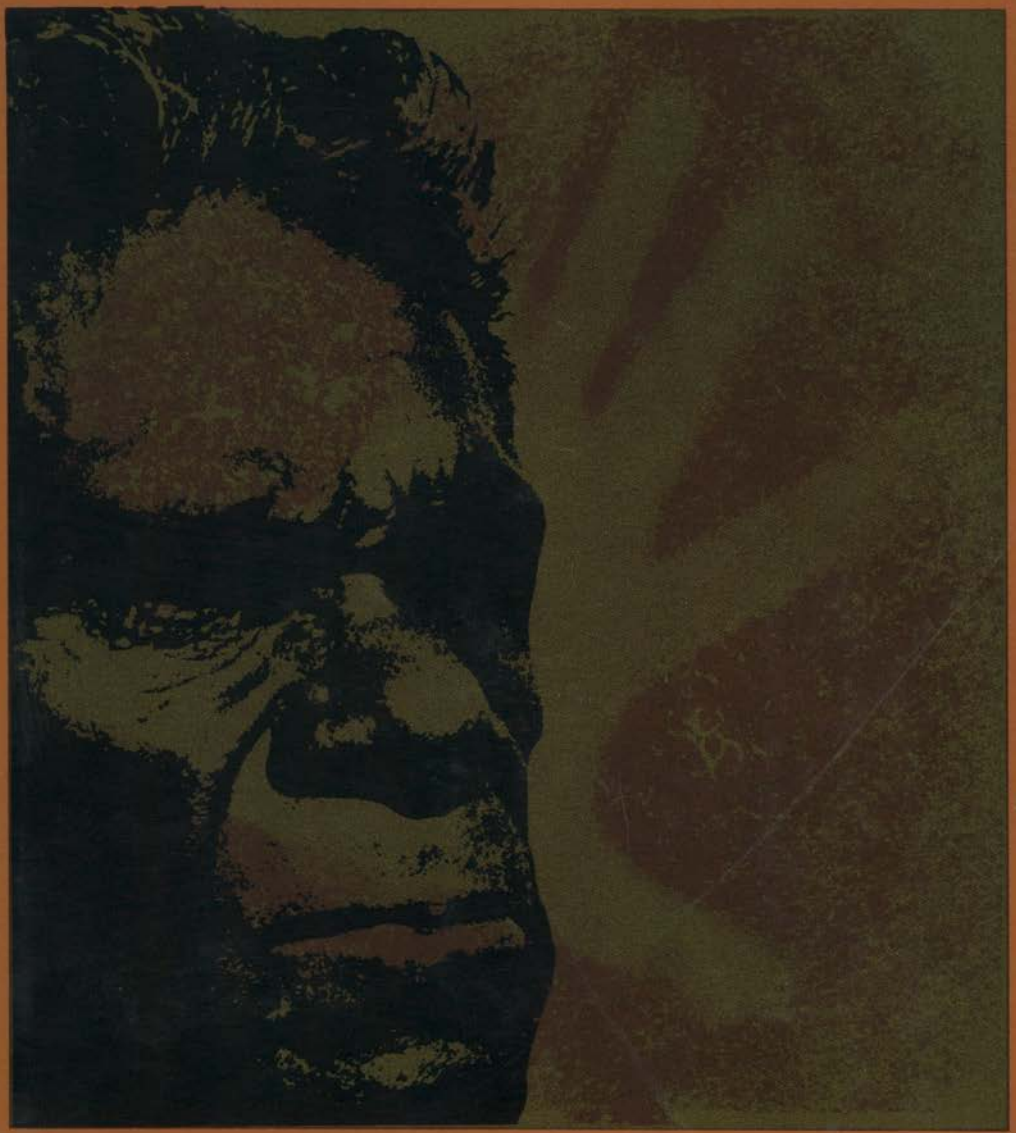
A BLANKET A YEAR

Leonard Broom and F. Lancaster Jones



ABORIGINES IN AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY

Land rights, perhaps the best known of Aboriginal grievances, is bitterly expressed in 'All they give us now for our land is a blanket once a year'. Yet, as Broom and Jones show in this book, the Aborigines are disadvantaged in every way.

No one knows who are Aborigines, how many there are, what jobs they hold, what education they have received. Yet, until this extraordinary ignorance is rectified, there is no basis for planning vital improvements. The authors stress the urgent need for public authorities to gather information on Aboriginal health, housing, employment, and education. Without this information no attempt to overcome the gross inequalities can hope to succeed.

A Blanket a Year offers constructive professional help. It is vital reading for politicians, administrators, social workers, educationists, and for all fair-minded Australians.

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RECOMMENDED RETAIL PRICE $4.95
PUBLICATION DATE 25.5.73

Aborigines in Australian Society 10

A series sponsored by
The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia

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Leonard Broom and
F. Lancaster Jones

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY PRESS CANBERRA 1973

First published in Australia 1973

Printed in Australia for the
Australian National University Press, Canberra

Overseas

United Kingdom, Europe, Middle East, Africa and Caribbean:
Angus and Robertson (U.K.) Ltd, London
North, South, and Central America: International Scholarly
Book Services, Inc., Portland, Oregon
Southeast Asia: Angus and Robertson (S.E. Asia)
Pty Ltd, Singapore
Japan: United Publishers Services Ltd, Tokyo

Registered in Australia for transmission
by post as a book.

Library of Congress Catalog card no 73-76201
ISBN 0 7081 0094 5

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NOTE ON THE SERIES

The Social Science Research Council of Australia (now The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia), which was founded in its present form in 1952, is the national organisation of social scientists. Some of its major functions are:

to encourage the advancement of the social sciences in Australia;
to act as a co-ordinating group for the promotion of research and teaching in the social sciences;
to foster research and to subsidise the publication of studies in the social sciences.

To these ends the Council has sponsored a number of major research projects. The first related to the role of women in public and professional life in Australia and was carried out by Mr Norman MacKenzie. His report, together with the associated study of the legal status of women in Australia by Dr Enid Campbell, was published in 1962 in a book, *Women in Australia* (F.W. Cheshire Pty Ltd, Melbourne).

The second major project, carried out by a group of economists, was concerned with the Australian taxation structure and under the authorship of R.I. Downing, H.W. Arndt, A.H. Boxer, and R.L. Mathews, the results were published in 1964 in *Taxation in Australia: Agenda for Reform* (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne).

In 1963 the Council approved its third and most ambitious major project, Aborigines in Australian Society, with the broad objectives of:

elucidating the problems arising from contacts between Aborigines and non-Aborigines and formulating policy implications from these;
drawing together existing knowledge in various parts of Australia

and undertaking such further original research as can be carried out over a period of three years.

In May 1964, Mr C.D. Rowley, formerly Principal of the Australian School of Pacific Administration in Sydney, was appointed Director of the Project, to work under the general guidance of a Project Committee appointed by the Council. The volumes now being published represent a major research enterprise in which many social scientists collaborated over the length and breadth of Australia.

However, the whole enterprise depended in very large measure on the magnificent support received, from the outset, from the Myer Foundation of Australia and the Sidney Myer Charity Trust. The Council wishes to acknowledge its gratitude for their generosity.

W.D. Borrie

PREFACE

Three of the chapters in this book are based upon previous publications or reports. They are not, however, reproduced in their original form but have been altered to incorporate additional evidence and to reflect our current thinking. Versions of Chapters 2 and 3 appeared in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* (Broom, 1970 and 1971). The section of Chapter 4 dealing with fertility patterns was presented by Jones at the 12th Pacific Science Congress in 1971 and was published in *Human Biology in Oceania* (Jones, 1972); the rest of Chapter 4 was originally prepared by Jones for the Council for Aboriginal Affairs in March 1970 but has been amended and updated for this publication. To the editors of the *ANZJS* and *Human Biology in Oceania* and to the Council for Aboriginal Affairs we express our thanks for permission to publish this material.

Chapters 1 and 5 were jointly drafted. We freely improved on each other's writing in the rest of the book although the primary responsibility for Chapters 2–4 remains that of the original author.

L.B.
F.L.J.
CANBERRA
NOVEMBER 1972

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> Then the white man came among us, we were hunted from our ground, shot, poisoned, and had our daughters, sisters, and wives taken from us ... They stole our ground where we used to get food, and when we got hungry and took a bit of flour or killed a bullock to eat, they shot us or poisoned us. All they give us now for our land is a blanket once a year. (Dalaipi quoted by Petrie, 1932 (1904) : 182-3)

Unlike the governments of Canada, New Zealand, and the United States, the Australian government (and the British colonial administration before it) has never recognised the rights of the indigenous people to the land they occupied at the time of European settlement. The British Crown declared Australia's lands its own and except in the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory proceeded to expropriate it to European settlers. Aborigines were treated as a rural pest, an obstruction to what is called development. Even when Aboriginal reserves were established towards the end of the nineteenth century, they were leased not to Aborigines but to government departments or religious missions, on the assumption that they could best judge the most appropriate form of development (Rowley, 1971b: 10-11). Although the South Australian government has given Aborigines some rights of control over some reserves,[1] Dalaipi's comments to Petrie remain as true today as they were then: all the white man gave for the land was a blanket a year.

[1] The recently announced policy of the Australian Labor Party is to legislate for a system of Aboriginal land tenure in Commonwealth Territories and to establish an Aboriginal Land Fund to acquire land for significant, continuing Aboriginal communities (*Canberra Times*, 14 November 1972, p. 20).

REPATRIATION AND LAND RIGHTS

The title of this chapter has two related connotations which evoke problems of policy appropriate to the contemporary situation. The narrow sense of repatriation is to be restored to one's homeland. Aborigines have begun to express publicly such a desire but so far with little success. Until recently many Aborigines thought that some reserves offered a semblance of a homeland, since white Australians seemed to have no use for the land. The mineral boom has changed that, and it has been made clear that Aboriginal claims to traditional lands—even on existing reserves—have no standing in Australian law. In fact, the former superintendent of the Methodist Mission at Yirrkala in Arnhem Land has written that when the Gove bauxite project was established no attempt at prior local consultation was made by either government officials or the mining group concerned. 'It is very cold comfort to tell an Aboriginal that he may still walk over land that was once his own but that by a mysterious process has been acquired by someone else; and that, as the original owner, he can hunt across it *until* the new owner needs it, bit by bit, for special sale upon which it is to be removed in very large boats. Insult is added to injury in a final humiliation when he is offered money to shovel away his own sense of spiritual security, as certain places represent to him still' (Wells, 1971: 4).

