismiss science entirely, he too argued that 'surely it would be much better for

the anthropologist and missionary to co-operate, for each has a distinctive contribution to make to the solution of a most difficult problem'.

For Sexton, as for many others, A.P. Elkin, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Sydney, and an Ordained Priest in the Anglican Church, embodied this ideal.

The leading social anthropologist in Australia, Elkin had little time for the type of physical anthropology conducted by the Adelaide researchers, or their conclusions. Provided that the policy of missions was 'not so much to save individual souls, as to preserve societies, especially during periods of cultural clash and transition', Elkin believed that Aborigines offered 'a great opportunity for religious missions'.

The problem with most missions, Elkin observed in 1934, was 'not so much the result aimed at' (ie. Christian conversion), but 'the emotional attitude of shame which is adopted and inculcated with regard to the native’s own social and religious life'. Rather than brand Aboriginal religion as 'devilish', Elkin advised missionaries to 'build upon' it, for in Aboriginal society, as in 'most primitive societies', religion was 'one of the most important cohesive factors' and could not be lost without the disintegration of that society.

Missionary success—defined in terms of Christian conversion but without the total obliteration of the Aborigines' own social and religious life—demanded 'knowledge of the native language and view of life, together with patience and conviction', according to Elkin. Moreover, it required training in 'social anthropology with special reference to primitive and non-European peoples, the functional and comparative study of religion, the study of population-problems, cultural contact and mission methods ... [and] medicine'.

By showing that anthropologists and missionaries could work together, and indeed had to work together if missions were to attract sincere and lasting converts, Elkin did much to bridge the gulf between science and religion. At the beginning of 1935, Sexton, clearly influenced by Elkin's teachings, was reported in the Adelaide press as saying that:

Any new missionaries who go out to work among the Aborigines should certainly have a knowledge of anthropology, and languages and customs of the natives. The aim should not be to destroy ruthlessly native culture, but to guide the longings and aspirations of the Aborigines into the right channels.

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73 A.P. Elkin, Missionary Policy for Primitive Peoples, St John's College Press, Morpeth, 1934 (reprint from The Morpeth Review, No. 27), p. 8.
74 Elkin, Missionary Policy for Primitive Peoples, pp. 2, 8; Elkin, letter of commendation in The Aborigines: A Commonwealth Problem and Responsibility, 1934, p.11.
75 Elkin, Missionary Policy for Primitive Peoples, pp. 5, 10.
Duguid, who joined Sexton's organisation, the AFA, at around this time, carefully clipped this article from the newspaper, and pasted it, along with Wood Jones, Stolz, Webb and Matthews' articles into a large bound journal. As mentioned previously, this was to become a habit for Duguid who filled three such journals during his years as a campaigner for Aboriginal causes. The value of these journals is further magnified by the fact that Duguid rarely, if ever, acknowledged the influence of others on his thinking. In the case of Ernabella's establishment, the clippings provide much needed insight into the 'spirited controversy' out of which Duguid's ideas for the mission which became Ernabella were born.

Duguid's contribution to this debate came in March 1935, during his Moderator's address, with his proposal to establish a 'Christian Anthropological Mission' in the Musgrave Ranges. With this proposal Duguid sought to put a stop to 'futile talk' about whether missionaries or anthropologists, science or religion, was best suited to help Aborigines, and 'get on with the job of saving one of the finest as well as one of the most interesting races on earth'. Having only recently conceived the idea himself, Duguid was more concerned with securing support for his scheme in principle than in practice and so gave little indication as to how such a mission would function. That it was to be no ordinary mission was implied by its title, and reinforced by Duguid's insistence that 'whoever [took] up the work [would] have to learn the language and understand the ways of the people among whom he [was] placed'. In line with Elkin's recommendations, Duguid pledged 'to give 100 pounds for three years at least towards the salary of an approved Christian Medical Missionary, who had anthropological training'. Implicitly rejecting Wood Jones' assertion that the ways of white men and Aborigines were 'incompatible', Duguid described his proposed mission as a place where whites could 'learn much from the native and the native much from us'; a testing ground of sorts where Duguid hoped 'good laws and proper enlightenment' would prove the 'two cultures ... complimentary'.

While appreciative of their new Moderator's initiative, the South Australian Assembly of the Presbyterian Church needed more information, and less prevarication, and so appointed a committee 'to investigate the possibilities' of Duguid's scheme. With Duguid as convenor, this committee of six helped to refine and redefine his proposal, transforming it from a 'Christian Anthropological Mission' to a 'Medical Mission'; a title

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77 Duguid was a member of the Aborigines' Friends' Association for three years, from 1934 to 1937. According to Duguid, he was 'the only person who ever questioned anything' during that time. See Duguid to Oliphant, 18 November 1946, Papers of Dr Charles Duguid, State Library of South Australia, Mortlock Collection, PRG 387, Series 1.
78 Duguid, 'Moderator's Address', p. 10.
80 Duguid, 'Moderator's Address', p. 10.
which better reflected Duguid's own area of expertise and his concern for the health of the Aborigines.\textsuperscript{82}

Disease had long been regarded one of the principle causes, if not the principle cause, of the 'dying out' of the Aborigines.\textsuperscript{83} However, whereas during the nineteenth century it was believed that along with disease and other physical causes, a 'deeper and more mysterious' force was at work, according to Anderson, the early twentieth century saw divine providence—or the hand of God—gradually give way to modern science and explanations which centred on the 'predictable biological consequences of personal contact between the immunologically competent and the immunologically naive'.\textsuperscript{84} In other words, although contact with Europeans was still considered potentially fatal to Aborigines, rather than the result of some 'mystical process', by the 1930s it was generally understood that Aborigines reacted to 'the new diseases they encountered ... in much the same way as anyone born of a previously isolated population'.\textsuperscript{85} Thus, Duguid observed that while the 'health of the Aboriginal in his native haunts, where he has been almost untouched by civilisation, is excellent ... where he has had to compete with cattle and [the] white man it is very bad'.\textsuperscript{86} Duguid described the 'health of the natives in the northern parts of South Australia [as] serious'; '[s]curvy ... influenza, tuberculosis, and venereal diseases [being] among those to which the native has fallen a prey'.\textsuperscript{87} Keeping Aborigines 'away from the townships and as far as possible from contact with white men' was their 'only hope' in the short term, but the long term demanded a different solution.\textsuperscript{88}

A Medical Mission, described by Duguid as 'a permanent hostel [with] two trained nurses in attendance somewhere in the vicinity of the Musgrave Ranges' would help to 'preserve the South Australian Aborigines from the ravages of disease and epidemic that [were] rapidly lessening their numbers' by providing medical attention for 'Aborigines from the whole of the surrounding country', including the Central Aborigines Reserve.\textsuperscript{89} At Australia's first and 'only purely Medical Mission' to Aborigines, there would be 'no need for a padre', Duguid declared, but there was a 'definite need' for a 'medical missionary patrol'.\textsuperscript{90} 'My idea', he explained, 'is to have a fixed point, out near the Reserve, and a patrol (medical) from it'.\textsuperscript{91} This was not a new idea. In 1933 the National Missionary Council (NMC) included the provision of a 'travelling medical service' for 'migratory Aboriginals'...
outside reserves, and for Aborigines on reserves untended by missions, among its many recommendations to government. Sexton, in his review of the NMC's recommendations, likewise stressed the 'urgent need in widely-scattered areas of a travelling medical service, in order to minister to sick Aborigines'. Indeed, the AFA had, 'in some measure ... tried to supply this in Central Australia', Sexton claimed, 'by the periodic visits to scattered tribes by its missionary', Reverend E.E. Kramer.\footnote{Sexton, ‘The New Policy Reviewed’, p. 9.} Duguid, who met Kramer in Alice Springs in 1934, maintained that while he and other missionaries 'working on faith lines' were 'fine people in their [own] way', they were 'incapable of anything but the simplest methods, eg. they could do nothing for gonorrhoea or tuberculosis'.\footnote{Duguid to Matthew, 19 April 1935.} Nothing less than a medical doctor on patrol, and two nurses trained 'in infant welfare, as well as general medical work', would suffice at Duguid's proposed Medical Mission.\footnote{‘Medical Mission for the Aborigines’, \textit{Advertiser}, 4 June 1935.}

The Presbyterian Church was still not convinced. In April 1935, the executive of the Presbyterian Board of Missions requested that Duguid's committee 'give consideration to possible alternative schemes for the provision of a medical patrol', such as giving 'more medical power' to existing missions; reminded the committee of the 'present obligations of the Presbyterian Church'; and further reminded the committee that under the Constitution of the Board of Missions 'No new Mission shall be originated by a State Assembly without approval of the General Assembly', next scheduled to meet in September 1936.\footnote{Matthew to Duguid, 16 April 1935 (enclosed 'Resolution of the Executive of the Board of Mission'), Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1; Duguid to Matthew, 19 April 1935.}

Duguid was outraged. Had the Presbyterian Church 'lost all faith, all adventure, all daring for Christ' he wondered? 'For God's sake, the Church's sake, and the sake of the Aborigines', Duguid implored the Board to 'lift [their] eyes unto the hills'. 'Rome is burning', he exclaimed, and 'I shall not wait ... for permission to go on'.\footnote{Duguid to Matthew, 19 April 1935.}

With 'a view to gaining further information for [the] Board in presenting the case for a medical patrol', Duguid left Adelaide bound for the Musgrave Ranges on 8 June 1935.\footnote{Duguid to Matthew, 19 July 1935, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 10.} After nearly a week's travelling over unsealed roads, creek-beds and sandhills, Duguid and his party—R.M. Williams as guide and E.B. Robinson as mechanic—reached their destination, a partly built homestead and sheep station belonging to Stan Fergusson in the foothills of the Musgrave Ranges.\footnote{'Story of Ernabella', \textit{Advertiser}, 2 April 1937, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1, Clipping Book 1, p. 126.} Named 'Ernabella' after an Aboriginal man who had told the surveyor John Curruthers that 'he owned the country' in the late 1880s, Fergusson's property was the destination of several scientific expeditions in the early 1930s.\footnote{'Thrilling Adventure of Surveyor Who Discovered Site of Ernabella Station', \textit{News}, 14 June 1938, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 10.} Situated at the eastern edge of the Central Aborigines Reserve, and with
a permanent water supply which attracted Aborigines, Ernabella was also the destination of 'doggers'; white men who traded in dingo scalps, 'buying' them off Aborigines for a handful of flour and sugar, and selling them to the South Australian government for more than seven shillings per scalp. Fergusson, Duguid observed, had several doggers working the reserve for him, all of whom, including Fergusson himself, had fathered 'half-caste' children. In his travel diary, Duguid recorded the names of these white men, the number, names and ages of their children, and their various venereal diseases, where known.  

After 'five days and nights in the dogging country, where every white man, without exception, [was] living with a black woman and breeding half-castes', and where one man 'boasted he would give every lubra he came across gonorrhoea', Duguid returned to Adelaide even more convinced of the need for a medical patrol. In a submission to the South Australian government in August 1935, Duguid suggested a three-fold solution to the 'native problem in the far north':

1. The Aboriginal Reserve to be increased to the east as far as Ernabella, and to be Inviolate. The entire Musgraves should be in the Reserve.
2. A police patrol of the eastern boarder of the Reserve.
3. A medical patrol of station whites and natives, and of natives on [the] Reserve, with Oodnadatta as headquarters and depots as Marree, Ernabella and Coober Pedy.

According to Duguid, while he was at Ernabella, Fergusson told him that if a 'police patrol of the SA Reserve ... [was] started, he would pull out'. This, it seems, was Duguid's intention. To rid [that] so-called Reserve of financially interested white men, and to keep the natives in it' was his goal, yet Duguid was no supporter of segregation. In his view, it was 'too late to leave our Aborigines alone'. By ridding the reserve of 'undesirables', Duguid sought to ensure that 'the Aborigines' early contacts [were] with the best type of white man', namely missionaries and men like himself.

In his third and final proposal for the establishment of a mission in the Musgrave Ranges, presented to the Presbyterian Board of Missions in September 1935, Duguid brought the main elements of his earlier proposals together in a greatly enlarged scheme. Prefaced with the ASS's 'plea on behalf of the Australian Aborigines', Duguid described

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the curator of mammals at the South Australian Museum, H.H. Finlayson. See Finlayson, The Red Centre: Man and Beast in the Heart of Australia, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1936.

100 Duguid, Travel Diary, 1935, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 2, pp. 11-13.
101 Duguid to Matthew, 19 July 1935; Duguid, Travel Diary, 1935.
102 Duguid to H.S. Hudd, Commissioner of Public Works, 15 August 1935, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 10 (original emphasis).
103 Duguid, Travel Diary, 1935.
104 Duguid, 'Moderator's Address', pp. 9-10; Duguid to editor, Daily Telegraph, [May] 1936; Duguid, 'The Australian Aborigines—(II)', The Australian Intercollegian, 1 July 1940, p. 88.
his proposed mission as the 'only hope for the natives of the Great Inland Reserve'. With 'detribalisation ... fast taking place', it would provide 'a spiritual prop—non credal—to fill the gap created by us', 'education and training for the changed conditions created by our coming', and 'medical care for their own peculiar ills and those acquired through contact with us'. With government co-operation, the mission would 'control' the dogging problem, prevent Aborigines from drifting towards white society and 'eliminate the exploitation of the native women'. 'Perhaps the most important part of the work', Duguid stressed, 'would be the medical patrol—a white man with natives guides on camels moving west and north from the depot in the Musgrave area'. Like the 'native patrols' initiated by Albrecht at Hermannsburg, the medical patrol would answer 'the curiosity of the unspoilt native, and [show] him how much better he is in his open country than in at the station as a hanger on'.

The mission itself, Duguid explained, would 'be run on the lines of similar Christian Missions in the Australian Mandated Territory of New Guinea, the missionaries learning the language of the native and getting to understand their side of the clash of culture as well as ours'. In order to further explain and distinguish his proposal from other missions operating in Australia at that time, Duguid argued that it was 'worse than useless to attempt to civilise and Christianise [Aborigines] in one fell swoop'. Rather, he professed, 'Jesus must be lived among them before they can understand what Jesus is, and the best of their own culture must be retained'. The 'process [would] be slow', Duguid advised, but ultimately 'worthwhile', for once Aborigines had 'seen and experienced the best that the new civilisation' had to offer, 'they [would] desire it'.

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105 Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia Held in Sydney, September 1936, Session Twentieth, Robert Dey, Son and Co., Sydney, 1936, pp. 98-105. Duguid presented this statement to a meeting of the Board of Missions in September 1935. The full text of Duguid's statement can also be found in Duguid, 'The Australian Aborigines', Aborigines Protector, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1936, pp. 11-17. Same, including J.R.B. Love's comments, can be found in Love's personal papers. See Love to Matthew, 13 July 1936, J.R.B. Love Papers, State Library of South Australia, Mortlock Collection, PRG 214, Series 1/66-82. A shorter version was submitted to the South Australian government. See Duguid to H.S. Hudd, 14 August 1936, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.

106 Duguid, 'The Australian Aborigines', Aborigines Protector, p. 16. Duguid did not develop his ideas on the operation of missions in the Australian Mandated Territory of New Guinea. It is likely that he borrowed this idea from Charles Genders, former president of the Aborigines Protection League (APL) in South Australia. In 1927, the APL submitted a petition to the federal government calling for the creation of a Model Aboriginal State. An accompanying 'Manifesto' highlighted 'the main features of the Federal Government with regard to the Mandated Territory of New Guinea' which were 'the preservation of native laws and customs and the participation of the natives, to an increasing extent, in the government of the Territory'. In 1935, Duguid became president of the APL. See The Proposed Aboriginal State—Manifesto', [1927], Papers of Constance Ternent Cooke, State Records of South Australia (hereafter SRSA), GRG 52/325. Elkin also referred to the Australian Mandated Territory of New Guinea in his A Policy for the Aborigines, St John's College Press, Morpeth, 1933, p. 1 (reprinted from Morpeth Review, October 1933). For more information on the Australian Mandated Territory of New Guinea see Christine Winter, "Looking After One's Own": The rise of Nationalism and the Politics of the Neuendettelsauer Mission in Germany, New Guinea and Australia (1928-1933)', PhD Thesis, Australian National University, 2004. The APL is examined in chapter two.

107 Duguid, 'The Australian Aborigines', Aborigines Protector, p. 16.
Both in terms of phraseology and ideas, it is clear that Duguid was influenced by Elkin, as McGregor has argued, but there were other influences as well. The Reverend J.R.B. Love, a fellow Presbyterian and superintendent of Kunmunya mission in the West Kimberley region, had long sought to integrate Christianity into Aboriginal culture with minimal disruption to the latter. Through Love's reports to the Board of Missions—and later through Love's highly celebrated book *Stone-age Bushmen of To-day: Life and Adventure among a Tribe of Savages in North-Western Australia* (1936)—Duguid would have known of his efforts to 'preserve tribal organisation, to conserve everything that was good in it, not to cast down and break up old beliefs and traditions, but ... to build up gradually a civilised Christianity'. Without means of employment, a Christian community, no matter how 'civilised', would not last long in the dry interior. From Albrecht Duguid learned that there was 'no end of work that the natives [could] be taught to do', such as:

- the tending of cattle, sheep and goats and camels; attention to wells, and the general work of an outback station; preparation and tanning of the skins of the animals they are so expert in catching, viz., wild-dog and the kangaroo;
- the making of leather belts and watch-chains—pleated and plain; the collection and preparation of mulga and other woods and poker-work there on, and many other forms of handicraft.

According to Barbara Henson, Albrecht's biographer, Duguid was fascinated by the array of goods for sale at Hermannsburg in 1934, and purchased several items from the cash store, including a snake skin, two stone knives and a message stick. Together with the other influences already mentioned, including Duguid's visit to the Musgrave Ranges, Love and Albrecht's practical experience as missionaries helped to shape Duguid's thinking, making his mission the 'greatest anthropological, cultural and industrial venture' ever proposed in the interests of the South Australian Aborigines.

