Archaeological Aspects Of Aboriginal Settlement

Of The Period 1870-1970

In The Wiradjuri Region

by

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A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

at The Australian National University

May 1999
SECTION 2
WHO ARE WIRADJURI?
Chapter 3
Who are Wiradjuri?

This chapter discusses some of the difficulties in distinguishing separate group identity (ethnicity) in both the social and archaeological contexts. Earlier the Wiradjuri region was explained with reference to Aboriginal concepts of country and the debate about group boundaries. This chapter faces similar complexities in explaining the changing identity of a people who have lived surrounded by the white community for eight generations. It is necessary to establish Wiradjuri as people with a past, present and future. In a sense, this research could be summarised by the question "Who are Wiradjuri?" because the surveys of settlements trace examples of the life, movements, survival, or assimilation into the majority culture of various families.

This chapter attempts to provide an intercultural account and looks at how European settlement is inextricably linked to the question of Wiradjuri consolidation and identity survival. There are many types of Wiradjuri identity, starting with hunter-gatherers who shared similarities in language and way of life, followed by two centuries of interaction with Europeans, leading to the questions of identity in contemporary society.

In an attempt to resolve this, the discussion is divided into three parts. The first establishes aspects of pre-European life, some of which appeared in altered form in recent settlements. The second discusses the impact of European arrival and occupation, how social interaction may be regarded as the cause of the problem. The third examines the wide ranging issues in contemporary Wiradjuri survival that include naming, family, law, urban settlement, group identity, assimilation, archaeology and ethnicity. It explains how the people of mixed ancestry in south-eastern Australia have forged a new, Koori, identity.

What emerges is a complex picture of continuity and change. It sheds light on the creation of a mixed Aboriginal/European culture and the recent recognition of Koori communities. It also introduces the problem of distinguishing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal settlements.

Pre-European Wiradjuri Life

By the time of early European settlement, Wiradjuri lands covered a large part of present day New South Wales, bounded by limits of usage of the people who said *wira* (no).
Wiradjuri was one of a group of "no-having" (wira or wiracy = no, and djuri or thurray = having) Aboriginal languages, which included a number of other dialects or languages in neighbouring areas of southeastern Australia (Austin et al. 1980; Donaldson 1985a).

**European Accounts of Wiradjuri**

Written accounts by Europeans of Wiradjuri have been coloured by their context. Pioneering ethnographers of the 19th century and early 20th century, such as R.H. Mathews (1897), A.W. Howitt (1904), and A.P. Elkin (1944, 1964), dwelt in detail on Wiradjuri religion, initiation ceremony and "rules" of social organisation, yet considered almost nothing of everyday life.

Late 20th century accounts of Wiradjuri hunter-gatherers have also been skewed. Written in a climate of revisionism and possibly in an attempt to compensate for past colonialism, these accounts tend to typecast them with exaggerated levels of environmentalism, spirituality, and political organisation. The Wiradjuri of Macdonald (e.g. 1983: 9) are not a loose confederation of people speaking related dialects, but the "Wiradjuri nation". The Wiradjuri of Gammage (1986: 12-21) are also a somewhat idealised people: environmentally conscious, deeply spiritual, highly politically organised and scientifically knowledgeable.

Hunter-gatherers had to know their country intimately in order to prosper. They tended to be mobile, and it follows that their most important survival mechanism was their knowledge, rather than their equipment. Humans strove to know how things work and tried to understand the spirit world. The daily life of people had routines, although it also included highlights which were marked by practice of their religion and by ceremony, orchestrated by the most knowledgeable seniors in the community. Wiradjuri hunter-gatherers also fit into this general description of the human family.

Although the long-term survival of hunter-gathering over the last few million years is popularised as "environmentalism", it is more accurately understood as an "adaptive stability" (Dunn 1968: 228). Accordingly, there was no buffer between the hunter-gatherer and the natural environment. The resulting human relationship to the natural rate of replenishment in the land was intimate, and created a conservative society which resisted change. Such a view helps explain the rapid and profound destabilisation which accompanied the sudden change of cultural encounter with whites, an Aboriginal response likened by Stanner (1979: 230-1) to "vertigo"—confusion, bewilderment, and terrorisation, compounded by the shock of European violence and occupation.
Sahlins (1968: 85) argued that hunter-gatherers were then able to be viewed as "the original affluent society": they could enjoy material plenty in relation to their adequate, but few, material and technological needs. Lee and DeVore (1968: 5-6) further commented that hunter-gatherers of the past knew their habitats as routine and reliable food sources, before the arrival of peoples with more aggressive social systems which pushed out remnant hunter-gatherer groups into unattractive environments which posed problems of survival.

Lee and DeVore's (1968: 11-2) characterisation of hunter-gatherer life explains much of the operation of Wiradjuri communities and sheds light on difficulties experienced by these communities in their move into towns. Hunter-gatherer life is portrayed as a pattern of living in small groups which move around. The group operate from a camp with a pattern of sharing out collected food. Whilst the women and children are based around the camp, men travel further to hunt. The food supply generally maintains local foraging group ("band") size at between about 25 to 50 which tend to be spread out as sparse populations, around 1 person per square mile (approx. 260 hectares), and in the range of 1 to 25 persons per 100 square miles (approx. 2,600 hectares). The group moves around in order to hunt and gather, and so personal property is at a very low level, and is maintained at a minimum by a generally egamarian system. Groups come together on a seasonal basis, which divides the year into times of fusion into large groups ("public" periods) and fission into separate household camps ("private" periods). Larger groups, sometimes called "tribes", were of about 500 people, the manageable size for everyone to know everyone else. Neither were hunter-gatherer bands bound by any necessity of maintaining property. Groups do not generally maintain exclusive rights to any parcel of land because they frequently visit other groups. The hosts of one season become the guests of another, so that reciprocal obligations are built up between groups. In this way the population was kept circulating between permeable and shifting band territories.

Radcliffe-Brown's (1931) classic model for Aboriginal society (as divided into the tribe, clan and horde) did not fit this picture. Hiatt (1968: 99-102) criticised the model as over-generalised and too rigid. Similarly, arguments by Tindale (1940: 150) and Birdsell (1953: 175) that the Wiradjuri were politically organised by powerful headmen do not fit this picture and were convincingly refuted by Pilling (1968: 142).

An emerging picture of Wiradjuri life in the recent prehistoric past, though sketchy, can also be inferred from disparate observations of the earliest Europeans in the region.

The account given here emphasises Wiradjuri material culture, settlement and subsistence, because these were the aspects of life most visibly altered by interaction with
European settlers. As already noted, social institutions such as religion and kinship have been described by earlier ethnographers, and will therefore not be greatly elaborated here. Besides, one difficulty with such structural-functional explanation, as argued by Braroe (1975: 177) is that it fails to "take the actors' point of view".

The difficulty and the challenge is how to indicate something of the Wiradjuri round of life, value system and world view; the basic Wiradjuri assumptions about life and experience. These have faint echoes in a very different Wiradjuri world that emerged during European occupation. Actually it will never be known what the earlier Wiradj uri world was like because the pre-European Wiradjuri are no longer able to speak of their life and order. The other ethnographic dilemma as described by Redfield (1955: 92) is that the thesis describes the Wiradjuri world to other people like ourselves who are not of it, in words of a language and experiences from an industrialised Western kind of life. The main materials available to us therefore are the writings of the European new-comers who were outsiders to the Wiradjuri world. The main tool available is the imagination.

Archaeological Background

The region mainly has two forms of archaeological site: surface stone artefact scatters and oven mounds, which are thought to represent camping areas. There are no archaeological data for tryout of pre-European shelters, camps or settlements as no area excavation has been carried out.

Traditional settlement

The hunter-gatherer household camp and shelter was an older pattern of life which continued after European settlement. Something of the Wiradjuri community plan and household cluster can only be inferred from early European observations. There appear to have been two types of settlement, small camps of extended households or bands, and larger, village-like, community camps.

A small Aboriginal camp on the Yass Plains (Bennett 1834: 168) consisted of simple stringy bark wind-shelters: "The natives had just arrived in the paddock, and established their temporary village or encampment; their habitations were merely sheets of bark, stripped from trees in the vicinity, and supported by props, the sheet of bark being placed to windward, and shifted as might be required, the fire for cooking purposes, etc., being made in front". Such shelters with large sheets of bark sheets in simple lean-to structures framed by a single or several forked poles, appear to have been a widely occurring hut type in southeastern Australia.
A small type of bough shelter appears to have been widely used by households while travelling. It was a simple frame constructed by placing a few young boughs or saplings tightly in the ground in a semi-circular form, the upper parts of which were woven or tied together, then covered with bark, leaves or grass (Dixon 1990: 201). Sturt (re-drawn in Memmott 1991: 47) sketched its roof plan. Dawson (1881: 10-11), though writing of Victorian riverine people, described it in detail, stating that these small temporary camp shelters were erected by the women. Small saplings were bent into a dome shape and covered with grass or bark, with an open side often facing the morning sun or a sheltering rock. A small fire burned in this entry. Camps of several related households clustered a number of dome shelters facing a common fire, which was mainly used for heating. A separate fire outside the cluster was used for cooking. In fine warm weather, the shelter was not built and a few green bushes placed in a half-circle to windward of the fire.

Sturt (1833) described the larger community camps. There were permanent pathways following the rivers and leading to camps. Sturt (1833 I: 86) observed that "The paths of the natives on either side [of the river] were like well trodden roads". Despite most groups appearing to be highly mobile bands, Sturt (1833 I: 90) encountered signs of village-like communities on several occasions. For example, following the Macquarie river, he found a group of 70 huts, each large enough to hold 12-15 men. They all had the "same compass orientation", and one particular hut was found to contain two large nets, about 90 yards in length. On another occasion Sturt (1833 II: 100) visited a "deserted native village" in which there were "huts large and long, all facing the same point of the compass, and in every way resembling the huts occupied by the natives of the Darling".

Dawson (1881: 12-13) stated that the ground immediate to huts was kept clean, and that bodily waste was buried or burned as prevention against sorcery. Sturt (1833 I: 90, 93) noted a hut was especially well swept. It was surrounded by a drainage trench, and was stocked with white ochre or lime, indicating that many were in mourning for a disease that raged through the settlement.

Once Sturt reached what he thought was the Darling river, he noted the village-like settlements and pathways: "From the size and number of the huts, and from the breadth of the foot-paths, we were still further led to conclude that we were passing through a very populous district. What the actual number of inhabitants was it is impossible to say, but we seldom communicated with fewer than 200 daily. They sent ambassadors forward regularly from one tribe to another..." (Sturt 1833 II: 126).
Dawson (1881: 10-11) stated that the permanent bough shelters in western Victoria were large structures over 1.8m. high inside. Large tree branches were framed into a dome shape by the men working as a group. They were then covered with thatch or bark, and some were plastered with earth, with a low doorway. A small fire was kept burning in the centre of the hut for steady heating. A separate outside hearth would have been used for cooking.

Distribution of the various hut/shelter types is unknown, but appears to have depended on the weather, size of household and duration of stay. They may be summarised as four types: (1) Circular bush screen as a wind-break in warm and fine weather; (2) Forked pole bark lean-to as a shade overnight rain-shelter; (3) Small covered bough shelter for camps of short duration; (4) Large covered bough shelter for seasonal camps. Continued use of outside cooking fires and versions of bough shelters at recent Aboriginal settlements is discussed in later chapters.

Had early Europeans recorded activities within Wiradjuri camps, they might have noted spatial differentiation within them. In the Sydney region, Aboriginal shelters were noted to be usually built close together either in a row or semi-circle (Dixon 1990: 199). Closely related families clustered their shelters together. Married men shared a hut at some distance from the rest of the camp. Dawson (1881) noted that there was division into separate huts at the camp: parents and children; young unmarried girls and widows; single men and widowers. Mary Gilmore, daughter of the manager of Cowabbee station in the 1870s, described two areas set aside for special uses in Wiradjuri camps. The first were oven mounds which represented communal locations for food preparation at camps, or places of treatment for respiratory illness. Some ovens (Gilmore 1935: vii, 232, 264), were constructed as eucalyptus steam-pits for rheumatism and respiratory infections. A special area of the camp (Gilmore 1935: 249-64), was also set aside for the instruction of women and delivery of babies. Babies were born in camps under the supervision of Aboriginal midwives. The expectant mother was relieved of arduous tasks by the other women at camp, procuring only sufficient food for herself. At a time when white doctors in Wagga Wagga donned their oldest coats, (kept stiff with dried blood as a mark of their trade), Aboriginal midwives carefully wiped their hands with the antiseptic from bruised gum leaves. Wiradjuri men knew to stay away from the women's instruction and separation area of the camp. This was a small area, big enough to hold several women and girls at a time, hidden from view and camouflaged by bushes. Small non-Aboriginal camps were distinguishable from these by their bedding, made from an indiscriminate range of nearby
plants, with leafy branches tossed down in random fashion to form a bed. By contrast, the Wiradjuri women's area had a carefully prepared floor clear of grass tussocks and roots, then swept clean bare. A birthing bed was then laid with fresh and soft eucalyptus leaves, in overlapping layers like shingles on a roof, to create a continuous carpet. The eucalyptus oil exuded by the branches was a precaution against infection. A cauterised cut was made through the umbilical cord with a firestick, or the newborn was dusted down with carefully prepared white ash (Gilmore 1935: 249-64). The baby was dried with grass and the afterbirth was buried, and later burned (Bennett 1834: 128). Based on the above incomplete accounts, a hypothetical model for the pre-European Wiradjuri household cluster, extended household (band) cluster and community camp may now be proposed (fig 3.1). The accounts suggest that for much of the time people were camped in small groups. A typical household cluster would have contained several shelters for very windy or rainy conditions. A shelter had its own hearth. Outside, another hearth was used for cooking. Beyond the swept area around the shelter was a household refuse zone.

Some groups would gather for short periods for ceremony or to share during seasons of plenty. They then lived in larger community camps. Some camps on the river banks were village-like in size. They would have contained numerous household clusters, but were also connected to nearby resources, such as a reliable sources of water and food. Spiritual sources such as dreaming places would have also been significant, especially when groups gathered for religious practices. Camps would have also been sited on established pathways.

A large camp would have had some spatial differentiation between men and women, initiated adults and the unmarried youths. The initiated men's hut would have been well away from the women's instruction area, which also contained a birthing bed. Boys undergoing candidature for initiation into adulthood would have slept separately from the mothers and daughters.

Material Culture
Wiradjuri material culture was one of stone, fibre, wood, bark, bone, and shell. Mussel shells were sometimes used as scrapers (Oxley 1820: 77; Beveridge 1883: 41). Nets were made from plant fibre cord (Beveridge 1883: 45). The range of tools and weaponry included spear throwers, parrying shields, broad shields, clubs, shovels, axes and varieties of throwing sticks (White 1986).

Much of the early description of Aborigines centred on technology. Bennett (1834: 175-6) described in detail the making of skin cloaks, which were worn reversed (with the
fur turned inwards) during winter. The skins were pegged and scraped in ornamental patterns with a mussel shell scraper, and stitched together with finely divided kangaroo tail sinew thread using a bone awl.

Wiradjuri adult men at this time had front upper teeth voids from their initiation, and wore red and yellow ochre face paint, possum skin cloaks, a stick or bone nose septa, and net headpieces (Oxley 1820: 19, 175). A Wiradjuri man's hand weapons included a club, boomerang, woomera and an array of spears (Bennett 1834: 116), but his minimal essential, carried in the teeth when crossing a river or climbing after a possum, was the stone hatchet, *galengar* or *mogo* (Oxley 1820: 8, 175). At camp, the women carried babies in their possum skin cloaks. Their articles of equipment seen at camp were several fishing spears ("lances"), shields, clubs, "chisels", and "workbags" with items such as paint and feathers, head nets, teeth necklaces and sinew for sewing the possum skin cloaks in which they carried their infants (Oxley 1820: 236-7).

Bennett also described in detail the making of the hair net worn by both men and women. Tendons from a kangaroo tail were separated into threads, the cord made up by two of these threads being rolled on the thigh, with additional thread added from time to time to make up several metres of fine cord. Nets were often coloured with ochre and the sinew cord was valued by stockmen for whip-lash making (Bennett 1834: 287-9).

Shorter spears were about 1.8m. long and were made of reed pointed with hard wood. Longer 3.6m. spears were made from a single shaft of hardwood with a sharpened point. With triple pronged spears of about 3.6 to 4.2 m., Wiradjuri spent times on the river in bark canoes, returning with fish or platypus (Bennett 1834: 242, 275). Some of the shields had patterns carved with a kangaroo incisor tooth (Bennett 1834: 275).

Backhouse (1835: 211) noted that Aborigines at Wellington carried a special hooked tool for retrieving grubs from tree bark which would be chopped out with a hatchet, and wooden paddles for digging up grubs and vegetable roots.

Wiradjuri used a range of treatment techniques for common illnesses. As well as the eucalyptus steam-pits already noted they used wattle tan-water for burns, the carrying of particular plant gums to treat diarrhoea, and the binding of wounds with gum leaf bandaging or a clean clay pack (Gilmore 1935: vii, 232, 264). Similarly Cunningham (1827 II: 45, 203) who was an English surgeon, noted that some of the acacia gum was diluted to treat "affections of the urinary organs, and dysentery". He also saw a man with a deeply wounded foot bury it into soft earth as a poultice, although he judged it to be a "sorry substitute for a poultice".
Aspects of material culture which continued in relic form after European arrival are described in later chapters.

Social organisation

In common with other Aboriginal and hunter-gatherer groups (Hiatt 1968; Pilling 1968), Wiradjuri social organisation is thought to have been based on the band. The band was a kin based family group; mobile and egalitarian. Status in the band was by age, where elders played an important leadership role. The band hunted and gathered together over a range which probably included riverine and hinterland country. At times, bands must have joined to form large gatherings of several hundred people to participate in ceremonies, initiation and trade.

Religion

Wiradjuri religion was expressed through the agency of spiritual experts, training of youths by initiation ceremonies, and burial practices.

In cases of illness where spiritual agency was suspected, the group's spiritual expert would be consulted. Healing by sorcery and suggestion would then be used. In Tumut, when the Aboriginal tribesman, Golong, was wounded with a spear, the magic man of his group, named Baramumbup, channelled magic through a quartz crystal to heal the wound (Bennett 1834: 191-3). In a book devoted to Aboriginal medicine men (karadjji), Elkin (1944: 14-5, 22-5) presented a picture of men that were "normal", but attained through higher degrees of training the specialist spiritual skills that other band members also shared, but to a less developed degree. In this sense the karadjji were ordinary individuals in the camp who led ordinary lives. Wiradjuri people included in their midst the outstanding individuals (Elkin 1944) of a strongly reflective turn of mind or who led in aspects of community life but shared the egalitarian Aboriginal outlook on life in which no one was able to dictate to anyone else.

Burials encountered by Sturt included an eight grave cemetery with conical grave mounds (Sturt 1833 I: 51). At about the same time a visitor to Wellington described this common type of burial. The dead person's legs were bound up to bring the knees to the chin and the whole body was placed in a round hole which was covered with leaves and boughs, then mounded with earth into the conical shape observed by Sturt. A small trench was cut into the ground part of the way around the mound, and surrounding trees were carved (Backhouse 1835: 212).
Food Economy

Wiradjuri food and economy was centred on the river corridors and their hinterlands. For convenience food economy is divided into four broad environmental zones, although any or all of these may have been in use by Wiradjuri at the one time. These were: river, swamp, plain and forest.