On 26 January 1972, the Australian government announced its intention to permit Aboriginal persons and groups to lease portions of the Northern Territory, which it controls (Australia, Prime Minister's Department, 1972). In South Australia, too, Aborigines have been given a voice in the management of reserves, including the issue of entry permits to reserves (South Australia, 1969: 22). Between 1967 and 1968 about 6,000 acres of former reserve land were transferred to the Aboriginal Lands Trust for ownership and development. However, this represents only a minute fraction (0·03 per cent) of South Australian Aboriginal reserves, which in 1968 amounted to 1,771,000 acres, mostly in the inhospitable north-west of the state. So far as the land is concerned, Aborigines elsewhere in Australia have been effectively dispossessed, and only a minority—perhaps a third—lives on land with which a traditional association can be claimed. The prospects of achieving even a modest degree of repatriation in the narrow sense—restoration to their homeland —are rapidly wasting. Unless white Australians restore by gift what they took by force, Aborigines must compete in a white man's legal system that denies them land rights stemming from prior occupancy, and a white

man's social and economic system that denies them the capital, personal resources, and educational skills to implement their current legal rights.

There has been a growing sentiment that governments—state and federal—should make over lands now classed as reserves to the Aborigines living on them (Rowley, 1971c: 12). Although this question has attracted widespread public interest and is now a political issue (Harris, 1972), it does not appear that support for it came mainly or predominantly from 'Communist elements and left-wing union elements' as asserted by the Minister for the Interior (Australia, Department of the Interior, 1972: 1). It is an issue because the denial of land rights to the prior inhabitants of a country is a denial of natural justice, which is not accepted in other 'new' countries or in Papua-New Guinea, which is administered by a different department of the same Australian government. That land rights did not become an issue earlier is testimony only to the political powerlessness of the Aboriginal people.

Land rights have now become an issue for a mixture of causes: the growing assertiveness of Aborigines, their testing of new-found power, a public appreciation of the natural justice of land claims, the clarity of the issue, and the search for quick and definitive answers to the Aboriginal predicament. Whatever the merits of the Aboriginal land claims—and they are powerful in terms of natural rights—there is no reason to suppose that Aboriginal problems would be solved by land grants. Nonetheless much would be gained in a sense of political and personal efficacy; the Aborigines would become harder for the polity to ignore.

Aborigines have been easy to ignore till now because they have been geographical, political, and social outcasts. Indeed, under the criteria currently applied to potential settlers by Australian immigration authorities, most Aborigines would be denied admission because they would be judged as unassimilable. They are non-European, with few technologically useful skills; they are often unemployed; they suffer from malnutrition and sickness to such a degree that by age 40 many are unemployable; they figure prominently in crime statistics, and have a low reputation in the larger society. While official documents portray Aborigines as 'happy and immensely vital' (Australia, Department of the Interior, 1972: 9), field research reveals high infant and childhood mortality, high morbidity, high levels of respiratory diseases, and generalised anxiety. According to Cawte (1969: 346), 'Aborigines in general do not regard themselves as fit and healthy'. Taft (1970: 14) sums up the stereotype of Aborigines held by Europeans in Western Australia as 'an irresponsible, lazy and dirty slob who has the redeeming features of being a good

parent and a friendly, respectful, and generous person'. Such negative community attitudes feed upon the depressed conditions of Australia's black minority and present a barrier to further advancement to citizenship and full participation in the economic and social order.

REPATRIATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Land rights are an immediate practical issue for the minority of Aboriginal Australians who live in traditional areas, but it is possible that more Aborigines will perceive a restoration of ancestral lands as a way to reclaim birthright and dignity. Surely if Aborigines are unable to win a place in urbanised Australia, a back-to-the-land movement may become an increasingly attractive alternative. But land rights, while a symbolic issue for all Aboriginal Australians, are only part of the wider question of repatriation.

Repatriation means 'to restore to one's homeland'; it also means 'to restore to citizenship'. T.H. Marshall has analysed the growth of citizenship in Britain in a way that can be translated into the status of Aborigines. According to Marshall, citizenship has three elements: civil, political and social:

> The civil element is composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom—liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought, and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice . . . By the political element I mean the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body . . . By the social element I mean the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society. (Marshall, 1965 (1949) : 78)

The institutions most closely related to each of these three elements of citizenship are the courts of justice, the houses of representative government, and the educational and social welfare systems. In general terms, the development of these separate elements can be assigned to different centuries: the concept of equality before the law belongs mainly to the eighteenth century, of equal political rights to the nineteenth, and of equal social rights to the twentieth (Marshall, 1965 (1949) : 81).

This broad characterisation is obviously inaccurate in some details. For example, women in Britain did not get the vote until 1918, and even now social equality is a slogan rather than a reality in most industrial countries. More important, the three elements are themselves interrelated,

and the full enjoyment of legal and political rights depends ultimately on the progressive extension of social rights—especially education, which in an industrial, bureaucratic society is the latch-key to full participation (Eggleston, 1972).

White Australians have long enjoyed full citizenship, and the commitment to legal, political, and social equality for Europeans is deeply ingrained in Australian culture. Black Australians, however, have until very recently lived under legal, political, and social restrictions which, in most cases, white Australians rejected for themselves over a century ago.

LEGAL STATUS

In his *Outcasts in White Australia*, Rowley has documented the range and effect of discriminatory laws on Australia's Aboriginal population. Restrictive legislation may in some cases have been well-intentioned but its effect was to degrade the indigenous people to the status of dependent outcasts. As Rowley indicates, a complete legal conspectus of restrictive ('protective') legislation would be a sobering document (1971a: 394).

Any discussion of the legal status of Aborigines is complicated by the fact that

> in Australia each State, as a matter of constitutional rights, administers its own Aborigines in terms of State legislation, while the Commonwealth is responsible for Aborigines in the Northern Territory. This arrangement has led to anomalies: definitions of 'Aborigine' vary; State legislation differs widely in degree of control of Aborigines; restrictions on liquor are not uniform; minimum wage rates differ; there is no uniform ration scale; and while all Aborigines now have a voting right in Federal elections, Aborigines in Queensland have no such right in Queensland. (Tatz, 1963: 33)

Since that summary was written, the situation has changed: the Commonwealth, as a result of a change in the Constitution approved by referendum in 1967, now does have a right to make laws relating to Aborigines throughout Australia, and considerable changes in state laws have occurred. The heritage of legislated inferiority has not of course been eradicated by redefined legal status and the present and future situation of Aborigines can only be understood in the context in which they grew up. There is the further anomaly that legal changes have not been matched by changes in administrative machinery or personnel until the last few years when the special Aboriginal Boards or Departments have, at least in some states, been disbanded.

Until the mid-1960s Aborigines were generally treated as persons in need of special care, which meant in practice that they were subject to

legislation which denied them the rights of other citizens. Protective legislation could be, and was, used to separate part-Aboriginal children from their mothers, to prevent cohabitation and marriage between blacks and whites, and even between blacks (Tatz, 1963: 45), to control physical mobility by confining Aborigines to a particular settlement, and to impose a double standard in the law by denying Aborigines citizenship rights. The motives behind such legislation varied from a desire to prevent the sexual exploitation of black women by white men to an attempt to foster the assimilation of part-Aboriginal children. Often the law was merely a piece of administrative machinery for controlling Aboriginal life.

The power exercised by 'protectors' under the law was nearly complete. As late as 1965 in Queensland,

> Every Aboriginal on a reserve could be ordered to work for thirty-two hours weekly, without remuneration, on the 'development or maintenance' of the reserve. Corporal punishment could be inflicted on those under sixteen years, but required the permission of the Director. The Aboriginal Court (which in practice on settlements was, until the 1965 Act, the superintendent sitting as a magistrate) could confine a child in the settlement dormitory until he reached the age of sixteen years. Entry by Aborigines to a reserve required permission or a removal order from somewhere else . . . The settlement offered a dumping ground for unwanted persons or for those deemed to be in need of 'protection'. (Rowley, 1971a: 110)

By the end of the 1960s most, but not all, such discriminatory legislation had been repealed.[2] The legacy of such laws is Aboriginal distrust of the legal system and resignation when confronted by it, as well as training in dependence and powerlessness. Even though Aborigines have formal equality before the law, they often plead guilty rather than defend themselves and they may be charged in situations where a white person would not. A recent example of the insensitivity of white law to the situation of Aboriginal Australians is the case of Nancy Young, whose infant daughter died, probably of scurvy, in July 1968 in Cunnamulla, Queensland.

> Four months later . . . Nancy was charged with manslaughter on the grounds of an alleged failure to provide her [infant] with adequate food or to seek medical attention. After three months spent in gaol for failure to raise bail, Nancy was found guilty by an all-white, all-male jury and sentenced to three years' hard labour. Her appeal was heard and dismissed by the full Queensland Supreme Court which, two months and a public outcry later, reversed itself on the grounds of fresh evidence, and freed Nancy one month before she was due . . . for parole. (Carrick and Robertson, 1970: 34)

[2] However, in Queensland some discriminatory laws remain. Assisted Aborigines can, for example, still be restricted in spending their wages by the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs (Wynhausen, 1972: 20-1).

Among the most obvious inequities cited by Carrick and Robertson were the long time between the alleged offence and the laying of a charge (four months), the high bail by Australian standards ($1,000) for someone who had lived in the district since the age of five, the failure of hospital staff to seek emergency treatment for an obviously sick baby, and the failure of state authorities to offer any compensation for eight months of wrongful imprisonment. A well-educated and well-advised white mother in similar circumstances would have considered proceeding with a case of civil negligence against the Cunnamulla Hospital. But 'in our Courts Aborigines are always defendants and never plaintiffs' (Carrick and Robertson, 1970:44).

POLITICAL STATUS

If the legal system has been characterised by discrimination, the political system has, until recently, been characterised by indifference. Until it was repealed by referendum on 27 May 1967, Section 127 of the Australian Constitution provided that

> In reckoning the numbers of the people of the Commonwealth, or of a State or other part of the Commonwealth, aboriginal natives shall not be counted.