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111 Duguid, 'The Australian Aborigines', *Aborigines Protector*, pp. 16-17.
113 'Plans for Native Mission Work', *News*, 10 February 1937; See also *A Mission to the Aborigines in South Australia* (statement and appeal issued by the Presbyterian Board of Missions), Brown, Prior, Anderson, Melbourne, March 1937, p. 5, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 10. Apart from Love, Duguid does not appear to have been particularly influenced by other Presbyterian missionaries. He referred to the 'splendid results' achieved by [our] missionaries on the Northern coasts' in his Moderator's Address, but otherwise made no specific reference to the
Ernabella 'buffer' mission

In September 1936, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church agreed to establish Duguid's mission. In November that year, the South Australian government pledged its support, promising a subsidy of up to 1000 pounds for the mission's inauguration.\(^{114}\) Negotiations with Fergusson to buy Ernabella were completed in April 1937, and in May the Board of Missions sent Love, then on furlough from Kunmunya, and Dr Lewis J. Balfour to examine and report on the situation there. Although favourably disposed to Duguid's scheme, Love and Balfour disagreed with Duguid on one crucial point. Finding the health of the Aborigines to be, 'on the whole, good', Love concluded that 'the task of head of the Ernabella Mission [was] not one for a doctor, but for a clerical missionary'.\(^{115}\) Dr Balfour agreed, arguing that 'unless the presence of the mission [drew] many sick natives from the surrounding districts ... there would not be enough work for a medical man'.\(^{116}\) As a consequence of Love and Balfour's reports, the Presbyterian Church appointed the Reverend Harry Taylor, a colleague of Love's from Kunmunya, the first superintendent at Ernabella.\(^{117}\)

Love and Balfour were not the first to comment on the relative good health of the Aborigines at Ernabella, as Duguid likely knew. A copy of the *Medical Journal of Australia*, dated June 1934, and book-marked to J.B. Cleland's article on the 'The Natives of the North-West of South Australia', was among the last of Duguid's personal papers deposited at the National Library of Australia. In this article, which documented the results of physiological and pathological tests conducted among the Aborigines at Ernabella in 1933, Cleland claimed that apart from old scars and burns and minor wounds and injuries, 'the natives appear[ed] almost free from serious disease'.\(^{118}\) The Chief Protector of Aborigines in South Australia, M.T. McLean, having accompanied Cleland on this expedition, concurred, noting in his Annual Report for 1933 that 'all the natives inspected were in remarkably good physical condition and free from disease'.\(^{119}\) Thus, rather than based on empirical reality, it seems that Duguid's claim that the 'health of the natives in the northern parts of South Australia [was] serious', was based on his assessment of situation in Alice Springs, and his fear that the physical degradation he had witnessed among

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\(^{114}\) Hudd to Matthew, 18 November 1936, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.


\(^{116}\) 'Report by Dr Lewis J. Balfour' in *Ernabella*, p. 19.

\(^{117}\) *Ernabella*, p. 3.

\(^{118}\) Cleland, 'The Natives of the North-West of South Australia', *Medical Journal of Australia*, 30 June 1934, p. 850, Duguid Papers: 3.

\(^{119}\) Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 'A brief outline of Aboriginal Affairs in South Australia since colonisation', unpublished manuscript, 1963, p. 22, SRSA, GRG 52/22/2 (emphasis added).
EsTABLISHING ERNABELLA

Aborigines there would spread to other less settled regions. By calling his proposed mission a 'Medical Mission', it is also likely that Duguid sought to highlight the AIM's neglect of Aborigines, thereby increasing his chances of gaining full access to the Smith of Dunesk Bequest.

Duguid was nothing if not pragmatic. Without a doctor as head of the mission, it could not, in good faith, be called a Medical Mission. Shortly after Ernabella was established it became known instead as a 'Buffer Mission'. From 1938 onwards, the 'buffer' concept became the central and defining characteristic of Ernabella—both pre and post establishment—with Duguid claiming that '[f]irst and foremost Ernabella has been called into being to act as a buffer between the white settlers east of it and the Native Reserve west of it'. Although Duguid had had such an object in mind from the outset, he had neither used the term 'buffer' to describe this aspect of the mission's work, nor viewed it as the mission's 'great purpose' until after it was established. But others had. In his Annual Report for 1936, McLean reflected that:

It appears to be impossible to stop the progress of the white race, even if it does upset the life and habits of the indigenous people. It therefore becomes our duty to buffer the contact in some way so that the clash will not only be gradual but will, in the first instance, be with persons who have the welfare and love of the Aboriginal at heart ... Doctor Charles Duguid has been urging this duty upon the people of South Australia and is endeavouring to get support for a scheme, which, gaining by the errors of missionary enterprise in the past, will serve to assist the Aboriginal to retain his virility and self-respect and save him from the general degradation which usually follows his association with white settlement.

Uncommonly sympathetic to the plight of the Aborigines in his care, McLean, it will be recalled, was the only authority to express any interest in Cleland's proposal for the establishment of a 'buffer area' in 1932. While also serving as the likely source of Hilliard, Broome and Edwards' claim that Duguid learned from the mistakes of other missionaries,

1 Dr Duguid first went to the Musgraves in 1935 and found a completely naked people ... He wanted a Mission established to stop the encroachment of white people and their cattle onto Aboriginal land. He saw the need for a buffer between the Aboriginal lifestyle and the white culture which had proved so devastating to Aboriginal people in other parts of Australia. Health was not an issue at the time. The Doctor found the people to be physically fit, and in the best of health ... If you read his book Doctor and the Aborigines, you will gain an accurate view of the concern behind his early vigorous campaigning.

120 Duguid to Minister (unnamed), 26 June 1938, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 10. In 1982, at 98 years of age, Duguid denied an (intending) MA student, Wendy Brown's suggestion of a link between the establishment of Ernabella and the provision of medical services. A letter to Brown (written by Nancy Sheppard on Duguid's behalf) states: 'Dr Duguid first went to the Musgraves in 1935 and found a completely naked people ... He wanted a Mission established to stop the encroachment of white people and their cattle onto Aboriginal land. He saw the need for a buffer between the Aboriginal lifestyle and the white culture which had proved so devastating to Aboriginal people in other parts of Australia. Health was not an issue at the time. The Doctor found the people to be physically fit, and in the best of health ... If you read his book Doctor and the Aborigines, you will gain an accurate view of the concern behind his early vigorous campaigning'. Wendy Brown to Duguid, 25 October 1982 and Nancy Sheppard to Brown, 15 November 1982, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.

this excerpt from McLean's report, quoted in full in *Doctor and the Aborigines*, foreshadowed Duguid's recreation of Ernabella as a buffer mission.\(^{122}\)

As the earlier titles he gave his proposed mission suggest, Duguid was aware of the power and importance of naming and cleverly capitalised on current trends. His use of the term 'buffer' closely followed the anthropologist, Donald Thomson's use of the term in his 'Recommendations of Policy in Native Affairs in the Northern Territory', submitted to the commonwealth government in 1937. A former student of Wood Jones', Thomson recommended a policy of 'absolute segregation' for Aborigines who were 'still in possession of their culture'. As a concession to missionary interests, however, Thomson suggested that mission stations could be established on the outskirts of otherwise inviolable reserves 'to act as "buffers" and to prevent the entry of outside influences into the reserve'.\(^{123}\)

In July 1938, *The Adelaide Church Guardian* informed its readers that Ernabella was a 'Buffer Mission of the type of which Dr Donald Thomson so strongly approves'.\(^{124}\) With the release of the commonwealth government's policy for Northern Territory Aborigines in 1939, Duguid's timely appropriation of the buffer concept received a further boost. Known as the 'New Deal', this policy was drawn up by the Minister for the Interior, John McEwen in consultation with Elkin. Rivals for influence with government, Thomson and Elkin held different views on Aboriginal welfare, and so while McEwen indicated the Thomson's 1937 recommendations had been considered, it is clear that his advice had been rejected in favour of Elkin's more assimilatory approach.\(^{125}\) The one point on which McEwen's 'New Deal' came closest to Thomson's recommendations was in relation to Aborigines 'still living in [a] tribal state', towards whom it would be 'the policy of the Government to, at least for the present, leave these natives to their ancient tribal life protected ... from the intrusion of whites'.\(^{126}\) In keeping with Thomson's suggestion, McEwen added that 'missions or district officer stations' would be maintained on the boundaries of the reserves 'to act as *buffers* between the tribal natives and the outer civilisation'.\(^{127}\)

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125 Tigger Wise, *The Self-Made Anthropologist: A Life of A.P. Elkin*, Allen and Unwin, North Sydney, 1985, pp. 143-44. According to Wise, McEwen's policy 'was a document that was pure Elkin ... Dr Thomson's ideas were out'.


Following the release of this policy, Duguid went to great lengths to show that the 'lines laid down [by him] in 1935-1936 for the working of a buffer Mission Station in the Musgraves, [were] identical with those in McEwen's New Deal'. The way Duguid told it, the federal government's new policy was not only the same as his, it was his: 'The new Federal Government scheme for the untouched tribal natives is just my scheme adopted by the Presbyterian Church for Ernabella', he claimed in 1939. While the similarities between Ernabella and McEwen's policy went beyond the buffer name, the name was of central importance. By calling Ernabella a buffer mission, and claiming that he had always intended it to be so, Duguid was able to expeditiously imply that government was following his lead.

This kind of self-promotion was a key factor in Duguid's success as a champion of Aboriginal causes. The more he was viewed as a leading figure, the more his views were taken seriously and the greater his image as a leading figure became. Rarely did he miss an opportunity to emphasise the 'strong support' his mission was receiving from 'leading government authorities in native affairs, both federal and state', and 'anthropologists throughout Australia', including Wood Jones. Staunch critic of missionary endeavour though he was, Wood Jones publicly declared that Ernabella 'was likely to do more good to the natives than anything attempted previously'. Duguid's discursive reconstruction of Ernabella as a 'buffer mission' notwithstanding, Ernabella was regarded as the 'greatest step yet taken for the uplift and maintenance of the native race' because of its policy of minimal interference with tribal custom. Although formulated by Duguid, this policy was not the result of miraculous inspiration, nor was it conceived in an intellectual vacuum. Instead, as the Reverend Harry Taylor, Ernabella's first superintendent put it: 'Ernabella is a Christian mission on scientific lines, using the findings of anthropologists, doctors, educationalists, and missionaries to help in the work'.

III. 'Some day I shall be thanked for what I have done': the Smith of Dunesk Bequest controversy and Duguid's 'search for truth'

All the praise that Duguid received for Ernabella's establishment could not make up for what he perceived as a lack of appreciation on the part of the Presbyterian Church. Most other Churches, he complained in a letter to H.C. Matthew, secretary of the Board of

128 Duguid to E.W.P. Chinnery, 1 August 1941, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
129 Duguid to MacDonald Webster, 31 May 1939, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 10.
130 Duguid to Mr Webster, Convener Foreign Missions Committee, Presbyterian Church, 13 February 1939, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 10; Duguid to editor, Advertiser, 9 December 1939; 'Ernabella's value - Haven of Refuge for Natives', News, 14 March 1939, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 3, Clipping Book 2, p. 172.
131 Our Brothers the Aborigines (pamphlet issued by the Presbyterian Board of Missions), Brown, Prior, Anderson, December 1937, Duguid Papers: 3.
132 Reverend Harry L. Taylor to editor, Advertiser, 6 December 1939, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 3, Clipping Book 2, p. 189.
Missions, would have been 'very proud that one of their members had achieved so much for the Aborigines'; not so the Presbyterian Church, at whose hands Duguid claimed to have suffered a severe 'battering' instead.\textsuperscript{133} Shunned by AIM members and sympathisers alike over his efforts to have the full proceeds of the Smith of Dunesk Bequest transferred to Emabella, Duguid felt that he deserved, at the very least, 'a minute of appreciation for [his] part in the starting and maintaining of Emabella'.\textsuperscript{134} As for the Bequest, Duguid was adamant that 'so long as Mrs Smith's money [was] diverted from the natives it [was] incumbent on [him] to go on with the fight'.\textsuperscript{135} Even if it meant 'washing [his] hands of the Presbyterian Church', Duguid told Matthew that he would continue to fight 'till Mrs Smith [was] honoured and Emabella benefited by the entire funds'.\textsuperscript{136} Once the true purpose of the Smith of Dunesk Bequest was known, returning Smith's money to 'the natives for whom it was first intended' became more than a matter of honouring Smith's wish; for Duguid, it became a matter of restoring honour upon the Presbyterian Church.

As Robert Scrimgeour has observed, the 'Smith of Dunesk story is one that does not reflect credit on the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland nor on the Presbyterian Church in South Australia'.\textsuperscript{137} Beginning in 1839, when Henrietta Smith of 'Dunesk', Lasswade, Scotland, purchased land in the new colony of South Australia with the sole intention of benefiting the Aboriginal residents there, her Bequest 'has been accompanied by frustration, discontent and controversy'.\textsuperscript{138} Due to delays in the survey and allocation of land in the new colony, Smith's purchase was not realised until 1852. Having meanwhile been reliably informed that the Aborigines of Australia were a dying race, incapable of survival let alone advancement, Smith signed a Deed of Gift which empowered the Colonial Committee of the Free Church of Scotland to apply the proceeds of her Bequest more generally 'towards promoting the cause of the Gospel in South Australia'.\textsuperscript{139} Dissatisfied with the wording of the Deed of Gift, and determined that her money be spent on Aborigines so long as Aborigines remained, Smith detailed her original intention in a letter that was recorded in the Colonial Committee minutes in December 1853:

\begin{quote}
With reference to the gift of certain lands in South Australia recently made by me to the Free Church of Scotland, I beg to state that my original design in purchasing from the Government 14 years ago six sections of land in that colony of 80 acres each, was that the annual proceeds of them might be
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[133] Duguid to Matthew, 30 August 1939, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 10.
\item[134] \textit{Ibid.}
\item[135] Duguid to Moderator General, Presbyterian Church, 30 December 1938, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
\item[137] Scrimgeour, \textit{Some Scots were here}, p. 106; Scrimgeour, \textit{Robert Mitchell: Pioneer missioner to the Inland}, Paradise, Adelaide, [1994], p. 50
\item[138] Scrimgeour, \textit{Some Scots were here}, p. 106; Scrimgeour, \textit{Robert Mitchell}, p. 50
\item[139] Phyllis Duguid, \textit{A Brief Account of the "Smith of Dunesk Bequest"}, [1937], p. 3, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 9.
\end{footnotes}
entirely devoted to the education and evangelisation of the Aborigines of South Australia ... The lapse of 14 years, however, producing changes of circumstances, thereby putting an end to the plan I had formerly laid down for benefiting the parties first intended. I have thought it best, in order that the property may not be lost to the cause of Christ, to convey it over to the Free Church of Scotland, trusting and believing that they will not lose sight of the welfare of the natives for whom it was first intended, along with their other pious objects in South Australia.140

Until her death in 1871, Smith continued to insist that her money was for the 'South Australian blacks alone, not whites ... again I say, not whites'.141 Between 1861 and 1896 a small proportion was paid to an Aboriginal mission at Point McLeay and small annual grants were made to the AFA, but most of Smith's money was left unspent. By 1896, the Smith of Dunesk fund had accumulated revenue exceeding 2000 pounds which, from that time until 1937, was used exclusively for work among white settlers; first by the 'Smith of Dunesk Mission', and later by the AIM.142 With Duguid's plea to have the fund returned to the Aborigines in 1935, the 'betrayal of trust' that had characterised the Bequest's history finally ended, according to Scrimgeour: 'Gradually the percentage of the Fund allocated to Aboriginal work was increased so that from 1941 until Church Union in 1977 the South Australian Presbyterian Church gave 75% of the fund to Aboriginal work and 25% to the AIM'.143

Rather than signalling the end of the Smith of Dunesk saga, as Scrimgeour has suggested, Duguid's entry marked the beginning of a new, and perhaps even more dishonourable chapter. Until Duguid revealed the true purpose of the Smith of Dunesk Bequest in his Moderator's address in March 1935, few within the Church had known of Smith's original intention, and those who thought they knew were largely mistaken.144 Historical inaccuracies, such as that printed under the heading 'The AIM: Its Formation' in the AIM's magazine Frontier News in July-August 1934, led readers to believe that Smith had been 'thinking of the destitute religious condition of the outback settlers' when she made her gift.145 Two esteemed members of the Church, the Reverends J.R. Fiddian and J.R.B. Love, were aware of Smith's real intention prior to Duguid's revelation, however, only Love, it seems, was aware of any wrong doing. Fiddian, in his history of the life of Robert Mitchell of the Inland (1931), argued that although Smith's 'original intention had

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140 Henrietta Smith to Colonial Committee, Free Church of Scotland, 28 November 1853, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 9.
141 Smith to Reverend Peter Hope, Secretary Colonial Committee, 30 March 1871, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 9.
142 Scrimgeour, Some Scots were here, pp. 106-115.
143 Scrimgeour, Robert Mitchell, pp. 50, 104; Scrimgeour, Some Scots were here, p. 118
144 Matthew to Duguid, 19 April 1935. In this letter, Matthew wrote: 'Your paragraph in your Moderational address about the Smith of Dunesk benefaction was a revelation to all of us.'
been the care of the Aborigines ... in 1853 [she] allowed a larger scope for her benefaction' which provided for work among white settlers. Love, in contrast, heartily commended Duguid for his efforts to 'right this wrong'. I have been sore about this taking of blacks' money to help the whites, who were never in so dire need, ever since I was interested in the blacks; but my small voice went no-where with effect', he told Duguid in 1936. Yet even Love was wary of criticising the AIM, describing it as 'one of the greatest forces for good in our branch of the Church'. Fiddian, a former Moderator of the Victorian Assembly, refused to even discuss the matter with Duguid. With little support from anyone within the Church, the task of challenging the AIM's right to the Smith of Dunesk Bequest was, as Matthew put it, left 'to [Duguid] to carry through'.