Table 3.1 Wiradjuri food economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Economy</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>River</td>
<td>Canoe fishing</td>
<td>Sturt (1833 II: 201) referred on several occasions to Aboriginal fishing. People navigated the river in simple canoes made from a square of bark with clay sealed at the ends, using their 3m. spears as poles and paddles. On one occasion, groups fished with short spears tapered to a point and caught fine fish which they gave to the whites. They themselves preferred to sit down to a meal of muscles [sic] (Sturt 1833, I: 17; 113). Sturt's (1833 II: 114) impression was that Aboriginal groups on the river preferred tortoise meat to the fish that they so easily speared along the river. One net seen by Sturt (1833 I: 90) had mesh for river fishing, and the other had a large mesh, probably for catching large game on land such as kangaroos. Once Sturt's boat was almost stopped by a net across the river (Sturt 1833 II: 109). The fishing nets had stone weights and were stretched in a semicircle across the river (Sturt 1833 I: 92). Mary Gilmore recollected Wiradjuri awareness of the limits to natural replenishment of vegetation and game. They replanted fruit seeds and medicinal shrubs, and restocked watercourses with breeding fish and crayfish carried in coolamons. They also carried out &quot;harvest rotation&quot; by alternating their campsites so as to enable species to recover locally (Gilmore 1934:140, 196, 208, 222). Fish traps were laid in watercourses. Gilmore remembered that these began with a large tree, undermined on the river bank, so that a year later it could be manoeuvred in position by hand to bridge the watercourse. A dam of interlaced brush or saplings was then constructed below the tree to allow small fish to pass through but keep the larger fish within particular waterholes. Where fish traps were constructed of stone rubble, then fish were allowed to replenish a dammed area from the lower side by lifting out a &quot;keystone&quot; for a time. Fish traps on the Murrumbidgee and Lachlan were cleared to create passage for the wool barge river traffic which flourished in these rivers in the 1880s. When flood currents took water up the creeks and gullies, fish followed the current. As the flood levels fell the fish were impounded. On small streams and tributaries, settlers took a cue from existing fish trap locations and put their dams there. Fish traps varied depending on the type of watercourse. On ephemeral watercourses they were made of boughs or light saplings. Where water would recede from a billabong into a river then 6&quot; to 8&quot; (150 to 200 millimetre diameter) saplings would be used. In major billabongs such as the Edwards at Deniliquin, Pregan Pregan and Wollundry at Wagga Wagga, log barriers were constructed. Places for large gatherings were selected partly on the basis of a good food supply, so that a sufficient quantity of food, near at hand, would be available to feed the large numbers of people. Some seasons prior to inter-group ceremonial gatherings such as burungs, the waters would be examined for the availability of fish. Then at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>Harvest rotation</td>
<td>Grass seeds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swamp</td>
<td>River mussels were another commonly collected food. The early surveyor Thomas Mitchell (1838 II: 34) described them as the chief food at Lake Cargelligo. As creeks and billabong waters receded, brush dams trapped the fish (Broughton 1847: 181; Gilmore 1934, 1935: vi), mussels were collected and edible plants such as the bulrush (Typha) were gathered (Bennett 1834: 183; Mitchell 1839 II: 36; Sturt 1883 I: 113). These were part of a hugely varied hunter-gatherer diet, as put by Bennett: &quot;they may be said to devour 'every living thing that runs upon the surface of the earth, or in the waters beneath&quot; (Bennett 1834: 242). Mussels and bulrushes were no doubt important food sources, yet as with the over-emphasis of grass seeds and <em>bogong</em> moths (Flood 1980), it would be easy to overestimate the importance of any single one seasonal food.</td>
<td>Grass seeds were one of many Wiradjuri foods. Being a women's activity, grass seed collecting, milling, and baking into small dampers (cakes) was little reported early European recorders, most of whom were men. However, grindstones and nutting anvils found at the Warangesda and Bulgandramine mission sites attest to the processing of vegetables and grinding of grass seeds. Also, Wiradjuri words and place names recorded by early Europeans (e.g. Gunther in Threlkeld 1892; Greenway 1911:105 and Richards 1902) indicate that grass seeds were used. Norman Tindale hypothesised that the western Wiradjuri were one of a number of groups that relied on grass seeds as a staple (Tindale 1940; 1974: 56). Through an ethnographic analogy with the concentration of farming populations in early Europe, he hypothesised that Wiradjuri and other &quot;Panara&quot; (grass-seed grinding) peoples were more concentrated in population, and more politically organised than &quot;meat-eating peoples&quot; because of this version of farming (Tindale 1974: 110-1). Later evaluation of the &quot;early farming&quot; hypothesis, such as White (1986: 27-8), concludes that the importance of grass seed was probably overstated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plains</td>
<td>Forest</td>
<td>Wiradjuri hunted a large range of animal species, but possums were probably the most commonly reported portion of the diet (e.g. Mackenzie: 1852: 82-120), being remembered as &quot;the great standby&quot; for local Aborigines around Wagga Wagga in the 1870s (Gilmore 1934: 116). In the wooded eastern part of the region, possums probably provided a year-round availability of meat (Backhouse 1835: 210-1).</td>
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Honey  When Mitchell followed Goobang creek into the Bogan River his party traded a steel tomahawk and was fed honey by local Aborigines. He described the technique of gluing a tiny feather-down weight to a captured bee with gum. The bee was then followed to the nest, the honeycomb being chopped out with a hatchet and taken away on bark sheets (Mitchell 1839: 173).

Koalas  Koalas were a highly regarded game meat (Cunningham 1827 II: 317). Another tree dweller was the possum which could be smoked out (Sturt 1833 II: 32-3). Aboriginal methods for retrieving possums changed during the period of European settlement, and the method described by Cunningham (1827 II: 43) was substantially the same as that remembered by Harold Reed at Bulgaundramine in the 1940s (Macquarie: 70).

Large game  Larger game species, such as wombats, bustards ("plains turkeys"), goannas, emus, kangaroos and dingoes, would all have been hunted. Some may have been protected by their identity as a clan totem to some groups, or limited by food restrictions. Even in the 1990s, the food restrictions on emu meat were remembered at Murrin Bridge (Lachlan: 100).

Fire control  Wiradjuri land use included back burning to fight large fires and reseeding the ground after a fire to promote recovery of vegetation (Gilmore 1932:168-9; 1934:220-1). It also included intentional firing to flush out game. Following a fire, game returned to an area, attracted by young shoots of regrowth. Some forests in the eastern lands were probably kept open for easier hunting as they were described as being "park-like" by some early settlers (e.g. Govett 1837:23; Oxley 1820:175).

As a result of spending so much time in Aboriginal company, the station manager or owner's children often learnt Aboriginal technologies. Some may have internalised aspects of Aboriginal ways of thinking. Some white children grew up under the care and tuition of Aboriginal women, whom they accompanied on their duties around the homestead. When stations caught fire, the Aboriginal people were sent for. Mary Gilmore remembered an event from her childhood that showed Wiradjuri management of fire, and the maintenance of important vegetation to repair fire-damaged areas. The main front of an established fire was allowed to take its course. Areas to be protected were countered with a large number of small separate fires maintained by the women. These were kept contained by fast beating with light bushes. By contrast, the white men's techniques were heavy handed and had greater risk. Their fire breaks tended to be deep, often as dangerous as the main fire. The beaters quickly tired because they used large bushes and heavy blows.

Replanting  Once the ground was cool enough to walk on, Wiradjuri people walked through the burnt area, examining the vegetation and testing to see which seed pods had opened. The women gathered fresh seeds and replanted them in the more severely burnt out areas. The children were instructed to damp down the planted seed. Grass seed was gathered by the women and winnowed by a turn of the wrist from a bark container to separate the seeds out from the husks. Seed was then sorted and the best placed in the burnt area in small pinches that allowed for at least one seed to germinate in each planting hole into a tussock. Wind-propelled seed types were ignored as these would sow themselves. On one occasion Mary Gilmore picked an edible berry and spat out the seed. Instantly an old Aboriginal woman scolded her for wasting the seed and after a search through the grass, found the seed and replanted it to replace the shrub. Quandong trees were valued as an edible fruit and Wiradjuri people paired the male and female trees when they were replanted. They also carried branches from a flowering groves to fertilise other trees, leaving the branches under trees to show that the work had been done and did not need to be repeated (Gilmore 1934: 152-4).
Most hunter-gatherer bands appeared to be highly mobile. Some, especially on the lower reaches of the major rivers, appeared by the time of European arrival to be living in semi-permanent village-like communities through which infectious diseases raged. Some of this disease was no doubt introduced through Europeans, but some of it may already have been present in the population. Sturt certainly formed the impression that this was so. This suggests a population which more than just being "in balance" with the environment, had to be keenly aware of what the limits of natural replenishment were in the environment. In recent prehistoric times, intensified pressure on land and resources would have led bands to meet sometimes in friendship, and at other times to compete for resources in warfare, a pattern observed at European contact.

Food provisions varied with the seasons. There were times of plenty, such as when groups gathered for burbung ceremonies. At such times groups could gather in one place and ensure supply by hunting and gathering from the morning to about mid day or mid afternoon (Mathews 1897). However there were also times of extreme hardship. During such an especially tough season, some groups experienced famine. Men were known for their ethic of bravery and a seeming indifference to pain, both in themselves and in others. The inevitabilities of a highly mobile hunter-gatherer life generally could not accommodate severely disabled band members. Infanticide of weak infants and passive forms of euthanasia were reported. Both men and women worked hard to provide for their families and defend their group. However the emaciated state of the women in comparison to the men suggests that they were less valued as people. Nevertheless, wives were a valued resource, and Wiradjuri groups commonly competed with each other in wife-stealing raids.

From the above table it can be seen that Wiradjuri subsistence was varied and tuned to the four major environmental zones. Its wide range of foods were subject to seasonality which typically required movement through the landscape. Backhouse (1835: 210-1) described a widely ranging Aboriginal diet of "almost all kinds of living things they can catch, including grubs, moths, ants' eggs, the larger lizards, and snakes...", although also observing that possums formed the chief part of the diet at Wellington. The compilation by Lawrence (1969: 105-8, 115-22) for riverine tribes of southeastern Australia describes a wide diet gathered in various environmental zones which included: emu, kangaroo, wombat, possum, koalas, platypus, glider, water birds, parrot, brolga, bustard, rat, cicada, crayfish, mussel, grubs, termite, honey, beetle droppings and a range of plants. The account by Sturt (1833 II: 114) suggests that fish was a food in such super-abundance on the rivers in some seasons, that people were indifferent to it, and did not eat it when other food could be
procured. Beveridge (1883: 36) stated that fish was over-abundant for eight months of the year.

However there would have been greater seasonal fluctuation in the available foods in the lower and drier western lands. Periods of hardship were the very dry seasons (Sturt 1883 I: 216) and extensive floods on the plains (Robinson, in Mackaness 1941: 344). Wet stormy winters were a time of hardship particularly in the south and in the high country, where the winters were longer (Beveridge 1883: 27). Sturt (1833 I: 113, 137) found groups who were starving and noted his impression that they were dying fast from scarcity of food during the drought. In this situation, he found the shallow grave of a woman who had been covered with leaves, which the party reburied in the "proper" way (Sturt 1833 I: 137).

Wiradjuri occupation was thus centred on the major river basins of the region, with seasonal use of the drier river hinterlands, plains, and forests. While Wiradjuri came to become known as "river people" because of family encampments that occupied the river corridor all year round, it is likely that many other bands camped for considerable periods of time in the nearby creeks and swamplands, as well as relying on water soakage in the plains. Once drier seasons returned they probably relied on the river, all the groups beating a gradual retreat to the river corridor in times of scarcity (Gilmore 1934:140).

Impact of European Occupation

Early Response to Europeans

The Wiradjuri situation, at least in the northern lands, had already begun to change by the early 1800s, in John Oxley's time. Aspects of response to interaction with Europeans during the early decades of European occupation are detailed in the following table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response to first contact</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Varied responses to first contact</td>
<td>Captain Charles Sturt presents something close to the stereotypical white expedition leader: unobservant of the surrounding landscape; uninterested in its inhabitants; suffering unnecessary physical deprivations; and blundering off established pathways to follow compass bearings. Yet even Sturt's account contains illuminating details. Aboriginal groups responded to Sturt's expeditionary party in contrasting ways. Sturt commented (1833 II: 183) on his amazement at the different reactions from one group to another, noting &quot;The different receptions we met with from different tribes are difficult to be accounted for&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horror and retreat</td>
<td>Some ran and set the bush alight. Some groups reacted with surprise, horror and amazement, retreating and setting fire to the bush to cover their tracks (e.g. Sturt 1833, I: 43, 90-1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity and approach to trade</td>
<td>Others made a cautious approach to trade, following the party to the limit of their group territory. On such occasions there was a laying down of weapons and cautious,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Others made a show of aggression as preparation for ritualistic fight to repel the strangers. Sometimes a retreating group would decide to try to repel the strangers. This was done as a prelude to a fight in which groups followed Sturt's party, yelling and beating their spears and shields together (e.g. Sturt 1833 II: 95). On other occasions, an attempt was made to goad the strangers into a fight by insulting them: kicking dust at them with a foot, baring a backside (Sturt 1833 I: 91). Preliminaries to fighting even resorted to arming whites, so that they would defend themselves in the expected manner (Sturt 1833 I: 114).

In another instance, an ambush was laid by sending the women out to suggest sex with the strangers to draw them closer to the men who hid with spears: "Eight of the women, whom we had not before noticed, came down to the water side, and gave us the most pressing invitation to land. Indeed they played their part uncommanly well, and tried for some time to allure us by the most unequivocal manifestations of love. Hopkinson however who always had his eyes about him, observed the spears of the men among the reeds" (Sturt 1833 II: 194). Groups which were ready with body paint and weapons, aiming to meet with Sturt's party and engage them in fight, and ran disappointedly after them when their small boat sailed past on the river (Sturt 1833 II: 103).

The fourth response, peculiar to the "first contact" situation, was a dialogue to ascertain if Sturt's party were dead relatives returning as white spirits. On one occasion a clan leader examined one of Sturt's party carefully. Sturt could not understand this response but recorded it clearly: "...an expression of sorrow over his features, the cause of which did not originate with us. I could see in a moment, that his heart was full even to bursting, and he seemed at once to claim our sympathy and our protection..." (Sturt 1833 I: 93). Sturt attributed this to the disease that raged through the community. Yet on another occasion, he reported that people "stared at us in the most earnest manner". A man of his party joined in song with the Aboriginal men, and to use Sturts' own words, "the impression upon the whole of us was, that they took him to have been originally a black, in consequence of which they gave him the name of Rundi. Certain it is, they pressed him to shew his side, and asked if he had not received a wound there - evidently as if the original Rundi had met with a violent death from a spear wound in that place" (Sturt 1833 II: 97). On another occasion, even the old and lame were anxious to see the party, and an old woman tried to embrace him (Sturt 1833 II: 135). These observations are consistent with the white "ghosts" being examined in the light of being Aboriginal kinsmen returned from the dead.

When Oxley travelled into northern Wiradjuri lands in 1817, he was one of the early Europeans in the area and was still able to meet "pre-contact" people. These had never seen a white man and reacted with shock. On these occasions Oxley was to glimpse both styles of fighting. One was the spontaneous ambush-style spear attack on an unwanted intruder in the group territory. The other was the ritualistic style reserved for inter-group fighting, in which the show of aggression, in this case by the party of men beating spears and waddies together (Oxley 1820: 226), was sufficient, and did not need to be accompanied by wholesale casualties. Fighting in settlements a hundred years after Oxley's expedition is explained in chapter 5.

Yet even by this time there were parties of Wiradjuri who had already seen white men, and were "neither alarmed nor astonished at what they saw" (Oxley 1820:175). Some even were familiar with the English vocabulary (Oxley 1820:8). Oxley was a sympathetic observer of his new surroundings, and described Wiradjuri who were as yet unaffected by European arrival as "handsome, well-made men, stout in their persons, and showing evident signs of good living" (Oxley 1820: 327).

In contrast to these were the people already showing the effects of introduced diseases; "their appearance was most miserable, their features approached deformity,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Smallpox</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pock-marked smallpox survivors roamed the countryside. Smallpox outbreaks were reported in 1789, 1795 and 1830, and spread into Wiradjuri lands from Wellington down the Lachlan River and into the Murrumbidgee River, probably from Yass, striking whole Aboriginal bands of 20 or 30 at a time (Bennett 1834:148-53). The <em>kradjee</em>, understood by settlers to occupy the role in Aboriginal society of physicians and soothsayers, treated smallpox victims by relieving their blisters with fish-bone needles, although death usually took place three days after the symptoms appeared (Bennett 1834: 154-5). Examples of traditional healing were to survive for generations after European arrival in small pockets of Wiradjuri country, where the old people had more confidence in a person they knew than just any kind of mere medicine. At Euabalong during the 1890s, the government protector complained of the traditional view of healing among local Aborigines (<em>Lachlan</em>: 80). On other occasions there were groups infected with a disease that left people lame or blind, and which to Sturt appeared similar to leprosy (e.g. Sturt 1833 II: 187). As early as 1813, surveyor Evans met two Aboriginal women near the upper Macquarie River. Both were blind in their right eye, a common effect on survivors of smallpox (Evans 1813-1814: 28). People stationed at Bathurst also remarked that a blind eye was common in both the men and women of the area (Antill 1815: 83).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuation of Aboriginal medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and their persons were disgustingly filthy: their small attenuated limbs seemed scarcely able to support their bodies* (Oxley 1820: 289).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade of European goods ahead of contact</td>
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<tr>
<td>European materials were sometimes traded in advance of the frontier, used by people who had never seen a white face. For example, Sturt's party met a man who had a &quot;tire&quot; nail as a spear point (Sturt 1833 II: 49).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avoidance of Europeans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even though Sturt gained the impression that Aboriginal people were camped only in family groups along the Murrumbidgee, he nevertheless commented on a place where there were many paths leading to the river and across the nearby plain (Sturt 1833 II: 74). He also was surprised when Aborigines appeared to avoid him at the junction of the Murrumbidgee and Lachlan, a place at which they &quot;generally had an establishment&quot; (Sturt 1833 II: 88).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving breastplates</td>
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<tr>
<td>The practise of presenting breast plates to Aborigines was early. Sturt's party reclaimed some of the copper sheet from their disused boat and he instructed his blacksmith to &quot;cut the copper in the shape of crescents, in order to present them to the natives&quot; (Sturt 1833 II: 115). Others received breastplates from white land holders, engraved brass or tin plates which were stung from the neck. (Cunningham 1827 II: 25-7).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kriol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than two decades after Oxley's &quot;first contact&quot; experience, Bennett's travelogue of the settled areas of what were then known as the &quot;Yas Plains, Goulbourn Plains, Tumat River&quot; and eastern reaches of the Murrumbidgee observed Aboriginal groups already widely affected by European settlement. An Aboriginal type of English language (Kriol) had by then developed, the &quot;barbed wire occupation&quot; had begun, fencing out Aboriginal groups from some of the best open grassland and river frontage, indicated by an Aboriginal woman's complaint to Bennett that: &quot;You ought give black feller milliken (milk), bullock, and sheep, for white feller come up here, drive away opossum and kangaroo, and poor black feller get noting to patta (eat,) merry, merry, get hungry&quot; (Bennett 1834: 326-7).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some continuation of beliefs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditional burial practices continued. Mothers carried dead infants on their backs for up to a year before charring the bones and redepositing them into a tree hollow, cave or ground grave (Bennett 1834: 125-6). Bennett noted that human fat was carried about as a charm or cure, and was rubbed over injured or painful joints (Bennett 1834: 295). Men and women had raised scars (cicatrices) over the breast, arms and back (Bennett 1834: 325).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Alcoholism

Prostitution

First "half-castes"

Infanticide

Christmas absorbed into traditional trade

Communal activities absorbed into Aboriginal life

Tobacco addiction

Absorption of European goods into traditional dress

Clothing adopted as a prestige item

Urban drift

Use of Aborigines as native police

English surnames

Rum was also exchanged for Aboriginal wives, and a generation of light skinned babies resulted. In the centre of settlement one Aboriginal man accepted the light skinned infant with the comment that "Oh yes! my gin eatit too much white bread!", but many of this first generation were not accepted as either whites or blacks and were sacrificed (Cunningham 1827 II: 19-20).

Infanticide of babies who were weak and not expected to live was reported (e.g. Cunningham 1827; Sturt 1833 II: 222-3) and probably had been a rare feature of hunter-gatherer life. However after European settlement, many babies conceived to white men, especially the males, were widely reported as killed at birth (e.g. Backhouse 1835: 215; Bennett 1834: 124-5). Malnutrition, depression and apathy probably played a role. With no future for fair skinned Aboriginal babies in either the bush or the station camp, both Aboriginal men and women probably saw no sense in rearing them. The Aboriginal view of illness was similarly fatalistic, as early Europeans, such as Robinson at Wybalenna, had observed, and death was faced without resistance.

By the 1830s, Christmas day was recognised by Aboriginal groups camped on stations as a festival at which the whites distributed items of European dress (such as a jacket, shirt or trousers), food rations and spirits (Bennett 1834: 333-4). Such events fitted in with Aboriginal values, fostering some sense of the station community akin to an enormous extended family, under the station manager as a paternalistic figure. Recreational activities, such as annual sports, races and Christmas celebrations, became part of station life, and were later continued in government settlements and institutions, such as Warangesda Mission, Brungle station, and Cootamundra Girls' Home.

Tobacco was no longer just a prestige or trade item among Aborigines but had become a consumer good. Tobacco addiction was observed to be widespread among both Aborigines and settlers (Bennett 1834: 168).

Bennett (1834: 181) described an elderly couple at Yass during the 1830s. The woman wore a possum skin cloak and string bag, but also a worn out European skirt. In place of the kangaroo tooth necklace earlier worn by women was a necklace threaded with pieces of clay tobacco pipe and coloured beads. Possum tail ornaments were tied to her hair. The man also wore a possum skin cloak and the possum tail hair ornaments as well as a possum skin belt. As in earlier times, he wore a nose peg, and carried a clay pipe (Bennett 1834: 181-2). Men also carried ornamental and initiation raised scars over the arms and chest (Bennett 1834: 242). Women commonly wore kangaroo teeth tied to their hair (Bennett 1834: 275). The European preoccupation with clothing is evident in such early reports, and the shabby state of European clothing worn by Aborigines was commonly commented on. An ill-fitting item of clothing, such as a cast-off dress from a white woman, soon grew shabby as it was worn for months. The outdoor lifestyle and dusty and muddy conditions of the camp also reduced clothing to tatters. The clothing issue was an important part of the station rations in Warangesda during the 1890s, and a uniform was issued to Aboriginal girls on leaving Cootamundra Girls' Home (Murrumbidgee: 67; Kabaila 1994: 61).

Within a short time there were Aboriginal men in the urban centre of the colony in Sydney making a living by panhandling, following passers-by and asking for a coin (the smallest coin being a "dump" in the early days of the colony)."Massa, gim me a dum! massa, gim me a dum" (Cunningham 1827 II: 23-5).