The size of the majority in this referendum (91 per cent of 5,710,120 electors who cast formal votes were in favour) suggests that the political process was lagging far behind public sentiment. Perhaps it still is.

Section 127 of the Australian Constitution was probably not an expression of racist sentiments on the part of Australia's founding fathers but a recognition of the fact that full-blood Aborigines were outside the political and social system: to include them in the operation of determining electoral boundaries and parliamentary representation would have given states with large Aboriginal populations a fortuitous advantage. At the turn of the century the social and political participation of Aborigines was nil and was expected to remain that way, and protective legislation was to keep them in their place until they eventually passed away. Section 127 did not, however, apply to persons with part-European ancestry, for two main reasons. First, part-European Aborigines had by definition experienced a degree of contact, even if at a generation's remove, with white Australians. Secondly, it was widely believed that white 'blood' would make the learning of white ways easier. Thus, part-Aboriginal children were periodically rounded up and placed in special missions, or in foster and adoptive homes (Rowley, 1970:236). But in

general, official policy was to prevent 'the production of half-castes' by controlling and restricting contact between Aborigines and Europeans.

By the end of World War II, Aborigines in three states—New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia—had the right to vote in state elections and, therefore, in federal elections as well. 'Under Section 41 of the Commonwealth Constitution, Aborigines who had the right to vote for "the more numerous House of Parliament of a State" were in the same situation as other citizens, in that they could not be *prevented* by a Commonwealth law from voting at Commonwealth elections' (Rowley, 1971a:392). In Western Australia and Queensland, Aborigines, including part-Aborigines, could not in general vote unless they held a Certificate of Citizenship (Western Australia) or were exempt from the Aboriginals' Preservation and Protection Act (Queensland). Under federal law, however, persons who were not predominantly of Aboriginal descent (that is, half-castes and part-Aborigines) could enrol to vote in federal elections, although in 1945 Queensland officials acted to prevent Commonwealth officials from advising part-Aborigines of this right (Australia, House of Representatives, 1961:4). In the Northern Territory persons of more than half Aboriginal descent could not vote, but the situation became complex after 1953, when the Welfare Ordinance, in an attempt to avoid reference to race, used a provision in the Electoral Regulations to restrict the application of the Welfare Ordinance to Aborigines: a person could be declared a ward under this Ordinance only if he or she did not have the right to vote, which in terms of the Electoral Regulations meant Aborigines (Jones, 1962: Appendix).

On 18 April 1961 the Commonwealth House of Representatives established a Select Committee to consider Aboriginal voting rights. According to its estimates (Australia, 1961:2), about 30,000 Aborigines—in effect the total adult Aboriginal population—were disfranchised in Queensland, Western Australia, and the Northern Territory, including many who were in fact eligible to enrol (for example, ex-servicemen and part-Aborigines) but were unaware of their rights. The Select Committee recommended as follows:

(1) That, because the aboriginal people in New South Wales and Victoria have long been integrated into the Australian community, early administrative action be taken so that the compulsory provisions of the Commonwealth Electoral Act relating to enrolment and voting be applied to them.

(2) That wherever it is relevant for the Commonwealth Electoral Office to act upon the definition of an Australian aboriginal, that definition should be that which is the practice in the Northern Territory, namely, a person entirely of aboriginal descent.

(3) That early action be taken by the Commonwealth Electoral Office to inform aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and ex-servicemen, and people entitled to the franchise under the terms of the Attorney-General's memorandum to the Commonwealth Electoral Officer of 25th January, 1929, of their entitlement to be enrolled and to vote. (Australia, 1961 : 4)

The Committee further recommended an amendment to the Commonwealth Electoral Act to extend the vote to all Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders but that enrolment as electors should not be compulsory in areas other than New South Wales and Victoria. 'These people have not perceived the relevance of parliamentary elections to their lives, so to compel enrolment would be harsh' (Australia, H. of R., 1961 : 8). The Committee also expressed concern at possible electoral malpractice and the coercion of new Aboriginal voters. Similar fears were expressed when women got the vote in 1902 and are expressed now when extending the vote to 18-year-olds is under discussion. Rights have to be possessed before they can be used, or abused.

In the decade since this report was tabled, Aborigines have moved to electoral equality, except that enrolment is still for many Aborigines voluntary and not compulsory as it is for other Australian citizens. The political awareness of Aborigines has grown, and they have shown themselves capable of organising campaigns that have embarrassed experienced politicians and administrators alike—even to the extent of forcing the federal government to introduce, without parliamentary debate, a local Canberra ordinance to dislodge the unofficial Aboriginal 'Embassy' which camped in tents for the first six months of 1972 on the lawns outside Parliament House (*Canberra Times*, Editorial, 21 July 1972). There can be little doubt that many Aborigines have learned to exercise their political rights as citizens. That they have done so with meagre resources indicates that this is only a beginning to more active Aboriginal participation in the political process at local, state, and federal level.

SOCIAL STATUS

The formal legal and political barriers to full citizenship have been removed. The barriers that remain are social, the legacy of generations of training in dependency, poverty, and isolation from the mainstream of the national life. The effect of these deprivations is seen clearly and poignantly in health. Despite inadequate record keeping, the picture is clear:

1. Infant mortality among Aboriginal children is very high compared with white children. In most areas it is double, and in some parts of central Australia it is ten times, the white Australian rate.

2. Even if an Aboriginal child survives the higher risk of death during the first twelve months of life, his or her chances of dying before the age of two or three are far greater than the risk faced by white Australian children, among whom the death rate at such ages is very low. The relative difference in white and Aboriginal childhood mortality rates is even more unfavourable than the difference in infant mortality rates (Moodie, 1969).

3. Those who survive the risk of death in infancy and childhood face a life of high morbidity and disabling disease. Undernourishment is associated with retarded physical and mental growth. Respiratory problems, eye complaints (such as trachoma), skin diseases, and worm infestation are endemic in some areas (Coombs, 1969). These debilitating and crippling disorders create adults with slender physical resources and many handicaps.

4. Psychological and psychosocial disorders appear to be much higher among Aboriginal adolescents, and are associated with low socio-economic status and unemployment among urbanised Aborigines (Gault, 1968).

5. Adult males can anticipate a lifetime of chronic unemployment and underemployment because of low skill and poor health. Census figures and unemployment data grossly understate the rate of unemployment and do not begin to measure underemployment. Analysis restricted to 1966 Census data (Chapter 3) indicates a rate of unemployment among adult male Aborigines of 7 per cent, but a field report on employment in fourteen Aboriginal settlements in New South Wales shows 18 per cent of Aboriginal men with dependants who were unemployed, with a further 14 per cent on invalid and age pensions (Long, 1970:88). Migration to urban areas is a partial response to unemployment in rural areas, but even in Sydney in 1966, 7 per cent of the 138 Aboriginal men interviewed by Beasley (1970:179) were unemployed, and a further 41 per cent were unskilled labourers.[3]

6. The careers of adult women consist of continuous procreation throughout their child-bearing period. Aboriginal fertility is high and increasing. Analyses of fertility in the Northern Territory suggest an overall increase in age-specific rates of fertility of about 50 per cent in the decade from the late 1950s to the late 1960s (Chapter 5). Perhaps it is true, as one federal politician has put it, that what the Aboriginal 'loves best in this world is his babies' and that Aboriginal women have 'a natural ability to learn maternal and child welfare' (Australia, House of Repre-

[3] This figure includes seven men whose occupation was not known.

sentatives, *Debates*, 26 October 1971:2498, 2499), but there is also evidence that Aboriginal women find uncontrolled fertility a handicap (Cawte, 1969:346), especially in the crowded and unhygienic conditions prevalent on many settlements and stations (Australia, H. of R., *Debates*, 26 October 1971:2500-1).

This volume speaks to issues relating to the social rights of citizenship. Through an analysis of a national inventory of human capital—the 1966 Census—it details the outcast status of Australia's indigenous minority. The cycle of dependency, poverty, high mortality, high fertility, and ill-health that constrains Aboriginal life-chances emerges in muted terms, muted because there are no comprehensive and reliable data on the overall extent of dependence on social welfare payments, no data at all on income, and only partial and incomplete data on mortality and morbidity, and on education and work. The position of black Australians compared with white Australians is daily eroding, in relative and absolute terms—relative because the life chances for the white majority improve at a faster rate, and absolute because the rate of population growth is much higher among black Australians: any change in the position of Aborigines, for better or worse, affects a continuously expanding population.

Some of the chapters in this volume were written in connection with a wider study of social stratification in Australia or as an extension of earlier analyses of demographic change among Aboriginal Australians. Any representation of the social stratification of Australia that leaves out the Aborigines is incomplete and inaccurate. In statistical terms Aborigines are a negligible part of the Australian population. They may amount to roughly one per cent of the total, but Australian historical and political scholarship rarely gives them one per cent of the attention (and betterment policies have never allocated one per cent of the GNP). However, the social significance of a phenomenon is not restricted to the magnitude of its mass or to the size of a scholarly or monetary investment. Aborigines, the bottom of Australia's structure of social inequality, spotlight a major discontinuity in public policy and social values. Yet societies must be understood for their disjunctions and discontinuities as well as for their more symmetrical relationships.

An indeterminate number of individuals with Aboriginal backgrounds have been absorbed into the European population, and a modest number have become participants in the larger society while retaining an Aboriginal identity. The remainder are isolated in varying degrees from the opportunity structure of the economy and from political participation,

experience weak control of the instruments of betterment, and suffer from inferior life chances and poverty of life-style. In a highly urbanised nation, Aborigines are the least urban element, in a rich nation they are the poorest, in a well-educated nation they are the least educated. In a full-employment economy they participate as an under-class, moving from unemployment into unskilled labouring jobs, or into invalidity.

The line of exposition in Chapters 2 and 3 is a comparison of Aborigines with other Australians, in terms of their educational and occupational statuses. This does not imply that all would be well if the relevant ratios for Aborigines were identical with those for the community generally. But it does imply that things would be better if the two groups were not so vastly different. It also befits a nation that thinks of itself as equalitarian to identify those areas where its values are not fulfilled. The comparison with non-Aborigines also serves to spotlight two crucial dimensions of what it means to be an Aboriginal Australian. Each of these social facts contains an implicit social criticism; each self-respecting social criticism contains an implicit call for social policy. Any attempt to develop a coherent policy encounters stubborn demographic, geographic, and administrative difficulties: in the present case, a high dependency ratio, wide dispersal of the population, small units of settlement, fragmented administrative responsibility, diversity of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, differing degrees of urbanisation. These and other factors require rigorous and continuing assessment of objectives, methods, agencies, and achievements.