To correct the impression that Smith had left her money for the benefit of white settlers, Duguid's first task, as he saw it, was to prove otherwise. From the Church of Scotland he obtained a copy of Smith's letter to the Colonial Committee in 1853, and from the AFA he obtained minutes, letters and other records concerning the Bequest dating back to 1871. While Phyllis undertook the laborious task of going through these records and compiling a short history of the Bequest, Duguid concentrated his efforts on establishing the mission. He had 'no intention', he claimed in 1935, 'of revealing publicly' what Flynn had told him at their meeting a year earlier 'unless an attempt [was] made to prove a case which [did] not exist', namely that the AIM treated Aborigines. Duguid's case, maintained somewhat ingeniously, was that while the AIM provided 'a magnificent social service to the white pioneers of the Commonwealth through its wireless and its hostels', it was 'for the white people, not the natives'. Since Smith had clearly bequeathed her money for work among Aborigines, this should have been enough, Duguid believed, to prove the AIM undeserving.

There were several problems with this approach. First, as Love pointed out, Duguid entirely underestimated the AIM's 'dislike of losing [the] Smith of Dunesk money'. Second, he underestimated the amount of service the AIM provided Aborigines, even though Aborigines were not in their purview. And third, Duguid overestimated his own ability to refrain from criticising the AIM in light of Flynn's (alleged) remarks. Prior to visiting Alice Springs in 1934, Duguid had believed that the AIM 'treated all men and women, black and white', and his dismay at discovering otherwise 'saddened [him] beyond words'. While in Alice Springs, Duguid also learned that the AIM missioner in Central Australia, Kingsley Partridge, did 'not hold [Christian] services with the station folks, the

147 Love to Duguid, 20 April 1936, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
148 Ibid.
150 Matthew to Duguid, 5 November 1938, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
151 Duguid to George Simpson, 21 May 1935.
152 Duguid to MacDonald Webster, 27 May 1935, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
153 Love to Duguid, 27 November 1936, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
154 Duguid to Simpson, 21 May 1935.
fettlers or the miners'. It was this lack, according to Duguid, that accounted for the contempt in which Aborigines in Central Australia were held, for if Partridge represented Christ to the white settlers, then 'the uplift of the native would be well on the way'. Soon after his return from Alice Springs, Duguid brought his concerns before the Executive of the AIM Field Committee in Adelaide, of which he was then an associate member. Finding the policy of the AIM unchanged two years later, Duguid resigned his membership of the Field Committee, citing 'Christian principle' as his reason.

At the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in September 1936, Duguid made several attempts to air his concerns about the AIM's policy, but 'every attempt was definitely frustrated', he claimed, by AIM members and Flynn in particular who 'confused the Assembly with half-truths' and 'words creating an effect at variance with the facts'. According to Duguid, Flynn 'did everything in his power to put the people against [him] and the Mission [he was] sponsoring for the natives'. This being unsuccessful, Flynn '[t]hen tried to pose as a friend to the native', moving an amendment to the effect that the Board of Missions 'be authorised to take appropriate steps towards ensuring adequate care of Aborigines in Central Australia'. Having earlier tried and failed to move a similar amendment compelling the AIM hostel at Alice Springs to 'admit or treat anyone in medical need, irrespective of colour', Duguid viewed Flynn's posturing with scorn. It was, he declared, yet another example of 'the Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde nature of the man'.

Twice thwarted through official channels, Duguid tried a different approach, this time penning his grievances in article form. Entitled the 'The Clash of Cultures in Central Australia and the Church's Attitude', Duguid's article, published in the Presbyterian Messenger on 25 December 1936, sent shock-waves through the Church. 'If Jesus were alive today in Central Australia', Duguid boldly asserted, 'He could not be admitted to

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155 Ibid.
156 Duguid to Chapman, 7 July 1936 and R.C. Racklyeft, Convenor AIM Field Committee to Duguid, 29 July 1936 and Duguid to Racklyeft, 6 August 1936, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
157 Duguid joined the executive of the South Australian AIM Field Committee in 1933, but attended very few meetings. See Minutes of the AIM Field Committee, May 1933 to July 1936, Records of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, South Australian Assembly, State Library of South Australia, Mortlock Collection, SRG 123/14.
158 Duguid to McKenzie, 11 February 1937. For an alternative reading of this meeting, see McPheat, 'The Life and Work of John Flynn', pp. 369-70. According to McPheat, Duguid's 'attack ... needled [Flynn] into one of the most spirited speeches of his career. He pointed out that the Flying Doctor Service treated twice as many blacks as whites, and quoted the numbers of Aborigines treated in AIM hostels'.
159 Duguid to McKenzie, 11 February 1937; Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, Sydney, 1936, p. 64.
161 Duguid to Matthew, 23 February 1937, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
162 Reverend A.S. Houston warned the AIM about Duguid's article. He wrote: 'There is a nasty article to come out in the Presbyterian [Messenger], written by Dr. Duguid, and criticising the AIM again ... I tried to have it kept out, but was unsuccessful'. A.S. Houston, extract, 11 December 1936, AIM Collection, Box 196, Folder 6. See also John Cormous, editor Messenger, to Duguid, 26 January 1937, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
our hostel at Alice Springs because of the darker colour of His skin'. It was difficult to imagine anything more 'contrary to the spirit of Christ' than the AIM's refusal to admit Aborigines to its hostels, Duguid argued, yet nothing was being done to prevent it: 'Surely to a Christian this ban against colour is a deep humiliation'. Citing case after case of the AIM's discrimination against Aborigines, and failure to carry out 'definitely religious work' among the white population of the Inland, Duguid called on the Church to act. The AIM, he declared, 'is the responsibility of the whole Church', not just AIM members and certainly not Flynn:

The Church must see to it that the love of Jesus for all men is a living factor in the work of our Inland Mission. If we do not abide in His word the truth is not in us as a Church, and we choose the shackles of this earth in preference to the glorious power of being free.\(^{162}\)

What Duguid wanted was 'a full and impartial inquiry into the whole work of the AIM, beginning with the Board in Sydney and extending to the limits of the Service'.\(^{163}\) What he got was a severe reprimand from the highest levels of the Church, threats of legal action and ridicule from AIM members and supporters.\(^{164}\)

Duguid was unrepentant. 'I stand by every word I have written', he told the Reverend John McKenzie, Moderator General of the Presbyterian Church in 1937,

and I am prepared to give evidence in any Court of the Church. So long as I am a member of the Presbyterian Church, I am not prepared to stand by and see the Church brought to nought by the hypocrisy that is being perpetrated by certain members of the AIM.\(^{165}\)

Flynn viewed the publication of Duguid's article as an 'unfortunate lapse into 'yellow journalism' in which one part is encouraged to irritate another—right or wrong being irrelevant for the time being—in order to provoke a controversy which will provide a tonic for weary readers'.\(^{166}\) Flynn's cynicism, borne out in the letters column of the Messenger, found some respondents claiming that Duguid had been the unsuspecting victim of 'a mighty "leg-pull", in the true and accepted spirit of the inland', and others that Duguid was clearly 'ignorant' of the duties of the AIM, as opposed to the Board of Missions; the

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\(^{163}\) Duguid to McKenzie, 11 February 1937.

\(^{164}\) John Flynn, Memorandum—'Dr Duguid's Attack on AIM', 31 December 1936, AIM Collection, Box 196, Folder 6; R.G. Macintyre, Memorandum [re: Dr Duguid], 2 February 1937, AIM Collection, Box 196, Folder 6.

\(^{165}\) Duguid to McKenzie, 11 February 1937.

\(^{166}\) John Flynn, Memorandum—'Dr Duguid's Attack on AIM'.

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former being for white people only, and the latter for the 'blacks'.

Perhaps more damning than Duguid’s article, however, were the letters of support received by a former AIM worker, Jean Finlayson, who described Duguid as ‘the only man I have known who has had the courage to fearlessly declare what we all know to be the absolute truth regarding the natives, the white man, and the AIM’. The final word was left to R. Wilson Macaulay, Clerk of the General Assembly, who stated that since the matters Duguid referred to in his article were now ‘sub judice’—meaning under review—‘the discussion should cease’.

Duguid’s efforts to reform the AIM for the ‘glory of the Church’, the Aborigines and the white settlers of the Inland, did nothing to help, and much to hinder, his efforts to wrest the Smith of Dunesk Bequest from that organisation. As the Reverend J. MacDonald Webster, general secretary of the Church of Scotland’s Overseas Department, put it:

I do not ... think that you will get very far ahead by denouncing the AIM in any public way. Whatever may be your own opinion about its operations or the line of work it has been pursuing in recent years, we cannot get away from the fact that it is an institution held in the highest regard by many and by very influential people not only in Australia, but in many other parts of the world.

Although sympathetic to Duguid’s cause, MacDonald Webster was convinced that only ‘part of the revenue from [Smith’s] Bequest [could] be applied for the welfare of the natives’. This, he maintained, was clearly appointed by the final line in Smith’s 1853 letter which referred to ‘other pious objects in South Australia’. What proportion of the Bequest should go to each, MacDonald Webster initially left to Duguid and the Smith of Dunesk Committee in Adelaide to decide, asking only that he be kept informed of their decision.

Most of the members of the Smith of Dunesk Committee were also members of the AIM; in light of Duguid’s ‘Dan-to-Beer-Sheba article of denunciation in the Messenger’, their sympathies did not lie with Ernabella. In 1937 the Smith of Dunesk Committee granted 20 pounds to Ernabella, an amount equalling less than 10 percent of the total funds available, with the AIM receiving the remainder. As a consequence of Duguid’s constant agitation, Ernabella received 50 pounds in 1938, and 75 pounds in

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167 W.T. Alexander to editor, Messenger, 8 January 1937, p. 465, AIM Collection, Box 196, Folder 6; Wicking to editor, Messenger, 15 January 1937.
168 Jean Finlayson to editor, Messenger, 8 January 1937, p. 465, AIM Collection, Box 196, Folder 6; Finlayson to editor, Messenger, 29 January 1937, p. 513, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 4.
170 MacDonald Webster to Duguid, 7 October 1937, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
171 MacDonald Webster to Duguid, 24 July 1935, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 9.
172 John Flynn, Memorandum —‘Dr Duguid’s Attack on AIM’.

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1939.\textsuperscript{173} In a move bitterly resented by the Reverend David Chapman, acting convenor of the Smith of Dunesk Committee and deputy chairman of the AIM State Council, the Church of Scotland sold the Smith of Dunesk lands in 1939 'without either seeking advice ... from the Smith of Dunesk Committee ... or notifying [them]'\textsuperscript{174} It was not losing the property which angered Chapman, for annual revenue remained assured, it was losing what he perceived as his Committee's control over the Smith of Dunesk Bequest. Therein lay the problem, according to MacDonald Webster, for Chapman had clearly 'failed to grasp' that the whole funds and land connected with the Smith of Dunesk Bequest were under the administration of the Church of Scotland.\textsuperscript{175} Rather than the Church of Scotland 'interfering' with Smith of Dunesk affairs, MacDonald Webster made it clear that the interference 'was solely on [Chapman's] part, for ... one does not interfere in one's own affairs'.\textsuperscript{176} Reasserting the Church of Scotland's right to allocate the Smith of Dunesk funds, MacDonald Webster instructed Chapman's Committee to pay equal amounts to Ernabella and the AIM in 1940, and three-quarters to Ernabella in the following year.\textsuperscript{177}

Chapman's attempts to censure the Church of Scotland over its sale of the Smith of Dunesk lands may have inadvertently tipped the scale in Ernabella's favour, but it was Duguid who left MacDonald Webster in no doubt as to Chapman's 'dishonourable' character, his Committee's bias towards the AIM—'the majority of its members are also members of the AIM committee'—and the scare tactics Chapman employed to prevent Ernabella from receiving 'a fair hearing'.\textsuperscript{178} Duguid saw it as his 'duty' to communicate material which 'would assist the Church of Scotland in its control of the Smith of Dunesk Bequest', but it was more than duty that prompted him to write as often, and in as much detail, as he did.\textsuperscript{179} For Duguid, it was personal. Chapman stood between him and his goal of gaining the full amount of the Smith of Dunesk Bequest for Ernabella, and he seemed to delight in doing so, deliberately withholding vital communications from the Church of Scotland, blocking Duguid's motions and using 'cruel exaggeration to frighten members who don't know the facts'.\textsuperscript{180} A mutual acquaintance told Duguid that Chapman 'knew the Smith of Dunesk money would eventually go to Ernabella', but that he was 'going to prevent it as long as [he] could'.\textsuperscript{181}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{174} Minutes of Proceedings of the South Australian Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, March 1939, p. 40.
\item \textsuperscript{175} MacDonald Webster to Duguid, 25 April 1940, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 9.
\item \textsuperscript{176} MacDonald Webster to Duguid, 21 March 1940, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 9.
\item \textsuperscript{177} MacDonald Webster to Duguid, 4 July 1939; MacDonald Webster to Duguid, 4 March 1941, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 9.
\item \textsuperscript{178} Duguid to MacDonald Webster, 3 September 1937; Duguid to MacDonald Webster, 27 February 1939, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 9; Duguid to MacDonald Webster, 19 March 1940, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
\item \textsuperscript{179} Duguid to Mr Martin, Clerk of Assembly, 20 March 1941, Duguid Papers: 3.
\item \textsuperscript{180} Duguid to MacDonald Webster, 19 March 1940.
\item \textsuperscript{181} Duguid to Chapman, 10 March 1941.
\end{enumerate}
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Following the decision to pay three-quarters of the fund to Ernabella, Chapman drew the Church of Scotland’s attention to ‘the great amount of service which the AIM [was] rendering to the Aborigines in South Australia’, and protested that:

at least half of the Smith of Dunesk income should be paid to the AIM to partially cover the cost of the service which has been rendered for many years in the past, and is still being carried on irrespective of the fact that the Smith of Dunesk money has been taken from the AIM.182

This was the challenge that Duguid had been waiting for; a direct falsehood that he could authoritatively deny. Much of the ensuing debate came to centre on the AIM hostel at Oodnadatta, recently renovated so as to better accommodate Aborigines. Although treating Aborigines was precisely what Duguid claimed he wanted the AIM to do, their apparent acquiescence in this regard seriously undermined his main argument for transferring the full proceeds of the Smith of Dunesk Bequest to Ernabella.183

Assuming a position of moral superiority, Duguid insisted that no-one rejoiced more than he ‘that the Inland Mission ... [was] now giving more heed to such Aborigines as may require the help of our Hostels, but it was not always so’:

Let us thank God that a better understanding is coming between Aborigines and whites, and between those in the Church who care for them, but let us cease to make claims for a past of which we should be ashamed.184

According to Duguid, the AIM hostel at Oodnadatta received 100 pounds per year from the South Australian government for the treatment of ‘indigent patients, white or black’, and an extra 20 pounds per year from the Aborigines Department. The other AIM hostels in South Australia received similar grants and also charged white employers for treatments provided their Aboriginal workers.185 That Chapman would claim Smith of Dunesk money for services to Aborigines that were ‘being fully paid already’ was inconceivable to Duguid, particularly given Ernabella mission’s precarious financial position. Whereas the AIM was ‘flooded with funds’, finding the 1500 pounds per year that it cost to run Ernabella was a constant struggle.186 Moreover, whereas the AIM was principally for the white people, and only incidentally for the Aborigines, Duguid argued that Ernabella was

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182 Minutes of Proceedings of the South Australian Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, March 1941, p. 45.
183 Duguid to Matthew, 30 August 1939. In this letter, Duguid complained that the AIM’s new accommodation for ‘natives and half-castes at Oodnadatta’ made his work ‘with the Church of Scotland very difficult re: Smith of Dunesk grant’.
185 Ibid., pp. 6-11.
186 Duguid to MacDonald Webster, 19 March 1940; Duguid, ‘Smith of Dunesk Report’.

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'fulfilling Mrs Smith's wishes to the full' by 'carrying out the work [she] envisaged ... when she made her gift'.

Using Smith's own words to reinforce his position, Duguid maintained that the 'work of Ernabella [was] purely for the education and evangelisation of the Aborigines of South Australia'. He even went so far as to claim that Ernabella, on occasion, treat[ed] white settlers' as well, thereby showing that the 'other pious objects' mentioned in Smith's letter were not forgotten. Considering how poorly the AIM fared in comparison, Duguid felt confident that Ernabella would be granted the full proceeds of the Bequest, there being 'no other course', in his view, 'compatible with honour'. Yet honour was precisely what Duguid risked in describing Ernabella as Smith's ideal mission. The emphasis he placed on 'education and evangelisation', particularly the latter, found no parallel in his requests for funding from government and other sources, in which he described the 'chief phase' of the mission's work as medical and/or its buffer effect.

Although funding was a major and ongoing concern at Ernabella, the lengths Duguid went to to secure the full proceeds of the Smith of Dunesk Bequest were, in many ways, disproportionate to the anticipated end result. Had Ernabella been granted the full proceeds, it would have amounted to an annual payment of between 200-250 pounds; certainly enough to relieve some of the Church's financial burden, but not enough to make a dramatic difference at the mission. Duguid's relentless pursuit of the full amount, even after Ernabella was granted three-quarters of the total, suggests that for him, the battle was about more than money, or even honour. In the end, it was about winning. Having denounced the AIM, its founder and its members, and subjected the Presbyterian Church to intense scrutiny, both historically and in the present, Duguid was determined to prove his cause right; to win at almost any cost, be it peace within the Church or his own spiritual life. 'Some day', Duguid declared, 'I shall be thanked for what I have done in this search for truth. And I am prepared to wait.'