Cunningham (1827 II: 25-7) noted a few of the colonial relationships between blacks and whites emerging during the 1820s which continued, in changing form for generations to come. Some Aborigines came to be employed as trackers or bush constables who obtained the prestige of carrying firearms. English names were already being assigned to Aborigines, and it was said that the first request an Aborigine made of a white was to name them. On early stations, Aborigines were
Use as station labourers employed in jobs such as stripping stringy bark for hut building and wheat grinding (Bennett 1834: 169, 305). Such accounts help explain the process of acculturation by which certain habits and cultural traits are taken up by a group, but not others.

The Aboriginal reception given at a first contact situation varied considerably, a point which Sturt questioned. In hindsight however, this can be well understood. The groups Sturt was encountering had a degree of communication with each other, but not as much as the white men expected. At times people were alerting neighbouring groups by messenger or fire signal. At other times when there was no communication between groups, the people were totally surprised by the unexpected arrival of Sturt's party. The picture this provides of hunter-gatherer groups is a far cry from the politically organised "Wiradjuri nation" that has appeared in the late 20th century literature, and instead suggests that the old fashioned view of small and mostly independent bands is a more accurate generalisation. The reluctance of some groups to accompany Sturt further than their familiar local territory appears time and time again (e.g. Sturt 1833 II: 29).

Earlier, Wiradjuri had established a way of life which relied on maintenance of knowledge passed down from the older generation to the young. Adjustments to way of life would have been slow, taking the passage of several generations to take effect. European arrival brought a greatly accelerated period of change which would have been accompanied by the disappearance of the oldest and most knowledgeable Wiradjuri through introduced diseases. This would have been the greatest obstacle in transfer of traditional, inter-generational knowledge. A similar problem exists at the end of the 20th century: a young Aboriginal population with very few seniors to pass their experiences on and to maintain core community values.

European goods were first used as trade or prestige items, with steel and glass finding traditional Aboriginal uses as spear ends and cutting blades. Clothing, clay pipes and beads were first casually incorporated as accessories into traditional dress, only later becoming regular consumer items or items of necessity. Alcohol and tobacco, which began as curios to try out, later became an addiction and a necessity.

After two centuries of occupation, Wiradjuri ancestors were popularly characterised as "living in a delicate ecological balance with their environment" and leading an "extraordinarily rich spiritual life" (Gilbert 1977: 2).
Impact of Government Policy

Government policies with respect to Aboriginal people have been an important factor, some would say the over-riding factor, in the social placement and settlement history of Aboriginal people during the 19th and 20th centuries.

This section summarises these policies to the present day. Legislation and policy are best explained as artefacts within the social context of their time. In practice, they tended to follow changing public perceptions, rather than directing them. Legislation set the general framework, which sometimes was not enforced for years. The technicalities of government policy and legislation did not always accord with public perception, or with the realities of Aboriginal life. While such written documents must be considered, their limitations should be recognised, especially in the light of Aboriginal oral accounts. The intent of legislation is open to some interpretation and the chronology (fig 3.2) provided here is greatly simplified.

Governor Phillip's main objective with respect to Aborigines was to guard their civil rights, as he saw them, and avoid the slavery that had occurred in the American plantations (Kirby 1987: ix). Similar protection, and conversely, control, was set out in Governor Macquarie's Proclamation of 1816 which declared Aborigines subject to the protection of white law, while infractions were liable to render them outlawed (H.R.A. Series I, Vol. IX, pp. 142-3). This was an expression of a principle that the Aborigines ought to be treated as British subjects under white law. The latter proclamation of martial law (Fry 1993: 35-7) indicated that settlers in the colony were at odds with this official view of the British administration.

Land legislation may be seen as marking out steps in the occupation of the region as land was progressively claimed and fenced out from Wiradjuri.

Table 3.3 Impact of early land legislation on Wiradjuri

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislation</th>
<th>Impacts</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government Orders Colonial Secretary's Office, 5 Sept. 1826, and 14 Oct. 1829. (&quot;Limits-of-Location&quot;)</td>
<td>These regulations set and revised what became known as the Limits of Location, (also &quot;Settled Districts&quot; or &quot;19 counties&quot;). Beyond these official boundaries lay a shifting settlement frontier unregulated by the colonial administration (Perry 1963:45-7, 125-6). The earliest runs occupied by squatters in the 1820s were thus not legally accepted (Roberts 1968: 187). Despite official limits, by the 1830s squatters had moved as far as Dubbo, Yass, the Monaro, and were quickly spreading down the rivers. They had little security of tenure and land was generally unfenced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperial Waste Lands Occupation Act 1846, Order-in-Council of March 1847</td>
<td>The first fences came with this Act and Order (Jeans 1972: 113, 155; Roberts 1968: 194-5). It removed the official limit and instead created a category termed &quot;unsettled&quot; lands which squatters could lease for 14 years. It enabled squatters to purchase land around home sites and obtain other land subject to improvements,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Crown Lands
Alienation
("Robertson") Act
1861

Crown Lands
Occupation
("Robertson") Act
1861

such as fenced yards and huts. Fences were thus introduced into the region.

As the 14 year lease period drew to a close, the introduction of free selection by the so-called Robertson Land Acts brought about even more fences. The Act for alienation converted squatter controlled land to small holdings so that any person could select between 40 and 320 acres (16 and 130 hectares) of Crown land, and pay at the end of 3 years. The Act for occupation gave the squatters a right to select their own leased land in the proportion of 4 acres for every pound spent on improvements, such as fencing (Roberts 1968: 236-7). The Act also allowed for squatters to create reserves for uses such as water, timber and travelling stock. Water reserves were used by squatters on the Murrumbidgee frontage to shut out their runs from others (Gammage 1986: 62).

The edges of the Limits of Location were marked by Michelago, Yass, and a line following north from Cowra. Wiradjuri territory lay beyond the Limits of Location i.e. beyond land grants and purchases from government, and was occupied by squatters who moved down the rivers, taking up land and water for their grazing enterprises. Early land legislation to limit the squatters was therefore highly significant to the question of Wiradjuri access to their lands. The 1826 Government Order was the first legal control to the spread of European settlement. At this point there was no fencing. For this short squatting period of illegally settled river land, Wiradjuri were still able to use the river corridors and gather bands together as in pre-European times. At this stage there was information gathered about settlers within the Limits of Location by the 1828 Census. The Limits of Location were also progressively surveyed by Mitchell over several years and published as a government map in 1836, showing places which were settled by Europeans at that time. The main form of official information beyond the Limits of Location was that gathered by the Pastoral Commissioner who visited the established stations, reporting on size of herds, number of people, the amount in crop, and approximate size of squat.

The first fences came in 1846 with the formalisation of squatting: graziers were able to purchase 1 square mile around improvements, usually a dwelling. The home paddock then became fenced. Squatters tried to purchase as much of their land as possible but often only that with water was needed because crown land was still accessible to the squatters. Also, reserves were used carefully to provide continuing access to water and to lock out other graziers.

After 1861 there was a filling of the landscape through legislation for small, closely spaced farms. With respect to the "barbed wire occupation", the whole period of fenced European occupation can be divided into two phases: mainly unfenced period prior to 1861 and the post-Robertson period.
The other great change in the post-Robertson Act period was that the region experienced a wave of town foundation. Prior to 1850 the main town in the region was Gundagai, a government town on the Great South Road set up in the 1830s. After 1850 there was a wave of town foundation in the region. Some of this urban growth was driven by government creation of towns such as Tumut. Other small towns had sprung up at creeks and crossings at which pubs had been built, such as Murrumburrah and Wagga. These had provided for travellers, but became urban facilities for the growing population. After the 1850s gold rushes came mining towns such as Young, Forbes, Temora, Grenfell, Lake Cargelligo and Adelong. Railway towns appeared at large railway junctions, such as Junee and Wyalong, and at railway construction and maintenance points, such as at The Rock and Grong Grong. European occupation of the region was therefore only truly consolidated in the 1870s, followed by the creation of a system of Aboriginal reserves. Between 1871 and 1879, New South Wales fences lengthened from 32,000 to 1,207,500 kilometres (Gammage 1986: 55). The period in which every back-block came to be fenced, 1884-1920, was dubbed "the period of closer settlement" (Roberts 1968: 306). This is why the hunter-gatherers observed by Sturt in 1830 were no longer in existence in 1870.

To summarise, in terms of land occupation the region can be considered to have been colonised twice. First, land and water sources were fenced out by graziers, with Wiradjuri living a riverside life on residue land in community camps. Second, the region filled up with closely spaced towns with Wiradjuri gathered at the edges, later moving into the towns.

There was at least one local exception to this general pattern of land settlement. Despite the early flood of settlers into the region, its arid margin experienced much later disruption. North-west of the Wiradjuri region the full impact of European settlement only occurred during the early decades of the 20th century. Ngiyampaa speaking people began to leave their bush camps and collect around a string of settler settlements when the Condobolin-Menindee railway line cut through their land in 1919. A settler's camp, such as Trida, which had a telegraph, store and pub, regular deliveries of goods from town, as well as men with disposable income, constituted a major focus for Aboriginal people. Some of them were beginning to adopt the English model of first name and surname, after their place of birth, such as Red Tank station, or after a station owner for a child born to an Aboriginal mother, such as the owner of Keewong station. Present day descendants include relations of the Keewong family and Red Tank Jack (Lachlan: 98).
Land legislation was not the only government impact on the people. The table below sets out other legislation, which often reflected prevailing attitudes, and its impacts on Wiradjuri.

**Table 3.4 Impact of other legislation on Wiradjuri**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislation</th>
<th>Impacts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An Act for the prevention of Vagrancy and for the punishment of idle and disorderly Persons, Rogues &amp; Vagabonds and incorrigible Rogues in the Colony of New South Wales 1835 —NSW.</td>
<td>Two 1830s Acts were to become important protectionist themes in later legislation and policy. The first Act was to discourage Aborigines from mixing with criminal whites, and allowed for punishment of whites with up to three months hard labour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Publicans Act 1838 —NSW.</td>
<td>The second Act stated that &quot;the introduction of intoxicating liquors among the Aboriginal natives of New South Wales and New Holland is productive of serious evil to the said aboriginal natives&quot;, and prohibited the sale of alcohol. These were echoed in later policies which attempted to reduce corruption of Aborigines by whites through the reservation system. Later policies of the NSW Aborigines Protection Board (noted below) tried to keep the Aborigines on reserves, while whites and light-skinned Aborigines were excluded. Reserves were intended to be alcohol-free places. The Northern Territory even tried to legislate against supply of methylated spirits to Aborigines (Methylated Spirit Ordinance 1952 —NT).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900, Sections 51 and 127 respectively.</td>
<td>The Australian Constitution had symbolically excluded Aborigines by exclusion from census counts and from federal responsibility. Aborigines, defined as people of the &quot;aboriginal race in any State&quot;, were omitted from being counted in the census, and omitted from people for whom the Australian Parliament might make &quot;special laws&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902 —Cth.</td>
<td>Similarly, the excluded &quot;natives&quot; from voting in Federal elections, although the law contained a &quot;loophole&quot; in that Aborigines were allowed to vote in Federal elections if they were already entitled to vote in State elections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Old Age Pensions Act 1908 —Cth., The Maternity Allowance Act 1912 —Cth., Child Endowment Act 1942 —Cth.</td>
<td>Aborigines were also excluded from a number of welfare provisions. Old age pensions, invalid pensions, maternity allowance, and child endowment either disentitled Aborigines from receiving payments or channelled payment to a second party such as the Board, to be expended on behalf of the recipient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence Act 1909 —Cth., Commonwealth Electoral Act 1949</td>
<td>Aborigines were not required to fight for Australia, and so were excluded from conscription. First World War enlistment accepted those of &quot;largely European descent&quot;. Chinese were accepted and some Aborigines also enlisted, their Aboriginality not being recorded. Later, those who volunteered and fought in the Second World War or joined the Defence Force were given voting rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aborigines Protection Act 1909 —NSW</td>
<td>The Act marked an attempt to move a population of Aboriginal people of part-European descent away from reserves. Closure of reserves continued for decades afterwards, combining with child removals to special homes for employment training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Act reflected the combined concerns of protection and control at that time. It laid down the general duties of the Board as supervision over welfare, distribution of relief, custody and education of children, and control of Aborigines residing upon reserves. Power was given to the Board to remove them from towns or reserves, and to receive wages on behalf of Aboriginal children apprenticed to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aborigines Protection Amending Act 1915 —NSW

Tightened the provision for removal of children and training them in institutions. The Board was given full custody of any child if it was "in the interest of its moral or physical welfare". Parents had right of appeal through the court.

Aborigines Protection (Amendment) Act 1918 —NSW

Redefined Aborigines as "any full-blooded or half-caste Aboriginal who is a native of New South Wales". This excluded many fair-skinned Aboriginal people who could be ejected from reserves.

Aborigines Protection (Amendment) Act 1936 —NSW which

Gave the Board power to recommend that any person "having an admixture of Aboriginal blood" living in undesirable conditions be removed to a reserve. The 1930s probably represents the highest point of the Board's power to control and police the communities. After 1940 there was an erosion of the powers ending in the abolition of the Board in 1969.

Aborigines Protection (Amendment) Act 1940 —NSW

Reflected changing concerns, with a name change to Aborigines Welfare Board. In place of the Chief of Police, the new Board was headed by the Under Secretary, Chief Secretary's Department as chairman ex-officio. The other 9 members were to include an appointed Superintendent of Aborigines Welfare, a senior member of the police force, and an expert on sociology and/or anthropology. The Act reflected new concerns for Aborigines to become assimilated into the general life of the community. It also continued the system of Aboriginal child removal and training. Such "wards" were children under 18 who were admitted to the control of the Board or committed to a home were prohibited from absconding and had their wages payable to the Board. The police force was also co-opted as it could carry out proceedings in the name of the Board against any offence under the Act.

Aborigines Protection (Amendment) Act 1943 —NSW

A further move to liberalise the management of Aborigines. Two members of the Board were now to be Aborigines, at least one of whom was to be "full-blood". Institutions were losing favour as the best way to rear children and provision was made for arrangement of foster families for removed Aboriginal children. The Act also introduced a voluntary system of Aboriginal absorption into the general community. This was the exemption system, under which some Aboriginal people were able to apply for an Exemption Certificate, commonly known as "dog-tag", by which they were exempted from control by the Board and from its welfare provisions. Unlike people classed as Aborigines, exempted people could be legally supplied with alcohol and could draw a pension, but were not permitted to live on the reserves. This system lasted to 1963.

Aborigines Protection (Amendment) Act 1963 —NSW

The was a preparation for dismantling the Board and the reservation system that had operated since 1883. The controls, such as removal to reserves, payment of wages to the Board, etc., were abolished.

Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies Act 1964 —Cth.

An indicator of the changing times was the which, according to McCorquodale (1987: 9) included the first use of "people" instead of "natives" in Commonwealth legislation.

Aborigines Act 1969 —NSW

Dissolved the Board, made all wards subject to the Child Welfare Act, and established an Aborigines Advisory Council comprising a Director and nine Aborigines, including one woman, and including six to be elected. The minister was given power to transfer reserves to Aboriginal people.

(Constitutional Alteration (Aboriginals) 1967 —Cth.)

A national federal referendum of 1967, supported by 90% of the Australian electorate, made two symbolic changes to sections of the Australian constitution widely considered discriminatory towards Aborigines. Section 127 had excluded Aborigines from federal census, and section 51 had not given federal power to legislate in respect of Aborigines in the States. The constitution had listed the powers of the Commonwealth Parliament, matters not so listed remained State
responsibilities, and so responsibility for Aboriginal affairs had remained a State matter. After the 1967 referendum the Federal Parliament could also have a role, but this did not extinguish State responsibility (Bennett 1989: 53-4).

Legislative attempts to provide land to Aboriginal communities followed. This Act provided for incorporation of The Aboriginal Lands Trust, for the purpose of acquiring property for Aboriginal communities. The Metropolitan Water, Sewerage and Drainage Act 1973—NSW exempted this land from rate payments for services.

The emergence of the land rights era in the 1970s led to this Act, completing moves for housing provision in mechanisms which handed over all Aboriginal reserves into Aboriginal community hands.

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs was remodelled and re-named the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, with the creation of a complex structure of regional Aboriginal constituencies and the devolution of some powers to them. The Act established the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, 13 Regional Land Councils and 117 Local Aboriginal Land Councils. Aboriginal reserves were handed over to Aboriginal housing corporations and unused crown land was able to be claimed by Aboriginal communities.

In this period of liberalisation Wiradjuri people moved into suburban housing, many of them leaving camps and government settlements into towns where they could obtain housing and education for their children. Aborigines, like other "Fourth World" or indigenous peoples, now began to have numerous opportunities to succeed or fail in the Australian nation-state, depending on how they represented themselves in contexts varying from job applications to land claims.

Laid an emphasis on land as the major dimension in Aboriginal affairs. It also partly ensured that nativistic imagery of Aboriginal people would continue through the 1990s.

The Act followed the High Court decision in Mabo vs. Queensland (No. 2) in which the concept of native title was accepted as possibly surviving colonisation, except where "valid extinguishment" had occurred. The legislation was written in a way that was intended to imitate the basis of traditional Aboriginal socio-territorial relationships, creating a category that needed to be satisfied in land claims by Aboriginal groups, the "traditional owners". Recent government policies have therefore revolved around traditionalist assumptions of hunter-gatherer attachments to land, and are similar to changes in other "First World" nation states in respect of the "Fourth World", or indigenous, segment of population. Changes which have taken place in the post-1975 land rights era have become part of a wider international process of indigenous recuperation under government funded policies.

From the table, it can be seen that the two most constant themes of government legislation in Aboriginal affairs were protectionism and the role of the Board. In the early years of the colony of New South Wales, government protectors were appointed to perform a dual role as protectors and controllers of Aborigines. However, after the mid-19th century, the appointment of Protectors lapsed and activity in Aboriginal matters almost ceased (Long 1970: 190).
An era of government protectionism was ushered in with formation of the Aborigines Protection Board of New South Wales (later re-named the Aborigines Welfare Board of New South Wales, and referred to in this text as the Board) in 1883. It ran a reservation system for managing Aboriginal people. In the late 19th century and through most of the 20th it was instrumental in changes of government policy on Aboriginal affairs between segregation on reserves and absorption into towns (Read 1988).

Historical accounts and their moral assessment of the Board's activities over this long period of operation vary. A subdued account of the Board based on the official documents was provided by Long (1970: 24-35). The late 1970s was a period influenced by the "black radicalism" movement in New South Wales. Influential historical accounts of this period tended to emphasise "Aboriginal perspectives" which attributed unsympathetic, even sinister motives to government officials. Such accounts critical of the Board's actions and moral position are provided in a revisionist history by Read (1983, 1988) based on a "culture conflict" model. Other, less "radical" historical assessments of the period nevertheless employed some of the Marxist terminology expected at that time (e.g. Hankins 1982, Attwood 1989). Some reassessment of the actions and motives of government officials followed during the 1990s. In a recent work, for example, Bain Attwood provided a moderate assessment of the Board's actions and motives. This acknowledged the difficulties experienced by the Board in achieving changing, and often contradictory, aims on limited budgets (Attwood 1994: 3-12).

Goodall (1997: 84) traced changes in government management of Aboriginal people in NSW through the early 20th century, by which the Aboriginal people came to form an impression of being relentlessly stripped of rights: "These included loss of access to the public school system formalised in 1902; loss of parents' control over their own children, with the 1915 Protection Act amendment; the brief acquisition of family endowment followed by its loss to indirect and partial payment through the Protection Board, in 1930; then the exclusion of Aborigines from Unemployment, Food and Work Relief systems from 1931".

By the 1930s, assimilationist policies were gaining some currency, although it was not until the 1950s when they were fully implemented as a coercive project of "assimilation" or social absorption, followed by a shift during the 1970s to "integration" and in the 1980s to "self-determination" or "multi-culturalism". The shifts roughly coincide with changing public perception, eventually followed by changes in government policy, to how minority groups such as immigrants should be handled.
Assimilation policies of the 1950s and 1960s have been criticised for their coercive nature, but according to Brock (1993: 157) their implementation also presented the Aboriginal communities with a viable alternative to institutional life for the first time and many took the opportunity to move away.

An administrative concern for much of the reservation period since 1883 had been the issue of supply of alcohol by whites to Aborigines and the exchanges (including sexual exchanges) that went along with this. Before 1967 an adult would have had to obtain a "dog-tag" to drink. The 1967 referendum seems to have coincided with, and may have helped cause, a change in alcohol supply to Aborigines from one of prohibition to free access. Alcohol was no longer limited to the privacy of illicit drinking on camps. The town and public street began to be thought of as a zone in which alcohol was allowed, and became part of the daily grog pursuit for some.

The importance of the 1967 referendum lies in the wide public perception of it giving a "fair go" to Aborigines and giving them long overdue "full citizen's rights". Difference between legal technicality and practice can be seen in three areas of human rights symbolically overturned, though not in any legal sense, by the 1967 referendum. These are the rights to vote, own land, and drink alcohol.

It was popularly believed that Aborigines could not legally cast a vote, buy land, or buy alcohol. While legally incorrect, in practice this was the case.

Technically, Aborigines had the right to vote at State elections in NSW and therefore could also vote at the Federal level. Some did vote, especially those living on managed government settlements (Goodall 1997: 85). However, it was widely known that the Constitution excluded "Aboriginal natives" from voting at the Federal elections. Most Aboriginal people living in community camps would not have envisaged entering the often hostile white sector of the nearby township to cast their vote.