Chapter 4, dealing with fertility trends, population composition, and population growth, demonstrates the urgency for progressive social policy measures. Even though the census gives a conservative estimate of the Aboriginal population, it is clearly growing very rapidly, doubling within the span of a generation despite high mortality. Yet the development of adequate policies is at each point frustrated by inadequate sources of public information. When the subject of ignorance is itself weak, policy is likely to be extemporised, short-run and too late. Non-policy is itself a policy of coherent and systematic neglect. But these are issues we discuss in the final chapter.

2 EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF ABORIGINES*

In 1966 for the first time the census compiled information on education and also released data on Aborigines in terms similar to those for other Australians. This combination of events in national bookkeeping makes it possible to assess the status of the Aboriginal population more fully and accurately than ever before. Base lines for future comparison can now be drawn and some tendencies can be identified. However, there is no substitute for periodic reassessments of the social conditions of a population as it undergoes change, and only to a limited extent can cross-sectional analysis substitute for repeated scrutiny.

This chapter inquires into the educational status of persons classified as having *50 per cent or more Aboriginal ancestry* in the 1966 Census. The base population is therefore about 80,000. Comparable data for approximately 16,000-17,000 identifiable Aborigines of less than 50 per cent have not been released, and they therefore cannot be dealt with here.[1] By thus focusing on the darker part of the population, a limitation imposed by the availability of information, the degree of Aboriginal differentiation may

* Revision of an article by Broom first published in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, 6 (October 1970): 150-6.

[1] The 'true' number of Aborigines depends upon the criteria and the method and completeness of enumeration. The administrative distinction between part- and full-Aborigines has contributed its modicum of confusion. Persons familiar with Aboriginal communities do not agree in their estimates of the probable number of Aborigines however defined, but there is consensus that the total of about 97,000 enumerated in 1966 is an underestimate. The responsible departments of the several states give estimates that total about 122,000 (excluding Torres Strait Islanders) and this too may be an underestimate on any broad definition of Aborigines. See Australia, Department of Territories, 1967:62. See also Jones, 1970; and Chapter 4 below.

be somewhat overemphasised and the sharpness of the discontinuity between Aborigines and non-Aborigines may be exaggerated. Compared with statistics on the total identifiable Aboriginal population, the data in this chapter may be biased towards northern and rural residence, a somewhat lower socio-economic status and a higher degree of cultural differentiation. Nevertheless, what is reported pertains to over 80 per cent of all persons described as Aborigines in the census.

Fairly high educational standards are necessary for citizens to cope with the paper and materials of industrial democratic societies, and much higher standards are needed for technologically sophisticated and highly bureaucratised ones. The daily round of work and non-work and the published announcements of opportunities and obligations presume a literate and numerate populace. Like other economies moving into an advanced technology, Australia requires a declining number of unskilled and semiskilled manual workers, rather large numbers of literate skilled workers, both white- and blue-collar, and rapidly increasing numbers capable of coping with technological change, resource exploitation, and the management of symbols and people (Jones, 1967:2-6). In modern society the illiterate or poorly educated are social fossils from a simpler time.

The educational system is hard pressed to supply personnel for the best-equipped category, but the adult Aboriginal population is frozen into the shrinking sector. Aborigines do not have the training to take advantage of opportunities in expanding industries nor to compete successfully in more nearly stable sectors, and there is every evidence that as a consequence of their weak educational backgrounds, their occupational (and therefore financial, health, and longevity) disadvantages will persist.

While opportunities for educationally qualified people have rapidly increased, the kind and quality of educational requirements have also rapidly changed for rural as well as urban occupations. The skill necessary during the herding phase of pastoral management is inadequate in a time of range improvement, big capital, and big government. Slowly improving their absolute educational achievements, Aborigines have fallen further and further behind the rest of the Australian population. For the most part the areas of expanding occupational opportunity are out of the reach of Aborigines.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STATES

Although school attendance is compulsory in Australia, the rule is not uniformly applied to Aborigines. Table 2.1 reports the figures on

Aboriginal non-attendance by state. As recently as 1966 one-tenth of the 5-14 age grouping were not in school at the census. If Victoria is ignored, non-attendance ranged from 6 per cent in New South Wales to 18 per cent in the Northern Territory. (The enumerated numbers at risk in Victoria are too small to warrant interpretation.) The variation, which is apparently related to the urbanisation of the Aboriginal population, indicates both the difficulty of educating a scattered population and the failure of the educational authorities fully to incorporate young Aborigines into the school systems and to take their special needs into account. This failure will inevitably prolong the inferior educational status of Aborigines compared with other Australians.

Table 2.1: *Aborigines aged 5–14 not attending school, by state, 1966*

State	Not at school	
	Per cent	Number
New South Wales	6	235
Victoria	3	16
Queensland	8	424
Western Australia	11	575
South Australia	14	224
Northern Territory	18	908
Total Australia	11	2,388

Source: Computed from unpublished tabulations of the 1966 Census, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics.

Table 2.2 shows differences between the states in school attainment of Aboriginal males aged 15 and older, and Table 2.3 gives the same information for females. Apparently there are no systematic differences between Aboriginal females and males in educational attainment. A few of the persons included in Tables 2.2 and 2.3 were still at school and would reach a higher level than that reported, but it is not likely that the general levels would be significantly raised nor the relative standing of the states altered.

Nationwide, less than 4 per cent had attained a secondary school certificate (cols. 1 and 2). Although differences in the educational systems of the states call for caution in making comparisons, it is clear that New South Wales and Victoria have had better retention rates into and through secondary school. The other states, except for the Northern Territory, are very similar (between 2 and 4 per cent) in taking Aboriginal students to a certificate, but the Northern Territory shows a weak performance (0·8 per cent for males and 1·0 for females). Queensland

Table 2.2: *Educational attainment of Aboriginal males aged 15 and older, by state, 1966 (in percentages)*

State	(1) L/M+ Higher	(2) I/J	(3) AHS	(4) AP	(5) NE	(6) NS	Total per cent	Total N
New South Wales	1·7	6·5	33·3	42·5	6·9	9·1	100·0	3,826
Victoria	1·8	6·4	26·9	48·3	3·5	13·1	100·0	435
Queensland	0·4	2·8	9·5	61·7	20·2	5·4	100·0	5,165
South Australia	1·2	1·7	12·0	43·0	30·7	11·4	100·0	1,580
Western Australia	0·4	1·7	17·4	27·2	44·6	8·7	100·0	5,128
Northern Territory	0·2	0·6	2·1	30·0	60·6	6·5	100·0	5,668
Australia*	0·7	2·6	14·1	40·4	34·5	7·7	100·0	21,837
N	144	571	3,084	8,821	7,532	1,685	21,837	

* Figures include Tasmania and A.C.T.

Explanations:
Col. (1)—Matriculation (or Leaving) certificate or higher qualification.
Col. (2)—Intermediate (or Junior) certificate.
Col. (3)—Attended high school.
Col. (4)—Attended primary school.
Col. (5)—No education.
Col. (6)—Not stated.

Source: Computed from unpublished tabulations of the 1966 Census, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics.

Table 2.3: *Educational attainment of Aboriginal females aged 15 and older, by state, 1966 (in percentages)*

State	(1) L/M+ Higher	(2) I/J	(3) AHS	(4) AP	(5) NE	(6) NS	Total per cent	Total N
New South Wales	1·8	5·2	35·1	43·2	5·4	9·3	100·0	3,475
Victoria	2·8	7·4	24·9	51·9	2·4	10·6	100·0	501
Queensland	0·3	3·0	10·2	64·5	16·5	5·4	99·9	4,893
South Australia	1·2	2·4	12·4	47·4	24·7	11·8	99·9	1,391
Western Australia	0·3	2·4	18·3	28·0	42·6	8·4	100·0	4,677
Northern Territory	0·2	0·8	2·7	27·3	62·9	6·1	99·9	5,643
Australia*	0·6	2·7	14·7	41·0	33·5	7·5	100·0	20,607
N	133	560	3,031	8,439	6,895	1,549	20,607	

* Figures include Tasmania and A.C.T.

Explanation:
Col. (1)—Matriculation (or Leaving) certificate or higher qualification.
Col. (2)—Intermediate or (Junior) certificate.
Col. (3)—Attended high school.
Col. (4)—Attended primary school.
Col. (5)—No education.
Col. (6)—Not stated.

Source: Computed from unpublished tabulations of the 1966 Census, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics.

and South Australia lag behind the other states in drawing pupils into the secondary level, and the Northern Territory again runs last. The Northern Territory also has the poorest record on Aboriginal persons without education.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE RACES

Table 2.4 shows the educational standard achieved by the non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal male populations, and Table 2.5 reports similar data for females. The two tables will be discussed together. This kind of table is an expository compromise. It intends to put into the record the maximum amount of information without inundating the reader. The juxtaposition of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal figures tells more about both sets of data than either set would communicate alone. The age groupings invite scrutiny of categories of functional significance and predictive value. They also express trends since the beginning of this century. One can enter the table at what are judged to be diagnostic points. Single years of age would take us closer to the individual, and single grades of school attainment would reveal finer distinctions if data were sufficiently accurate to warrant such treatment; but the evidence is not at hand and even if available would not much change the general argument.

Just as it is important to make the most of information it is important not to try to bend statistics to serve a purpose for which they are not suited. For example, it is best to assess the performance of specific schools through direct, case-by-case evaluation rather than by summary census statistics. In fact, rigorous and detailed assessment of performance, indispensable for administration, especially of segregated schools, is rarely if ever published, perhaps almost never done.

Even from the crude five-year groupings, it is clear that at every age Aborigines lag behind their white age peers. They enter school later, progress slower, quit sooner, and terminate at a lower level.[2] Note that 15 per cent of Aboriginal males and 14 per cent of Aboriginal females aged 5-9 had no education, an indication of late entry. Compare those values with 3·5 per cent of non-Aboriginal males and females (col. 7).