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189 Duguid to Moderator General, Presbyterian Church, 6 February 1939, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 9.
190 Duguid to Senator Foll, Minister for the Interior, 29 May 1939, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 10. Placing his own honour at even greater risk, Duguid utilised the little known fact that the 'Smith of Dunesk funds [could] not be spent outside South Australia' to further his own cause. Shortly before she died, Smith stated that her money 'was solemnly given to God for the behoof of the South Australian blacks alone ... no other Colony has a right to a farthing of it'. According to Duguid, this meant that the AIM, whose services spanned the length and breadth of the country, had acted against Smith's wishes by putting her money 'into a Federal pool'. Ernabella, on the other hand, was 'solely for work in South Australia'. Although technically located within South Australia, Ernabella's close proximity to the border meant that Aborigines from the Northern Territory regularly visited the mission; a fact Duguid made much of in his repeated calls for a federal subsidy during the early 1940s. Duguid, 'Smith of Dunesk Report', p. 9; Smith to the Reverend Peter Hope, 30 March 1871; Duguid to J. R. Blanchard, Convenor Smith of Dunesk Committee, 27 January 1942, Duguid Papers: 3; Duguid to Chinnery, 1 August 1941 and Duguid to Collings, 5 January 1942, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
191 Duguid to Chapman, 10 March 1941.
192 Duguid to Martin, 20 March 1941.
The praise that Duguid thought he deserved for honouring Smith's wishes never came; Emabella never received any more than three-quarters of the annual revenue of the Bequest; and despite his threats to do so, Duguid did not leave the Presbyterian Church. His fellowship with the Church, sorely missed during this controversy, was too important to him. While it could be argued that gaining three-quarters of the Smith of Dunesk Bequest for Emabella was a victory in itself, it was not the victory that Duguid wanted; in his eyes it was a defeat. Unable to reconcile his greatest success—the establishment of Emabella—with this defeat, Duguid obscured the link between them by leaving his Moderator's address out of his autobiography. As this chapter has shown, the implications of that omission went far beyond such a purpose: it enabled the myth of Duguid's 'visionary' establishment of Emabella to develop. In reality, had Duguid not complained about Flynn in a letter to Mary Bennett, and had Bennett not responded with reference to the Smith of Dunesk Bequest, Emabella—'the outstanding Christian Mission to Aborigines'—might never have been established (see Plate 3).^{193}

193 Dunstan, Felicia, p. 112.
Next to the establishment of Ernabella mission, Charles Duguid is best known for the post-war campaign he led against the British and Australian governments’ plan to test rockets in Central Australia. Duguid had two main objections to the rocket range; its route through the Central Aborigines Reserve and the threat it posed to the cause of world peace. For the sake of the latter, Duguid was opposed to the testing of rockets anywhere in Australia, or elsewhere in the world. For the sake of the former, however, Duguid was prepared to accept an alternative rocket trajectory, one that bypassed the Central Aborigines Reserve and left the 1000 or more ‘tribal’ Aborigines who lived there ‘unmolested’. Asked in 1947 if he knew of anywhere that rockets could be tested without risk to Aborigines or whites, Duguid replied that ‘there [was] no place in the whole wide world where these tests [could] be conducted without risk to all humanity’. His personal view, unchanged throughout the year-long controversy, was that there was little hope for all humanity if Aborigines suffered as a result of the rocket tests. Thus his rallying cry, ‘Hands off the Aboriginal Reserve’.

Duguid’s battle against the rocket range was foremost a battle to save the Central Aborigines Reserve. But from what? According to government, the military and Professor A.P. Elkin, Australia’s leading authority on Aboriginal issues, the risk to Aborigines from either falling projectiles or contact with whites was ‘negligible’, and could be adequately guarded against by the appointment of patrol officers. Moreover, apart from allowing a
few small areas to be excised for the building of observation stations, it was not proposed that the land's legal status as a 'reserve' be altered. Against this, Duguid and his fellow protesters argued that any violation of the reserve would spell disaster for the Aborigines who lived there. 'Why was the Aboriginal reserve chosen', Duguid repeatedly asked: 'Why pick the reserve set aside for the welfare of the tribal Aborigines?'

Duguid suspected, and indeed alleged, that government had chosen the reserve in spite of 'the fact that the whole life of a maximum number of Aborigines [would] be completely upset'. However, the official answer was disarmingly simple. The route through the reserve was 'both the best available in Australia and most suitable for the project'. In the eyes of government, the media and the majority of white Australians, the Central Aborigines Reserve was 'just what the rocket doctor ordered'—dry, desolate and largely devoid of people (see Plate 4). Duguid could not, and would not, accept this view. 'The reserve, be it noted, is not a playground', he declared: 'It is the home country of a people, their all'. As well as fighting to save the reserve, Duguid was striving to save a people and a way of life for which he felt personally responsible. 'I know that country. I know its people', he insisted, and 'I am not prepared to accept the preventable death of my friends in the north for any reason': 'I am not prepared to see them sacrificed'. For nearly a decade, Ernabella mission had served as 'a carefully planned first contact' for the 'tribal' Aborigines of the Central Aborigines Reserve, 'protecting [them] ... from a too sudden introduction' to modern civilisation. That government would knowingly 'wreck the whole scheme' by firing rockets into the reserve, and by allowing military personnel, scientists and other observers to enter the reserve, struck Duguid as 'madness'; it could not be condoned. Yet despite his efforts, and those of the hundreds who joined him in opposition to the project, the rocket range went ahead as planned.

This chapter has three parts. With a view to understanding Duguid's fierce and unrelenting opposition to the rocket range, the first section examines his views on the importance of land to Aboriginal people. The second section, an overview of the work of

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6 Duguid to editor, Advertiser, 22 August 1946; Duguid to Dedman, Minister for Defence, 6 November 1946, Papers of Dr Charles Duguid, State Library of South Australia, Mortlock Collection, PRG 387 (hereafter Duguid Papers: 2), Series 1.
7 Duguid to editor, Advertiser, 9 December 1946.
9 'Australia as test ground for secret weapons', Advertiser, 1 April 1946; 'Scientists Stage Atom and Rocket Tests', Sphere (London), 6 July 1946, p. 12; 'Rocket Ranges in Australia', The Times (London), 22 October 1946; 'Australian Rocket Tests—Desert Range for Imperial Scheme', The Times, 17 January 1947.
12 Duguid, The Rocket Range Aborigines and War, The Rocket Range Protest Committee, Melbourne, 1947, p. 11; Duguid, 'Should Rocket Bomb Tests be held in Central Australia'.
Ernabella Under Threat

Ernabella mission during its first ten years, serves a similar purpose. As will become apparent, understanding what Duguid was fighting for, as well as against, helps to sharpen the contours of the rocket range debate, enabling its hitherto under-examined dimensions to come to the fore. The most significant of these, I argue, came with the Australian Guided Projectile Committee's startling prognosis in March 1947 that 'detribalisation of the Aborigine [was] inevitable' and could be hastened without negative effect.\footnote{Report by the Australian Committee on Guided Projectiles on the Welfare of Aborigines Located Within the Range Area, 1 February 1947, NAA: A816/1, 12/301/74; Dedman, 'The Long Range Weapons Project', 10 March 1947.} Given Duguid's firm belief in the necessity for gradual change, this announcement served to highlight the difference between his and governments' approach to Aboriginal welfare. More importantly, it reflected the changing direction of Aboriginal administration in post-war Australia, and revealed the extent to which Duguid's thinking about Ernabella was out of touch with government objectives. In the final section, Duguid's opposition to the rocket range is contrasted with Elkin's support for the project; a climactic battle of the 'experts' that Duguid lost, yet emerged victorious in other ways, his reputation as an uncompromising advocate on behalf of Aborigines greatly enhanced as a result.\footnote{Duguid considered himself an 'expert' on the Central Aborigines Reserve. See Duguid to Dedman, 6 November 1946. In this letter, Duguid wrote: 'I can assure you that whoever told you that there are very few natives in the Reserve is not an expert on the Reserve'.}

I. 'Their future depends on land'

Like many advocates on behalf of Aborigines, Duguid was preoccupied with the future. At its core, his activism was directed towards preventing extinction and securing a future for the Aborigines of Australia. 'The past [should] not be dwelt on', he argued, 'and the present [should] be examined chiefly with a view to the future development of the race'.\footnote{Duguid, 'An Advocate for the Aborigines in England', Aborigines Protector, 1939, p. 6.} Duguid's numerous publications on the topic—including 'Our Natives and Their Future' (1938), The Future of the Aborigines of Australia (1941), 'The Future of the Aborigines' (1944), and 'The Aborigines' Hope of a Future' (1946)—all carried the same important message: 'The future of the Aborigines of Australia depends on land'.\footnote{Duguid, 'Our Natives and their Future', The Link, 2 May 1938, pp. 172-73; Duguid, The Future of the Aborigines of Australia, Presbyterian Board of Mission, Melbourne, 1941; Duguid, The Future of the Aborigines (1944), in C. Duguid, The Aborigines of Australia, Broadcasts and an Address, Reliance Printing Company, Adelaide, 1946, pp. 21-24; Duguid, 'The Aborigines Hope of a Future' (1946), in C. Duguid, The Aborigines of Australia, Broadcasts and an Address, pp. 35-39.} But not just any land. According to Duguid, it had to be:

> their father's country, for all the principal features of it are related to their life and well-being. The tribal organisation is bound up in their tribal territory, which must remain theirs, and only theirs, if they are to live as tribal natives.\footnote{Duguid, The Future of the Aborigines of Australia, p. 9.}
The phrase—'if they are to live as tribal natives'—was the key. As will be discussed in chapter four, Duguid believed that there were three main 'types', or groups, of Aborigines; 'tribal', 'detribalised' and 'half-caste'. Once dispossessed of their land, 'tribal' Aborigines became 'detribalised', according to Duguid, and eventually became 'half-caste'. At the 1937 Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities, J.A. Carrodus, Minister for the Interior, advanced a similar argument: 'Ultimately, if history is repeated, the full bloods will become half-castes', he declared. However, whereas Carrodus and his fellow Conference delegates sought to harness this process by means of racial absorption and 'eventually forget that there ever were any Aborigines in Australia', Duguid wanted a future with 'tribal' Aborigines in it.

Duguid's understanding of the vital importance of land to 'tribal' Aborigines owed much to Mary Bennett's influential monograph *The Australian Aboriginal as a Human Being* (1930). According to Bennett, 'the whole culture and social organisation of the Aboriginals as well as their material welfare [was] based on land ownership':

On land ownership rests the title to hunt for a living. On land ownership is based the peace of the tribes. On land ownership is constructed the social organisation with its geometrical design of marriage laws and inheritance, with its obligations and privileges. On land ownership is founded the right to perform ceremonies for increasing the supply of animals and plants. Parted from their land the race dies as surely as an uprooted tree.

Echoing Bennett, Duguid argued that 'tribal' Aborigines lived 'healthily and happily under a social organisation ... [that was] founded on the ownership of land':

The country owned by a tribe [is] the centre of its being. Their religious rites, the laws of inheritance and food gathering, their traditions and customs are centred in their own particular country. Banishment from it immediately detribalises them.

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Like Bennett, Duguid believed that Aborigines 'deprived of their land, and their living, must in the course of time die'. Before death, however, came detribalisation; a state of utter 'bewilderment' and 'degradation' that Duguid aimed to prevent by helping Aborigines to retain their tribal lands.

During the 1930s and 1940s, Duguid's strongest criticisms of Australia's governments, both federal and state, were over land. Rather than take steps to 'preserve the race', Duguid 'really believe[d] that at heart the Australian Government would like to see the Aborigine die out and so relieve it of its responsibility'. He claimed to be 'in possession of facts which prove[d] that the finding of gold and the fattening of bullocks [was] ... considered by some Governments of more value to Australia than the preservation of her Aboriginal people'. Witness, he repeatedly argued, the devastation wrought by the alienation of the Aboriginal reserve at Tennant's Creek when payable gold was found there in 1934:

Their beautiful waterhole is now used for washing gold and their corroboree ground is a series of mining leases. They have been transferred to new ground, badly stocked with game and poorly watered in comparison with their age-old territory.

Separated 'from their ceremonial grounds and deprived of their tjuringas', the Warramunga tribe, formerly of Tennant's Creek, had been 'detribalise[d] ... by Act of Parliament', according to Duguid; 'sacrificed' in pursuit of gold, just as others of their kind had been, and were 'still being sacrificed for the fattening of bullocks'.

Aborigines had 'no rights, no voice and no security of tenure of land', for their reserves 'exist[ed] only on paper' and could 'be altered or done away with at the stroke of a pen at Canberra'. To white Australians—the 'voters of the Commonwealth'—Duguid charged the responsibility of altering this 'inhuman situation'.

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24 'Detribalisation' is an anthropological term that pre-supposes a static and unchanging 'tribal life'. As McGregor has argued, 'in the anthropological imagination, [cultures were] real things, which people either did or did not possess'. McGregor, Imagined Destinies, p. 231.
26 Duguid, 'The Aborigines of Australia', typescript article for Venture, February 1940.
29 Duguid, 'The Australian Aborigines', The Australian Intercollegian, 1 May 1940, p. 46; Duguid, 'Moderator's Address', p. 7. See also Bennett, The Australian Aboriginal as a Human Being, p. 134.
30 Duguid, 'The Aborigines of Australia', typescript article for Venture, February 1940.

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your tribal natives you must force your Governments to declare all existing reserves inviolate, and you must do it this year—now', he declared:

The native people where not being exploited are not dying out ... But if White Australia is going to banish the natives from a reserve when gold is found there ... and if the white man is going to be allowed to run bullocks on every blade of grass left in the Interior, the day of highly intelligent native tribes will fast close in to the night of their extinction.31

In calling for the creation of inviolable reserves, Duguid joined a chorus of campaigners—humanitarians, missionaries, anthropologists and others—whose commitment to inviolability was tempered by the type of violation they proposed. The National Missionary Council, for example, wanted inviolable reserves with missions on them; anthropologists such as Frederic Wood Jones believed that scientists had a 'duty' to study Aborigines on otherwise inviolable reserves; Duguid argued that regular missionary patrols were necessary to prevent Aborigines from leaving their reserves.32

Although equally flawed, Duguid's support for inviolable reserves differed from other campaigners; it was also longer lasting. As Bain Attwood has observed of two Victorian based campaigners, Amy Brown and Helen Ballie, their focus on inviolability and all that it entailed—segregation and protection of Aborigines on large reserves—began to shift in the mid 1930s (just as Duguid was entering the field) towards policies which emphasised 'assimilation and adaptation and development'. The catalyst, according to Attwood, was A.P. Elkin, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Sydney, whose call for a 'positive policy' from 1934 increasingly influenced humanitarian demands.33 In Elkin's view, it was not enough to declare an area an Aboriginal reserve and expect the Aborigines to remain there. Whether inviolable or not, Elkin argued that:

natives will not remain permanently on the Reserves, for they are gradually attracted away to white settlements of which they hear through their kin in neighbouring tribes, and as the years go by, the younger folk lose the attachment for the old country; then as the tribe in the settled country dies out,

they take its place, work for, or hang round, the white man, and in their turn
die out.34

Elkin's 'positive' alternative was to suggest that:

if there were established on each large reserve an institution, practical,
educational and religious in nature, which would give the Aborigines a new
interest in life, they would not be so readily lured away to white settlements off
the Reserve, but rather would themselves be the cause of other natives being
attracted to it.35

As influential and important as Elkin was, Duguid drew inspiration and ideas from other
anthropologists and campaigners who thought differently from Elkin, with the result that
Duguid supported the establishment of missions near, but not on reserves; inviolability,
but not segregation; Aboriginal development and preservation.

Duguid's linking of detribalisation with degradation and death resonated with
Wood Jones' principal argument in support of inviolable reserves. According to Wood
Jones, '[d]etribalisation [was] the first step towards certain racial death'.36 Like Duguid,
Wood Jones believed that Aborigines could be saved from this fate by the establishment
of large inviolable reserves. Here their views departed, however, for whereas Duguid saw
dispossession as the main cause of detribalisation, Wood Jones blamed contact with white
civilisation: Aborigines, he argued, were 'inevitably doomed to death once contact [had]
been made with our alien culture'.37 As Russell McGregor has explained, Wood Jones 'did
not mean that such people would leave no progeny at all; rather, that with them the line of
racial purity would terminate'.38 Thus, it was to prevent the contact that led to
detribalisation, and ultimately to the production of half-castes, that Wood Jones stressed
the need for inviolable reserves; locales where the cultural integrity and racial purity of
'uncontaminated' Aborigines could be preserved. While Duguid agreed that contact could
be disastrous, even fatal, for Aborigines, he argued that 'degradation [resulted] from too
sudden contact with white civilisation'; not all contact with all whites was fatal.39 It was a
subtle, yet important distinction, for it meant that Duguid could reject segregation—the
premise underlying Wood Jones' support for inviolable reserves—without rejecting the
need for inviolable reserves, or dooming the Aborigines to extinction.

34 Elkin, 'The Aborigines, Our National Responsibility', The Australian Quarterly, 14 September
1934, p. 56.
35 Ibid., p. 57.
36 Frederic Wood Jones, Australia's Vanishing Race, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1934, p. 39.
37 Ibid.
38 McGregor, Imagined Destines, p. 226.
39 Duguid, 'The Natives on the Edge of Our Civilisation' (1943), in C. Duguid, The Aborigines of
Australia: Broadcasts and an Address, p. 8 (emphasis added).
In Duguid's view, segregation, or the "leave-them-alone" policy, ceased to be practical politics the moment our forefathers decided to inhabit Australia, not least because 'contact with our civilisation [was] in the end inevitable', but because it amounted to an abrogation of responsibility. According to Duguid, the grave unwisdom of segregation was 'painfully demonstrated' to him following his trip to the Petermann Ranges with T.G.H. Strehlow, Deputy Chief Protector of Aborigines in the Northern Territory and Pastor F.W. Albrecht, superintendent of Hermannsburg mission in 1939. Where as late as 1936 an estimated 500 Aborigines were believed to have lived, they found 26 Aborigines only; 'five men, eight women, one old woman and twelve children'. A three year drought had forced the people to move away in search of food and water, and many, Duguid reported, had died of starvation. 'These people died not of disease', he stressed, 'but of starvation in Australia'. On his return to Adelaide, Duguid was appalled to find schemes to control the growth of wheat being discussed in daily newspapers. 'We in the South with a glut of food had left the natives in the Petermanns alone—left them to die of starvation', he exclaimed: 'No-one of that 1939 patrol advocates that the natives are best left entirely alone'. Yet this was precisely what the concept of inviolability, as applied to Aboriginal reserves, meant, according to Cecil Cook, Chief Protector of Aborigines in the Northern Territory from 1927 to 1939.