There had not been a legal restriction on the right to buy and own freehold land. A few Wiradjuri people did buy residential blocks of land in the 1920s and 1930s (Murrumbidgee: 112). However, the broad reality was that few were in an economic position to purchase land. Land assumed by Aboriginal families to be theirs by freehold was often gazetted Aboriginal Reserve which was later revoked and sold to white land holders.

It was generally believed that Aboriginal people should not be sold alcohol. Technically, it was State, not Federal, law which prevented publicans from legally supplying alcohol to people defined as "Aboriginal natives". However the daily reality was that only white people, those with a "dog-tag", or those accepted as "honorary whites" within a town
were served by publicans, and this was perceived by many Aboriginal men as unjust discrimination. The 1967 referendum did not change the legal position, but marked a turning point, after which alcohol began to be freely supplied to Aboriginal people.

By the 1970s the general population were ready to regard the Aborigines as a distinctive people, a potential nation to which was owed land and a degree of self-government. An era of indigenous renewal, distinguishable from former government coercion, has now been in implementation for about 30 years and in this text is termed the "land rights era" for convenience. Merlan (1998: 210) observed that the recent liberalisation of thinking and action in democratic western "First World" nation-states has brought this complicated era in which there has been an intensified national effort to maintain and reconstitute Aboriginality.

Increasingly, vocal Aboriginal dissatisfaction with government was symbolically expressed through the setting up of the Aboriginal tent embassy on the lawns of Parliament House in 1972. A Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs was created during the term of Labor government (1972-1975).

During the 1970s the Family Resettlement Scheme operated, providing employment, housing and educational incentives for people to leave areas of high unemployment such as the communities in western NSW and move into areas of economic growth. As with the previous assimilation, child removal and exemption systems, and as with the town housing that was to follow, this policy consistently underestimated the importance to Aboriginal people of community ties and attachment to place.

The post-1975 land rights era has been accompanied by changes in Aboriginal response to white expectations of their "culture". Previously, changing Aboriginal cultural knowledge was absorbed by young people through their encounters with older knowledgeable people. Increasingly, a fixed notion of "culture" is being structured by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. This is similar to late 19th and early 20th century models of society which formed rigid notions of tribes and clans criticised by Sharp (1968: 159-60) as "prefabricated constructs". This sees "culture" as a classical, static body of knowledge, as able to be recorded, taught in schools, and brought back from local extinction by fusion with knowledge from other Aboriginal peoples.

The Wiradjuri region is one of intense settler impact. In the past, Aboriginal people spoke feelingly about country. In this recent land rights era of western institutional influences, and of incentives to explain attachments to land, they have begun to see it in historical and economic terms.
The nation-state, by fostering public displays of classical, decorative aspects of Aboriginal "culture", is now beginning to incorporate traditionalist assumptions about Aboriginal people into the national identity. This reflects the latest wave of contradiction in attitudes to this small but significant ethnic minority. These attitudes have oscillated between compulsive attempts by whites on the one hand to engineer the Aborigines to change, and on the other, to freeze them into a popularly imagined fixed culture and fixed time.

**Eight generations of Aboriginal and European Interaction**

The main early feature of European settlement in the Wiradjuri region was the pastoral squats which were laid out along the main rivers in the 1830s. The impact of this initial settlement on hunter-gathering was devastating. Water was traditionally important to the Wiradjuri and as it provided a reliable food source and a place for group ceremonial gathering during seasons of plenty. The pastoral stations eventually became the focus of Aboriginal groups alienated from their lands.

The next main feature of European settlement was land taken up under the Robertson Land Acts. These gave ownership to settlers of remaining smaller blocks of land, generally off the rivers but grouped around secondary water sources such as ephemeral creeks and lakes. Peacocking was a technique by which the large landholders were able to buy all water frontage under other people's names, claiming ownership to all remaining water sources and gaining access for grazing in adjacent Crown land. Again, nomadic life of the Wiradjuri was further disrupted. Their lands were reduced to residue areas of unwanted Crown land with no water. The impact on hunter-gathering was again, devastation.

By 1865 the European settlements had become the primary sources of food as well as the form containing other resources, such as government blanket distributions. A process of cultural interaction with whites was well under way. Behind such broad features of land settlement lies a complex picture of change over eight generations, which is best examined in more detail.

During the period of pastoral expansion into the Wiradjuri region in the 1830s, cattle and sheep graziers moved rapidly down the river corridors. Large stations took up the best watered land on which the Wiradjuri hunter-gatherer population was based. These squattages along major watercourses during the 1830s tended to be large, open and flat areas of well-watered land, between 1 and 4 square miles in area (1 square mile is 640 acres or 259 hectares). Beyond the 19 counties declared by the British government bordered by...
Yass and Cowra and known as the Limits of Location (in which land had been purchased or granted, and was thus under official administration of the colonial government), were large tracts of land freely available to white settlers who "squatted". This is where the stations formed the frontier of white settlement in the colony. Yass, the Monaro and Murrumbidgee were settled as early as 1828.

As an ethnic group colonised by a foreign system of land management, the Aboriginal people were forced to depend on station properties, but this initial pastoralism did not totally restrict the Aborigines. The open character of stations still allowed continuing mobility for Aboriginal groups, with the opportunity not only to camp on some of the stations but also to move across the back country connecting them.

The violence along this moving frontier was associated with competition for land, and lasted for a decade or more, with events such as the Proclamation of Martial Law in the months of August to December in 1824 (Gammage 1986: 32-6, 48-9), and the "Wiradjuri War" on the Murrumbidgee River of 1839-1841. They were however part of a pattern of frontier violence that followed the shifting frontier of settlement. First there was indifference or welcome, then guerrilla style attacks by isolated Aboriginal groups at the weakest spots of settlement, followed by settler or police reprisals which wiped out whole Aboriginal hunting and gathering bands (Rowley 1970: 33). This process of violence followed the shifting frontier of settlement through and beyond the Wiradjuri region until the consolidation of European pastoral occupation throughout New South Wales at about the mid 19th century. Incidents of Wiradjuri armed resistance were followed by reprisals from settlers, including massacres during the Black War of Bathurst in 1823-4 (Fry 1993: 34) and at Massacre Island on the Murrumbidgee River in 1841 (Gammage 1986: 35). Local folklore also indicates that other massacres probably occurred at Hulong Sandhill (Gammage 1986: 35) and Blakney Creek (Farrington pers. comm.). Local stories become exaggerated with the passage of time, especially in details such as the numbers of people killed. Yet even the cattle frontier of north-western Australia in the early decades of the 20th century repeated many events of the Wiradjuri region frontier a century earlier.

Frontier murders and massacres are unlikely to be archaeologically verifiable in the region. Most are known only from oral sources and are unlikely to be locatable as bone preservation conditions are generally poor in the region. Accounts of frontier violence in the region also fall into two contrasting types. As described by Ken Fry (1993: 32-3), the first places sympathy in the Koori position by relying on the hearsay record of Koori casualties,
and doubting the truth of official reports. The second tends to accept official reports, ignoring hearsay evidence or discounting its value, especially in relation to Koori casualties.

Initial land settlement by Europeans saw prime grazing land, the land closest to reliable water sources, taken up. Sporadic guerrilla style attacks on particular stations and stockmen slowed down but did not stop the advance of the frontier through Aboriginal lands. On the other hand, the type of landscape that these large and open pastoral properties had created allowed some continued movement of mobile Aboriginal households, and also the trading of food rations and other European goods in exchange for work or co-operation. Some Aboriginal groups retreated into areas not yet occupied; others camped in the vicinity of European settlements. It was during this time that the first generation of "half-caste" Aboriginal children (i.e. of part-European descent), were seen in areas of early European settlement by Government Protectors (Avery 1994: 11-30). At this time, the construction of station communities probably accompanied the fading of high-level Aboriginal identity at the clan and tribal levels.

Pastoral expansion between 1830 and 1850 introduced disease into the Aboriginal population, with severe outbreaks of smallpox, influenza, measles and venereal disease. Pastoral settlement also increased the level of interaction between whites and blacks. (Dowling 1990). Eventually, Aborigines did what other colonised minority groups have done. Realistically judging that they could not win a contest against the vastly larger settler population, they ceased armed resistance and turned to making themselves less visible.

European foods and goods were obtained from European settlers out of fear, charity, or in return for short term labour or sexual services. Some white station owners fed and protected "their" blacks in return for their labour. Late 20th century Australia has been bothered by the station owner's paternalism to black employees, and particularly bothered by the sexual exchange for goods. Studies have also been made by a range of anthropologists and historians on the subject (Bell 1980: 167-9; Berndt 1977: 189-90; Elkin 1964: 159-63; Frost 1989: 189; McGrath 1987: 74-7) which suggest that the regular provision of food and clothing to extended households accorded better with Aboriginal social rights of distribution among extended families than the "equal pay to individuals for equal work" belief of white unionists and urban dwellers with social consciences. As there were initially very few white women on the frontier, white men sought out Aboriginal women as sexual partners. In return, black women received not only protection and food, but had some influence in dictating their terms of employment and their continued use of the land for kinfolk to camp on and gather foods.
The annual distribution of government blankets also became absorbed into traditional ceremonial practices. At some centres of distribution, large groups would gather to hold ceremonies, to receive the "gifts" of blankets, and to settle disputes. The distribution of blankets also foreshadowed later government "mission" settlements in that they brought into close contact for the first time people from places who were previously unknown to each other.

During the period of pastoral expansion there were still some bands of Wiradjuri people who had survived introduced diseases and frontier violence and seldom frequented the European stations and settlements. Some settlers maintained good relations with "domesticated" Aboriginal contacts who helped them keep away the "wild" blacks. Such "reliable" Aborigines acted as intermediaries between whites and camp inhabitants. Station employers took advantage of the existing divisions between those of mixed descent and "full-bloods". Other trusted intermediaries were often awarded metal breast plates ("king plates") and distinguished themselves from bush blacks who knew less about station life. By the 1850s there was already an established generation of adult Aborigines of part-European descent who remained on stations as housemaids and stockmen. Clearly, some Aborigines had begun to internalise certain white values. The gold rushes of the 1850s brought a new population into rural areas. After the gold discoveries, some Aboriginal groups split up to join the rushes. Others found work on stations that had lost employees to these events.

Within the area bounded by the Limits of Location, the next major change to settlement were the largely uneconomic, in the closer settlement legislated by the Robertson Land Acts of 1861 in small farm blocks no larger than 320 acres. Many of these small-scale farmers were undercapitalised and lived on land that could not support them. By the 1870s many of these had failed on the poorer lands, but by then the landscape had been permanently fragmented. The archaeological result is abandoned huts and a pattern of right-angled and short straight roads which followed small property boundaries. Most of the back country in New South Wales was subdivided into small blocks and the mobility of Aboriginal people became very limited. Much of the station work that had previously been done by Aboriginal people was now being undertaken by these farmers. Aboriginal groups were now no longer necessary and were reduced to seeking out camps on small, residue parcels of land.

The Robertson Land Acts had recognised the increased pressures of white occupation and worked to create a pattern of closer settlement, producing small, generally economically poor properties which could barely support small settler households, let alone Aboriginal
employees or dependents. With much of the back country around the big pastoral stations taken up under Robertson Land Act legislation, mobile Aboriginal groups were squeezed out of the remaining land. This consolidation of pastoral leases ushered in a long period of Aboriginal fringe camp settlement on the edges of towns and a period of welfare during which generally small portions of land were set aside for Aboriginal people by governments. Part of the Robertson land subdivision system was the creation of a series of reserves on land by squatters to guarantee its continued use. By the time that Aboriginal reserves were formed in the 1880s, there were also travelling stock reserves (TSRs), stock watering reserves, timber reserves, showgrounds, and town commons. These various reserves laid the foundation for many of the Aboriginal camps ranging from overnight stay camps used while droving to large community camps that lasted for decades.

In New South Wales, bureaucracy came with the growth of settlement. By the time the government formed the Aborigines Protection Board, a state agency to manage the affairs of the indigenous people in 1883, the Wiradjuri had been interacting with pastoralists, workers and townspeople for 50 years, as well as other ethnic minorities placed at the edges of white society such as Chinese miners, rural labourers and market gardeners, South Sea Island indentured labourers, Afghan cameleers and Indian hawkers. Their family histories, communicated through the incidental details in oral accounts, contain traces of a largely ignored aspect of the Aboriginal story.

Government management of Aboriginal people in the 1880s brought about a series of reserves to which Aboriginal people gathered. During the frontier period, the reduction of population had brought a loss of cohesion in traditional Aboriginal groups. In the post-frontier reservation system, a more subtle process of social re-identification began. Local groups in reserves gradually integrated into their number other Aborigines from other areas who wanted to make it their home. At larger government settlements such Warangesda and Brungle, many people came to re-identify with the broad social identity of familiar people who were becoming ever more locally oriented, and with some of whom they were by then thoroughly intermarried. Instead of just being the people at Warangesda or Brungle, they became the Warangesda people and the Brungle people.

Over the next century Aboriginal people had much interaction with the white population. Seasonal work, such as shearing, droving, station work, horse breaking, and fruit picking, offered degrees of freedom. In government run "missions," such as Brungle and Warangesda, people lived in crowded conditions and worked daily jobs for rations and carried out work contracts for a fee, under the watchful eyes of managers and their
overseers. On small Aboriginal farming reserves, such as at Grong Grong, families built their own slab huts and cultivated small farm plots to supplement their casual employment with pastoralists.

Some Aboriginal descendants lived by small scale farming. A series of mostly small farm blocks were occupied in the early areas of European settlement for some decades. Some reserves outside of the Wiradjuri region on the coast and the south-west of NSW were on highly productive farm land, although those in the drier wheat/sheep belt were usually fairly meagre. The Aboriginal farmlets around Rye Park were probably typical of the latter, a landscape of the Robertson Land Acts of fairly marginal country with no major river flats, divided into small properties. In the 1840s it had been occupied by squatters, who then put up parcels of the land for sale by auction. Some of the small reserves created in the 1890s were in response to Aboriginal applications for land to occupy and farm. Some of the requested blocks were in areas which Aboriginal families had previously occupied, and so they were in a sense traditional land, but the push from the Aboriginal applicants was for economic benefit.

It is to this 1890s era that the Aboriginal community belief in freehold title over reserves can be traced. Former residents of reserves near Yass, Brungle, Cowra, Euabalong and Darlington Point have repeated essentially the same story of reserve land being freehold, personally granted to a particular forebear, such as a great-grandfather, by Queen Victoria. The formation of small reserves by the government was based on assumptions about the desirability of managing "civilisation" of Aborigines by creating a class of sedentary small scale farmers. This fitted well with 19th century beliefs in cultural evolution, and also echoed the approach taken by orthodox "settlement missionaries" from the earliest years of white settlement at places such as Wellington. Goodall (1997: 87) has traced the tradition back to the 1890s when local police, as agents of the Protection Board, were sent out to explain that the lands were being given by Queen Victoria, i.e. Crown Land, to be theirs if they continued to live on it or farm it. Aboriginal families eagerly accepted the explanation and assumed that lease documents amounted to inalienable freehold title. However the reserves were in the main only effective for the lifetimes of these original residents. After 1909, changes to policy combined with the effect of increased pressure on land for closer settlement and soldier settlement (Read 1988:55). The Board instituted a wave of dispossession by resuming reserves. Most of the Aboriginal farmlets, generally of 40 to 100 acres, had been revoked by the end of the 1920s. The 1920s and 1930s disputes between New South Wales country town councils and Aboriginal populations over
expanding "fringe camps" can be traced to the pressures brought to bear by this closure of Aboriginal reserves, or by increased restrictions of who was allowed to live in them.

In the 1890s the numbers of "full-blood" Aborigines were in rapid decline in the Wiradjuri region and large gatherings had become a rarity. There was an increasing population of Aborigines of part-European descent living in small groups. For reasons later detailed, Aboriginal settlements formed around the early towns. At town fringe camps people settled in related communities in self-built huts, often having to forage for food and income. Relocatable and temporary dwellings, such as tents, tin huts, and wagonette camps, were a common feature of the 19th century white settler's landscape, reappearing in the 20th century as settlers and miner's camps, fringe camps during the Great Depression and seasonal workers camps. They were however used by Aboriginal people throughout the period of European occupation.

Attempts had already been made by Governor Macquarie and Major Goulburn in the early years of the colony to "civilise" Aboriginal children in special training institutions (Cunningham 1827 II: 52). In the early to mid-20th century children were removed from Aboriginal communities by the Aborigines Protection Board in significant numbers and reared in institutions at Cootamundra, Kinchela, and Bomaderry. Though they were never a large part of the labour force, the children from these institutions were classed as domestic servants and manual labourers, coming to be regarded by employers, and being taught to regard themselves, as inferior people. Growing up without parents left gaps in knowledge of family and community because parents give children more than their genes: they pass on cultural knowledge by a complex process. Children's complex interaction of personal choice, of what is in the blood, and observation learning of their immediate Aboriginal community environment, was impossible in such institutions.

In the early decades of the 20th century the government's Aborigines Protection Board in New South Wales tried to police the communities. Yet by moving in a circuit that avoided the main towns, some Aboriginal people could live as itinerant workers. Other Aboriginal elders favoured "civilisation" of their children probably because they knew that an English education would enable the next generation to survive and thrive.

During the 1930s Great Depression years the "black cloud", i.e. race, was less a distinguishing mark than class. Social differences between those with income and the unemployed were probably more important than race. It was common for both Aboriginal and white workers to live side by side and for them to intermarry. Aboriginal people comprised a minority within a class dominated by white casual workers. Low status was as
binding as race and ethnicity divisive. Aboriginal traits were diluted by greater numbers of whites at every level of society. Despite this intimacy, a Koori culture developed and expanded to include features of both the Aboriginal and European cultures. Since the 1930s, Aboriginal communities of southeastern Australia have fought to rebuild their cultural identity and unity. They have also sought to improve their image among the people of Australia.

In the 1940s some Wiradjuri people on pastoral stations in the west of the region found work in shearing, droving, crutching, boundary riding, fencing and clearing. From Cowra and Darlington Point Aboriginal families provided labour for the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area at the new irrigation towns of Griffith and Leeton, where there was both fruit picking and cannery work. The various fruit and vegetable harvests were followed on a seasonal basis. The NSW coast to the east of the region contained even more intensively forested and farmed land, with opportunities for fairly constant employment in sleeper cutting, sawmilling and picking. These two types of employment and station work west of the Divide, formed two of the three large circuits of movement in the region. The third movement circuit, also a form of employment by receipt of welfare rations, was between the major government "mission" settlements. A handful of employers, such as Wier Park near Narrandera, and Kiley's Run near Brungle, paid Aboriginal people wages equal to those of European workers.

In Board-run institutions, such as Cootamundra Girls' Home, light-skinned Aboriginal children learnt to "think like whites", but were not accepted by whites as equals. Few of the children reared in these institutions are thankful for the Board's former actions in its role as adopted guardian. Yet despite the pressures from government, movement for employment, and dangers of child removal there were also some small and quiet villages, such as Gooloogong and Euabalong, where a slower pace of life than the larger towns allowed both white and black people could build their own huts and camps, virtually untouched by the child removal and assimilation activities of the authorities that characterised larger government settlements.

From the 1880s, the government system of Aboriginal reserves was formalised, absorbing many of the earlier Aboriginal settlements. By the 1960s local governments were actively clearing Aboriginal community camps and policy had changed to absorb the Aboriginal people into new town housing schemes. 1970 is therefore a convenient date to mark the approximate end of the Aboriginal community camp and government settlement era in the Wiradjuri region.
The urbanisation of Aboriginal people over this century up to about 1970, documented by their settlement patterns in the colonising situation, and by the "fringe" community camp phenomenon, are important themes of Aboriginal life. Aboriginal society was not truly colonised, for Aboriginal people retained a firm footing on either side of the frontier. They became "modern" by adapting English material culture and speech, and internalising some white values. They remained "traditional" in that they moved in a circuit of settlements that maintained wide contact with kin, they took rural employment where they camped on familiar sites, and they returned periodically to the bush economy. Study of urban fringe people from the 1950s in the far west of New South Wales (Beckett 1964) noted identity changes that would have swept through the Wiradjuri region earlier in the 20th century. A new generation of uninitiated Aborigines of mixed descent tried to adopt white Australian cultural norms and to distance themselves from the "Jacky-jacky" image of Aboriginality circulated by whites. Ashamed of the old language, they began to relate mythology as curiosities, rather than as the way to understand the world. Beckett (1993: 678-80) noted that this rising generation's robust Aboriginality was maintained through a distinctive lifestyle, rather than by continuing cultural traditions explained through "blackfeller law" or Dreaming.

This era of camps and government settlements, with its mixture of government policies of welfare, containment, exploitation, and assimilation of Aboriginal people, ended with the resettlement of Aboriginal people into suburban housing schemes during the 1960s, '70s and '80s. The 1870-1970 century of Aboriginal settlement varied from place to place in the region, although there are themes shared by much of the region.

To summarise, each decade brought an increase in settlement: in the 1850s gold-diggers filled the townships, free selectors took over small pastoral holdings in the 1860s; Chinese labourers left the mines to work on stations in the 1870s; railway towns sprang up in the 1880s. Within several generations of European arrival, many parts of the Wiradjuri region were densely settled and the interaction of Aboriginal and European ways of life that had developed on the big stations was becoming a thing of the past.