Australia is a highly literate country, but at age 45 and above one-half to three-quarters of the Aboriginal population report no formal education and are presumptively illiterate. As young as ages 25-29 nearly one-quarter of Aborigines have not been to school, and at ages 15-19 the

[2] For general documentation on these and related points, see Dunn and Tatz, 1969. See also Biddle and Smith, 1968 : 13-25.

Table 2.4: *Educational attainment of males by age and race, Australia, 1966 (in percentages)*

Age		(1) Univ.	(2) Other tert.	(3) L/M	(4) I/J	(5) AHS	(6) AP	(7) NE	(8) NS	Total per cent	Total N
Under 5	N.A.							100·0		100·0	585,949
	A.							100·0		100·0	6,902
5- 9	N.A.						95·6	3·5	0·8	99·9	595,538
	A.						81·9	15·3	2·8	100·0	6,043
10-14	N.A.				0·6	48·2	50·8	0·3	0·1	100·0	556,251
	A.				0·2	35·1	58·9	5·0	0·8	100·0	4,962
15-19	N.A.	*	0·1	15·7	35·1	36·6	10·9	0·3	1·3	100·0	536,848
	A.			0·5	3·7	27·2	51·6	10·5	6·5	100·0	3,633
5-19	N.A.	*	*	5·0	11·4	27·5	53·9	1·4	0·7	99·9	1,688,637
	A.			0·1	1·0	18·6	66·6	10·6	3·0	99·9	14,638
20-24	N.A.	2·4	2·8	18·8	30·8	29·4	13·5	0·4	1·8	99·9	436,709
	A.		0·1	0·7	4·3	19·2	50·6	18·3	6·8	100·0	3,057
25-29	N.A.	3·8	4·2	11·5	26·8	33·2	18·0	0·6	1·9	100·0	384,336
	A.	0·1	0·2	0·8	3·2	17·0	49·2	23·8	5·7	100·0	2,579
30-34	N.A.	3·2	4·1	10·2	24·4	33·3	22·0	0·7	2·1	100·0	355,654
	A.	0·1	0·1	0·5	2·8	13·4	46·4	29·2	7·5	100·0	2,373
35-39	N.A.	3·1	4·3	9·8	23·0	30·5	26·3	0·7	2·3	100·0	397,463
	A.			0·8	2·8	11·8	41·1	34·9	8·6	100·0	2,074
40-44	N.A.	3·1	4·0	9·1	21·6	27·2	31·9	0·7	2·4	100·0	396,536
	A.		0·1	0·4	1·8	8·8	35·9	44·2	8·8	100·0	1,804
45-49	N.A.	2·4	3·7	8·5	20·5	25·7	36·0	0·7	2·5	100·0	343,033
	A.			0·4	1·6	6·5	31·7	50·8	9·0	100·0	1,530
50-54	N.A.	2·1	3·6	8·2	19·4	24·2	38·8	0·9	2·7	99·9	323,810
	A.			0·6	1·6	7·1	28·9	53·0	8·8	100·0	1,199
55-59	N.A.	1·8	3·3	7·4	16·9	23·0	43·3	1·1	3·2	100·0	276,100
	A.			1·3	1·2	6·1	27·3	54·8	9·3	100·0	940
60-64	N.A.	1·8	3·1	7·3	14·9	22·4	45·4	1·2	3·9	100·0	215,590
	A.			0·3	0·8	5·7	22·5	60·5	10·2	100·0	790
65-69	N.A.	1·6	2·6	6·9	12·9	21·9	47·2	1·5	5·4	100·0	161,376
	A.			0·3	0·3	3·7	14·9	72·4	8·4	100·0	886
70+	N.A.	1·1	1·9	6·3	9·4	19·3	52·0	2·1	7·8	99·9	251,166
	A.			0·2		3·0	13·5	74·0	9·3	100·0	972

* No significant decimal places.

Explanation:
N.A.—Non-Aboriginal.
A.—Aborigines, defined as persons of half or more Aboriginal ancestry.
Col. (1)—University qualification.
Col. (2)—Other tertiary qualification.
Col. (3)—Leaving or matriculation certificate.
Col. (4)—Intermediate or junior certificate.
Col. (5)—Attended high school.
Col. (6)—Attended primary school.
Col. (7)—No education.
Col. (8)—Not stated.

Source: Computed from unpublished tabulations of the 1966 Census, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics.

Note: The aberrant entry of 1·3 per cent for Aboriginal males aged 55-59 is presumably due to transcription or coding error in census processing. There is no reason to believe that this age grouping differs so much from adjoining ages.

Table 2.5: *Educational attainment of females by age and race, Australia, 1966 (in percentages)*

Age	Race	(1) Univ.	(2) Other tert.	(3) L/M	(4) I/J	(5) AHS	(6) AP	(7) NE	(8) NS	per cent	Total N
Under 5	N.A.							100·0		100·0	557,195
	A.							100·0		100·0	6,700
5- 9	N.A.						95·7	3·5	0·8	100·0	567,358
	A.						83·6	13·7	2·7	100·0	5,858
10-14	N.A.				0·7	48·3	50·6	0·2	0·1	99·9	530,197
	A.				0·3	38·4	56·2	4·6	0·5	100·0	4,941
15-19	N.A.	*	0·3	14·1	38·3	35·2	10·8	0·2	1·1	100·0	511,378
	A.			0·7	4·7	28·6	50·5	8·9	6·6	100·0	3,650
5-19	N.A.	*	0·1	4·5	12·4	27·1	53·9	1·3	0·7	100·0	1,608,933
	A.			0·1	0·9	13·9	41·0	38·1	2·0	100·0	21,149
20-24	N.A.	1·3	4·8	12·7	35·2	30·2	14·0	0·4	1·4	100·0	417,232
	A.		*	0·8	4·4	20·3	51·8	16·0	6·7	100·0	2,776
25-29	N.A.	1·2	4·4	9·3	30·2	33·8	18·9	0·6	1·6	100·0	361,729
	A.		*	0·7	3·8	17·7	46·3	24·3	7·1	99·9	2,560
30-34	N.A.	1·0	3·0	8·7	27·2	33·7	23·9	0·7	1·8	100·0	331,700
	A.			0·6	2·1	12·7	44·9	32·6	7·1	100·0	2,419
35-39	N.A.	1·0	2·3	8·2	25·8	30·9	29·1	0·7	2·0	100·0	367,099
	A.		*	0·9	2·2	10·2	43·0	35·6	8·1	100·0	2,057
40-44	N.A.	0·8	1·8	7·7	24·0	27·4	35·4	0·7	2·2	100·0	377,215
	A.			0·4	2·0	8·1	36·6	44·5	8·4	100·0	1,668
45-49	N.A.	0·7	1·5	7·2	22·1	26·0	39·4	0·7	2·3	99·9	334,639
	A.			0·7	0·9	7·2	32·6	50·6	8·0	100·0	1,344
50-54	N.A.	0·6	1·6	7·2	20·5	24·1	42·3	0·9	2·8	100·0	317,824
	A.			0·7	0·9	7·3	28·9	54·2	8·0	100·0	1,056
55-59	N.A.	0·6	1·9	6·3	17·7	22·9	46·2	1·1	3·3	100·0	266,916
	A.			0·6	1·0	6·0	28·3	54·7	9·4	100·0	842
60-64	N.A.	0·6	1·7	6·3	15·2	22·4	48·5	1·2	4·1	100·0	219,759
	A.				0·2	5·4	21·7	63·7	9·0	100·0	812
65-69	N.A.	0·5	1·4	5·6	12·4	22·1	51·0	1·4	5·6	100·0	195,020
	A.			0·4	0·3	3·7	18·1	70·2	7·3	100·0	697
70+	N.A.	0·3	1·0	4·6	8·4	19·2	56·1	1·6	8·8	100·0	378,842
	A.			0·3	0·4	3·2	15·0	71·9	9·2	100·0	726

* No significant decimal places.

Explanation:
N.A.—Non-Aboriginal.
A.—Aborigines, defined as persons of half or more Aboriginal ancestry.
Col. (1)—University qualification.
Col. (2)—Other tertiary qualification.
Col. (3)—Leaving or matriculation certificate.
Col. (4)—Intermediate or junior certificate.
Col. (5)—Attended high school.
Col. (6)—Attended primary school.
Col. (7)—No education.
Col. (8)—Not stated.

Source: Computed from unpublished tabulations of the 1966 Census, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics.

fraction is one-tenth. But at those ages virtually all of the rest of the population has some education. Indeed in the non-Aboriginal population, even in the cohorts aged 50 or older, only one or two per cent have no formal schooling.

But these figures understate illiteracy. The percentages for whom education is not stated (col. 8) include many persons who have had little or no schooling. To be conservative about it, if only half of those so listed are transposed to col. 7, then over one-fifth of Aborigines aged 20-24 are classified illiterate; the corresponding figure for non-Aborigines would be a bit over one per cent. Furthermore, the large number of Aboriginal adults reported as having attended primary school (col. 6) includes many who are functionally illiterate because they attended only a short time and have used their schooling very little over the years. Although deterioration of unused and poorly controlled skills can be observed in any population, it is a safe assumption that at the same age and at the same level of education, the occupational and other life experiences of most whites reinforce the skills they acquired in school so that they retain more of what they once learned.

Each of the educational levels described in the tables covers several years of schooling. It seems from general observations about educational achievement and from the distributions in Tables 2.4 and 2.5 that Aborigines tend disproportionately to cluster in the lower ranges of Attended-High-School and Attended-Primary levels because of their late entry, frequently interrupted schooling, and scholastic retardation. They are also cut off by the school leaving age at a lower level, if indeed they remain enrolled until the statutory age (Watts, 1965:115). The tables thus show that a very large part of the adult Aboriginal population lacks the education to cope with jobs requiring more than rudimentary skills. This educational disadvantage occurs even in the youngest cohorts, although in a less severe form.

The instrumental value of education is not measurable by simple increments but rather is made up of steps of varying size and utility which are constantly reassessed as the economy and the labour force change. Perhaps almost any kind of education is valuable if the educand has a lot of it, but education in lesser amounts must be closely tuned to the emergent opportunity structure, a fact that places great burdens on educational decision makers. An educational decision that might be inconvenient for an urban population from literate homes may be fatal for Aborigines who are, occupationally speaking, in the wrong place at the wrong time with the wrong skills.