In a lengthy internal report headed 'Aboriginal Missions', Cook defined inviolability as the attempt to 'isolate the Aboriginal from extraneous influence of all kinds so that he may continue to live in accordance with native customs, completely unaffected by the development of a progressive alien civilisation across the border'. The effect of such a reservation, Cook observed:

is to give an area of land the status of a sanctuary, within the boundaries of which the Aboriginal lives and moves and has his being as a museum specimen, with the difference that theoretically there should be no observers to study him.

Aside from the logistical impossibility of patrolling the borders 'every day and every night' to prevent ingress as well as egress, Cook alleged that sanctioning inviolable reserves would place government in the position of condoning 'cruel initiation ceremonies and such

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41 Duguid, The Future of the Aborigines of Australia, 1941, p. 11.
43 Duguid, 'Ernabella Patrol', 1939, State Records of South Australia (hereafter SRSA) GRG 52/1/1939/52; Duguid, Ernabella: The Medical Patrol, 1939, Presbyterian Board of Missions, Melbourne, 1939, p. 9-12.
44 Duguid, The Future of the Aborigines of Australia, 1941, p. 11.
bitterly controversial matters as ritual rape ... [and] tribal murder'. The inviolable reserve was an 'illusion', according to Cook; 'at once undesirable and impracticable', 'ineffective if not actually noxious' and a 'menace' to national security. A better model, in his view, was the 'controlled' reserve, which would 'regulate the tribal life within the reserve with a view to the Aboriginal's ultimate adaptation to admission to the new advanced civilisation'. Under Cook's system of 'controlled reserves', missions that submitted 'voluntarily to strict government control' would be responsible for supervising this transition.46

Like Elkin, Cook wanted reserves to 'be used as training grounds for the Aboriginal'.47 However, as McGregor has argued: 'Unlike Elkin, Cook openly avowed that the transformation to Western civilisation must be total, obliterating all traces of Aboriginal culture'.48 As Cook put it:

If ... we resort to interference, we must recognise that there can be no compromise. The policy of the missionary ... that interference should be as far as possible compatible with the retention of tribal organisation and unobjectionable native custom is fallacious. Once having interfered, we must admit the necessity of proceeding step by step until [the] existing social organisation has been completely demolished and replaced by a new structure adapting the Aboriginal to an economic life in the white community.49

Although Cook's views on the proper management and role of Aboriginal reserves differed in several important respects from Elkin's, the similarities were enough for McGregor to align them, together with other critics of segregation, under the heading 'Elevation by Reservation'. In Imagined Destines: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory, 1880-1939, McGregor likewise aligned the supporters of segregation, including Wood Jones and his former student Donald Thomson, under the heading 'Preservation by Reservation'. Thus juxtaposed, the differences of opinion and approach within these two groups paled next to those between them, creating an impression of polarity at variance with Duguid's reality.

As will become apparent, Cook's program for missions on reserves was the complete antithesis of Duguid's policy at Ernabella, yet Duguid considered Elkin his ally and one of the Aborigines' 'greatest friends'.50 He also admired Wood Jones and Thomson—'two other noted Australian anthropologists'—for their tireless devotion to the Aboriginal cause.51 The greatest difference between Duguid and the men in McGregor's

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46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
49 Cook, 'Aboriginal Missions'.
51 Ibid.
study was that Duguid did not see reserves only, or even mainly, as administrative tools. They were not simply a means to a bureaucratically determined end, be it preservation or elevation. Rather, Duguid saw reserves as land that belonged, or should belong, to the Aborigines, not just until such time as they were ready to join white society, but forever. "Secure the land, that still is his, for all time", Duguid implored, 'otherwise he will soon die out'.

Duguid held 'very strongly that all areas marked on the map of Australia as Aboriginal reserves should be sacro-sanct to the natives', meaning inviolate and irrevocable. Although inviolability implied a kind of segregation, Duguid could support it without supporting a policy of segregation because he believed that Aborigines would choose to stay on their own land—and away from contact with 'undesirable' whites—if the amenities of civilisation were brought to them via the establishment of 'buffer missions' outside reserves like Ernabella. What Duguid wanted, therefore, was preservation on reserves and elevation off them; the best of both worlds, leaving Aborigines free to travel in between as they pleased.

'A Model Mission'

Among the most important influences on Duguid's thinking about Aboriginal reserves was the Aborigines Protection League (APL), an Adelaide-based organisation that Duguid joined, and became president of, in 1935. The APL was formed ten years earlier to give organisational support to its founder, Charles Genders, whose idea of a Model Aboriginal State still permeated the League's philosophy when Duguid took over as president. In 1927 the APL submitted a petition and manifesto to the Commonwealth House of Representatives that called for:

a large area of land—say Arnhem Land—[to] be handed back to the natives now on it, and that they be told it is to be their own country, to be managed by themselves (with such assistance as is necessary) according to their own laws and customs but prohibiting cannibalism and cruel rites. In other words, a separate Aboriginal State, with such provisions in its Constitution for a severe penalty on any unauthorised white person entering it.

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The APL's petition was not successful. On the grounds that Aborigines had 'no conception of democracy as understood by civilised nations' and could not be 'expected to develop qualities that they [had] never so far displayed', J.W. Bleakley, the Chief Protector of Aborigines in Queensland, rejected the Model Aboriginal State idea as 'impractical'.

Bleakley's low opinion of Aborigines' ability to govern themselves notwithstanding, the APL continued to believe 'in the inherent ability of the native race' to govern itself. Under Duguid's presidency, the 'principle of self-government' remained an important feature of the League's 'main duty'; 'to see that sufficient suitable land [was] set aside for the Aborigines'. The APL also recognised 'the Aborigines rights to retain [their] native culture' and cautioned against 'rushing changes on the natives'. It viewed land as the 'whole crux of the Aboriginal problem' and called for 'present reserves [to] be made inviolate' and for new reserves to be established on 'all tribal land'. Under Duguid's presidency, the League 'actively support[ed]' Ernabella mission. Without over-stating the connection between Ernabella and the Model Aboriginal State, it is clear that Ernabella exemplified many of the League's earlier Model Aboriginal State objectives in revised form. Like Genders, Duguid's ultimate goal was for the Aborigines at Ernabella to become a 'self-supporting, self-reliant race'. 'We are not attempting to make the native into a white man', Duguid explained:

Our aim is to maintain the native as such in his own country; to make his own country more attractive for him than the cattle stations on the other side of us; to co-operate with them [the Aborigines] in the production of a happy and healthy people.

With the APL's support, Duguid was 'determined ... to see Ernabella become a model Mission for the whole-blood tribal natives on anthropological lines as laid down by

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56 The Model Aboriginal State proposal was added to the terms of reference of an inquiry that J.W. Bleakley was conducting on behalf of the Commonwealth. See Bleakley, *The Aboriginals and Half-Castes of Central Australia and North Australia* (1928), Commonwealth of Australia, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1929, p. 30.

57 Minutes of the Aborigines Protection League (hereafter APL Minutes), 14 June 1939, Papers of the Aborigines Advancement League, State Library of South Australia, Mortlock Collection, SRG 250 (hereafter League Papers), Series 1.

58 APL Minutes, 14 June 1939 and 14 February 1940, League Papers, Series 1. See also Charles Genders, *The Australian Aborigines*, typescript, 4 January 1937, J.B. Cleland Collection, South Australian Museum Anthropology Archives, AA 60, Acc. 233. In this document Genders reaffirmed the 'basic principle for which the League was formed—viz. to advocate the return of land to the Aborigines to be governed by themselves'.

59 APL Minutes, 14 June 1939 and 14 February 1940.

60 *Aborigines Protection League* (publicity pamphlet issued by APL), [1940], Duguid Papers: 1, Series 3.

61 APL Minutes, 14 June 1939.


63 Duguid to Mr McLeay, Minister for Trade and Customs, 29 April 1940, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
His dream was to see 'buffer stations similar to Ernabella ... placed in many parts of Australia'.

In an effort to garner public support for Ernabella's work, at the end of 1939 the APL hosted a large public meeting at the Adelaide Town Hall at which slides and moving pictures of life at Ernabella were shown. While few present doubted Duguid's claim that Ernabella was 'saving the Aborigines from extinction', at least one member of the audience, Dr E. Couper Black, was not convinced. It was the moving pictures of 'happy, contented adults and family groups with numerous children' that Black found most objectionable. If movie cameras had been in use 50 years ago, he reasoned, similar scenes could have been shown from missions throughout Australia. 'But where are the thriving adults and happy family groups in those places now? They don't exist', Black argued, and neither would the 'laughing children' of Ernabella 50 years hence. 'A few stray individuals may become more or less Europeanised and be shown as exhibits' but the 'hard facts of history' left little doubt that the majority would eventually 'degenerate' and become extinct. Black's letter to the editor of the Adelaide Advertiser in December 1939 served as a counter-point to Duguid's rhetoric, and gave defenders of the mission, other than Duguid, a chance to air their views in public.

The superintendent at Ernabella, Reverend Harry Taylor, then in Adelaide on furlough, was quick to come to Ernabella's defence. The 'main reason for degeneration', he replied, 'is the breakdown of the tribal life, and with it the collapse of moral sanctions caused by sudden and unrestricted white contact'. A devotee of the type of missionary policy that Cook so deplored, Taylor explained that:

Ernabella is there to see that the tribe remains a tribe and that the Aboriginal is not made a poor imitation of the white man, but that he may absorb into his own culture the best elements of civilisation in such a way that the balance of his tribal life is not destroyed.

E.R. Edwards, honorary secretary of the APL, agreed. Having spent the previous three months at Ernabella, and 'seen the reaction of the bush natives to it', Edwards argued that it was:

regarded by them as a sanctuary, where sympathy and understanding are to be had, and where, if they wish, they can obtain work and training; but they are

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64 Duguid to H.S. Foll, 29 May 1939, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 10.
65 Duguid, 'The Australian Aborigines—(II)', p. 88.
66 Dr E. Couper Black to editor, Advertiser, 4 December 1939. See also Duguid to editor, Advertiser, 9 December 1946.
67 Reverend Harry Taylor to editor, Advertiser, 6 December 1939.
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always urged to live their own life in the bush and regard themselves as a people.68

Far from hastening extinction, Edwards insisted that Ernabella was the ‘only way to prevent the natives from the Great Central Aborigines Reserve drifting eastwards to the settled country, where only degradation and extinction await them’.69

Following the AFL’s Town Hall meeting, the Chief Protector of Aborigines in South Australia, W.R. Penhall, stated that: ‘The work of Ernabella Mission should be of great importance in retarding the detribalisation of natives living on the adjacent reserve’.70 Duguid’s ambitions went beyond retarding or delaying detribalisation, however. Quite the contrary. By preventing the degredation that heralded detribalisation, Duguid believed that Ernabella could prevent detribalisation from occurring. The mission had already proved that degredation could be reversed. According to Taylor, when he first arrived at Ernabella there was an Aboriginal man ‘working on the place [who] referred to his fellow tribesmen as "wild niggers" and to himself, proudly, as a "station boy"’. As a consequence of the mission’s influence, ‘[t]hat man now takes his part in the tribal ceremonies and has learnt that not all white men despise him for keeping his age-old customs’, Taylor explained: ‘The people now sing in the camp and at their work, an indication not only that they are happy, but that the tribal ties still hold.’71 Similarly, Edwards claimed that before Emabella mission was established ‘the natives were dressed in filthy rags and treated as useless’. Now ‘the natives are treated as human beings—as a race with its own rights and culture’, and the ‘old clothes are practically gone’, Edwards observed: ‘Corroborees and sacred ceremonies are encouraged, and the black man is holding his own’.72 For Duguid, one of the strongest indicators of this was the fact that ‘no half-castes [had] been born’ in the area since the mission’s establishment.73

None of these arguments could persuade Penhall that detribalisation was anything but ‘inevitable’. Like the majority of his fellow administrators, Penhall viewed (controlled) detribalisation as a necessary step on the road to Aboriginal development and assimilation. It could be slowed down to make the ‘period of transition as congenial for the natives as possible’, but it could not be stopped.74 In 1939, in a letter to E.W.P. Chinnery, the Director of Native Affairs in the Northern Territory, Penhall described detribalisation as an ‘inevitable process’.75 Duguid, in contrast, viewed detribalisation as ‘the tragedy of a

68 E.R. Edwards to editor, Advertiser, 6 December 1939.
69 Ibid.
70 News, 30 November 1939, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 3, Clipping Book 2, p. 188.
71 Taylor to editor, Advertiser, 6 December 1939.
72 Edwards to editor, Advertiser, 6 December 1939.
74 W.R. Penhall to A.P. Burdeu, honorary secretary Aborigines Uplift Society, 14 September 1940, SRSA, GRG 52/1/1940/7.
75 Penhall to E.W.P. Chinnery, 22 September 1939, SRSA, GRG 52/1/1939/52.
sudden jump from a stone-age culture to a twentieth century one.76 In seeking to prevent this tragedy, Duguid held no false hope that the Aborigines at Ernabella could remain a 'primitive' or 'stone-age' people. He understood that 'a primitive race [was] altered by every new contact, whether that contact [was] a missionary, an anthropologist, or someone else'.77 Yet he also believed that Aborigines could, and should, remain 'tribal' during their elevation to a 'higher level of civilisation'. For Duguid, 'tribal' signified 'dignity', 'independence' and 'self-respect' and was contingent on Aborigines remaining on their own land. Unless the intention was to make Aborigines into 'very inferior and degraded editions of white people', 'tribal' was a state of being that needed to be preserved.78 And this, Duguid claimed, was precisely what Ernabella was doing:

For years before the Mission came to Ernabella the young people of these tribes filtered east and north to the cattle stations and jumped over-night from their civilisation into ours with the worst possible results to themselves. Since the advent of Ernabella that has stopped. In the future, understandingly trained Aboriginal people, quietly prepared for their own place in the economy of the nation will be available when required.79

'In a word', Duguid explained, the Aborigines 'who come and go to Ernabella continue to be tribal natives, but in the future they will know how to handle a situation connected with our civilisation that, but for their training at Ernabella, would have puzzled them'.80

Although the stress Duguid placed on Aborigines retaining their land, and thereby remaining 'tribal', was not shared by Penhall, their differences of opinion did not become an issue until 1947 when Penhall supported the rocket range, bringing their alliance to an end. Like his predecessor, M.T. McLean, Penhall was sympathetic to Ernabella's work.81 He understood and approved of Ernabella's intention 'to keep the natives native as long as possible', yet he also believed 'that such an ideal [would] be difficult of attainment'.82 As the second world war drew to a close, the efficacy of Ernabella's aims and its ability to achieve them came under serious review. Despite Duguid's consistently positive portrayal, Ernabella mission was plagued by problems, some of which were common to Aboriginal institutions in general, while others related specifically to Ernabella's aims and the assumptions that underlay them. A fundamental assumption was that Aborigines wanted to remain on their own land, and that by doing so they could remain 'tribal' despite the mission's influence. With questions such as—'Is this Mission satisfactory?' 'Can a

76 Duguid to Chinnery, 1 August 1941, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
79 Duguid to J.S. Collings, Minister for the Interior, 5 January 1942, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
80 Ibid. (emphasis added).
81 See chapter one.
82 Penhall to H.C. Matthew, secretary Presbyterian Board of Missions, 10 May 1945, SRSA, GRG 52/1/1945/11.
nomadic hunter be a Christian? 'What of the tribe?'—being asked by the friends and supporters of Ernabella in the years preceding the rocket range controversy, one has to wonder whether Duguid, in fighting against the rocket range, was fighting for an ideal at Ernabella—or an ideal Ernabella—that Penhall and others had long suspected was not working.83

II. 'Is it satisfactory?': Ernabella Mission 1937-46

Three properties lay between Ernabella mission and the Central Aborigines Reserve, and thus between Ernabella and its purpose; to be a 'buffer' between the white settlers to the east and the Aborigines to the west. As a result of Duguid's campaigning, in May 1939 the Pastoral Board cancelled all the leases between Ernabella and the reserve and 'assured' Duguid that so long as Ernabella remained a mission they 'would never be allotted' to white settlers. Expressing his profound relief at this development, Duguid exclaimed: '[We] are now, and shall always be, the first white contacts with the natives'. Although understandable, Duguid's elation at this apparent 'conclusion to [his] efforts with the Government of South Australia' was somewhat premature.84 On the condition that it undertake regular patrols through the 1500 square mile area, the Presbyterian Church was granted a five year licence over the three properties ending in August 1944. Beyond that point, the future of the blocks, and indeed the future of Ernabella, was uncertain. Without the blocks, Ernabella mission was 'dead', according to Duguid, and with nothing more than the Pastoral Board's assurance to go on, they hung like a noose around the mission's neck for the next five years.85 To keep the blocks Ernabella needed to be successful, and be seen to be successful. But what Duguid called success was not necessarily regarded as such by others.

Duguid's efforts with the government of South Australia were far from over. In November 1939, the South Australian Parliament passed an amendment to its Aborigines Act, 1934 which saw the office of the Chief Protector of Aborigines abolished and replaced with an Aborigines Protection Board (APB) consisting of six members and a Minister of the Crown.86 Aware that these changes were taking place, Duguid wrote to


84 Duguid to Matthew, 1 June 1939, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 10; Duguid to Reverend J. MacDonald Webster, General Secretary of the Church of Scotland, Overseas Department, 16 June 1939, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.