Issues in Contemporary Wiradjuri Survival

Wiradjuri survival in terms of identity was greatly affected by European colonisation and included such issues as Wiradjuri language, family, law, and camps. Recent consolidation of Wiradjuri identity is also to be seen in a context of social change. Questions of cultural assimilation, archaeology and ethnicity also colour Wiradjuri identity.
Tribe, family and kin

Since the 1970s, a series of changes have affected the Aboriginal communities, starting with a substantial loss of community through their relocation into towns, followed by internal community competition for land title and positive offered by changes in government funding and native title legislation. Aboriginal people continue to adjust to these major challenges to their communities.

Current census information for Aboriginal people is published on the basis of administrative regions. Fig 3.3 shows how the Wagga Wagga Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) region (McLennan & O'Donoghue 1996) compares against the Wiradjuri region as variously estimated by Tindale (1974) and Horton (1994). Although the ATSIC region takes in additional less populated land to the west and north, for the purpose of this broad discussion it be assumed that the Wiradjuri region and Wagga Wagga ATSIC region are the same.

The Aboriginal population of the region is counted as approximately 20,000, about 5% of the total population of the region (McLennan 1998 b: 13). Possibly over half of these may be from non-Wiradjuri families who were resettled from other areas. Another quarter or so may be people who have re-identified themselves as Aboriginal during the last decade. Others would have assimilated into white society. From such approximations, it can be seen that the population of established Wiradjuri families has only in recent times recovered to its pre-European size of about 5,000.

They may be small in number, but the Aboriginal people of the region still form a distinctive segment of the total population. A profile of their late 20th century position in the region (fig 3.4) can be gauged from the Australian Bureau of Statistics population census and ATSIC surveys (McLennan & O'Donoghue 1996). This region has (except for Roma in Queensland) the youngest Aboriginal population in Australia. The median age is about 18 years, that is, half of the people are above that age, the other half below that age. By contrast the median age of the general population is 34 years. The age structure of the Aboriginal people of the region is that of a large young population, the result of high fertility rates, combined with a scarcity of old people, the result of high mortality rates. This age structure, which is similar across Aboriginal populations through the continent (fig 3.7), but particularly evident in this region, has disrupted the inter-generational transmission of knowledge, bringing about a huge "generation gap". In this region, there is no Aboriginal English (Kriol, Pidgin English or Broken English) spoken at hon. and only 2% speak an Aboriginal language of any kind. About one in twenty adults were taken away from their
natural families when they were children. Intermarriage and interaction with the white sector continues - about half of all families contain a white family member.

Despite over a decade of substantial government funding of agencies to assist Aboriginal people, most households remain economically poor. Half of all households have no employed household members. Most people's source of income is government payments, resulting in a fairly low yearly incomes of generally less than $12,000. About one in four people have been arrested by the police in the last 5 years, and a quarter of those have been arrested four or more times.

The efforts of recent governments to improve the socio-economic standing of Aboriginal people resulted in medical and legal aid centres. Housing programmes have successfully resettled people into suburban houses - the majority live in three bedroom houses and suffer no housing stress. The situation of Aboriginal groups has been changing rapidly during this recent land rights era as they have become recognised in the media, settled land claims, and begun to pursue economic and social developments in their respective townships. Since this time, Aboriginal people have increasingly entered into the social and economic life of Australia. Non-reserve Aboriginal people have begun to resurface as identified communities.

Part of the difficulty of forming a distinct profile for the Wiradjuri region is that it is part of a larger, demographically eroded wheat belt that stretches from about northern Victoria to southern Queensland. Even the smaller political capital of Canberra has grown into a large regional centre since the 1960s largely at the expense of other towns in the region such as Cootamundra, Temora, Young, and Murrumburrah. Several towns, such as Dubbo, have shown rapid growth to become regional centres over the last few decades while all of their smaller surrounding townships have declined. Urban drift is common as small family farms sell out to larger holdings owned by syndicates. Old people retire in the town, but for the young people jobs are scarce and some have to move into regional towns or the city to seek out employment. For some, the traditional rural emphasis on self-sufficiency is matched by dependence on alcohol and reluctance to seek treatment for mental illness, because of fears that people in the small community might talk. Many of the white people receive government assistance, and many of the Aboriginal people work for the dole through Community Development Employment Programs (CDEP) funded by ATSIC.

The paradox of government sponsored cultural renewal and white acceptance of Aboriginals into townships is that it has been accompanied by increasing alcohol and drug
use among the young, and by a widespread breakdown of cohesion in Aboriginal community. It remains to be seen whether the region will experience durable improvement of community conditions and solid employment prospects.

Yet the most important distinction to make between Wiradjuri and the general population is in blood and belonging. Aboriginal families operate in urban situations as well as in "traditional" country, and it is family that forms the main bond for Wiradjuri society. Sutton (1998: 55) observes that the wide membership of the extended Aboriginal family forms the most important Aboriginal social grouping in settled regions (i.e. in urban and rural as opposed to "remote" areas). In a sense these extended families are the "new tribes" of "post-classical" (i.e. contemporary) Aboriginal society (Rigsby 1995; Sutton 1998: 55).

So to answer the question "Who are Wiradjuri?", one must form some kind of profile of the Wiradjuri family, not necessarily from a statistical standpoint attempted above, but by generalising from observation. In suggesting a profile of the Wiradjuri family, this study draws on regional surveys by Sutton (1998: 55-123) of recent observations about the Aboriginal family. These reflect that family patterns vary both geographically and over time but also suggest a broadly similar Aboriginal experience in the urban and rural situations in which the majority of contemporary Aborigines live (Sutton 1998: 53). The profile was also discussed with a senior member of the Wellington Aboriginal community, Joyce Williams, on tapes now lodged with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). Ten characteristics which explain the importance of Wiradjuri family networks are detailed in the following table.

Table 3.5  Ten characteristics of Wiradjuri family networks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Concern for kin</td>
<td>From an outsider's point of view, Wiradjuri primarily want to remain in close proximity with their relatives. Much of the fairly constant travelling, visiting, attendance at funerals, and more recently, committee meetings, can be appreciated in this context. For any individual, people are divided into two categories: those who are kin (family or relations), and those who are not kin. In camp communities there was not much differentiation between kin: being a relative is more important to Wiradjuri than defining what sort of kin one is. Such non-differentiation of obligations has also been reported among the Pintupi (Myers 1986: 107) as well as hunter-gatherer groups (Lee and DeVore 1968).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Surnames are used to identify family networks</td>
<td>Families operate as an extended kinship network and are identified by a surname. Other-surnamed, but related, family networks, provide a wide net across the region and beyond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Family networks are defended</td>
<td>It may be regarded (Bell 1961: 428) as a self-perpetuating group in which new members are recruited when they are born. Recruitment into a family is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
compulsory and automatic. Children adopted from other Aboriginal or white households and reared by the family are not recruited. Members leave the group if they die or emigrate. Yet the family network, as observed by Inglis (1964: 131) does not have exclusive boundaries as it includes members who migrated to the city, as well as members who do not keep regular contact with relations and may pass as whites in the non-Aboriginal community.

| 4 | Ties of blood are extremely important. | Descent is traced cognitively, that is through either or both parents. A child therefore acquires kinship connections through both his/her parents. Everyone is aware of their mixed ancestry. There is little stratification based on either gradations of skin colour, material wealth or religious denomination. |
| 5 | Kin terms have wide application. | Children are taught to use kin terms as courtesy titles, "uncle" or "aunty" for distant older community members, "sis" and "coz" for ones of similar age. In conversation, men call each other "brother" to signal similarity of status, also acknowledging a white man as a kind of honorary Aborigine, at least for the duration of the conversation. Such kin terms therefore have wide application when compared with non-Aboriginal usage. The "thumbs-up" Koori handshake is also occasionally used between men. There are also inclusive, group terms in local slang. In the Wellington district, a group of Aboriginal children will be a mob of booris, and a group of young black and white friends will be a mob of koorimartas (from local Aboriginal slang for a white—marta). Terms vary locally: the honorific buboo used at Brungle for senior men, and known along the Murrumbidgee towns, was unknown to Joyce Williams at Wellington (pers. comm. Sept. 1998). |
| 6 | Genealogical knowledge is deep | Two community seniors meeting for the first time will probably have family tree knowledge extensive enough to locate a connection at some point, and establish that they are related. As with some other groups, (e.g. in Adelaide recorded by Inglis 1964: 116), many can trace their ancestry as far back as the first generation "half-castes" who married in the mid-19th century, or even to a "full-blood" ancestor who married a white settler. |
| 7 | There is a willingness to share the house with kin. | Families tend to take in Aboriginal relatives (as in Sydney's urban Aboriginal community; Beasley 1970: 174-6), for example relatives of the wife if she has a white husband, irrespective of the capacity of the house. Ties with suburban neighbours tend to be superficial. Ties with geographically distant kin are reinforced, by sudden and frequent visits for mutual support, to spend time with each other, or to attend funerals. As observed in a study of Victorian families (Barwick 1962: 21) the activities of kin are the main topic of gossip. |
| 8 | Strong women rule their families | A social survey of NSW Aboriginal reserve communities (Long 1970: 36) saw that for many Aboriginal children raised in "fatherless" families, that is those in which the father was absent for much of the time in itinerant work, the focal person of the household was the mother, mother-in-law or grandmother. If the father refuses to acknowledge paternity then the mother's surname is taken. The dominant figure of the family, the disciplinarian and decision-maker, tends to be a senior woman, usually the maternal grandmother. For her, growing old carries less fear of being abandoned than among whites, because the woman with the most grandchildren is respected by the community. |
| 9 | Family seniors run organisations. | There is now also a range of formal organisations such as committees, medical centres, land councils, native-title claim groups and elders groups. As observed by Hagen (1996:178-9) in the Upper Murray, such organisations are group decision based, and occupy much of the time for participating community seniors, who are commonly called "elders". |
| 10 | Family networks | Some families remain relatively undispersed and have retained a territorial
have a home base

Family is important to Wiradjuri, and is part of the creolised, distinctive, Koori sub-culture, that is neither traditionally Aboriginal nor European. The family networks are the "new tribes" of the Wiradjuri region. There are also new tribes in wider senses. Previously the circle of relatives at a settlement formed a person's set of acquaintances, their tribe in the broadest sense of the word. Once resettled in the town, the community connections to any individual, their "tribe", became extended to all the people that lived in their address and telephone note book.

There are two other examples of new tribes which could be mentioned here. Each has branched out from differing areas of European/Aboriginal interaction, and each incorporates traditional aspects of Aboriginal communality. These new areas are Christianity and football.

The importance in urban and rural areas of "family" (in the constantly evolving, and specifically Aboriginal sense of the word) helps explain two otherwise incomprehensible Aboriginal social phenomena. The first is the success of the Aborigines Inland Mission (AIM) which swept through Wiradjuri communities particularly in the 1930s to 1950s and continues to this day. The second is the pivotal role of the football match in rural Aboriginal communities. Both are "new tribes" in the Wiradjuri region.

The AIM was a charismatic religious movement founded by a white missionary in the 1930s. It offered a type of limited incorporation into a selected structure organised by whites (other examples of similar types of limited incorporation were the Aborigines brought into the Catholic Church by nuns or those that joined the Salvation Army). Much more importantly, it tapped into Aboriginal communality. During the 1920s and 1930s, Aboriginal society had been pooled into new government mission communities, many of which, like Warangesda, were then broken up or divided between light and dark skinned residents. Large inter-group gatherings known as "Christian conventions" were held by the AIM at which Aboriginal people from a large surrounding area were drawn into a selected reserve at certain feast times of the year (Easter and Christmas particularly). Full immersion river baptisms provided another focus. This combination of communality, group-spiritual experience, and communal song fitted in well with previous Aboriginal practises. It is
strongly, though no doubt accidentally, reminiscent of earlier Wiradjuri inter-group gatherings such as the **burbung** ceremonies. Myers (1986: 269) observes that Christian Pentecostalism in central Australia also fitted in well with Aboriginal social life in its emphasis on regular congregation within settlements for communal singing and its emphasis on the Law, in which "human misbehaviour is sanctioned by watchful supernatural action". Both the Christian movement and earlier Aboriginal forms of ritual shared goals of making people happy, reducing conflict, and providing the community with authoritative Law. He argues that this "new Law" gave people an acceptable form of refusal to participate in drinking with relatives.

The AIM church founder probably had in mind the small-community-based, vigorously musical and charismatic churches of black slave communities in America. Although the AIM combined the music and preaching with characteristic Anglo-Saxon restraint, it nevertheless provided the opportunity for communal spirituality in a mainly Aboriginal social setting. Once the AIM succeeded in recruiting "native" preachers (not necessarily Wiradjuri but often from other Aboriginal language areas), the movement took off. It faded in the 1960s but exists to the present day. These then were a group of "new tribes" reborn out of the ashes, as it were, of the closed government mission settlements of the 1920s and 1930s in the Wiradjuri region, or more precisely, from the members' point of view, the "new tribe" (singular), as the AIM Aboriginal Christians consider that they are united by their belief.

People will drive great distances to a football venue, or charter a bus so the whole community can attend. Competition sport communality exists particularly in rural towns, and is not exclusively Aboriginal. It is however another example of "acculturation", by which selected aspects of European cultural practices are fiercely taken up by Aboriginal communities. It is also "creolised" in that Aboriginal communities have not only adopted football, but made it their own. Aboriginal players occupy a key role in the sport and are an influence back onto rural white communities. In other words there is a certain amount of cultural interaction. Nevertheless, one way of understanding the role of communal football matches is in the context of the "family", in the Aboriginal sense of a wide and related group of mutual supporters, sharing successes and failures. These then are the "new tribes" relating to football in the Wiradjuri region.

There are, of course, other dimensions to sport, and two are noted here. Firstly, as pointed out elsewhere and as argued by Macdonald (1990), the boxing ring, and the "fair" fist fight occupied a role in Aboriginal communities akin to the ritualised Wiradjuri fighting
of earlier times. Communal competition represents in football is another example of ritualised battle. The well known adage, "its not whether you win or lose its how you play the game", explains some of the Aboriginal male ethos, commented on by early explorers. These observed that many Wiradjuri in early contact situations, even under expectation of death, stood their ground to show that they were men of worth, men to be accounted for, men who would not be stood over. The second dimension of sport as argued by Attwood (1989: 119) is that it was one arena in life in Aborigines were treated as equals or superiors to the whites. Also, as noted previously regarding membership to clubs conducted by whites, it was a sort of limited incorporation into the white world, within which Aborigines treated as "honorary whites", freed temporarily from their accustomed and expected role as second-class people.

Up to the time of their recent settlement into townships, the real wealth and strength of Aboriginal people had been in the closeness of their communities. This is not to say that Wiradjuri communities need to be idealised. Macdonald (1990: 128) argues that the Koori world view incorporates themes of egalitarianism and closeness: "Kooris stress the fact that theirs is an egalitarian society in which no one is boss for anyone else; that Kooris are autonomous and self-determining individuals; that they do not differentiate one mob of Kooris from another; that they, unlike white people, share their material resources; that Koori families are very close". Myers (1986: 121-2) observed how the egalitarian ethos is linked to the Aboriginal concept of "shame", by which senior community leaders avoid the impression of egotism, by downplaying their personal role. Yet, as Macdonald (1990: 129) observes, Kooris have always known that in practice the community does not match its ideals: "maybe people don't want to share, maybe they don't care enough for their children, maybe some are too powerful" Such mismatches between utopian ideals and everyday life are irresolvable. They can't be talked through or analysed too closely, and are handled by community members "keeping things even".

One of the few reliable facts of settlements in the region is that their size and economy is subject to changes. Ten thousand years ago, as well as a hundred years ago, there had been a working landscape consisting of a dynamic distribution of sites resulting from a people's economic use of the landscape. The government system of reserves was part of site distribution during the 19th and 20th centuries. Extensive recent attempts were made by governments in southeastern Australia to move Aboriginal people into suburban houses. Despite this move into the towns, many relics of the reserve ("mission") system still survive
in the spacing and location of Aboriginal housing areas. This is why archaeological aspects of Aboriginal settlement reach up to the contemporary period.

**Old and New Law**

The importance for traditional Aboriginal people of holding The Dreaming or "the Law" for future generations was recorded by Myers (1986: 53). The law was not seen as an order to which all of the community is subordinated: "It's not our idea, men told me. It's a big Law. We have to sit down alongside that Law like all the dead people who went before us." In practice however, the Law is not unchanging but continually being uncovered and re-enacted.

Merlan's contemporary observation (1998) of culture change in relation to a sacred waterhole near Katherine illustrates the point. The waterhole and other places where a rainbow serpent is thought to be present are now overrun by tourists who swim there without caution. Merlan (1998: 71) describes how people fitted this change into the "old law": "An implicit indeterminacy arises: to whom does the "new law" apply? to everyone, or just to non-Aborigines? Rather than asking this question directly, or reacting to it categorically by rigidly observing or flagrantly ignoring constraints, Aboriginal people tend to live the indeterminacy, sometimes swimming in the shallow water, sometimes fishing at the pool's margins, but always with an awareness of the rainbow serpent's dangers, and often repeating that, in the days when people were walking the country, they would never have camped within close proximity of these plunge-pools, as white people do now".

Similarly, Aboriginal people of the present day in the Wiradjuri region and coastal communities recall the human-like Doolagar but note that increased land development brought white people into doolagar places so that it is now no longer seen. The application of both "laws" applies. The 19th century Aboriginal settlement communities at Brungle and Warangesda were attached to sites which embodied the old law, Mudjarn at Brungle and the Burbung ground near Warangesda (Mathews 1897: 115). Yet during the same decades that these high ceremony sites continued to be used, Aboriginal residents demonstrated their familiarity with the "new law". At Warangesda, Aboriginal residents held open air Christian meetings in the mission square, organised a community strike for better conditions, were involved in an Aboriginal community council which advised the missionary on community matters, and on at least one occasion took out court proceedings against a white man.

New settlement and mining brought settlers onto features in the landscape that had been restricted and controlled by Aboriginal law. Older Aboriginal people, on seeing this,
would have concluded that that outsiders had no intelligible "law" in relation to such things, or that they had brought with them an era of "new law", which weakened or displaced the old constraints.

The replacement of the Wiradjuri language and of Aboriginal names by English at about the end of the 19th century suggests that Aboriginal people increasingly lived in an era of "new law".

Names and Language

Aborigines did not acquire European names until they began regular dealings with whites, who needed a way to identify them. In this period of pastoral expansion European names began to be adopted by Aboriginal people, often named after their white station owner father, or after the name of the station. By the time of the formation of Warangesda Mission in 1880, all but two of the Aboriginal residents were known by English language names. In contrast may be seen the Aboriginal people around Katherine in the Northern Territory, who began to adopt the English model of naming since the Second World War (Merlan 1998: 98). This is significant to understanding the fitting of identity among a minority group. In a study of interaction between Indians and whites in a small Canadian plains town, Braroe (1975: 123-31) shows that the adoption of European names allowed Indian identity to continue, but with reduced visibility among the whites. It also served to reduce negative valuation by whites who denied any continuity in Indian customs.

The adoption of English style names is one way of understanding some mechanisms of culture change operating in the region. People at some point in their lives adopted, or had applied to them, the surname of a regular employer or boss. Yarri, the Brungle man who saved white people during the floods at Gundagai in 1852 honoured his station employer by becoming baptised and adopting his employer's surname (Macquarie: 88). The employer also was sometimes a short or long-term partner for an Aboriginal woman, who adopted his name for herself and her children. Lucy Hamilton Hume at Yass was thought to be a descendant of the early white explorer Hamilton Hume and his Ngunawal wife (see partial genealogy Murru nbidgee: 18). One Aboriginal woman told me of her great-grandmother's name adoption of her white husband station owner Robinson, probably in the 1870s (Norma Morgan pers. comm.1998).

Names of an earlier era, up to about the early 20th century, were given to Aborigines in everyday usage by whites, and also probably suggested to Aboriginal parents for their children. Some of these "Aboriginal-sounding" names stayed in use only as nicknames.
Others were joke names such as Sambo, Tiger, and Topsy which were originally given by whites and which became common in Aboriginal communities. Countless Aboriginal men were individually known as Jacky, their women as Mary, collectively as Jacky Jackies and Marys. There were men called Sambo and Tiger at Warangesda, and Tiger Lyons at the Narrandera Sandhills. Yarri's wife at Gundagai was Black Sally. Topsy Clark gave an oral account of Carowra Tank (*Lachlan* 99). A common nickname for brown-skinned islander and Aboriginal workmates context was Choc (*e.g.* *Lachlan* 51). Aboriginal communities reciprocated with nicknames for white people such as Blue Omo, named after a washing powder for a man that never washed, and Darkie for a white man who lived among the Aborigines (*Macquarie* 90, 93). The giving of ridiculous or condescending names was also a way for white authority figures to maintain a social gap from Aborigines. In a Board photograph of the 1920s, Brungle community senior Bubo Fred Freeman was identified along with the joke name given him, aka "Professor Mark Cabrini" (*AIATSIS pictorial collection*).