The social and economic consequences of educational deficiencies do not stop with occupational effects. Because Aborigines are less able to deal with the world of numbers and words, they are less efficient consumers. They are less able to obey the injunction that the buyer should beware because they are less likely to know of what they should beware and how to implement their wariness. They are less likely to know about or take advantage of opportunities for and forms of redress or available welfare benefits.[3]

The constraining and crippling effects of illiteracy and the sense of vulnerability before the authority of the printed word, the official document, the price list, or the column of numbers is an inherent part of the life experience of most adult Aborigines. Such conditions make it difficult for them to get value for money or for work and to make the most of what they have. Such conditions make it almost impossible for a person to bargain forthrightly on an even footing or to strike out on fresh ventures with any likelihood of success. He is often dependent upon the honesty, generosity, forbearance, and friendliness of strangers, at best a poor substitute for self-reliance.

At the other educational extreme, there is a dearth of Aborigines with high qualifications. Tables 2.4 and 2.5 show that they are statistically absent from the tertiary categories (cols. 1 and 2), that less than one per cent have achieved the Leaving Certificate (col. 3), and that at the level of Intermediate Certificate (col. 4) they lag far behind whites. Comparing the entries in cols. 3 and 4, no cohort of Aborigines has progressed as far as the least educated, oldest cohort of whites.

To sum across cols. 1-4, about 5 per cent of Aborigines aged 20-24 had an Intermediate Certificate or better; more than 50 per cent of their white age peers were so qualified; 18 per cent of white males and 14 per cent of white females aged 70 and older were so qualified. This statistical interpretation again understates the magnitude of Aboriginal disadvantage because it combines all categories above mere attendance in high school. The message in the table is doubly important because it indicates not only what is but what must be for the next half century. The dead weight of the educationally incompetent will remain a burden on the Australian society and younger, hopefully better educated, Aborigines for decades to come.

Only at the Attended-High-School level (col. 5) is there a significant

[3] For example, see Western Australia, 1968:8, which indicates the dependency of Aborigines on welfare officers for lodging claims and managing funds and the consequences of the requirements of the Audit Act of 1967.

shift. The youngest cohorts still lag, but they begin to show some holding power into, but not through, secondary school. And not even that for much more than one-third of any age grouping. The average non-Aboriginal aged 20-24 had achieved an Intermediate Certificate or better in 1966. The average Aboriginal had attended primary school.

POLICY

Because the whole Aboriginal population suffers educational disadvantage, there is no particular age grouping that commands attention to the neglect of others, nor any single pedagogical solution. Strong cases can be made for literacy programs and adult education, for pre-primary schooling, for special vernacular schools, for concentration on the late primary years where a drop in motivation and performance often occurs, for an emphasis on integrated schooling, or the identification and fostering of highly talented tertiary school prospects.

The evidence shows that the present Aboriginal population as a whole is inadequately educated to cope with an agricultural economy of the late nineteenth century, much less an industrial economy of the late twentieth century. Even the age groupings now entering the workforce lack the educational means to compete in the job market. Education at least to the Intermediate Certificate level is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for the vertical mobility of Aborigines, but that standard is out of reach for the great majority. As is shown in Chapter 3, the job ceiling for Aborigines is what one would predict from the educational distributions described here.

Each formula for educational improvement has its proponents and all compete for scarce resources. If increasing funds and resources are at last put into Aboriginal education, objective, critical, and continuous monitoring of performance should be initiated from the outset. Behind the different educational strategies are different, sometimes clashing, values and objectives. For example, vernacular schools are attractive because they are responsive to the legitimate pleas for Aboriginal identity, pleas that strike a responsive chord among concerned white Australians. Proponents of vernacular schools can also point to some success in other countries. But the preference for education in mother tongue also receives impetus from those who have made up their minds that integration is a flawed policy, not only historically but currently.

Given the diverse situations of Aborigines, no one educational strategy should have pre-emptive priority. Vernacular schools can be strongly

defended for the larger and more isolated linguistic groupings, but they are impossible to justify for more urbanised or smaller groupings which contain few persons who know an Aboriginal language. For such communities teaching in an Aboriginal language may be instruction in an exotic tongue, and the energies of Aborigines should not be misdirected into spuriously 'Aboriginal' learning. Few Aboriginal languages have more than a handful of speakers. Even the multi-dialectical Western Desert language is known by only 4,000 persons. Other languages that are referred to as 'numerically strong' have only a few hundred speakers each (Wurm, 1972: 12). Education should be appropriate to the situations in which the Aborigines live and are soon likely to live. Practical usefulness should stand high in the criteria of educational decision makers. Aboriginal children need better teachers, more teachers, more hours in school, more days in better schools, more schools designed for children rather than for custodians, missionaries, or linguists.

Increased awareness of a genuine cultural past may well contribute to the confidence and psychological strength of many Aborigines. That confidence will be built on sand if it is offered as a substitute for the ability to deal competently with white Australia. Indeed it can be argued that to make informed choices among the difficult alternatives offered by varying degrees of integration Aborigines must be more rather than less sophisticated about what the choices entail. Those Aborigines who choose the least possible amount of integration must be the best informed and most politically competent of all—no easy prescription. Otherwise as usual the choices will be made for them by outsiders or by the few Aboriginal leaders whose voices are beginning to be heard. No one of those leaders can or would claim to represent the wide diversity of Aboriginal situations and only a vastly improved educational system can qualify an adequate number of competent persons. The low educational status of Aborigines means that there will be a shortage of well-qualified indigenous leadership during a trying period which has more hope, more challenge, and more promise than ever before.

3 WORKFORCE AND OCCUPATIONAL STATUSES OF ABORIGINES*

Students of social stratification are nearly unanimous in the view that occupation is the pivot of the stratification system in industrial societies. If only one measure were possible, occupation would be chosen because it can serve as an indicator of earned income, of probable skill and training, of authority, of prestige and of other elements that make up an individual's position in the social order. For the same reasons, differences in workforce and occupational statuses measure the economic and social subordination or superordination of identifiable populations, and changes in such indicators are the best clues to alterations in social rankings and in the social evaluations from which such rankings arise.

The 1966 Commonwealth Census allows for the first time detailed comparisons between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal parts of the Australian population.[1] Chapter 2 deals with the educational status of Aborigines and suggests how their educational inferiority places a ceiling on achievement. The present chapter compares the workforce and occupational characteristics of Aborigines with the rest of the population to assess the extent of differentiation and to delineate further the cleavage between Aborigines and non-Aborigines.[2] The line of exposition is an

* Revision of an article by Broom first published in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, 7 (April 1971):21-34.

[1] The delimitation of the Aboriginal population creates some problems of interpretation mentioned in Chapter 2. Concentration on the darker segment of the Aboriginal population may exaggerate the occupational dissimilarity between Aborigines as a whole and the rest of the population.

[2] For an invaluable compendium and commentary illuminating many of the topics discussed in this chapter see Sharp and Tatz, 1966.

exercise in disaggregation. The population at risk is identified, its participation in the workforce is assessed, its employment status is described, and finally its occupational distribution is examined. At each step in the filtering process Aborigines are compared with non-Aborigines.

It should be apparent from the evidence in the chapter on educational status and from this chapter that the Aborigines are far from a homogeneous mass, but perhaps their diversity should be underscored. They are widely distributed through the continent and allocated with differing degrees of authority and control to the responsibilities of several jurisdictions. These facts coupled with their diverse cultural origins, differing historical experiences, and the varying extent to which they have 'assimilated' or have been assimilated to European norms and ways complicate public policy and confound generalisation. The statistically based treatment here should be read with the explicit understanding that no single Aboriginal community or population cluster would show the distribution of characteristics summarised here. Nevertheless the Aboriginal population is popularly and politically conceived as an entity, and a broad understanding of its basic social and economic attributes is needed. No community study nor personal account, however thorough or sympathetic, can substitute for aggregate information, any more than census analysis can substitute for intimate field studies. As in the best of human interaction, complementarity and symmetry should dictate the accumulation, exchange, and application of knowledge, especially knowledge about mankind.

WORKFORCE AVAILABILITY AND DEPENDENCY

The age composition of a population may be described in terms of those available for productive work and the dependent, those deemed too young or too old to work. Table 3.1 compares the status of Aborigines with the rest of the population according to two sets of assumptions. Set 'A' assumes that on the average people begin work at 15 and continue through age 64. Set 'B' assumes later entry into the workforce and earlier retirement. In either case Aborigines are at a disadvantage: a smaller proportion of the population is available to support the total. This does not mean that the occupationally active part of any population directly supports the total. Responsibilities for old, young, and incapacitated are in varying degrees delegated to specialised agencies. Nevertheless, the dependency measure indicates a circumstance in the relationship between potential earners and non-earners. It is especially significant for a popula-

Table 3.1: *Workforce availability-dependency composition by race, in percentages, 1966*

	Age	Aborigines		Non-Aborigines	
Assumption A	Dependent				
	Under 15 years	44		29	
	Over 64 years	4		9	
	Total dependent		*48*		*38*
	Available for workforce				
	Ages 15-64		*52*		*62*
Assumption B	Dependent				
	Under 20 years	53		38	
	Over 59 years	6		12	
	Total dependent		*59*		*50*
	Available for workforce				
	Ages 20-59		*41*		*50*

Source: Based on Census of the Commonwealth, 1966. Ref. No. 2.23, Table 14, p. 27.

tion which is not skilled in dealing with bureaucracies and which highly values family obligations and communal hospitality.

Both sets of assumptions presume that the two populations enter and leave the workforce at the same ages. In fact, however, Aborigines leave the workforce much earlier than other Australians (see Tables 3.2 and 3.3) so that their real disadvantage is more serious in this respect than is apparent. Aboriginal males enter the workforce somewhat younger than non-Aborigines, but the difference is not large. A correction for persons attending school throws the balance in favour of non-Aborigines for all ages and both sexes (see the bracketed values in Tables 3.2 and 3.3).

Under the first set of assumptions there is about one person of working age for every Aboriginal of dependent age where the ratio for whites is about 1·6 to 1. This means that if workforce participation, employment, occupations, and earnings of Aboriginal and white adults were identical, Aboriginal children and old persons would have far less financial support from within their own groups than their white counterparts. In fact, workforce participation, employment, occupations, and per capita earnings of Aborigines are all inferior.