85 Duguid, Ernabella: The Medical Patrol, 1939; Duguid to Matthew, 1 June 1939.

86 Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 'A brief outline of Aboriginal Affairs in South Australia since colonisation', unpublished manuscript, 1963, pp. 22-23, SRSA, GRG 52/22/2.
Malcolm McIntosh, the Commissioner for Public Works, in September that year, listing his credentials and suggesting himself as a possible Board member. 'I would very much like to be the representative on the Board of the whole-blood and the myall natives', Duguid wrote:

The country and its people from the South-North railway line to the Western Australian border I have visited often and know better than anyone in the south. I have wandered among the tribes in their own haunts and eaten their food and attended their corroborees. The latter is a privilege granted to very few. Every year my holiday of four to five weeks is spent among these people and I am sure ... [you] will recognise the extra value my visits to the far north and farthest north west will have if the powers of a Protector were officially vested in me.87

With the establishment of Ernabella mission to his credit, there was scarcely any need for this kind of self-promotion, yet in matters of such importance, modesty, it seems, meant leaving things to chance. For Duguid, the opportunity to 'pool [his] resources with the Board' was simply too good to be missed.88 When an invitation to join the APB was finally extended to him in January the following year, Duguid readily accepted.89

As a consequence of Australia's involvement in the second world war, restrictions on travel and increased demands on his personal and professional life, Duguid was forced to delay his planned visits to the north of the state, and to Ernabella mission in particular, for the duration of the war. The work of the mission, and the people there, were never far from his mind, however, for as Chairman of the South Australian Ernabella Mission Committee, a sub-committee of the Presbyterian Board of Missions, Duguid was in regular contact with the superintendent and other staff at the mission.90 In this capacity, Duguid acted as a link between Ernabella and its various sources of sponsorship—private businesses, humanitarian organisations and government departments, including the APB—while as a member of the APB, Duguid was privy to correspondence to and from the mission, and about the mission, which facilitated his lobbying on Ernabella's behalf.91 Where others may have seen a conflict of interest, Duguid did not, for 'in everything Aboriginal', he asserted, he 'put the interests of the Aborigines first'; a dubious

87 Duguid to Malcolm McIntosh, Commissioner of Public Works, 21 September 1939, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
88 Ibid.
89 Duguid to A.L. Read, Under Secretary, Chief Secretary's Office, 27 January 1940, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
91 Duguid regularly shared 'confidential' information with the Presbyterian Board of Missions. See Duguid to Matthew, 3 June 1944, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1. Duguid wrote: 'I am enclosing confidential minutes of the APB ... to show you that the Board will refuse no request to Ernabella'.

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recommendation, but one indicative of Duguid's priorities nonetheless. With all these contacts and responsibilities in place, there was little about life at Ernabella during the war that Duguid did not know. Except, perhaps, what it was actually like to live there.

A 'few happy days' in August 1939 represented the sum total of Duguid's time at Ernabella before the onset of war, time enough to confirm his 'previous conviction' of Ernabella's importance, but not to gain any meaningful impression of life at the mission. Not that longer or more regular visits would necessarily have altered Duguid's perception, however, for when it came to Ernabella, he tended to see what he wanted and/or needed to see. On this occasion, Duguid saw Ernabella as a 'haven of refuge' for the Aborigines of the Central Aborigines Reserve:

The men bring their wild dog-scalps to the Mission to be exchanged for whole-meal flour; they bring the sick and aged, and they have brought their women and children to the shelter of the camp when they have gone off to a corroboree. But after a spell alongside the Mission the people go out again.

This was as Duguid had planned it to be; this was Ernabella holding the Aborigines in their own country through the 'fair exchange of flour for scalps'. However, given that other visitors to the mission, both before and after Duguid's stay, complained about its 'untidy and dirty' state—'why at Ernabella', one man alleged, 'you can't put your foot down for the dung'—a more appropriate description might well have been a 'haven of refuse'.

Was Ernabella the 'dirtiest station' in the region? Or was it, as Duguid described, 'a centre of friendliness, and of work', a place where Aborigines were being shown 'how much better off they [were] in their own country—free to roam at will—than sitting down at a cattle station in rags'? Could it be both? In the greater scheme of things, did it matter if the mission was 'untidy'?

Although generated by white men with little sympathy for the mission, and therefore probably exaggerated, the reports of Ernabella's uncleanliness reflected a reality and a problem at the mission that Duguid seemed reluctant to face. When confronted with news of Ernabella's alleged 'dirty' state in December 1938, Duguid's first response was to insist upon keeping visitors 'away ... until it [was] cleaned up'. Later, after visiting the mission himself, Duguid sought to lessen the impact of such criticism with the observation

92 Duguid to Matthew, 29 June 1944, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
94 Duguid, Ernabella: The Medical Patrol, p. 5.
95 Duguid to Minister (unnamed), 26 June 1938, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 10.
96 Matthew to Duguid, 20 December 1938, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1; G.F. Davis to 'Dear Sir' (not Duguid), 25 April 1940, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
97 Matthew to Duguid, 20 December 1938.
98 Duguid, Ernabella: The Medical Patrol, p. 5.
that it was to be expected: 'If the white people of the ... district ever acclaim Ernabella as a
fine thing, there will be something wrong at Ernabella', he told H.C. Matthew, secretary of
the Presbyterian Board of Missions.100 In Matthew's view, there already was something
'desperately' wrong at Ernabella. Having previously expressed strong reservations about
the superintendent, Harry Taylor's 'inexperience in the management' of missions, Matthew
viewed Ernabella's reputed uncleanness as confirmation of Taylor's incompetence: uncleanliness signalled disorder.101 At the end of 1939, after another year of poor book-
keeping, misplaced invoices and evasive answers, Taylor was asked to resign as
superintendent of Ernabella. From then until the beginning of 1941 when the Reverend
J.R.B. Love was finally coaxed from Kunmunya to Ernabella, acting superintendents
oversaw the running of the mission.102

After such an unsettled and inauspicious start, no-one rejoiced more than Duguid
at Love's appointment. As one of 'the most experienced, sensible and anthropologically
minded Missionaries to natives in Australia', Love was the embodiment of Duguid's ideal
superintendent; 'a linguist, a leader and man with knowledge of station life in all its
departments, as well as a fine Christian'.103 With Love in charge, 'the future and the
success of Ernabella [seemed] assured'.104 At the end of his first year at Ernabella, Love
reported that '[r]elations between the native people and the staff [were] excellent', and that a
'friendly and smiling attitude [was] evident'.105 Encouraged by these and other positive
reports emanating from the mission, Duguid described the Aborigines at Ernabella, and
especially the children, as 'the happiest you could meet'.106 'Were you to visit Ernabella', he
told a group of Adelaide school children in March 1943:

you [would] find that no family ties have been broken, and that no superior
complexes have been set up. The children still sleep naked between the family
fires, and by day they still collect food with their mothers, and when older
hunt with their fathers and men of the tribe.107

Duguid to Matthew, 3 October 1939, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
Matthew to Duguid, 1 July 1938 and 13 October 1938 and 28 November 1938 and 20 December
1938, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1. The reports of Ernabella's uncleanness were accompanied by
accusations of sheep stealing and cattle spearing at the Mission. See Inspector Parsonage to
Commissioner of Police, 8 August 1938, SRSA, GRG 52/1/38/21.
When J.R.B. Love arrived in March 1941 he found Ernabella 'in much better shape that [he] had
feared might be the case', although there was still a 'great deal ... to get cleaned up'. Love to
Matthew and Duguid, 13 March 1941, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 10.
Duguid to Chinnery, 1 August 1941, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1; Duguid to Matthew, 3 October
1939.
Matthew to Duguid, 18 May 1944, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1; Duguid to Mr Martin, Clerk of
Assembly, 14 November 1940, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 10.
Love to Penhall, 19 January 1942, SRSA, GRG 52/1/41/22.
Ibid., p. 10.

PART 1: PUBLIC
ERNABELLA UNDER THREAT

With their 'laughing eyes' and healthy countenance—'shining brown bodies [and] white teeth'—the 'happy bush children' at Ernabella served as proof of the mission's success.\textsuperscript{108} Having pinned such high hopes on Love, and apparently been rewarded, it was all the more shocking, therefore, to discover that Ernabella, under Love's management, 'was underfeeding its natives'.\textsuperscript{109}

Unlike the allegations of uncleanliness, the reports of underfeeding came from reputable sources; a police constable at Oodnadatta and two members of the APB, Constance Ternent Cooke and Alice Harvey Johnston. Instead of 'happy bush children', Cooke and Johnston saw 'sick people lying naked on the ground' and 'under-nourished' Aborigines dressed in 'rags' when they inspected Ernabella on behalf of the APB in October 1943.\textsuperscript{110} 'No work, no tucker' was the 'rule at Ernabella'. Its policy was to feed workers, children, aged, infirm and sick Aborigines only.\textsuperscript{111} Finding the mission in the grip of an influenza epidemic that had resulted in eight deaths and affected over 300 Aborigines as well as the white staff, Cooke named underfeeding as the first, and most serious, of Ernabella's many problems:

The workers and their families receive for breakfast plain porridge and a hunk of damper; for lunch damper and tea with sugar; for the night meal a stew made of goat meat and vegetables, damper and tea with sugar ... The old and infirm, or "pensioners" as they are called at Ernabella, do not fare even as well as this. With few exceptions, they receive one meal only, at night. This consists of a hunk of damper and tea with sugar.\textsuperscript{112}

Nor was there much opportunity for Aborigines to boost their meagre rations with provisions from the store, Cooke observed, for although some Aborigines had money and others the means to barter, 'the store [did] not contain enough to supply [them] with ... the ordinary amenities of life'. On scalp-receiving day, Cooke witnessed the frustration this caused:

Unfortunately only a certain number of scalps can be taken at a time, as there is not enough exchange value in the store. We watched from inside the store, and saw that the natives became angry when Mr Love said he could take no more scalps. He had to start to close the door and speak to them firmly ...


\textsuperscript{109} Duguid to Matthew, 7 May 1944, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.

\textsuperscript{110} Duguid to Chinnery, 1 August 1941.

\textsuperscript{111} Cooke, 'Impressions of a Visit to Ernabella'.

\textsuperscript{112} Cooke, 'Impressions of a Visit to Ernabella'.
[Love] said that every male member on the staff of Ernabella had been assaulted by a native at some time.\(^{113}\)

As well as being underfed and under-provided for, Cooke suspected that the Aboriginal workers at Ernabella were also being underpaid.\(^{114}\)

When further reports of underfeeding at Ernabella were received by the APB in the following year, Duguid blamed Love. Spurred by rumours of an 'appalling death rate' at Love's previous posting, Duguid drew a link between 'Love's failure to save his natives from preventable illness and death at Kunmunya' and the present crisis at Ernabella. Good feeding, Duguid argued, 'is the first bulwark' against disease: 'Ill-fed natives, however, will die like flies no matter what the infection'. Duguid's preferred solution, Love's immediate resignation as superintendent at Ernabella, caused the Board of Missions to look askance.\(^{115}\) 'Mr Love cannot be held responsible for the dying of the natives at Kunmunya', the Board reproached, and '[nor] can it be truly said that the dying of the natives [there] was because of underfeeding'. As for Ernabella, the Board insisted that it was up to APB to decide on a 'standard of adequate feeding'. '[If] that were done', the Board maintained that the APB would find 'the Superintendent ready and eager to give the heartiest co-operation in adherence to that standard'.\(^{116}\)

Duguid wanted someone, or something, to blame for Ernabella's deficiencies other than the mission itself. So too, it seems, did the Board of Missions. Shifting the blame from Love to the APB could not hide the fact that something was wrong at Ernabella, however. Given Duguid's high opinion of Love before the question of underfeeding arose, his reference to unfounded rumours and his reversal of faith in Love's abilities on the basis of these, revealed his deep anxieties about the future of Ernabella. With the Church's five year licence on the properties between Ernabella and the Central Aborigines Reserve drawing to a close, the source of Duguid's anxieties was clear. The 'government is taking stock of us', he told Matthew in May 1944, and '[we] cannot go on as we are doing'.\(^{117}\)

According to Duguid, the secretary of the APB, Penhall, had warned him that:

> the future of the blocks between us and the reserve depends on the success or otherwise of Ernabella in the interests of the Aborigines. If Ernabella gives clear evidence that it is acting in the interests of the Aborigines and raising them mentally, morally and physically, the blocks will not be taken from us.\(^{118}\)

\(^{113}\) *Ibid.*
\(^{114}\) 'I don't know what the local stations pay their workers', Cooke wrote, but '[it] seems to me that the remuneration given for the work of our native people should be revised'. Cooke, 'Impressions of a Visit to Ernabella'.
\(^{115}\) Duguid to Matthew, 7 May 1944, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
\(^{116}\) Matthew to Duguid, 8 June 1944, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
\(^{117}\) Duguid to Matthew, 7 May 1944.
\(^{118}\) *Ibid.*
Apart from the mission school, Duguid worried that Ernabella had little to show for its
endeavours.

First opened in 1940, the school at Ernabella was the 'essence of the Mission'. Here 'self-government [was] encouraged', 'personalities [were] being formed and minds trained', and Aboriginal children were 'being prepared for the day when they [would] meet the white race face to face'. Instead of being taught in English 'as if their [own] language were one to be despised', the children at Ernabella were 'taught in their own tongue'. And the results, according to Duguid, spoke for themselves: 'The average child attending the Ernabella school, after the equivalent of six months can read and write; and after the equivalent of twelve months many of the children can write their own language as fluently, neatly, and correctly as white children'. Yet even the school—Ernabella's 'great success'—was not immune to criticism. 'Whilst in full agreement that the children should be taught in their native language', Cooke felt that they would 'not be able to hold their own' when in contact with white people unless they were also taught English, 'the language of the country'. Matthew agreed. Following Cooke's report, Matthew informed Duguid that he was 'now convinced that the learning of English should not be optional ... but should be compulsory'.

Like Duguid, Matthew was 'full of anxieties' about Ernabella. Unlike Duguid, however, Matthew believed that the 'failure at Ernabella [went] much deeper than underfeeding'. Hesitantly, he explained:

I think underlying it is an unuttered belief that the Aborigines are not worth saving. Or [that] they are not capable of being used worthily in our modern life. We as Churches play at the business of saving them ... [but] our equipment of a mission station is of the most meagre and inadequate kind. Beside a people who are community-minded, who think and work in terms of the group, we set down an individual or even two, who can give to the Aborigines the most inadequate conceptions of what the white community from which they came stands for and does ... What of the tribe? Is the general effect of our insufficient labours on their behalf just to break the tribal life up and so disintegrate the life of the community?

120 Duguid, 'Aboriginal Children I have met' (1946), in C. Duguid, The Aborigines of Australia: Broadcasts and an Address, p. 33.
122 Duguid to Matthew, 7 May 1944.
123 Cooke, 'Impressions of a visit to Ernabella Mission'.
124 Matthew to Duguid, 18 May 1944.
125 Ibid.

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In Matthew's view, an entirely new approach to mission work was needed. 'Side by side with the Aboriginal tribe there should be a community group', he insisted. It should have 'a carpenter and builder, a gardener, an orchardist, a man in poultry, in pigs and in sheep'; all members 'should be married and have their own homes as an expression of the full community life of the white man'; and all should be committed to 'occupying themselves to the full in the pursuits in which they expect the black man to be their partners'. Even if it meant a fourfold increase in the budget for Ernabella, Matthew was convinced that 'something along these lines' needed to be done—'and done soon'—'to save the Pitjantjatjara tribe'.

In particular, Matthew wanted more attention focussed on the 'neglected area of the young people aged 13 or 14 to 20 and upwards, a structure of education and influence that [would] fit them for any future'. Duguid and Penhall found much to recommend Matthew's plan. In Penhall's opinion, anything that would 'equip the native for useful work, not only for his own salvation, but to enable him to serve in the general community' was a step forward. Signalling his assent, Duguid agreed that it was time to move beyond 'the meagre routine and stir ourselves afresh in the development of the native'. Love, however, was not convinced. 'What industry do you visualise for Ernabella?' he asked Matthew: 'How far do you wish to go in the way of bringing the young people away from their life as nomad hunters?' 'Please do not think me obstructionist', Love wrote, 'I want to do everything possible to elevate our people here ... [but] I believe that detribalisation will mean extinction'. So did Duguid. However, provided that they remained on their own land and away from contact with harmful whites, Duguid did not associate vocational training for Aboriginal adolescents with detribalisation. And yet, it was exactly the opposite—'the stubborn fact that they seem[ed] to drift towards the white man's cattle and sheep stations, away from their reserve'—that made the need for vocational training so urgent, according to Dr R. Trudinger, an 'honoured and experienced missionary' whose son Ronald was the teacher at Ernabella.

At the request of the Board of Missions, Dr Trudinger visited Ernabella in June 1944. In his subsequent report he described a combination of problems 'unique' to Ernabella: the 'pronounced nomadic habits of the people'; the fact that the mission had 'no control whatever over their movements'; and the 'almost complete segregation of the youths ... during the period of their initiation'. Rather than continue to labour under the false belief that 'the natives could be Christianised, and still keep their tribal life', Dr Trudinger urged the Mission authorities to institute a program of industrial training that would 'equip the

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126 Ibid.
127 Ibid.
129 Duguid to Matthew, 29 June 1944, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
130 Love to Matthew, 18 July 1944, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
blacks ... for a useful life'. However, it was Dr Trudinger's further observation regarding 'the tendency of the natives to move east to the habitations of the white man instead of west to their own reserve and home-land' that most concerned Matthew and the Board of Missions. In seeking confirmation from Love, Matthew asked whether the young people at Ernabella were 'forsaking their nomadic life and losing their skill in hunting and [were] therefore in danger of becoming detribalised'.

Love did not appreciate outsiders interfering in the running of his mission; that included Matthew and Duguid as well as Dr Trudinger. In answer to Matthew's fears, Love described the eastward movement of Aborigines as normal. These were 'hunting journeys', Love explained. On these journeys, the people lived on 'their accustomed native foods', chiefly kangaroo meat which was more plentiful in the east than the west. Although they also visited the cattle stations, and occasionally found casual employment, most of the people returned to Ernabella and the reserve. According to Love, the eastward movement of Aborigines was not the problem. The problem was Ernabella:

They come back here with a great collection of old ragged clothes, presumably obtained from their compatriots who are employed and clothed on the stations. Here is one problem for us: we must make Ernabella more attractive than any other station. The attractions are mainly white man's clothing and white man's food, the latter being a long way second.