Popular Christian names which were also given to white people up to about the mid-20th century, were Rosie, Nellie, Maude, Iris, Violet, Pearl and Effie for women; Archibald and Ernest for men. These also probably mark the last generation of people in the Wiradjuri region who were confident in their own community but sometimes reticent around whites, easily reduced to confusion in the presence of a white official. These may be contrasted by the creativity that went into the naming of children in recent decades, with some preference for exotic-sounding English names such as Milika, Venus, Diyan. The most recent wave of naming uses popular names from the media, such as Cheryl and Wayne. Similar movements in naming have been noted... American Indians *Braroe* (1975: 124) and around Katherine (*Merlan* 1998: 119). This process of name adjustment over a century of urbanisation provides a picture of cultural interaction, in which the outside group is always adjusting its naming practices to position itself within the white community. At the end of the 20th century very few Wiradjuri knew how their English-origin surname happened to be assigned to their ancestors, and apart from place names such as Goolagong, all Wiradjuri had English (or other non-Aboriginal) surnames. To know that Roland Williams is Wiradjuri, one must know that Williams is a "Wiradjuri" name.
Urban Drift

Earlier Wiradjuri groups had been attracted by sources of permanent water supply such as major rivers. Similarly, in arid regions of the continent Aboriginal groups camped at waterholes.

After colonisation, Wiradjuri came to be on the outside of European society, which also concentrated colonial authority and resources on settlements. The increasingly urban nature of European settlement became the main attractant for this outside group. The pastoral station, the town, railway camp, mining camp, pub, and even the government settlement for Aborigines or community camp were all in this sense "urban" locations which were attractants for Aboriginal settlement, for "urban drift". As later explained, these could all be regarded as 19th and 20th century equivalents, though somewhat enlarged in social complexity and scale ("super waterhole"), of the water source as a focus for Aboriginal settlement.

Such concentrations of people and resources became important to Wiradjuri survival both economically and socially. The social distance maintained between Wiradjuri and this more numerous and increasingly urban population is tied up both with the formation of spatially distinct settlements and with the maintenance of outsider group identity. However, the Wiradjuri situation changed immensely over the period of European occupation. This raises the question of identity survival: whether it is possible for Wiradjuri to gain a new identity acknowledged by both themselves and the general community.

Questions of New Identity

There are complicating factors in distinguishing Wiradjuri people from the rest of the population or of even estimating their numbers. This section presents a diachronic view, one involving time, of ethnic identity in the Wiradjuri region. It first looks at the continental trends of Aboriginal re-identification over recent decades, including re-identification at the tribal and regional levels. The difficulties encountered in distinguishing ethnicity in archaeology, and distinguishing the Wiradjuri in particular, are examined. A conceptualisation of ethnicity should accommodate the duration and intensity of cultural interaction outlined early in this chapter.

Since the 1970s Wiradjuri people, along with a number of other groups of Aboriginal descendants, have emerged as vocal and visible groups. This relatively recent recognition of Wiradjuri people as an identifiable group can be better understood by examining a changing continental and regional system of settlement and identity.
First the picture in 1966. A map (fig 3.5) clearly illustrates a continental pattern of Aboriginal identity and settlement, drawn from 1960s administrative data (Feodoroff 1971: 27).

Areas of settlement by "part-Aboriginal" people occupy about a fifth of the continent. All of Victoria, most of New South Wales including the whole of the Wiradjuri region, the eastern side of Queensland except for Cape York, and the south-west corner of the continent are all areas in which the Aboriginal people of part-European descent were living. These areas also broadly correlate with the 1850 frontier of European settlement (fig 3.6, after Feodoroff 1971: 24), and therefore represent areas of Aboriginal population that have had the longest period of interaction with European settlers. Conversely the arid interior of the continent include some of the last areas to be settled by Europeans and is shown as containing "mostly full-blood" Aboriginal populations. A similar continental divide was mapped by Long (1970: 5, table 1) to represent census districts in which more people identified as "half-caste" Aborigines than "full-bloods" in the 1961 census.

Some Aboriginal groups were living a European way of life and formed such a small minority as to be invisible to the white population by the 1960s. In a sense, they had become white. Tasmania is the most stark example of the trend. On this map, Tasmania was literally shown in white, that is containing fewer than 100 Aboriginal descendants. Later, Rhys Jones (1978) was able to write a paper theorising why the extinction of the Tasmanian Aborigines had been inevitable, simply because there were no known living Aboriginal Tasmanians. In 1966 there were in fact only 36 Aboriginal people counted in Tasmania, about 20,000 in New South Wales, and around 80,000, i.e. 1% of the population Australia-wide (Smith 1980). The phenomenon of newly recognised Tasmanian Aboriginal people provides the most stark example of change. Aboriginal people of part-European descent had previously been regarded as economically poor whites, and probably regarded themselves as part of the assimilated population. Yet since the 1970s, Tasmanian Aboriginal descendants surfaced not only in Tasmania, but also in places where Tasmanians had moved, such as Sydney. Re-identification helps to explain the rise in Tasmanian Aboriginal population count from 36 people in 1966 to 14,000 people in 1996.

The 1996 census data (McLennan 1997) shows how much the situation had changed. There was over a four-fold increase in the count of Aboriginal people Australia-wide, bringing the figure to just over 350,000 or around 2% of the total population. The increase in New South Wales was five-fold to just over 100,000 whilst in Tasmania the number had increased to almost 14,000. Fig 3.8 shows the trend at the continental level over the course
of the 20th century (after McLennan 1998a: 157). The recorded number of Aboriginal people can be seen to have stayed fairly even over the first half of the 20th century, with sudden jumps during the three decades since the 1967. Natural population growth, increased life span, and even the changing census survey definitions of who is Aboriginal do not account for such dramatic increases.

Such increases mark a recent acceptability and even desirability of re-identifying as Aboriginal. In the Wiradjuri region, developments over the last thirty years have radically changed the picture through recognition of Aboriginal groups.

An "Aboriginal land rights era" was ushered in by the Australian government in the 1970s by formation of a range of governmental Aboriginal organisations such as land councils, elder's groups, housing corporations, native title groups, medical and legal aid centres. This also produced an arena in which Aboriginal family alliances and jealousies could be acted out, encouraged by competition for land and funding. Earlier policies of assimilation policy are now widely criticised as cultural interventions and social engineering. Ironically, the equally well-meaning political engineering of the present day is responsible for most of these new Aboriginal bureaucratic structures, run mainly along family lines, and periodically threatened with financial audits and removal of funding.

Due to the demands of rigidly defined administrative areas and popular imaginings of tribal groupings, a series of local Aboriginal authorities (called Aboriginal Land Councils in New South Wales) were formed with local language group or "tribal" names. One unforeseen by-product of this has been a pressure for Aboriginal people, who previously regarded themselves just as Aboriginal or as part-Aboriginal, to identify themselves as part of some particular "tribe". In the 1940s at Hollywood government settlement and Brungle station there was no talk of tribes, as Agnes Shea (pers. comm. 1996) put it simply: "In those days nobody was Ngunawal, Wiradjuri, Ngarigo or Walgalu. We were all just Australian Aborigine". Particular identity had become obsolete in these new forms of settlement and has only resurfaced since the land rights era, during which people have begun to regularly identify themselves in this way, at least for certain purposes. The question of who belongs to a tribal group has also become connected to the prospect of material benefits such as employment assistance, park lease-back monies and claimed land. The process of Aborigines redefining themselves continues. Many now define themselves at the regional or tribal level than at the local or community level.

The recent division of New South Wales into administrative Aboriginal Land Council Territories and the prospect of native title claims based on "tribe" suggest sharply defined
boundaries rather than the socially and spatially interconnected world of earlier times. Younger Aboriginal people increasingly use tribal terms of identity, and there are now signs of confusion between their ancestors' country and the present day political territory of their Local Aboriginal Land Council. The two may be, but generally are not, congruent areas. The re-fashioning of identity of people into members of particular "tribes" has both a positive and negative side. On the positive side are feelings of security, group belonging and loyalty to a chosen group. The negative side of re-identification is the pressure on people to conform to stereotypes, and be able to reproduce what are assumed to be "traditional" forms of knowledge and experience.

In the context of recent re-identification, Merlan (1998: 174) observes that "tribal" identity cannot be understood as continuity of Aboriginal culture, and that its contemporary manifestation is far more concrete and fixed in boundaries than in the past.

Chapman (1993: 2), separates two social ways of fostering ethnicity: the definition of others, and the definition of own group. The former requires a degree of ethnocentrism. That is to say, it is important for people to define "others" in pursuit of their own self-definition. Aboriginal people distinguish themselves from whites as "others", even though the latter come from varied language backgrounds and countries. Contemporary classification of humanity into indigenous and non-indigenous categories, is an example of ethnocentric classification put to technical and legal use.

Group definition is the other social factor. Discourse which attempts to define societies and cultures will take an interest in boundaries (Chapman 1993: 1). One way of defining the group is by living area. The continent-wide compilation of tribal and language boundaries by Tindale (1974) is the best known example. A similar argument has been made for Wiradjuri area (Camm and McQuilton 1987: 44), which notes that Wiradjuri communities (variously defined) still live approximately within their traditional country and nearby urban centres (fig 3.9). Provenance of marriage partners for the Aboriginal community at Erambie government settlement at Cowra also suggests that Wiradjuri people have a regular tract of country, from which their marriage partners derive (fig 3.10). Similarly, there is a map (Camm and McQuilton 1987: 44) showing "sites significant to Wiradjuri people" located in sparsely settled areas of the Wiradjuri region. Such arguments may also be understood as artefacts of European occupation. A map showing locations of "Wiradjuri communities" avoids the problem of how to know who is Wiradjuri, and how to count such people. Marriage matches at the government settlement of Erambie may be understood in terms of movement through a wide post-colonial network of government
settlements and places of seasonal employment. Commercial archaeologists are obliged to consult local Aboriginal Land Councils, so it is no surprise that site locations known to Wiradjuri region Aboriginal Land Councils happen to coincide with their administrative areas. Such arguments are therefore circular, and convincing at a superficial level only. They tend to reflect white people's hopes for fulfilment of popular imaginings of Wiradjuri "traditionality" in terms of attachments to land and "significant sites". The actual settlement distribution and movement situation can be more fully explained as a series of complex local, regional and inter-regional networks, as chapter 7 will show. Seasonal occupations such as fruit picking, droving, shearing, shed work, and railway work all affected Wiradjuri movements. Employment migration, government resettlement schemes and the locations of government settlements and reserves affected where people lived.

Contrary to white expectations for rigidly defined Aboriginal attachments to land, Wiradjuri ethnicity does not, in principle, require land for its definition. The land rights era has created events in which there is an explicit focus upon Aboriginal culture and traditionality. To admit change in Aboriginal relations to country might be seen as a denial of Aboriginal identity and worth. To admit change in culture might be seen as weakening an Aboriginal political position maintained through claims of traditionality. The frequent and self-conscious introduction of newcomers to country and proclamations of Aboriginal beliefs to the public media are best understood in the context of preparations for land claims. The conversion of Aboriginal relationships to country into concrete terms is undertaken both by claimants in order to make a clear and tenable case, as well as by opponents, to argue the inadequacy of Aboriginal attachments to country in comparison to what is represented as "traditional" ownership (Merlan 1998: 174-5).

In the older generation's oral accounts there is no special glorification of old people as "elders" in the manner that has occurred more recently. Old people are the ones who straddle the border between past and present and were not seen to have been an especially privileged group. In a way, their greatest achievement is that when the new generation follows they can present what they know as backed by the authority of knowledge from the old generation. In recent times however, the old people have become involved in the many committee and governmental structures formed for Aboriginal communities, and have mobilised their families to take on the added load of carrying on political debate and securing their share of community funding.

In the struggle for survival and under great pressure to conform to European ways, the linguistic identity of southeastern Australian groups such as Wiradjuri began to
disappear. A specifically Wiradjuri identity had largely disappeared by the 1960s, if not earlier. A number of the Aboriginal people in the region did not think of themselves in terms of identities, such as Wiradjuri, until quite recently, but as "Aborigines", "Blacks", or a "mob" belonging to some particular settlement community, such as the Griffith Blacks or the Narrandera Mob. The re-emergence of Wiradjuri linguistic identity ties in with a number of factors. At the time that Read began doing his research with Wiradjuri people in 1980 hardly any people were aware of this identity (Peterson and Carr 1998: 57). The passing of the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Rights Act in 1983 established local and regional land councils which in New South Wales tended take the local linguistic identity as shown on Tindale's 1974 map for their name. These developments led to people becoming familiar with the term. Yet while many identify as Wiradjuri, since that is the term that the public seems to demand, they are clearer about their links to a particular settlements or tract of country as "home". That is to say they are clear about their area but less concerned about the name.

The gap for a period of time, in the existence of a Wiradjuri identity, is bridged through combinations of identity factors, such as Aboriginal ties through a father or mother, birth in an area, rural employment in an area, and residence in a camp or mission. From these factors, 5 types of identity claims can be ranked from strongest claim to weakest claim (Peterson and Carr 1998: 47). They would be broadly applicable to southeastern Australia and may be described as follows: (1) Patrilineal descent from a Wiradjuri region Aboriginal man identified in the earliest European records. (2) Cognatic descent from an Aboriginal ancestor who resided in the Wiradjuri region person in the earliest European record. (3) Cognatic descent from an Aboriginal ancestor who resided in the Wiradjuri region at some time later than the earliest European record. (4) A member of the senior living Aboriginal generation who was born in the region and grew up on one of its camps, government settlements or towns. (5) Irrespective of where they were born or live, the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of people in (4) above.

Such a ranking of strength of identity claim would naturally be expected to vary from one cultural group to another, depending on its history and customs. Once it is clear that there is no fixed set of criteria for who is Wiradjuri, it becomes easier to see how identifying Wiradjuri as a population may present difficulties.

Precise figures for Wiradjuri population have always been uncertain. Before European settlement, possibly about 5,000 Aborigines lived in the region. This figure is indicative and
is qualified below in the light of the greatly contrasting estimates of pre-European Wiradjuri population reviewed by White (1986: 13-6). They seem to fall into two categories.

The first places weight on either observed numbers of people, or carrying capacity of the land and discounts the effects of disease and war. Government officials travelling through the region up to the mid 19th century estimated a population in the range of 3800 to 4400, made up of the 1826 Sadlier figure of 1,800 in the Bathurst/Wellington District; the 1845 Bingham estimate of 1,500-2,000 for the Murrumbidgee District; and the 1845 Beckham estimate of 500-600 for the Lachlan River District (reviewed in White 1986: 15). Richards (1902: 121) estimated Wiradjuri population based on a carrying capacity for the land of 1 person per 15 square miles (approximately 1 person per 40 square km.) for 60,000 square miles (155,400 square km.) of Wiradjuri country, arriving at an estimate of 4,000.

The second category of Wiradjuri population estimate places weight on population reduction by disease and war, and arrives at much higher population estimates. This is particularly the case with work done in the atmosphere of historical revisionism which peaked during the 1970s, such as Butlin (1983) and Campbell (1985), who concentrate on the effects of disease on population reduction. Macdonald (pers. comm. in White 1986: 15) suggests a population of 12,000 to 20,000. Such high estimates of indigenous populations may reflect a trend towards exaggerating hunter-gatherer settlement density and political organisation, to make indigenous people more "important" in the eyes of the reading public.

By the 1990s a population of people who claimed Aboriginal descent were living in the region, mostly in low rental housing within townships. Those familiar with the genealogy investigator's rule of thumb that the average Australian family tree has "at least three skeletons in the closet" will no doubt accept that of the thousands of people of mixed Wiradjuri and European descent, probably more than half would not even be aware of an Aboriginal connection in their family tree. There would likewise be a number of people who claim for themselves a particular "tribal" identity whose families are linked by marriage and descent across great distances outside their perceived traditional language area. A shift from the popular notion of a fixed and static ethnic identity, to a recognition that identities and loyalties to particular groups do change over time, may therefore do something to help understanding between people some of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who currently regard their cultural differences as irreconcilable.

Several groups live in communities that have maintained an Aboriginal identity throughout the course of their history. Brungle, Erambie and Murrin Bridge are reserves
that people continue to live in, and represent communities that have refused to give up either identity or place of residence.

After enduring over 200 years of exclusion and attempts to change their way of life, some Aboriginal communities are now trying to revive aspects of their local culture, picking up threads of old traditions in their lives in ways that give them new meaning. This balance of old and new in people's lives is creating a new self-image for Aboriginal people of part-European descent.

Absorption or Interaction?

The concept of "culture" is an abstraction which allows ways of talking about complexity. Even if cultures could exist in some frozen state of independence, the historical facts of white settlement and the long-term nature of intercultural exchange seem to disallow the notion of a completely independent present-day Aboriginal "culture".

Given the complexity of interaction between indigenous and non-indigenous people, it is inaccurate just to produce a static picture of Aboriginal life. It is also important to try to glimpse the way that Aboriginal communities crafted their culture under the constraints of European colonisation. In recent decades it has become conventional to talk about the importance of maintaining Aboriginal culture. This reflects a past-oriented view of culture as a "classical" set of structures, as divorced from the "post-classical" or everyday flow of social events. The appropriation of vivid aspects of the classical Aboriginal culture (such as paintings and dance), and attempts to render it teachable in schools, reflects a view of culture as a fixed entity and not as being continually re-made. At the time of writing, people were still in the process of coming to grips with an understanding and acceptance of cultural change, often expressing it in "culture struggle" terms such as assimilation or the more contentious "cultural genocide".

In interview Eddie "Kookaburra" Kneebone, of Pangerang descent, expressed how in his view each Aboriginal generation since the start of European occupation had experienced types of culture change. He also explained how present day people consciously reject the notion of assimilation applying to them. His understanding of "assimilation" as a historical process is not limited to the forced change experienced by Aboriginal people under government policy of the 1950s (although it was the stated government policy in that decade). He uses the term as part of a continuum of cultural choices started by the arrival of the first European on Australian shores. The Aboriginal segment of the population is now irreversibly joined to the larger population through way of life and economic need. The
government's welfare system of reservations is seen in Eddie Kneebone's account as an injustice to the Aboriginal people:

I've used this word, "assimilation". Now a lot of Aboriginals today do not believe that Aboriginals have assimilated. Now I don't know, what do you call an Aboriginal in a pair of pants? Assimilation. He's not wearing anything traditional. Because they can say a few words that are Aboriginal, or that they can do a few things that are Aboriginal, because they sit down to a barbecue, with kangaroo meat there, they seem to think that they can call themselves Aboriginal. Well, the only thing that we have going for us is that we are descended from the traditional people, into what we call urban Aboriginals.

Whether we like it or not, we use cars, we spend money, we dress ourselves in clothes, we work in a white man's job from nine-to-five. If I use the word assimilation, it's the truth, whether you like it or not. These people will sit and wait, and when I use it, all of sudden they jump up, "We have not assimilated! You are saying we have assimilated when we haven't." But what I'm saying is that the evidence is there that you have, and if you deny it, then why are you still putting your pay in your pocket every fortnight. Because you have. A lot of people say, "They had the assimilation policy, but look here, I haven't assimilated". But you have.

Now we're going to look at assimilation n years ago [the reservation system]. You've got traditional Aboriginals, going into white man's area. They are penned off and told, inside this land here, you sit down and behave yourself as an Aboriginal person. We will feed you and give you clothes, and anything you want just to quiet you down, as long as you don't upset all the land owners, and people around you. So these people have gone along with it. Now that's assimilation. Get rid of their tribal notions, their tribal values, and their tribal attitudes, and now turn them into whites. But we can't have them as white people, because that's not going to work for us. Learn our language, do our labour, but we won't accept you. But if you do it the way we tell you, then we'll give you food and clothes, and make life a little bit easier for you. That's assimilation, right? Today, none of us live tribally. The only life that we know is what we've got now and we try to get better things in life and take on better roles.

The first moment that an Aboriginal woman got up in the morning, and wouldn't venture outside the hut unless she had a dress on; you've got assimilation. It did not occur instantly, where an Aboriginal walked in and they said, "Put on a pair of trousers.", and they all put on a pair of trousers. It took generations for it to work. It has worked. We have
assimilated quite well, because now most of us have never been back to live tribally, don't know our language, don't know our laws and customs, are continually arguing and fighting over little things that don't matter in life. Our people live in a world which is the only one we've got.

So we have assimilated over the generations in our own way. The people who disagree do so because they feel threatened (edited transcript of conversations between Eddie Kneebone and Peter Kabaila, Wodonga, Victoria, June 1997).

Eddie Kneebone's account concentrates one direction of cultural influence (from white to black). Yet there were always influences running in the opposite direction: from white station managers' children raised by Aboriginal women in the 19th century through to European residents of Aboriginal "fringe" camps of the 1960s. In the 1870s, the young Mary Gilmore, accompanying Aboriginal people at a river, and not recognising her father leaving the river downstream, asked "Who's that white blackfellow?". At the time, white men who lived among the Aborigines were called "white blackfellows" (Gilmore 1934: 142). One of the most memorable Aboriginal fist fights on the Murie a century later was between two big men, except that in this Wiradjuri fight one of the men "was white but he lived among us" (Lachlan: 58, 60). The significance of this type of prearranged ritualised fight, as Macdonald (1990: 131) comments, is that it is a demonstration of commitment to the Koori community. At community camps such as the Woolscour and Wattle Hill, white and Koori households lived together. Over eight generations of interaction there were whites who, through their involvement with Aborigines, internalised certain Aboriginal values. Many married into Aboriginal families and left Koori descendants. In this sense, over the generations there not only has been a flow of Kooris "becoming white", there has been a flow of whites "becoming black".