Under the second set of assumptions the location of discrepancies is altered, but whites still have a significant advantage. Projections of the age characteristics of the Aboriginal population show that if current levels of mortality and fertility remain stable the disadvantageous dependency ratio will persist through this century and beyond (see Chapter 4). If mortality falls, the dependency ratio will rise above its present high level.

Dependency is sometimes expressed more formally as a ratio computed by dividing the dependent population, however defined, by the population of working age. Accepting the values in Table 3.1, we observe that for Aborigines the total dependency ratio is 48/52 or *92*. For non-Aborigines the corresponding ratio is 38/62 or *61*. The young dependency ratio shows a larger discrepancy between Aborigines and non-Aborigines. Aborigines under 15 years are 44 per cent of the Aboriginal population. Thus 44/52 yields a young dependency ratio of 85, nearly double the comparable ratio of 47 for European Australians.

WORKFORCE STATUS OF MALES

Columns 1-3 of Table 3.2 report the non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal populations of specified ages, the respective numbers included in the workforce, and the relationships between the base and workforce populations, that is the workforce participation rates. It can be seen that at all ages except the youngest the Aboriginal workforce participation rate is lower. The one exception, ages 15-19, is not to the benefit of Aborigines but rather is due to their earlier school leaving. Corrections for persons at school, shown in footnotes to the tables and the bracketed values in col. 3, demonstrate this. For Aborigines the workforce participation rate (col. 3) is highest for ages 20-35, but it is significantly lower than for whites and it declines through the remainder of the potential working life. By ages 55-59, 33 per cent of Aboriginal males are out of the workforce, by ages 60-64 nearly half, and by 65-69, 80 per cent.

The picture for whites is entirely different. From ages 20 to 59 the rate exceeds 90 per cent and from 25 to 50 it approaches 100 per cent. If corrected values are taken, the non-Aboriginal rate is at a constant maximum from entry to late middle age. Even at the older ages when whites could leave the workforce to enjoy accumulated savings and superannuation credits, their participation rates are double those of Aborigines. It might be thought that the unemployment rate of whites would be raised because the fully recruited workforce would include many persons of marginal employability. Apparently this is not so (see cols. 4-5). The full-employment policy of the Australian economy (and polity) works—for whites, but not for Aborigines. Aboriginal unemployment ranges from a high level of 12 per cent at the earlier ages to a low in excess of 3 per cent, and in no case is it lower than the highest rate for whites. The unemployment rate (col. 5) relates col. 4 to col. 2, that is the number unemployed divided by the workforce for each age grouping.

Table 3.2: *Workforce participation and unemployment of males, by age and race, Australia, 1966*

Aborigines Age	(1) Total	(2) Workforce	(3) Participation rate	(4) Unemployed	(5) Unemployment rate	Non-Aborigines Age	(1) Total	(2) Workforce	(3) Participation rate	(4) Unemployed	(5) Unemployment rate
15-19	3,633[a]	2,646	73 (83)*	313	12	15-19	536,848[c]	355,251	66 (97)*	9,494	3
20-24	3,057	2,543	83	192	8	20-24	436,709[d]	409,575	94 (97)*	6,603	2
25-29	2,579	2,174	84	146	7	25-29	384,336[e]	373,687	97 (98)*	4,469	1
30-34	2,373	1,965	83	95	5	30-34	355,654	347,414	98	3,627	1
35-39	2,074	1,694	82	95	6	35-39	397,463	387,927	98	3,803	1
40-44	1,804	1,467	81	98	7	40-44	396,536	384,955	97	3,938	1
45-49	1,530	1,177	77	60	5	45-49	343,033	330,208	96	3,412	1
50-54	1,199	884	74	36	4	50-54	323,810	306,713	95	3,181	1
55-59	940	627	67	30	5	55-59	276,100	251,788	91	2,972	1
60-64	790	435	55	22	5	60-64	215,590	171,394	79	2,543	1
65-69	886	176	20	6	3	65-69	161,376	64,134	40	917	1
70+	972	75	8	4	5	70+	251,166	38,768	15	494	1
N.S.	1,240	465	38	16	3						
Total	23,077[b]	16,328	71 (73)*	1,113	7	Total	4,078,621[f]	3,421,814	84 (88)*	45,449	1

* Values in parentheses are workforce participation rates (col. 3) calculated on totals (col. 1) reduced by the indicated number of students.
Explanation:
Col. 3 = Col. 2/Col. 1: Col. 3 states the percentage of persons of specified ages available for employment.
Col. 5 = Col. 4/Col. 2: Col. 5 states the percentage of persons of specified ages in a workforce unemployed at the census.

[a] Includes 453 full-time students.
[b] Includes 560 full-time students.
[c] Includes 169,929 full-time students.
[d] Includes 16,298 full-time students.
[e] Includes 1,986 full-time students.
[f] Includes 189,073 full-time students.

Source: Computed from unpublished tabulations of the 1966 Census, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics.

It should be emphasised that the high unemployment rates for Aborigines are based on a smaller fraction of the potential workforce (col. 1) and that therefore the economy of the Aboriginal family is being carried on far fewer shoulders. In summary, fewer Aboriginal than white males remain in the workforce at all ages, and more of those who remain are unemployed.

Recent research on health and dietary deficiencies in Aboriginal children indicates an association with physical and mental retardation and perhaps lasting damage that would diminish adult health and working capacity (Jose and Welch, 1970; Kalokerinos, 1969; Moodie, 1969; see also Tatz in Sharp and Tatz, 1966: 51-60 and discussion 61-7). Lowered resistance to debilitating disorders, sensory (especially hearing) defects, and an earlier onset of ageing symptoms reduces workforce participation and partially explains the age-employment patterns shown in the table. In addition, heavy outdoor work, one of the correlates of low educational status, wears out workers at younger ages.

The geographical distribution of Aborigines in areas of historically limited job opportunities in low-technology, strongly seasonal industries also impairs the chance for normal work careers. There is little variety in the job openings in such areas even if the Aborigines were qualified, and there is little in the work experience of Aborigines which would help them find bridges to other economic sectors. Apprenticeship programs of a high standard are rarely available to Aborigines, and the on-the-job training offered on many missions and settlements is unrealistically low in the level of skills acquired.

On the other hand, work such as droving, which Aborigines have done for a long time and well, has become defined as Aboriginal work, and Aborigines are poorly rewarded for it despite its economic importance and irrespective of the competence with which they perform the tasks (see Albrecht, de Vos, Gruen, and Evans, all 1966: 180-236; Stevens, 1967, 1968; Tatz, 1970). The valuation of a job according to the valuation of its occupants can also be observed in the case of women's work: nursing, typing, infant school teaching, and housekeeping.

GEOGRAPHIC IMMOBILITY

An underemployed workforce can improve its condition by training or retraining to acquire more saleable qualifications or by moving to places where their present qualifications can be used. (Their situation can also be changed by relocating employment opportunities, but Aborigines do not

have the political power to influence the location of industrial activity.)[3] The adaptability of an underemployed workforce is best studied through detailed job histories to discover whether individuals moved from areas of poor to areas of better job opportunities. Such data must take into account actual and potential qualifications, the efficiency of job-finding agencies, their ability to communicate essential information to the subject population, and influences such as housing, domestic ties and the like, which can foster or inhibit mobility. Unfortunately, it is often true for Aborigines that the essential information on a nation-wide or state-wide basis is not available, and small-scale inquiries are insufficient to allow for confident generalisations.

The alternative of seeking work in quite different environments is especially hard for Aborigines whose experience and knowledge seldom encourage an experimental approach to the white Australian world of work. In any case, geographic mobility is not a characteristically Australian solution to the job search except when there is said to be gold at the end of the road. I make a distinction between seasonal and itinerant, i.e. migratory, work on the one hand and authentic geographic mobility linked to exploratory job mobility on the other. A migratory worker may travel a long way but jobs, living conditions, and social interaction are much the same wherever he stops: the worker fills the same social and economic niche although it may be made up of widely separated locations. True geographic-occupational mobility on the other hand involves entering fresh occupational opportunities in different social spheres. Aboriginal settlements in urban areas to which Aboriginal strangers can sometimes gain relatively easy access afford protective environments for such exploratory behaviour. But as a means for facilitating mobility they are no better than the knowledge of the labour market current among the members of the segregated community. Hostels are an institutional and managed approach to the same problem. Many Aborigines engage in migratory labour; few are authentically mobile in the occupational or social sense.

[3] In July 1970 the Minister for the Interior announced he would discuss with industry representatives the possibility of locating industries in Aboriginal areas of the Northern Territory. Such programs, which are at face value attractive, need to be approached with clear understandings of the basic objectives, the costs, the likely returns and to whom they will accrue. Submarginal enterprises, propped up by government subsidy to keep Aborigines busy at jobs that would disappear if subsidy were removed, will be the easiest to establish. Economic viability ought to be sought, but near-term profit could be exchanged for industries well integrated with the local resource base and with a significant training factor. Unless the decisions are wisely made and the industries capably administered, the Aborigines will be blamed for costly failures attributable to other people's errors.

No reliable evidence is available on the union participation of Aborigines, but impressionistic information and inference from occupational distributions suggest slow incorporation. In Australia, where unions perform many social and economic roles beyond traditional bargaining and member protective services, the extent of union participation measures access to important socialising and associational activities. Unionising Aboriginal blue-collar workers would, therefore, make a major impact on their general social adjustment as well as their occupational standing.