The issue of clothing had long been a source of contention at Ernabella. In his first annual report, dated January 1942, Love commented favourably on the Aborigines' 'request for clothes' in exchange for dog-scalps, only to be informed by the APB that 'the wearing of clothing by the natives should, in the interests of health, be discouraged'. Health was not the only consideration, however. Duguid took pride in the fact that 'at' Ernabella only the few native men and women who are working at the homestead have even the simplest clothing, while those who only the visit the homestead occasionally are encouraged to remain tribal, meaning naked. Whether for reasons of health or 'tribal integrity' or both, it was one thing to allow the Aborigines at Ernabella to remain unclothed; it was quite another, in Love's opinion, to prevent them from wearing clothes. Ever the pragmatist, Love argued that since the Aborigines at Ernabella desired clothing, and would have it irrespective of the APB's edict, it was far better to provide them with a 'minimum of decent clothing ... and encourage them to use soap, and wash'.

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132 Ibid.
133 Ibid., p. 2; Love to Matthew, 23 October 1944, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 10.
135 Ibid.
Love wanted Ernabella to be the 'most attractive' station in the district; a place where Aborigines could 'get goods beyond the resources of the bush, equal to what they [could] get anywhere else, and where they [could] find something in the spiritual life of the Mission that they [could] not find elsewhere'. Apart from making Ernabella more attractive, however, Love wanted the mission to remain as it was. Against Dr Trudinger's suggestion that industrial training could begin with 'gardens or flocks looked after by the natives themselves', Love replied: 'Rule it out. The benevolent patriarchate is the only system that will function here in a lifetime'. Love saw himself as the benevolent patriarch. His subjects—'all of the people of Ernabella'—were nomadic: 'Let them continue to be nomadic', Love declared. As for the adolescent males whose 'initiation into the status of tribal manhood' kept them outside the mission's influence, Love insisted upon a policy of continued acquiescence to the dictates of 'tribal lore'. 'We can visit them', Love allowed, 'but they cannot take part in the life of the Mission, being secluded from contact with the women'. Although, as Love readily acknowledged, his plan offered little that was 'spectacular to show visitors, [or] to write about', he maintained that the 'permanent result ... of respecting tribal life' was the only result worth aiming for.

While the future of the mission was still being debated, Love learned that a white man had applied to lease two of the three blocks between Ernabella and the reserve. Now more than ever, Ernabella needed spectacular results. Love's warning that the Aborigines 'would inevitably die if their tribal lands were alienated from them' was not enough, its impact weakened by the steady and well-documented drift of Aborigines away from the reserve, east towards the pastoralists and south towards Ooldea and the East-West railway-line. Duguid's plea to save 'the last of the tribal natives of South Australia' was equally ineffectual, for if the Aborigines were voluntarily leaving the security of their reserve, and thereby becoming detribalised, perhaps they no longer needed a 'buffer mission'. With or without the blocks, it seemed clear that Ernabella was unable to prevent Aborigines from leaving the reserve. Thus, rather than focus on Ernabella's achievements—or lack thereof—Penhall drew government's attention to the economic benefits of extending the boundaries of the Central Aborigines Reserve to include the blocks in question.

Penhall's most persuasive argument concerned Ooldea. According to Penhall, the several hundred Aborigines currently residing at the Ooldea mission had 'no future hope before them save a parasitic existence on the Government and philanthropic bodies, unless they [could] be transferred to a more suitable region where they [could] continue their

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139 Ibid., p. 4.
140 Love to Matthew, 23 October 1944, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 10.
142 Ibid., pp. 4-5; Love to Matthew, 18 July 1944.
143 Love to Duguid, 23 October 1944, SRSA, GRG 52/1/1944/86.
144 Ibid.; See also Penhall to Chinnery, 22 September 1939.
145 Duguid to Penhall, 1 December 1944, SRSA, GRG 52/1/1944/86.
nomadic existence'. Anticipating Ooldea's imminent closure, Penhall claimed that the Aborigines there could be moved to the area between Ernabella and the reserve 'at no cost to government'. The alternative—allowing white pastoralists to occupy the blocks—would result in 'a still greater drift of natives to Ooldea... where they become an increasing expense to the government, and present a very difficult problem in administration'.146 The Department of Lands was sufficiently impressed by Penhall's Ooldea solution to allow for the 'possibility' of extending the reserve to include the blocks in question. While it waited to see how successful the APB was in moving the natives now at Ooldea back to the Musgrave Ranges, and keeping them there, the Department agreed to renew Ernabella's licence over the blocks for a further year, ending in August 1946.147 It was a temporary reprieve for Ernabella. As for Ooldea, the Aborigines there were not moved until 1952, when the entire population was moved south to Yalata in advance of the British testing of atomic weapons at Maralinga.148

Duguid visited Ernabella in May 1946. It was his first visit since the outbreak of war, and his first opportunity, therefore, to comment first-hand on the problems that had besieged Ernabella during his seven years absence. In his subsequent report to the APB, Duguid left nothing to chance. He praised the 'tidiness and cleanliness of the Mission', made special mention of the increased ration order and high nutritional value of the food, and noted how well the 'old people [were] being cared for'. Rather than risk inflaming an already volatile situation by addressing the problems of detribalisation and/or Aboriginal migration in his report, Duguid let 'the happiness of the people, whether at the Mission itself, at the native camp, or on the sheep camps' speak for itself.149 Duguid's message was clear: Ernabella's problems were over. Duguid's agenda, however, was also clear. He wanted Ernabella's boundaries to be finalised in favour of the mission. Less than two months later, at the end of July 1946, this decade-long and increasingly angst-ridden issue was pushed from Duguid's mind, unresolved in the face of a new and far greater threat, the rocket range. Ernabella's problems were far from over.

146 Penhall to the Minister for Public Works, 21 December 1944, SRSA, GRG 52/1/1944/86.
147 Director of Lands to Penhall, 16 April 1945, SRSA, GRG 52/1/1944/86.
149 Duguid to Penhall, 5 June 1946, SRSA, GRG 52/1/1946/15.
III. 'Detribalisation of the Aborigine is inevitable'

The rocket range controversy focussed unprecedented public attention on the welfare and future prospects of the Aborigines of the Central Aborigines Reserve. While a desire to protect Aborigines from harm was evident on both sides of the debate, opinion varied as to the impact the range would have on them, whether and how their interests could be safeguarded, and what their interests actually were. No-one could deny that the Aborigines would be effected in some way by the rocket range. However, the measure of that effect—be it negative or positive, destructive or constructive—was largely determined by how the reserve's inhabitants were perceived. Duguid perceived and portrayed them as 'fully tribal' Aborigines. In his view, all talk on the part of politicians and others that their interests could be safeguarded was 'utter nonsense':

The invasion of their territory in the way planned by the British and Australian Governments means their end. In place of the fine upstanding myall native of the mountain ranges, within a few years will be a half-caste race, and for this all those supporting the rocket firing range must bear the responsibility.

The supporters of the project, including A.P. Elkin, argued that the 'tribal life' Duguid was so solicitous of preserving no longer existed, or at least not to the extent that Duguid claimed. They pointed to the steady drift of Aborigines away from the reserve, the increased contact with white people and the influence of Ernabella and other missions. Rather than hastening Aboriginal extinction as Duguid claimed, the project's supporters maintained that its only effect would be to hasten Aboriginal detribalisation; a process that all evidence (barring Duguid and his fellow protesters') suggested was well under-way.

In *Fire Across the Desert* (1989), a commissioned history of Woomera and the Anglo-Australian Joint Project, Peter Morton has argued that the rocket range controversy was 'slow to ignite', an argument in keeping with his further claim that 'few Australians cared much for Aboriginal culture ... [in] those days'. The length of time that elapsed between the British and Australian governments' earliest discussions about a possible rocket range in Australia at the end of 1945 and the first stirrings of discontent mid-way

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150 Between August and November 1946, the Adelaide *Advertiser* printed more than thirty letters and editorials on the subject, with similar interest and debate reflected in newspapers in Melbourne and Sydney, and to a lesser extent in London. See Morton, *Fire Across the Desert*, p. 69.

151 Duguid to Chifley, 4 October 1946, Association for the Protection of Native Races Papers, University of Sydney Archives, Series 7.

152 Duguid to editor, *Advertiser*, 28 October 1946. See also S.G. Eyles, Inquiry Officer to Deputy Director, Commonwealth Investigation Branch, report of 'Meeting Conducted Under the Aegis of Common Cause Protesting Against Rocket Bomb Tests in Australia', 7 August 1946, NAA: D1918/0, S1493.

153 Morton, *Fire Across the Desert*, pp. 69, 76.
through the following year was not the result of indifference, however, but rather of secrecy. Although enough speculative information found its way into British and Australian newspapers by the end of July 1946 to ignite Duguid and his fellow protesters' rage, the Australian government refused to release any details about the proposed scheme until formal agreement with Britain was reached at the end of November that year.  

Unofficial reports suggested that rockets would be fired in a north-westerly direction from Mt Eba, a pastoral property in South Australia, to Ninety Mile Beach in Western Australia, and that observation stations would be built at 100 mile intervals inside the Central Aborigines Reserve. According to Duguid, this meant that Ernabella mission was ‘in danger’ (see Plate 5). Without confirmation from government, however, it was an easy task for Duguid’s critics and supporters of the project to discredit his objections as ‘unwarranted’, ‘premature’ and ‘hysterical’, and Duguid himself as ‘a well-meaning crank’.

Ending months of speculation, the Minister for Defence, John Dedman, issued the Australian government’s first authoritative statement on the rocket range on 22 November 1946. Dedman’s statement confirmed Duguid’s worst fears—the rocket range was going ahead, and it was going through the Central Aborigines Reserve—yet Dedman maintained that the risk to the Aborigines would be ‘negligible’:

It is suggested to me by those most competent to judge, that the accident risk to the Aborigine will be less than that taken by the ordinary citizen of one of our cities in crossing a motor thoroughfare, or from the danger of an aircraft falling from the skies.

In regard to the very limited number of observation posts which may later have to be established along the line of fire, Dedman assured the Australian public that he was ‘very conscious of the need to do everything possible to safeguard the Aborigines from contact, or encroachment on any area of special significance to them’. Towards this end, he stressed that instructions had been given to the Australian Guided Projectiles Committee (AGPC) to ‘consult with the Director of Native Affairs and other authorities concerned in Aborigine welfare, and to report on the measures necessary to ensure their safety and welfare’.

155 ‘Scientists stage atomic and rocket tests’, Sphere, 6 July 1946; Duguid to editor, Advertiser, 7 August 1946.
156 Duguid to editor, Advertiser, 27 July 1946
157 See R.L. Parsons to editor, Advertiser, 13 August 1946; J. Peacey to editor, Advertiser, 22 October 1946; J.C.B. Morely to editor, Advertiser, 2 and 6 November 1946; C.T. Madigan to editor, Advertiser, 8 and 13 November 1946; Roy Curthoys, chief Australian correspondent The Times to Sir Frederick Shedden, Secretary Department of Defence, 15 October 1946, NAA: A5954, 1656/2.
158 Dedman, ‘The position regarding the setting up of Guided Missile Range and a supporting developmental establishment in Australia’, 22 November 1946.
159 Ibid.
In keeping with Dedman's pledge, a special meeting of the AGPC was planned for early in the following year. Hurried letters were sent to the Premiers of South Australia and Western Australia, asking for representatives from their governments to be co-opted to the AGPC 'from the aspect of State Aborigine policy'. The federal Attorney-General and Minister for External Affairs, Dr H.V. Evatt, suggested that Elkin should be invited, and Major General L.E. Beavis, recently appointed chairman of the AGPC, was dispatched to see him in person. According to Elkin's biographer, Tigger Wise, Elkin readily agreed to co-operate: 'It would be his pleasure, he told Beavis, to do whatever the government thought fit. To avoid accusations of collusion', however, Elkin suggested that the army invite the Australian National Research Council to nominate an anthropological expert to the Committee, namely himself. The Department of the Interior and Dedman wanted Duguid to be invited as well, but Beavis objected, pointing to what he called Duguid's 'known bigoted outlook' against the range. In the end, government resolved to invite Duguid and Donald Thomson to attend part of the meeting in a non-official, non-voting capacity. On 29 January 1947, two days before the AGPC meeting was due to commence, Duguid received an urgent telegram inviting him to attend. Lending weight to Duguid's claim that 'the whole meeting was a farce', Thomson was given less than a day's notice, his invitation to attend being conveyed by telephone the night before the meeting.

Headed by Beavis, the AGPC comprised six core members from the departments of defence, navy, army, air, munitions and the Council for Scientific Research, most of whom were also members of the Board of Administration responsible for the establishment and supervision of the rocket range. Paul Wilson has argued that this represented 'a striking paradox or conflict of interest', for as members of the Board of Administration their principle task was to ensure the success of the rocket range, while as members of the AGPC they were charged with recommending procedures to ensure the safety of Aborigines whose 'way of life', according to the protesters, was directly threatened by the rocket range. However, there could only have been a conflict of interest if members had had the option of finding the scheme too dangerous. Since the purpose of the AGPC meeting was to recommend measures that would 'ensure the safety and welfare of Aborigines in the range area, on the basis that the range would be built as

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160 Chifley to Premier of Western Australia, 4 December 1946, NAA: A5954, 1656/2.
164 In Doctor and Aborigines, Duguid stated that he received this telegram on 20 January 1947, an error repeated in Wilson's thesis. Official records reveal that the decision to invite Duguid was not made until 29 January and that he was cabled thereafter. Shedden to Duguid, 29 January 1947, NAA: A5954, 1656/2.
166 Wilson, 'Rockets and Aborigines', p. 39.
... *planned*, there was no conflict of interest. The rocket range was going ahead regardless, and to this all members agreed. 'I look at it this way', Elkin explained:

> We cannot do anything about this range, and those of us with experience in native matters should get behind the government and do everything we can to help. We have to face it. We cannot [stop] the project going through.

In addition to the six core members, six others were co-opted. Of these, only four had any specific knowledge of Aboriginal matters; F.H. Moy, Director of Native Affairs for the Northern Territory, A O. Neville, former Chief Protector of Aborigines in Western Australia, W R. Penhall, Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Board of South Australia, and Elkin. The two other co-opted members, L.F. Loder and Lieutenant General J.F. Evatts, represented the department of Works and Housing and the British Long Range Weapons Organisation respectively.

On 31 January and 1 February 1947, the AGPC met at Victoria Barracks in Melbourne, with Duguid and Thomson in attendance on the second day. On the first day of proceedings Elkin persuaded the Committee to agree to five measures that he considered essential for the protection of Aborigines in the range area; 'a patrol officer to regulate contacts, protection of sacred sites, no transfer of Aborigines from place to place, no Aborigines to be used for labour, and airstrips to be used rather than roads'. With these measures agreed upon, and before Duguid and Thomson were called, the second day of proceedings opened with a brief summary of the previous day's discussion:

> Contact with white people is increasing the detribalisation of the natives, including the controlled detribalisation brought about by the Missions. An important point is that it should be controlled, and not uncontrolled, contact. A serious aspect is that there is a continuous drift of the natives to South Australia.

At this point, Neville remarked that increased contact was 'only hastening a process which must come soon'; by this he meant detribalisation. Following Neville's interjection, Beavis concluded his summary thus:

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167 'Report by the Australian Committee on Guided Projectiles on the Welfare of Aborigines Located Within the Range Area', 1 February 1947, NAA: A816/1, 12/301/74 (hereafter AGPC Report) (emphasis added).

168 'Notes Taken at Meeting of the Australian Committee on Guided Projectiles Held on 1 February, 1947', p. 11, NAA: A816/1, 12/301/74 (hereafter AGPC Notes).

169 AGPC Report.


171 AGPC Notes, p. 1.
I suggest putting in our report—and this is important on the basis of the statement of the proposed activities affecting the Central Aboriginal Reserves—that the conference agrees satisfactory arrangements can be made for the safety and welfare of the natives.\textsuperscript{172}

In terms of the AGPC's subsequent report and recommendations to parliament, it bears emphasising that this 'important general conclusion' was reached prior to Duguid and Thomson being called. It is equally important to note that the question of detribalisation—so crucial in terms of the AGPC's overall findings—was raised prior to Duguid and Thomson's entry, and was not raised at all during their consultation with the Committee.

On entering the Committee room, Duguid made his objections clear. If the rocket range was definitely going through the reserve, he knew 'of no welfare matters at all which [would] save the poor blacks'. 'I know of none', he declared. While Duguid conceded that airstrips rather than roads for the recovery of missiles and transportation of personnel 'minimise[d] things considerably', and was pleased, though sceptical, to learn that Aboriginal labour would not be used, he was adamant that no measures would 'keep the Aborigines away [from] ... the settlements'. Although informed by Beavis that 'settlements' was the wrong term, and that 'at most' there would be three 'observation posts' staffed by no more than 25 people, Duguid was unrelenting. In his opinion, 'the size of the settlements ... [did] not make a great deal of difference to interference with Aboriginal life', for 'whether small or big ... it [would] be quite impossible' to keep the Aborigines away. But 'why is it necessary to keep them away?' another Committee member asked, to which Duguid replied:

Because I do not want their mode of life interfered with. It is inevitable that some outside contacts will be made, but they should be made by anthropologists and enlightened missionaries who are prepared to observe their customs and mode of life generally, and approach them as definite entities.

But what 'if suitable patrol officers [were] employed to take charge of that aspect', Beavis inquired, only to face Duguid's swift retort that he knew of 'only two men who [knew] anything about the language of the Pitjantjatjara in the Reserve'. To Elkin's more inclusive claim that he was 'concerned with the welfare of Aborigines not only in the Reserve but along the whole range', Duguid replied that the 'Aborigines in the Reserve [were] of a

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid.
much more primitive state'. 'That is why I stress the value of the Reserve', he explained, and why 'I will not give up my attempt to save it'.