Of the culture change theories discussed in the introduction, a picture of cultural interaction, running parallel to "creolisation theory", emerges out of the Wiradjuri region, a picture which probably holds true for southeastern Australia generally. Despite interaction and in some cases assimilation into the white community, gaps and differences continue to exist. Differences in perspective and gaps in communication between whites and Aborigines, beyond immediate matters of living and working conditions were commonplace. They were an aspect of the marginal position held by Aboriginal town campers relative to the townspeople. Yet the Aboriginality of people is not a constant but adapts to changing circumstances. It is within this context of interaction between Aboriginal and non-
Aboriginal people, giving rise to a new southeastern Australian (Koori) culture and identity, that shifts in Aboriginality can best be understood.

**Archaeologically Distinguishing Wiradjuri**

Three of the characteristics of the human household which might be archaeologically distinguishable are gender, occupation and ethnicity.

In Aboriginal communities a common gender role was for the women and children to stay at camp while the men went out to casual work on properties. Whole households also moved fairly constantly, often all doing seasonal work such as fruit picking. Male and female "activity areas", such as those proposed in a model of the Mesoamerican household unit by Winter (1976) do not feature in the archaeology of Wiradjuri settlements.

The occupations of Wiradjuri communities were no more archaeologically distinguishable than those of any other small rural settlement. Portable household wares, such as the kerosene lamp, camp oven and enamelled tin ware were common, as are rabbit trap parts. Much of the hut construction contains the use of fencing wire connections, which themselves are an artefact of experience in rural fence contracting. Otherwise, there is little that indicates clearly defined occupations. People's occupations were rarely clearly defined. Women occasionally took in washing or cleaned houses, or did fruit picking with the whole household. Men did a variety of jobs ranging from shearing shed work to railway labouring, droving and fencing. Others travelled with fair grounds in the boxing tents. It is little wonder that occupation is a barely distinguishable characteristic in the residue of Wiradjuri settlements.

Ethnicity may be archaeologically distinguished if a distinct material culture is visible. Before 1945 many ethnic groups filled labour shortages in Australia. For a short period of time, they were excluded from, and excluded themselves from, the dominant society of English origin. The Cornish and Welsh built an identifiable mining architecture of stone. Chinese miners, who though ethnically diverse were broadly categorised by whites as a single ethnic group, constructed distinctively organised water management systems and perimeter security systems of wire and tin cans to warn of any intrusion into their camps. They also imported a distinctive material culture of Chinese ceramics. Some characteristics of their stone huts show a stone building technique and room size that is distinguishable from the white miner's huts (Smith 1998). Afghan cameleers built separate settlements which contain small tin mosques as well as residue connected with the care and use of camels (Parkes 1997).
Yet each distinctive ethnic group, once their traditional occupations had changed, seemingly melted into the social "melting pot", only faintly reflected by the preservation of surnames, old photographs, archaeological residue, language fragments and recollections of a lost world. Small ethnic groups do not seem to be able to sustain separate languages, customs, religious beliefs or historical outlook for more than a generation or two. The long term incapacity of minority ethnic groups to maintain a separate identity, while living amongst a larger population seems to be a subject of little research. Perhaps for an ethnic minority to be able to retain its separate language and identity the group must reach a critical mass of perhaps 5% or 10% of the local population. The other determinant of ethnic survival is likely to be whether the group excludes itself from the majority population, or alternatively whether it is excluded by the majority population.

The cultural distinctiveness of Wiradjuri is not archaeologically distinguishable in terms of material culture. That is to say, they did not maintain a non-European material culture. Aboriginal people all over the continent quickly grasped the uses of European materials and technology by the mid to late 19th century. There is nothing in material culture that separates the cups and saucers in an Aboriginal household's hut from those of an English migrant household living at the same economic level.

The paradox of ethnic identity for the Wiradjuri region is that the Aboriginal minority would probably not have been able to exclude themselves from the majority population, marry within the Aboriginal segment of population, and maintain a degree of distinctiveness, had it not been for government policies now widely regarded as racist. These policies largely maintained a separate position in society, and through the reservation system, maintained exclusion from the majority population through a system of separate settlements. These ethnic enclaves welded them together in a way not duplicated in the looser white situation, yet even in this ghetto-like situation there was a common drive upward, towards respectability, with often divergent outcomes.

Ironically, the recent liberalisation of public attitudes and government policy toward the Aboriginal people now poses a greater threat to identity than the previous system of reservations.

At the end of the 20th century, the older generation of Aboriginal people, i.e. those now over 40, can remember a world when communities lived together in camps or in government settlements. The next generation are the ones that have no direct experience of the communal life in a ethnic enclave. Only the third generation, the ones presently going
through school, are in the position to benefit substantially from education scholarships or other forms of "socially inclusive" government policy.

Might an archaeological "signature" of ethnicity be found at a household, community or regional level? Archaeologically there is nothing that identifies individual household refuse items in the Wiradjuri region as Aboriginal. In terms of residue and therefore in terms of material culture, their camps are not distinguishable from those of others. It is only therefore the oral history and written record that provide information on whether the camp was Aboriginal or not.

The ethnicity of Wiradjuri settlements is best appreciated from the archaeology at the community and regional levels. When combined with other types of documents (oral and written), the archaeology shows that Aboriginal communities shared a similar way of life and related to nearby white communities in characteristic ways. Models for understanding ethnic interaction at the district and regional levels are developed in chapter 7 - "Region - systems of settlement".

The aspect of ethnicity for Wiradjuri settlements is also easy to overstate. While most Aboriginal settlements were separate from the white community, there were time-frames for some settlements in which both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents cannot be distinguished. Such settlements were Tent-town (later called Tin-town) on the river bank near Wagga Wagga and Wattle Hill at Leeton. Evidently the differences between the land owning town population and landless people exceeded racial differences at some settlements. At other places, Aboriginal people moved in with the poorer whites and progressively took over their area, a common theme in migrant and slum geography. Hill 60 at Narrandera and the Murie at Condobolin are the notable examples.

In a review of developments in the archaeology of ethnicity, Parkes (1997: 7) suggested that once an ethnic group has been defined, it is possible to study its "ethnically significant" artefacts by an industry in which they were involved.

When the industry ceased, the simple and observable link between ethnic group and material culture evaporated. Yet these people did not just disappear, as is commonly thought of when regarding changes among ethnic minorities. They interacted with others. Some moved among the Aboriginal people because they too were outsiders and dark skinned. People such as John Sheer Kahn of Cummeragunja Mission and later of Warangesda Mission, who changed his name to Johnny Swift and lived among the Aboriginal people at Darlington Point (Kabaila 1993; *Murrumbidgee*: 130); "Tommy Bell", the Indian who lived at the Darlington Point police reserve among Aboriginal families
and Alec Mongta who tried hawking, but then settled into market gardening, eventually marrying an Aboriginal woman (Alan Mongta, Bodalla, pers. comm. April 1998). There are even cases of the archaeology of Chinese mining melting into a gradient of Aboriginal descendants. When Lim Fong, a Chinese market gardener from near Bulgandramine Aboriginal mission was too old to farm he was not accepted in the town. The mission had been closed, and Lim Fong joined the rest of the Bulgandramine Aboriginal community at the Bottom Hill camp at Peak Hill, where Aboriginal people cared for him up to his death in the 1950s (Macquarie: 73). The Loosik family shared a household with Aboriginal families on their Chinese market garden near Wellington (Macquarie: 32, 37). Members of various outsider groups such as Chinese, Afghans and Indians are not uncommon in Aboriginal family trees.

In the introduction it was suggested that there are different kinds of ethnicity. For the Wiradjuri region it is suggested that ethnic relations between Aborigines and whites can be regarded not as a hard division fixed in time and intensity but as a spectrum.

Some families hid their Aboriginal connections and moved into white society. The most effective form of assimilation was not the force of government policy and child removal for training in a white culture. It was the willing assimilation of people who hid their Aboriginal ancestry. Their descendants "stepped up" in society and became absorbed into the white community. Many families in present day townships share both Aboriginal and European ancestry but consider themselves white. Those that grew up on Aboriginal settlements considered themselves black. One of the most difficult realisations for both the non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal communities in the Wiradjuri region is to accept that ethnicity is on a spectrum, irrespective of skin colour, which ranges from people of Aboriginal descent who identify themselves totally as Aboriginal to people who have no knowledge of or do not acknowledge their Aboriginal descent, identifying totally as white. The line that divides Aboriginal and European Australians in the Wiradjuri region is not a simple division by skin colour. The line, as observed by Jones (1996: 66) for other ethnic groups, traces social and cultural commonalities across boundaries and considerable variation within the group.
Figure 3.1 Hypothetical pre-European Wiradjuri:
1) household cluster; 2) band (extended household) cluster; 3) community plan
Figure 3.2 Main phases of Wiradjuri region chronology and legislation
Figure 3.3 The Wagga Wagga ATSIC administrative region (yellow shaded area) compared against Tindale’s (1974) Wiradjuri tribal area estimate (red outline) and Horton’s (1994) Wiradjuri cultural area estimate (blue outline)
Figure 3.4 Profile of Aboriginal people in the region using selected characteristics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and ATSIC survey of the indigenous population of the Wagga Wagga ATSIC region (after McLennan & O'Donaghue 1996)
Figure 3.5 Above - Atlas map of 1971 showing continental area occupied by Aboriginal people of part-European descent (green) and showing Tasmania as containing no Aboriginal people (from Feodoroff, J. 1971: 27)

Figure 3.6 Below - European settlement frontier in the Australian continent, showing frontier coverage at c1850 (coloured brown). The area is generally similar to that identified as occupied by Aboriginal people of part-European descent shown above (from Feodoroff, J. 1971: 24)
Figure 3.7 Age structure of indigenous population compared with total population (estimated resident population, Australia, for 30 June 1996, from McLennan 1998 b: 6)

Figure 3.8 Growth in recorded number of indigenous people over the course of the 20th century, showing the increase during the post-1967 era. This increase partly reflects changing census definitions of indigenous, effects of natural population growth and increased life span. It also indicates an increase in re-identification of Aboriginal people (from indigenous counts plus augmented estimates, censuses 1911-1996, after McLennan 1998 a: 157)
Figure 3.9 Above - Some Wiradjuri communities in traditional country and nearby urban centres (from Camm and McQuilton 1987:44)

Figure 3.10 Below - Sample of marriage matches by descendants of Erambie government mission at Cowra (from Camm and McQuilton 1987:44)
Chapter 4
Distribution of Wiradjuri Settlement in the Post-Conquest Period

The distribution of new forms of Aboriginal settlements that arose in the period following European arrival in the former Wiradjuri region reveals a number of important features of Aboriginal settlement in New South Wales.

This section analyses the factors influencing the distribution of Aboriginal settlement in the Wiradjuri region (fig 2.2). It examines why Aboriginal settlements were located where they were and whether the settlement pattern of the Wiradjuri region was unique or similar to other patterns of human settlement. The world-wide phenomenon of the drift into towns is also examined in context of the Wiradjuri region.

A Reflection of Traditional Aboriginal Movement

The Wiradjuri region is an area of both densely wooded river corridors and long horizons, but it was never empty. Prehistoric movement of Wiradjuri bands followed a regular area of country. This can be inferred from the numerous early European observer's accounts of Wiradjuri movement through the landscape. Mathews' (1897: 111-53) detailed reconstruction of the Wiradjuri initiation, *burbung*, that took place in the 1870s shows that it brought together groups from a large area. These groups well knew the extent of their home range. When entering the ceremonial ring, each contingent participating in the ceremonies would call out the chief localities, camping places and the like, within their *ngoorumbang*, their country. Bennett (1834 I: 327) also noted that all the countryside was named and Mitchell (1839 II: 41) remarked on the naming of each permanent waterhole in the lands around Lake Cargelligo. Wiradjuri day to day movement was thus through a circuit of familiar places, probably known both by their physical resources as well as their spiritual resources (stories of creation or dreamings).

Wiradjuri also travelled outside their group territory for the purpose of trade. The tooth extracted during initiation would be sent out to groups occupying other countries, to be returned some months later. The occasion for return of the tooth then became a time of trade, carried out as barter and gift giving:
Supposing for example there is plenty of suitable stone for making hatchets and whetstones in the country belonging to one tribe, they will exchange these commodities with the men of another tribe, in whose country there may be suitable wood for making spears and other weapons. People who have coloured clays will exchange them for skins of animals not plentiful in their own country. Others will have string made of the bark of certain trees, richly coloured feathers of rare birds, reeds for making light spears, and so on, which they exchange for other articles. It may be that some of the men and women exchange exactly similar articles with the people of another tribe merely as mementos of their meeting (Mathews 1897: 151).

The Scottish squatter Peter Beveridge also listed exchange items such as spear reeds, red ochre, possum cloaks, and fibre for nets (Beveridge 1883: 20).

Localised Wiradjuri movements into neighbouring territories for inter-group ceremony, trade or fighting appear to have been common events. Despite being fairly mobile within a well-known range, Wiradjuri negotiated for permitted entry into related language areas through messengers (e.g. Mathews 1897: 118-20, 151). Recent claims that Wiradjuri movement extended to other extremities of the continent such as Cape York and Torres Strait (e.g. Gammage 1986: 18), or even to the mouth of the Murray River in South Australia are likely to be exaggerations.

At the time of European settlement, Wiradjuri speaking bands moved over a wide geographic area, although the pre-European Wiradjuri boundaries are unclear. The extent of Wiradjuri lands were dramatically affected by European contact, through small pox epidemics, long before Wiradjuri saw the new-comers first hand. After European arrival the movement of Aboriginal people continued though in a more restricted manner. Yet the constant movement of Aboriginal households in historic times, so unexplainable to government authorities who tried so hard to settle the Aborigines permanently, was a fundamentally ancient pattern of hunter-gatherer life developed by food foraging and ceremonial needs prior to European arrival. The 19th century missions to Wiradjuri (Wellington and Warangesda) were run by "settlement missionaries" who supposed that the Aborigines would settle down and farm. Ann McGrath commented on the contrast between the European and Aboriginal models of settlement, noting that the early gathering of Aborigines around European settlements was never a one-way migration: "Contrary to the European settlement model, Aborigines were often only visiting, stopping off at what might
be called fast-food markets - for a day, a week, a season, or even as a base for a few years" (McGrath 1987: 21).

After European arrival, Aboriginal life was not stationary. People continued to live the travelling mode of life, spending their formative years foot-walking and riding their country. The occurrence of pre-European Aboriginal stone tools on recent Aboriginal settlements such as Carowra Tank government settlement, Flakeney Creek farming reserve, Warangesda mission, Brungle station, Bulgandramine station, Wellington Common and the Murie community camp also indicate cultural continuities at these places since before European settlement. At the Murie, the building of the 1930s Aboriginal community camp on top of an Aboriginal stone tool scatter may simply reflect continued choice of camp locations by successive generations of Aboriginal people. However, Warangesda, Brungle, Bulgandramine and Flakeney Creek were 19th century Aboriginal settlement locations and would have been recognised as Aboriginal places by the Aboriginal people who built huts there during the colonial period.

Earlier, people conceived the landscape as multiple centres, each of them anchored by a dreaming and by the activities of people. Mythically storied places (even if not of long-standing significance but of recent social construction or "invention") played an important role in defining the landscape for Aboriginal people before European arrival. Some of these mythical connections to pre-European centres continued for a time after European arrival (e.g. Brungle and Warangesda). More often, mythical connections were re-made at the new places of settlement (examples are Devil's Hole, the Murie and Narrandera Sandhills). After European arrival, Aboriginal people re-defined their daily lives, re-organising their travel as a framework of places along settler travel routes and at concentrations of people, the sites of early towns. The ancient travelling mode of life thus became grafted onto new patterns of Aboriginal employment and settlement, as generations of people moved between the new missions and government settlements, followed seasonal fruit picking and casual station employment, or took up travelling work such as droving, railway fettling and tent boxing. Earlier, places were differentiated in Aboriginal terms of country by mythological stories of their origin. By about 1870 many of these would have been submerged within the new settlement context of towns, gold fields and railways. As in other regions of Aboriginal Australia (e.g. Myers 1986: 79-93) the travelling mode of life produced stories that involved recounting of movement from place to place, rather than one-off visitation of places for specific purposes. This way of life would be impossible today. Although this mode of life
continued in some form right up to the 1970s settlement into townships, to the present day young generation it is probably as distant as hunting and gathering.

**Location of the outsider in the Wiradjuri Region**

The location of the outsider in the town was discussed in the introduction, using the Roman occupation of Britain as an historical example. The same theories will now be applied in the Wiradjuri region to explain the types of Aboriginal settlement. It will be recalled that in the introduction, towns were examined in a context of colonisation. However, the focus of a town can be political, economic, social or religious and the "suburb", not in the white middle class housing sense but in the sense of the separate camp outside a centre, took a variety of forms in the Wiradjuri region. In order to push the theory to the logical limits of its explanatory value, 6 such types of foci for Wiradjuri camps may be examined: (1) town, (2) government settlement, (3) factory, (4) station, (5) mythological place, and (6) camp. Each of these will be briefly explained as a focus for Wiradjuri camps before moving onto an example.

The town "fringe" settlement is the best known example of the Aboriginal "suburb" in the Wiradjuri region. Camps in Griffith and Dubbo moved progressively as the town centre expanded, until they ended up outside the township of the present day. However the government settlements, which were themselves often placed on the edges of towns, also were a focus. The Murie, a community camp situated well outside the official Aboriginal mission at Condobolin, is a good example. The factory or place of industrial employment was also a centre, and camps such as Woolscour (next to the wool scour at Narraundera) and Wattle Hill (near the Leeton cannery) are examples. The pastoral station or rural employer was the main focus for Aboriginal camps up to the start of the reservation system. Though widely known, it is better documented for places of more recent European settlement in "remote" Australia (e.g. McGrath 1987) than in the Wiradjuri region. A 20th century example of camps on the edge of a rural employer's property were grape and fruit picking camps in near Griffith such as Condo Lane, adjacent to the McWilliams winery. Possibly from times prior to European settlement, particular places in the landscape were favoured for various activities whether they were camping places, ceremonial places. Wiradjuri may have chosen to stay at storied places, centres for mythology. Brungle's mountain, Mudjarn, is one such place, another is the burbung ground at Warangesda. The final focus is the "fringe" camp itself. Any grouping of households would attract others. Some were not accepted into "the fold", and formed a separate but related household camp consisting of up
to several households. Bushranger's Creek camp outside of Wellington is an example of such a "satellite" of the main camp.

This division into different foci has some explanatory value but is simplified. In each district and town the foci for camps and settlements combined in different ways. Narrandera has a well documented Aboriginal settlement sequence and is given here as an example of the way the "suburb" or "fringe" camps formed and changed.

During the last decades of the 19th century, Wiradjuri people would have included Narrandera township in their circuit, or home range. Aboriginal people probably moved between small unreported camps on the fringes of towns and government settlements at which rations were provided. Camps along rivers (for example by the river at Gooloogong, the Yass Blacks' Camp), under bridges (for example the Black Bridge at Dubbo, and Ryan's Place near Cowra) and along railway lines (for example the Railway Gates near Cowra), were close to such townships, but not the immediate living space of respectable townpeople. Such camps were areas in which Aborigines and whites could engage in drinking and dealing. Other than a newspaper reference to a corroboree on East Street in the 1890s (Gammage 1986), nobody wrote much about, or remembered anything about, the Narrandera town campers. The official and townspeople's view that Aborigines should be kept out of town led to attempted administrative controls of Aboriginal presence in the towns by creation of small Aboriginal reserves. But then there was also a conflicting administrative pressure to get Aboriginal people off the reserves, off government welfare, and have them trained in respectable occupations for a life among whites.

The move by stages of the Aboriginal households into Narrandera began with the increased exodus of Aboriginal families from Warangesda Mission, which was being closed down in the early decades of the 20th century. The Narrandera Sandhills settlement formed, and remained an established community camp until after the end of the Great Depression. Other outsiders, whether because they were economically or ethnically different from both the townpeople and from the Aboriginal people, formed a separate settlement. In the case of Narrandera these were places such as the white people's camp near Dixon's sawmill ("Dixonville") and the poor white residential enclave called Hill 60. The camps of economically poor whites, such as "Little Canberra" on the edge of Cootamundra township, have tended, like the Aboriginal community camps, to evaporate from the memories of respectable town folk, and hence do not appear in local histories or heritage lists.

The Narrandera Sandhills Aboriginal community camp lasted for some decades. Then due to a combination of local developments, such as the death of the local station employer
and patron, but demolitions by the Shire Council, and the improving economic standing of Aboriginal households, the Aboriginal community moved out. They moved into the poor white residential area of Hill 60, replacing the resident families there.

A few economically advantaged Aboriginal households had already bought land blocks at Hill 60, or the Top Sandhill as it came to be known among the Aboriginal community. Economically poorer Aboriginal people and their intermarried poor white household members formed a separate camp at Woolscour. This was on the fringe of the Hill 60 residential precinct. Eventually the Woolscour households also bought blocks and built humpies on the blocks at Hill 60.

Hill 60 now became known as the Aboriginal precinct of the town, the "mission". With charity help a small community hall for church meetings and dances was built, the town doctor provided medical treatment free of charge for many of the families, and the permanent settlement into the ethnic enclave might have been the end of the process.

However as housing policies began to change, the Aboriginal families were offered rental houses in the town. Meanwhile at Hill 60, many of the households did not keep up their rate payments. Council evictions and land auctions followed at Hill 60. More families moved into the town. Council then chose Hill 60 as the place for the sewerage treatment plant and the site emptied.

By the 1990s the old Narrandera Sandhills settlement sites had long been deserted and only two elderly local Aboriginal residents were able to identify it. The Woolscour camp area, originally set aside as a watering place beside the river crossing, had again become unoccupied public land. The newer Aboriginal precinct, Hill 60, had two or three original or returning Aboriginal households living in self-built houses or kit homes. Housing is scattered through the town, yet the Aboriginal men still meet in one of the pubs, which has become the unofficial all-Aboriginal meeting ground.

At a community level, the move into Narrandera has been a slow and staged process, driven by shifting forces of changing Aboriginal economic and social standing, state wide government policies, local government actions, and the influence of both black and white community leaders. At a global level, the move into Narrandera is another example of the treatment of outside groups and of urban drift, a process that is recognisable in a number of other cultural and temporal contexts.
Factors Affecting the Growth and Decline of Aboriginal Settlements

Growth and decline is one aspect of Aboriginal settlements which fits into a world framework of rural and urban settlements. The world-wide phenomenon of drift into towns, the formation of the sub-urban settlements, can be traced in the growth of European townships which often cluster around an early medieval, Roman or even pre-historic nucleus. Similarly, the decline of some settlements and their subsequent desertion was experienced in Europe following the collapse of the Roman Empire and during the Thirty Years War (Wedgwood 1938: 512-20). Similar processes of urbanisation are true for the Wiradjuri region. The main difference is that whereas the transition from hunter-gathering to urban life in Europe took place over several thousand years, in the Wiradjuri region Aboriginal people moved from a highly mobile hunter-gathering life to a growth and decline of settlements, and then to a totally urban life, within a staggeringly rapid time-frame of about 150 years.

In common with towns that have clearly defined phases of building, the building fabric of government settlements changed over time. The 1870 to 1920 era of Aboriginal housing belonged to the Aboriginal people, who built their own slab or bark huts, put up tents, or used traditional Aboriginal shelters (called goundjis, goondies, or gunyahs). Although self-built huts continued to be constructed and occupied in Aboriginal camps up to and after 1970, a clear era of government housing is discernible in the 1920 to 1950 period. This was the era of the small tin hut. The post-Second World War period saw a renewal of housing fabric and the 1950 to 1980 period belongs largely to timber weatherboard and "fibro" (asbestos cement sheeted) cottages. The present phase of brick veneer housing construction began by the 1980s when government funding was consolidated for Aboriginal communities to buy their own rental houses. The chronology is broad and contains exceptions, but places such as Erambie, Condobolin Mission and Brungle each contain the whole sequence of four phases in their housing fabric. Other settlements document one or two of the phases.

The development of Aboriginal settlements separate from white settlements is also not, in principle, that unusual. There are many world-wide instances, outside the geographical area and time-frame under survey, of a society divided between the "insiders" who held the strong economic position and occupied the townships, and the "outsiders" who were both economically and geographically marginalised. Shanty towns, the low-grade suburbs built by the economically poor in every continent of the world, are well covered in the literature of urban geography and urban archaeology. The numerous spontaneous settlements that have grown up on vacant public land around most of the large metropolitan
centres of developing countries consist of self-built shelters. The most critical factors determining construction of the shelters, temporary in nature and built of discarded materials, are the low economic capacity of the people and the low security of land tenure. Examples of these unserviced settlements are in Africa, Asia and in the *villa r-iseria* settlements of Latin America (Mabogunje et al. 1978: 49).

In the Wiradjuri region case the settlements were different to shanty towns in developing countries in that most Wiradjuri settlements were ethnically separate from town populations. Nevertheless, themes such as the growth of camps and drift into towns, when considered in context of the Wiradjuri region, have parallels with human settlement in other regions of the world.

Once the landscape had ceased to be dominated by the big open pastoral stations, Wiradjuri settlements, although patterned onto areas of pre-European movement, became adapted to the network of towns. Within this broad framework of settlement location there existed a wide variety of settlements which may be broadly placed into two classes: those built by government drawing directly on welfare (government settlements); and those offering an alternative way of life for Aboriginal communities (camps).

In contrast to the planned nature of some government settlements, many of the camps experienced spontaneous growth, change and decline, leaving little trace by the end of the 20th century. General differences between the Aboriginal camps and government settlements may be likened to the contrasts between rural settlements and urban towns of early Europe.

Like rural towns, some camps appeared to grow out of local physical factors such as terrain and water-supply. Settlements had formed at river ford crossings in early Europe, and some of early towns surveyed by the British for the New South Wales colony were placed onto existing river crossings. During the 19th century a number of Aboriginal camps formed on stock routes where people stopped to water livestock or waited for the river to fall before crossing. Gooloogong, Carowra Tank, the Woolscour, Yass Riverside and Tintown were such locations.

By contrast to such camps, some government settlements had limited dependence on their environment, their location and layout developing as alien importations. Government settlement plans have a similarity to town plans since Roman times because they tended to be deliberately measured and executed on a grid or central street axis. Places such as Warangesda, Erambie and Hollywood are examples of the institutional layout, further examined in chapter 6. The origin of the geometric plan at such government settlements,
whether it was based on a quadrangle, row housing, or a grid pattern, can be traced back to convenient measurement and accessibility by road.

For the purpose of general understanding and comparison, the simplest division of Aboriginal settlements is into two types: community camps and government settlements. These two broad settlement types contained many examples of contrasting characteristics. While it is unlikely that any settlement could be found that embodies all of the listed characteristics, the simple classification is useful as a conceptual model. Contrasts found between some camps and government settlements are further discussed in chapter 6 - "Community - Physical layout and living space".

Yet each settlement site is in a sense unique. Some settlement sites fell out of Aboriginal community use early. Examples are Warangesda and Carowra Tank, cleared in the 1920s and 1930s respectively. Others, such as Brungle and Erambie are occupied to the present day. More than government settlements, the camps were like living beings in that they adapted themselves to changing needs. Some camps, such as Gooloogong reserve, contained nuclei of Aboriginal settlement, settled by different Aboriginal kin groups.

A few people might dismiss the new forms of Aboriginal settlement as simply the response of a "disrupted" people and culture. While it is certainly true that hunter-gathering had ceased as a necessary form of subsistence, the picture of the Aboriginal people as disrupted, and by implication destroyed, is both patronising and factually wrong. Ethnic groups around the globe have experienced an accelerated pace of changes during the 20th century and Aboriginal communities too, were adapting to change in a variety of ways that are reflected in their settlements. The surveys of different camps and government settlements illustrate that as elsewhere, changes were not uniform through the region, but related to complex relationships, in this case the relationships between government agencies, town communities and Aboriginal families.

Like the towns of Europe, many settlements of the Wiradjuri region waxed and waned in their intensity of occupation depending on a variety of local factors. Many of the settlements would already have been established Aboriginal town-fringe camps by about 1870, although the written record is scant. The presence of pre-European artefacts at many settlements, (such as at Wellington Town Common, Yass "Blacks' Camp", Carowra Tank, Murie at Condobolin, Erambie at Cowra, Gooloogong, and others) point to phases of settlement site occupation both before and after European arrival. Some of these phases are so distinct as to be classed as separate settlements. The Murie at Condobolin (Lachlan: 55-66) is a good example of a settlement with such distinct phases of occupation. The
combined evidence of pre-European stone artefacts such as the stone axe flake, burial poles which have a limited duration and which therefore can be dated from around the time of European settlement, and the memories of older residents, show the Murie to be a place with a sequence of separate occupations as follows: (1) Pre-European use by Aboriginal hunter-gatherers; (2) Aboriginal burial area in the early period of European settlement; (3) White fringe-camp; (4) Aboriginal camp; (5) Recreation area. This multi-phase occupation with sharp transitions (in this case from a white fringe camp into an Aboriginal camp and then an uninhabited place) has parallels to the archaeological record of settlements in other continents whose inhabitants experienced changing fortunes.

Another example of a settlement that fluctuated in intensity of occupation due to local factors was Oak Hill at Yass. The district of Yass was settled early and a pastoral township had formed by the 1830s. Oak Hill, which is situated about midway between the river and the town, probably was already an established camp by the time the Board was gazetting it as an Aboriginal reserve in 1888. Pressure from the townspeople brought about the establishment of Edgerton Station, and the resettlement of people from Oak Hill. A few years later during the First World War there were labour shortages which created cash employment for Aboriginal men. Edgerton collapsed economically and Oak Hill was again occupied. By 1934, the resettlement of Aboriginal people into the new government settlement of Hollywood drained Oak Hill again. However, a few of those staying on at Oak Hill were later joined by households ejected from Hollywood. By 1955, when Hollywood was being closed and the roofs of its houses were being torn down to prevent return, Oak Hill was in full swing. The construction of early fibro town housing in 1955-60 in the segregated area of the "New Mission" removed a few people from Oak Hill, but it was many years before Aboriginal rental housing was available for all. Driven out by ethnic intolerance and shortages of housing and amenities, many Aboriginal families left Yass never to return. The public housing waiting lists kept people camped on Oak Hill. Some rental housing started again in the mid 1970s, but it was only during the early 1980s that Aboriginal Corporations were formed and supplied with funding to provide average suburban houses. The last Aboriginal household left their shack at Oak Hill in 1986.

A further understanding of the Aboriginal settlement pattern can be found by drawing back from a view of individual settlement growth and decline, and instead to outline general factors which affected the formation, or non-formation, of Aboriginal settlements.
Magnets of Settlement

Simplifying some of these relationships it can be seen that three important features which acted as "magnets" and drew Aboriginal people into settlements were kin, water, and tucker (food). In the following paragraphs, each of these magnets will be explored in greater detail.

The desire to move amongst related people accounted for much of the size and spacing of Aboriginal settlements. Small camps and reserves can be seen stretched out at intervals which allowed people to travel fairly continuously between them. The desire or need to move on varied. Reserves under control of managers were tightly policed, and sometimes residents were expelled from them. Seasonal work, such as shearing or fruit picking, required a household to be mobile. Some families moved to stay ahead of state welfare authorities, mainly the New South Wales Aborigines Protection Board to escape having their children classed as neglected and removed to be made wards of the state. But much of the travel was simply for people to see familiar black faces, for children to get to know their relatives, to share joys and sorrows with communities connected through descent, marriage and background. The AIM Christian "conventions" in which large numbers of Aboriginal people would travel to nominated meeting places such as particular missions over Easter, also created a focus for movements which fitted in well with Aboriginal living patterns, and became important expressions of Aboriginal community life. In the present day, Aboriginal funerals still draw large groups travelling from far-off communities that recognise kinship links with the deceased.

A second magnet for Aboriginal settlement was access to water. The rivers provided water for drinking, cooking, fishing, bathing and washing. The rivers also provided long views and places of solitude from the townships. During the 1940s and 1950s they were places of Christian baptism by travelling Aboriginal preachers (Lachlan: 67, 75). There was also general European recognition that Wiradjuri were drawn to riverside camps. Many of the reserves and missions set aside for Aboriginal communities at locations such as Wellington, Erambie and Warangesda were next to a river. Even the water irrigation canals snaking through Griffith were like a web of small artificial town "rivers" beside which people built their huts.

The third magnet for settlement was access to tucker. A town within walking distance provided food staples such as flour, sugar and tea, also household supplies and liquid refreshment. Towns therefore drew Aboriginal settlements of their own. Rations, food coupons and pensions were also linked to towns, police posts and reserves.
Even well before Aboriginal reserves had been set aside, Aboriginal groups were camped at towns, such as the current showground sites at Yass and Cowra. The early attraction of European settlements for Aboriginal people, popularly known in terms of diminishment of land for hunter gathering, was a widespread event and requires explanation.

The early congregation of Aborigines into station and town camps was brought about through an Aboriginal view of European settlements as "super-waterholes" (view by Elkin, in Hiatt 1968: 100). McGrath (1987) has likened the northern cattle station she was living on to a "super waterhole" for local Aboriginal people. According to Richard Baker (1990), these observations explain much of the Aboriginal move from the bush into the town. Before European arrival, Aboriginal hunter-gatherers had collected at places of plentiful food resources, such as waterholes, and had come together periodically for ceremonies and social meeting at ceremonial sites. After European arrival, many settlements offered new and better "waterholes" to Aboriginal people. This satisfied a longing for stimulants such as tobacco and tea, and provided European "fast foods" such as flour and sugar. McGrath (1987: 126) notes that damper and johnny cakes were the popular camp breads, and for Aborigines on stations signified a successful "hunt". They also provided economic necessities after drought and farming had made water or traditional foods scarce. In this sense the European pastoral stations, government missions and towns became "super waterholes" to Aboriginal people. Initially the European settlements were only a focus for occasional Aboriginal curiosity about European life and material goods. But once there was an Aboriginal camp at a settlement, there was even a greater attraction to those still out in the bush to come in for social and ceremonial gatherings. In this sense the European settlements were a social focus and became the equivalent of Aboriginal "super ceremony" sites (Baker 1990: 29-31; McGrath 1987: 20, 125). The intensive sociality possible in a town created an Aboriginal focus for settlement. This picture of willing assimilation into a new material culture helps explain why hunter-gathering gave way so rapidly to "fringe" camp life. Seen in this light, the creation of official Aboriginal reserves and government settlements on the edges of towns were the government's means of legitimating the Aboriginal presence, rather than collecting Aboriginal people into settlements against their will.

Of the many settlements investigated, one that seemed remote from this kind of logic was Carowra Tank. This was an isolated managed government settlement in dry and featureless country around a stock dam. It was closed after a few years of operation between 1926 and 1933. Superficially, it appears to be simply a failed example of forced
resettlement, and that is the way it is explained by some present day Aboriginal descendants who live in the Murrin Bridge Aboriginal community. But further research (Lachlan: 88-100) showed that there was more to the Carowra Tank story and that the Aboriginal gathering at this seemingly desolate place can indeed be better understood in terms of the "super waterhole" and "super ceremony" factors noted above.

Stone artefacts on the ground indicate that far from being uninhabited desert country before European arrival, Carowra Tank was used by Aboriginal hunter-gatherers probably centred on a water soak where the tank was later built. Carowra may indeed appear as dry and featureless to a European visitor, but Donaldson's linguistic work (1980: xxiv) has shown that it was in the heart of Ngiyampaa people's country; their home base and traditional hunter gathering land (Donaldson 1980: xxiv). By the 1880s Carowra was a staging post for Europeans and their animals. It formed part of a stock route and contained a Cobb & Co coach stop and bush pub. By the early 20th century, well before the government settlement had been built, Aboriginal groups were camped there in sufficient numbers as to sign a petition for the government to send their children a school teacher. The Aborigines Protection Board sent government ration carts, which travelled monthly to drop off supplies to Aboriginal households. By the 1920s, scarcity of employment and scarcity of traditional foods brought on by the drought, probably coupled with a desire to join their own people, brought the last independent households, such as Geordie Murray's clan, into the Carowra Tank settlement, which clustered around a giant man-made rainwater reservoir (Lachlan: 88-100). Carowra Tank was truly, even literally, a "super waterhole" before the existence of the official government settlement.

Earlier economic treatments of the topic would have seen the "fringe" settlement mainly as a place with a significant economic relationship with its local town and district, often as a source of labour for nearby stations. The "super-waterhole" concept recognises that of greater significance to camp residents was the concentration of other people and the presence of a range of goods and services available in the nearby town (including employment), combined with desire for independence from the town's welfare and government agencies.

Constraints on Settlement

While the proximity of kin, water, and tucker influenced settlement location, there were also conditions limiting these influences. These were the constraints on availability of
land, the availability of employment, and constraints on personal freedom due to
government intervention. These three conditions are now examined in detail below.

The first condition was the density of European settlement. Researchers have pointed
out that before European settlement, Aboriginal people occupied the most suitable land.
There are links between some prehistoric sites and landscape features such as spurs, saddles
etc. There is a similar congruence between early European settlement location and level
terrain containing slopes of less than 8 degrees (Higginbotham 1992: 8; Jeans 1972: 321-3).
Yet after European arrival the choices for Aboriginal communities became limited by the
plans made in London by the British administration to survey and partition the landscape for
colonial settlement.

Property boundaries tend to persist for long periods of time under the imported
British system of "real estate", where the imaginary lines laid out by surveyors are
considered more "real" than who is actually living on the land or what natural boundaries
exist in the landscape.

Why is this British governmental division of the Australian landscape important to
note? It is because so much of the shape of present day townships and therefore of their
nearby Aboriginal settlements, are relics of this system.

The urban pattern was laid out in NSW from the very beginning of the colony. As
early as the 1830s the British administration set out to duplicate the settlement pattern that
had formed in England during the post medieval period to the late 18th century, by mapping
the whole of New South Wales and surveying a pattern of planned villages and townships
onto the Australian landscape. They had seen the overcrowding resulting from European
settlement growth. The government decided to create an English settlement system of 19
counties in the NSW colony and emulate the close distribution of small market towns and
villages. The mapping of the colony was begun by Major Mitchell in the 1820s and was
completed in the 1830s. Some of the towns reinforced existing patterns of settlement and
survived. Other towns failed, although many of these property boundaries persist as mapped
blocks on farmland.

The result of Aboriginal dislocation off the large tracts of open land was a "barbed
wire occupation" in which Aboriginal people found themselves fenced out of the most
suitable land. The only available living space left to Aboriginal households then generally
became the "residue" portions of land: crown land, land near the town's outskirts, near a
dump or cemetery. This has distinct parallels with the vacant public lands invaded by
present day lowest income groups in so-called developing countries of Latin America,
Africa and Asia, who create their own settlements on hill slopes, desert wastes, lowlands or narrow valleys (Mabogunje et al. 1978: 49). Unlike chosen pre-European campsites, the Bushranger's Creek Aboriginal camp was at the bottom of a steep wooded gully. The only way of obtaining water in dry seasons was to break the town water line. The old Aboriginal camp at Yass was cut into a steep hillside, facing west into the summer afternoon sun. Although many towns had separate black and white fringe camps, in some towns the only available space was where the poorer white people were already settled. The Murie (Condobolin) and the Top Sandhill's (Narrandera) are examples of settlements in which Aboriginal households moved in alongside white families before outnumbering and gradually displacing them.

The second constraint on Aboriginal settlements was the availability, or lack of, local employment. Much of the movement of Aboriginal people, especially of the men, was to follow pastoral and fruit picking work. Fettlers camps on railway lines, Wattle Hill near the cannery at Leeton, and camps near pastoral stations are examples of settlement location determined by place of employment.

The third and most important constraint was the intervention of government policies and government officials which determined in many cases, where a settlement would be permitted to exist. Some reserves, such as Gooloogong, were based on previously established Aboriginal camps. Others, such as Erambah, became a focus of Aboriginal settlement, drawing people from both the local district and also from distant communities (Lachlan: 16,18). The Woolscour reserve at Narrandera was situated on the convergence of a river crossing, supply of water, and probable employment at the wool scouring works. But it was chiefly available as an Aboriginal camp because it was a portion of land set aside as a resting and watering place on the stock route. Anyone could camp there for a period of time without being evicted (Murrumbidgee: 98). Some settlements were determined by the logic of bureaucrats. Hollywood mission was built on a dry and stony hillside because the town council decreed it as the only available land (Murrumbidgee: 51). Nobody else wanted the land and it was far enough out of town to keep the protests of local white town residents at bay. Yet when the town had grown, the revoked mission site became prime semi-rural residential land, and was subdivided and sold off as separate blocks. Communities which were settled at Carowra Tank were later re-housed on top of an exposed Aboriginal burial ground at Menindee. People from four different Aboriginal language backgrounds from Menindee were once again moved, this time in open-topped trucks, to Murrin Bridge (Lachlan: 96,101). Since the 1970s a number of government
housing and employment programs provided incentives for Aboriginal people to relocate. Many families now live in the so-called Aboriginal "resettlement" towns such as Wagga Wagga and Bathurst, which dislocated households from western NSW under State government incentives known as the Family Resettlement Scheme. Although forced together initially out of necessity, relationships are now being established between these family networks, forming Aboriginal communities of their own.

Some communities live on reserves that have been continuously occupied throughout the pre-European and historic periods, and contain complex communities that drew people from many places and exported them into a vast area of country. Once Maloga had become established, some years after armed resistance by Yorta Yorta hunter-gatherers to white occupation in the 19th century, it became the focal point of Aboriginal land use and settlement throughout the historic period. Wallaga Lake, Lake Tyers and Erambie are other examples of reserves that contain not only people of local descent but also people descended from a large number of other Aboriginal reserves.

The distribution pattern of settlements by Wiradjuri descendants over the last 200 years grafted fundamentally ancient movement patterns onto the newly formed European townships of the region. On the other hand, certain aspects of Aboriginal settlement, such as the drift into the towns, show similarities to other human settlement patterns. Wiradjuri settlements related to the complex relationships between government agencies, town communities, and Aboriginal families. Wiradjuri were drawn into towns not only due to government control, need for employment and unavailability of any other land, but also by the European goods and by desire to live with the other Aboriginal people who had already encamped near European settlements.