Prior to the AGPC meeting, Duguid and Thomson had never met. Duguid knew of the anthropologist's 1937 'Recommendations of Policy in Native Affairs in the Northern Territory', foremost of which had been 'absolute segregation' and, despite disagreeing with this, had borrowed Thomson's 'buffer' concept for use at Erabella. More importantly, Duguid knew Thomson by reputation as a fine scientist whose work was 'made human and effective by his deep love for the Aborigines'. The feeling, it seems, was mutual, with Thomson likening the older man's 'honesty and sincerity' to a 'breath of clean fresh air'. At the AGPC meeting, Thomson backed Duguid as best he could. Having received insufficient warning and facts to prepare his case, Thomson's contribution was necessarily limited. Asked what 'ultimate effect' he believed the range would have on the Aborigines, and whether he had any 'helpful suggestions' to give the Committee, Thomson sketched what had happened in other parts of Australia where 'quite untouched' Aborigines had been forced into contact with whites: 'The native gets an inferiority complex, gets into an apathetic conditions, and loses the desire to live'. Although Beavis objected that the Aborigines in question could not be called 'untouched' for they 'already wander in and out [of the reserve], and have their contact with civilisation already', this only reinforced Thomson's view that nothing could protect the Aborigines from contact with range employees.

The AGPC thought otherwise. After hearing Duguid and Thomson's views, the Committee agreed that 'neither of these gentlemen had advanced any reason which precluded the making of satisfactory arrangements to ensure the safety and welfare of the Aborigines in the proposed range area'. More pointedly, Elkin remarked that 'neither of these gentlemen suggested any ways in which the Committee might fulfil its purpose, namely to safeguard the Aborigines while carrying out the project, their attitude being a negative one'. The AGPC's report, tabled in the House of Representatives on 6 March 1947, reflected Elkin's influence. Accordingly the Committee recommended that patrol officers be appointed to provide for the welfare of Aborigines 'both within and without the Central Reserve', thereby ensuring that any interference occasioned by the rocket range was 'controlled and not uncontrolled'. The issue of control was especially important in relation to the 'planned detribalisation of the Aborigine'. Under the heading 'Aims of the Aborigine Protection Authorities', it was explained that:

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173 Ibid., pp. 1-9
174 See chapter one.
176 Donald Thomson to Duguid, 27 December 1946, Duguid Papers: 1, Series 1.
177 AGPC Notes, pp. 9-10.
178 AGPC Report, p. 11.
179 Secretary AGPC to Shedden, 8 February 1947 (quoting remarks by Professor A.P. Elkin), NAA: A5954, 1656/2.
it is now accepted that the detribalisation of the Aborigine is inevitable, and that it is the aim of the Government authorities responsible for the protection of the Aborigine, in conjunction with missionary authorities, to control such detribalisation in the best interests of the Aborigine. 180

Although, by its phrasing, this statement gave tacit acknowledgment to a different (if now obsolete) perspective regarding detribalisation, it is not sufficiently appreciated that not everyone in 1947 'accepted' the inevitability of detribalisation. Alison Holland, for example, has argued that Duguid and Thomson 'both recognised the 'inevitability' of detribalisation, but at the core of their defence of inviolable reserves was a commitment to gradual and sympathetic transition and development'. 181 With regard to Duguid, only the second part of Holland's argument is correct; neither part reflects Thomson's views.

As well as being inevitable, the AGPC implied that detribalisation could be hastened without negative effect, thereby making explicit how different Duguid and Thomson's views were from Elkin's and the rest of the Committee. The AGPC acknowledged that '[c]ontact with white people, additional to that controlled by the government authorities and the two main Missions [at Ernabella and Warburton] would accelerate the rate of detribalisation ... as at present planned by those authorities'. However, the AGPC was confident that if 'the contacts brought about by the construction and use of the guided projectiles range were controlled and of a wholesome nature, their only effect would be the putting forward of the clock regarding detribalisation by possibly a generation'. 182 Less than three years earlier, in defending Ernabella's hold over the properties adjacent to the Central Aborigines Reserve, Penhall had argued that 'the intrusion of white occupation' in that area 'would inevitably lead to rapid detribalisation and diminution in numbers and efficiency of the natives, not only of the natives, but of the State of South Australia as a whole'. 183 Yet Penhall was one of the four co-opted 'experts' responsible for the AGPC's contrary finding that detribalisation could now be hastened without negative effect. What had changed?

According to Duguid, nothing had changed. If the rocket range went ahead as planned, he predicted that within a generation the 'fine native people' of the Central Aborigines Reserve would 'have ceased to exist except as oddments here and there without any real hold on life', which to him meant 'detribalised'. 184 Duguid viewed the prospect of accelerated detribalisation as a repudiation of all that Ernabella stood for, all that he had fought for, and all that had been achieved at Ernabella over the previous ten years. Following the release of the AGPC's report, he delivered a powerful address at the

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180 AGPC Report, p. 5.
181 Holland, 'Saving the Aborigines', p. 259.
182 AGPC Report, p. 5.
183 Penhall to the Minister for Public Works, 21 December 1944.
184 Duguid, The Rocket Range, Aborigines and War, p. 12.
Melbourne Town Hall in which he condemned the rocket range as a 'final token of Australia's disregard of her minority race':

Shot and poisoned as they were in the earlier days, neglected and despised more lately, must our Aborigines now be finally sacrificed and hurried to extinction by the sudden contact with the mad demands of twentieth century militarism?185

'Let us be frank and admit that we are forcing a clash between human beings', Duguid declared:

Not only may a few individual Aborigines meet their death in one way or another—and secrecy will prevent us ever knowing—but the whole fabric of life of 1500, or more, of our tribal Aborigines is to be sacrificed in this preparation for another war.186

Since the 'whole fabric' of Aboriginal life was linked to the land—'the land that has been their spiritual heritage for unknown centuries, the land that grows their vegetable food ... the mountain slopes that provide their water supplies, and the nearby plains that carry their game'—Duguid described the 'sudden taking over of [their] country' as equally, if not more, dangerous to Aboriginal survival than 'sudden contact'.187

For Duguid, detribalised meant degraded—or no longer 'tribal'. It also meant 'without land', for it was land, according to him, that made 'tribal life' possible. The number of organisations and individuals who named 'violation of the reserve' as their principal objection to the rocket range suggests that many Australians—black and white—felt as Duguid did. The Women's Christian Temperance Union, the New Education Fellowship, the People's Council for Culture, the Victorian Aboriginal Group and the Australian Aborigines League (AAL) among others, protested strongly against 'any encroachment on the Central Reserve, and consequent interference with tribal life'.188 In his capacity as honorary secretary of the AAL, Aboriginal activist Douglas Nicholls even went so far as to beseech the Queen of England to protect his 'defenceless' people and their land from the

185 Ibid., p. 15.
186 Ibid., p. 10.
188 Amy Brown, honorary secretary Victorian Aborigines Group to Chifley, 21 August 1946, NAA: A816/1, 3/310/435 Part 1. This file contains more than one-hundred letters of protest from various organisations and individuals against the rocket range. See Doris Gray, general secretary Women's Christian Temperance Union of South Australia to Chifley, 15 August 1946; Rupert Best, general secretary New Education Fellowship to Chifley, 31 October 1946; H.J. Tapscott, chairman Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society to Chifley, 6 November 1946; Laura Gapp, honorary secretary People's Council for Culture to Chifley, 10 January 1947.
rocket range. According to Elkin, however, it was 'not violation of reserves that [was] at stake'. Rather, he maintained that the rocket range highlighted the more important 'matter of how we assist Aborigines all over Australia to meet the contact with our culture which is hastening upon them during and since the war in an accelerated degree'.

As Tigger Wise, Geoffrey Gray and others have observed, Elkin's views on the effect of sudden contact between Aborigines and whites had changed. Whereas before the war Elkin had convincingly argued that abrupt change caused tribal disintegration and depopulation, the great influx of army personnel into the Northern Territory and subsequent large scale employment of Aboriginal labour during the war persuaded him that under certain circumstances Aborigines could readily adapt to new ways of living with no apparent ill-effects. In *Citizenship for the Aborigines: A National Policy* (1944), Elkin explained his new theory thus:

> The Aborigines in the Northern Territory are rendering excellent, interested and willing service to the Army in this time of national crisis. There are several reasons why they are doing so: they are treated with justice and consideration; their work is appreciated; and their group or social life is preserved. But the fundamental reason is that their general health and diet are provided for in the same degree as in the case of the [white] soldiers: Showers, sanitation, good food served at tables, transport to and from work, prescribed hours of work and hospitals and medical attention.

If these conditions—the likes of which had seldom been experienced by Aborigines before—were replicated on a wider scale, Elkin was confident that 'the Aborigines [would] advance much more quickly' than previously expected. It seems that Penhall and the rest of the AGPC shared his confidence.

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190 Elkin to Bishop Cranswick, Chairman Australian Board of Missions, 18 July 1947, A.P. Elkin Papers, University of Sydney Archives, P130, (hereafter Elkin Papers), Box 55, File 1/12/6.
193 Ibid., p. 24; Elkin to Cranswick, 18 July 1947. Elkin's war-revised views found support from the Adelaide based Aborigines' Friends' Association (AFA) who went further, arguing that 'inasmuch as the natives rendered satisfactory service in the army, [they] should be permitted to take part in the new defence scheme'. Almost alone among humanitarian organisations, the AFA openly supported the rocket range, seeing it as an opportunity to create employment for Aborigines in 'their own country'. See Gordon Rowe, secretary AFA to H.V. Johnson, Minister for the Interior, 6 August 1946 and Rowe to Chifley, 13 June 1947, NAA: A816/1, 3/301/435 Part 1. See also *Aborigines' Friends' Association Annual Report 1947*, Adelaide, 1947, pp. 5-6.
In the belief that there were 'many bodies, Missionary, Humanitarian and University, who would be satisfied if [he] could assure them on this matter and give a few substantiating facts', Elkin released a statement on the rocket range in March 1947. Entitled 'Guided Projectiles and the Welfare of the Aborigines', Elkin's statement received wide media exposure, being printed in daily newspapers and church papers. Other than to advise would-be protesters against wasting their 'energy in futile protests or abstract arguments', Elkin's main point was that Duguid and others' 'emphasis on the violation of the Central Australian Reserves [had] been overdone'. Not only was there constant movement of Aborigines in and out of the reserve, but the Aborigines there had 'been in contact with white people for at least 30 years'. Moreover, since 'the missions at Ernabella and in the Warburton Ranges [were] educating [Aborigines] in such a way that they must become civilised—a correct policy', according to Elkin, this meant that 'the old way of life [was] already much modified'. As such, it was 'not so much a matter of violation of Reserves that counts', Elkin argued, but of 'doing damage directly or indirectly to Aborigines wherever they may be'. With patrol officers employed to oversee the welfare of Aborigines along the entire length and breadth of the range, both inside and outside the reserve, Elkin had 'no hesitation in saying that the Aborigines [were] not doomed by this experimental work'; indeed, he implied, it was possible that they would be better protected than ever before.

Having been 'associated with Aboriginal welfare, and to some extent with administration, for twenty years', Elkin expected that his statement 'would do a great deal to allay' public fears. He was mistaken. According to Wise, '[u]proar greeted Elkin's statement' with '[l]etters of utter astonishment at his apparent defection [filling] his mail'. Two missionary organisations with which Elkin had long been associated, the Australian Board of Missions (ABM) and the National Missionary Council (NMC), expressed strong reservations, each claiming that their stand in defence of the reserve was supported 'by anthropological teachings in the past', namely Elkin's. In June 1947, the NMC released its own statement on the rocket range which, according to Elkin, did 'not agree with [his] and to some extent contradict[ed] it'. With the NMC's statement, Bishop Cranswick, Chairman of the ABM, circulated a memo which he hoped Elkin would regard 'as defining in greater detail the specific Christian opinion on [the rocket range] in a way that ... [Elkin may] not have felt [himself] free to do in [his] capacity as a member' of

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194 Elkin to Dedman, 4 March 1947, NAA: A5954, 1656/2.
196 Elkin, 'Guided Projectiles and the Welfare of the Aborigines'.
197 Elkin to Dedman, 4 March 1947.
199 Ibid.
200 Elkin to Mr Dovey, Honorary Secretary National Missionary Council, 17 July 1947, Elkin Papers, Box 55, File 1/12/6.
the AGPC.\footnote{Elkin Cranswick, 18 July 1947.} Unable to abide Cranswick’s insinuation that he was ‘a coward with regard to [his] fundamental views’, and finding himself in ‘a serious state of duplicity’ over the NMC’s statement, Elkin resigned his membership of both organisations, thereby cementing his and Duguid’s polarised positions.\footnote{Elkin to Dovey, 17 July 1947; Elkin to Cranswick 18 July 1947.} In April 1947, Duguid resigned his membership of the South Australian APB, citing the South Australian government’s support for the rocket range and Penhall’s duplicitous agreement as his reasons.\footnote{Duguid to McIntosh, 28 April 1947, Duguid Papers: 2, Series 2.} Neither man, it seems, could work within an organisation that effectively supported the other.

In Duguid’s opinion, Elkin’s close ties with the federal government had reduced the anthropologist to a state ‘of complete subservience’, the proof of which was Elkin’s apparent preparedness to ‘back any proposition the Federal Government puts up, even to the extent of a rocket range through a Reserve’.\footnote{Duguid to Doris Blackburn, 12 February 1947 and Duguid to Margaret Carden, honorary secretary Australian Student Christian Movement, 11 March 1947, Duguid Papers: 2, Series 1.} In his own defence, Elkin maintained that his support for the rocket range was based on a set of ‘facts’ that Duguid refused to face. Duguid, for example, talked about the reserve as if it was ‘where the people [were]’, yet Elkin insisted that this was only ‘sometimes’.\footnote{Wise, in an attempt to discredit Duguid’s attack on her subject’s integrity, has argued that Duguid was ‘[u]naware that Elkin, since the war, had changed his views completely about the effect of sudden contact between whites and Aborigines’. This, however, was not the case; according to Duguid, Elkin told him about his changed views at the AGPC meeting. Instead, for various reasons, including his belief that Elkin had ‘sold-out’ to government, Duguid was simply unconvinced by Elkin’s new theory. Wise, \textit{The Self-Made Anthropologist}, p. 200; Duguid, ‘The Rocket Range and the Aborigines’, unpublished address, 24 August 1947, Duguid Papers: 2, Series 1.} Duguid gave the ‘impression as though the whole area [was] filled with ... mountains and rock holes and Pitjantjatjara people’, yet ‘a tremendous portion of the reserve [was] useless desert’.\footnote{Elkin to Cranswick, 18 July 1947.} Duguid based most of his arguments ‘on hearsay’, ‘rhetoric and emotionalism’, yet the ‘facts’ of the matter were plain: the rocket range was the decided policy of the British and Australian governments; Aborigines would not be harmed in any way; and their sacred sites would not be interfered with.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}} Rather than continue to protest ‘against what was not happening and what [was] not likely to happen’ as a consequence of the rocket range, Elkin urged Duguid and his fellow Presbyterians to help in other ways by keeping ‘the natives away from contact which they fear almost needlessly by making their Ernabella Mission more attractive’; by now an uncomfortably familiar argument.\footnote{Elkin ‘Guided Projectiles and the Welfare of the Aborigines’; Elkin to Dovey, 17 July 1947; Elkin to Cranswick, 18 July 1947; Wise, \textit{The Self-Made Anthropologist}, p. 201.}

Nearly everyone involved in the rocket range controversy saw the ‘facts’ differently. The Australian government saw a vast ‘empty’ wasteland that was ideal for testing Britain’s rockets. Elkin saw a government that was willing and able to manage an accelerated
detribalisation, and a government that was prepared to do everything, even 'to the point of inconvenience', to ensure Aborigines' safety.209 Having long since lost faith in government's ability, let alone desire, to protect Aborigines, Duguid and Thomson saw the rocket range as government's 'deliberate attempt to exterminate them'. Theirs was not the winning argument. While Duguid remained 'utterly and uncompromisingly opposed to the rocket project', the Presbyterian Board of Missions took Elkin's advice.210 Its new secretary, V.W. Coombes, having met with Elkin to discuss Ernabella's future several months before the AGPC meeting, was resigned to seeing 'a rapid acceleration in the tempo of the natives' change over to more Western ways'.211

By the end of 1947, the rocket range controversy was over. In many ways, it was over before it began. In fighting against the rocket range, Duguid was fighting for an ideal at Ernabella that no longer existed, and perhaps never had; a sanctuary of preservation and elevation where 'tribal' Aborigines could learn about white civilisation without losing their identity as 'tribal' Aborigines. Likewise, Duguid was fighting for rights to land that Aborigines did not have, and for rights to a culture and 'way of life' that was increasingly viewed as incompatible with Aboriginal advancement and assimilation. Yet Duguid fought on regardless. It was the same fight he had been waging since the mid 1930s, and it was the same fight he would continue to wage in the coming decades. Having taken on government, the military and Elkin in a year-long sustained battle to save the Central Aborigines Reserve and its inhabitants from the rocket range, Duguid achieved notoriety, and a more positive fame in some quarters, as an uncompromising campaigner. While of little comfort to the Aborigines whose ancestral home became the Guided Projectiles Range—cruelly named Woomera, an Aboriginal word meaning throwing stick—Duguid's moral victory stood him, and his cause, in good stead for the battles yet to come.212

209 Elkin to Dovey, 17 July 1947.
210 Holland, 'Saving the Aborigines', p. 253; 'Resigns from abo boards as rocket protest', Argus, 10 May 1947.
PLATE 3a. This was the original Ernabella station homestead, known as 'the Manse'. This photograph was taken by J.R.B. Love, superintendent at Ernabella mission, in 1943.

Source: Ara Irititja Archive.


Source: Ara Irititja Archive.
PLATE 4. Artist's impression of Mt Eba region.

Original caption: 'THE "DEAD HEART" OF AUSTRALIA, WHICH WILL BE THE SCENE OF FORTHCOMING ROCKET BOMB TESTS: An artist's impression of the lonely Mount Eba region, in North-eastern South Australia, which has been chosen by a British Mission, under Lieut-General Evetts, as the most suitable place for establishing a testing station for British rocket bombs, some of which may be charged with atomic explosives. The area selected is described by those who know it as "a wilderness of saltbush and bluebush, and a haunt of dingoes, dotted with stagnant water-holes."

Artist: Alfred Morris

Source: Sphere (London), 6 July 1946, p. 12.
PLATE 5. Charles Duguid's rocket range map.

PART II: PRIVATE