Because Aborigines work in jobs characterised by seasonality, instability, and layoffs, they need more provident attitudes and habits than persons who have stable employment the year round. But the practices of saving and planning ahead call for a relatively high level of education, which Aborigines lack. Hence, low education, the root cause of low and unstable occupational status, assures that seasonal and migratory work will have deleterious effects on Aborigines. For this reason, Aboriginal incomes should be stated and interpreted on a fortnightly or monthly basis, not on a yearly basis that averages peaks of fairly high earnings and valleys of no income or of unemployment benefits only. Otherwise the administrator, advocate, or antagonist may interpret in psychological rather than situational terms the failure of some Aborigines to manage marginally adequate annual incomes. Furthermore the disadvantageous dependency ratio should be kept in mind. The most meaningful measure of income for the family economy is of course per capita disposable income.[4]

WORKFORCE STATUS OF FEMALES

The workforce characteristics of Aboriginal females can be briefly stated (see Table 3.3). Overall their workforce participation rate is low: 24 compared with 35 for non-Aboriginal females. Both workforce participation rates begin low and slope off rapidly, but at no age does the Aboriginal rate approach that of whites. Corrections for persons at school, the bracketed values in col. 3, sharply raise the discrepancy at ages 15-19. Despite their low participation rate, Aboriginal women show fairly high unemployment. Considering the low income of Aboriginal families and the urgent need to supplement earnings, the low workforce participation and the high unemployment of Aboriginal women is a twice-wasted opportunity.

[4] Australian social and economic statistics are notoriously deficient on income data. Until they are regularly available on a national basis for all important population segments, especially Aborigines, sociological understanding and public policy will be hampered.

Table 3.3: *Workforce participation and unemployment of females, by age and race, Australia, 1966*

Aborigines Age	(1) Total	(2) Work-force	(3) Participa-tion rate	(4) Unem-ployed	(5) Unemploy-ment rate	Non-Aborigines Age	(1) Total	(2) Work-force	(3) Participa-tion rate	(4) Unem-ployed	(5) Unemploy-ment rate
15-19	3,650[a]	1,504	41 (49)*	175	12	15-19	511,378[c]	317,923	62 (86)*	12,308	4
20-24	2,776	830	30	68	8	20-24	417,232[d]	245,816	59 (60)*	5,861	2
25-29	2,560	566	22	32	6	25-29	361,729	124,808	35	2,911	2
30-34	2,419	548	23	18	3	30-34	331,700	106,030	32	2,211	2
35-39	2,057	456	22	18	4	35-39	367,099	131,300	36	2,275	2
40-44	1,668	400	24	7	2	40-44	377,215	144,046	38	2,133	1
45-49	1,344	338	25	6	2	45-49	334,639	123,956	37	1,684	1
50-54	1,056	245	23	7	3	50-54	317,824	103,823	33	1,285	1
55-59	842	154	18	3	2	55-59	266,916	72,568	27	907	1
60-64	812	75	9	3	4	60-64	219,759	36,285	17	358	1
65-69	697	16	2	0	0	65-69	195,020	16,293	8	166	1
70+	726	16	2	1	6	70+	378,842	11,793	3	143	1
N.S.	1,117	173	15	2	1						
Total	21,724[b]	5,321	24 (25)*	340	6	Total	4,079,353[e]	1,434,641	35 (37)*	32,242	2

* Values in parentheses are workforce participation rates (col. 3) calculated on totals (col. 1) reduced by the indicated number of students.

Explanation:
Col. 3 = Col. 2/Col. 1: Col. 3 states the percentage of persons of specified ages available for employment.
Col. 5 = Col. 4/Col. 2: Col. 5 states the percentage of persons of specified ages in a workforce unemployed at the census.

[a] Includes 564 full-time students.
[b] Includes 664 full-time students.
[c] Includes 143,444 full-time students.
[d] Includes 5,908 full-time students.
[e] Includes 150,405 full-time students.

Source: Computed from unpublished tabulations of the 1966 Census, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics.

Amount of education makes surprisingly little difference in workforce retention, although amount of education affects the number reported as unemployed. Better educated Aboriginal women apparently know their unemployment entitlements and what to do about them, a small tactical victory by people who up to now have lost all the wars.

Whether the workforce dropout rate is due to disillusionment or some other factor, such as family obligations or poor health, needs investigation. Perhaps one explanation is related to the fact that when Aboriginal women achieve some education, they are seldom able to use it occupationally. Of the 37 Aboriginal women with Matriculation standard, 14 were employed in personal or domestic service; of the 187 with Intermediate standard, 67 were employed in similar jobs that are inappropriate to their nominal educational qualifications and have little or no career value.

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF MALES

The occupational distribution of Australian males (Table 3.4) shows that Aborigines are virtually absent from the white-collar world: from professional, managerial, proprietorial, and other white-collar work (Groups 1-7). Only 2 per cent of Aboriginal workers occupy the top seven occupation groups, which are the most responsible, least onerous physically, and best rewarded materially, compared with 35 per cent of non-Aboriginal workers. Aborigines are lacking even in the shop assistant category (Group 10), which is ordinarily filled by juniors just entering the workforce. Although a low-paid category, such jobs are important for their effect on future careers, especially for persons who do not have good educational qualifications. Because Aborigines do not work as shop assistants, they miss out on apprenticeship experience that could enable them to move into better jobs by compensating for poor formal education or by validating educational qualifications.

Two-thirds of Aboriginal male workers are concentrated in farm and manual labour, categories which include only one-seventh of white workers. Farm and other rural labour, contracting sectors of the economy, account for 45 per cent of all Aborigines but only 4 per cent of whites. Other labouring jobs account for 22 per cent of Aborigines compared with 11 per cent of whites. The fairly large percentage of Aborigines listed in the Not Stated category, which includes many floaters and casual unskilled labourers, is indicative of marginal economic status. A large part of the Aboriginal workforce is locked into the least rewarded

Table 3.4: *Occupational distribution of males by race, 1966*

Occupational group	Aborigines N	%	Non-Aborigines N	%	Diff.
1. Upper professional	37	0·2	118,364	3·5	3·3
2. Graziers and wheat and sheep farmers	31	0·2	90,888	2·7	2·5
3. Lower professional	116	0·7	152,074	4·4	3·7
4. Managerial	36	0·2	268,067	7·8	7·6
5. Self-employed shop proprietors	3	*	26,380	0·8	0·8
6. Other farmers	45	0·3	149,988	4·4	4·1
7. Clerical and related workers	85	0·5	388,238	11·3	10·8
8. Members of armed services and police force	44	0·3	73,775	2·2	1·9
9. Craftsmen and foremen	577	3·5	724,703	21·2	17·7
10. Shop assistants	27	0·2	89,149	2·6	2·4
11. Operatives	1,965	12·0	403,337	11·8	0·2
12. Drivers	526	3·2	219,582	6·4	3·2
13. Personal, domestic and other service workers	790	4·8	154,514	4·5	0·3
14. Miners	442	2·7	31,816	0·9	1·8
15. Farm and rural workers	7,283	44·6	133,464	3·9	40·7
16. Labourers	3,598	22·0	367,189	10·7	11·3
17. Not stated	723	4·4	30,286	0·9	3·5
Total	16,328	99·8	3,421,814	100·0	115·8
Index of Dissimilarity					57·9

* No significant decimal places.

Explanation:
The occupational groups are a hierarchical ranking based on skill and rewards (Broom and Jones, 1969: 651-2, 657-8).

Source: Computed from unpublished tabulations of the 1966 Census, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics.

and least promising occupational spheres and experienced in jobs with little or no transfer value to dynamic parts of the economy.

Military and protective services are appropriate occupational niches for Aborigines because they call for a wide range of skills and educational levels and because they can afford training in diverse technical skills with value in civilian jobs. But recruitment of Aborigines for menial jobs with little or no training element would accomplish little or nothing. Unlike New Zealand where the Maoris are highly represented in the armed forces, there is a dearth of Aborigines in any military or protective occupations: only 35 men in the armed services and only 110 men in all sorts of fire, police, and protective service (Commonwealth Census, 1966, Ref. No. 2.23, Table 11). The success of the Israeli army in incorporating (and assimilating) immigrants from Arab lands might be instructive to

administrators seeking efficient institutional means for incorporating Aborigines as effective members of the society.

Mining (now occupying only 3 per cent of Aboriginal workers) may have promise for Aborigines because of their geographic distribution—the only case in which geography can work for rather than against them. But the opportunity is largely latent (Rogers, 1969). Modern mining is capital intensive rather than labour intensive. Realisation of its potentiality depends on upgrading Aboriginal workers to more responsible, technically sophisticated skills. The free forces of the labour market are not likely to open up a significant number of significantly better jobs that Aborigines could quickly fill. Both exploratory and extractive technology are advancing rapidly, and the burden of educational disqualification weighs ever more heavily against chances for a substantial Aboriginal improvement.

However, the large resources of money and sophisticated personnel available to mining companies could improve Aboriginal prospects if the motivation, whether external or internal, were present to apply some resources to Aborigines. The mining sector would become of transcendent importance and could change the depressed economic status of many families if mineral rights were vested in Aboriginal individuals or groups. But even then normalising the occupational structure and the achievement of Aboriginal economic competence would not occur quickly. A precondition is an educational infrastructure with a range of skills appropriate to expanding opportunities where job competition is not too severe (see Chapter 2).

A detailed scrutiny of Aboriginal males in the workforce who have the best educational qualifications shows surprisingly little relationship between education and occupational status. Of 103 with Matriculation level schooling (perhaps an overestimate), only 2 were upper professionals, 4 lower professionals, 1 a manager, none were graziers, shop proprietors or farmers, 2 were clerical workers—a total of 9 out of 103 in the top seven occupational categories. Two others were in the protective services. The remainder were blue-collar workers: 63 in the two lowest labouring categories and 16 were operatives.

The pattern is much the same for the 506 males with Intermediate education: 1 per cent were in the top five occupational categories, 42 per cent in the two lowest (or 56 per cent if those listed as Not Stated are included). Because persons with better educational qualifications are relatively young, it might be argued that they have not yet had time to capitalise on their educational background. However, the present distribu-

tions do not suggest that the best qualified Aborigines are situated to improve their status in the job market. But *lack* of education does make a difference: two-thirds of those with only primary schooling were in the two lowest labouring categories and, as expected, three-fourths of those with no education were in the same categories.

Education is a necessary condition but not the determinant of Aboriginal job status. Opportunity and perception of opportunity (the latter linked to education), geography and attitudes towards geographic mobility (again linked to education), group ties and motivation (probably related to education) limit and channel the possible uses of education.

Education, health, work experience, and geography limit—in a negative sense determine—the employment prospects of adults now in the workforce, and only to a small extent can such conditions be altered. Illiterate adults over 35 who have had sporadic and unskilled work experience are difficult to change into stable participants in the workforce. But some low-yield and relatively sustained productive activity is better than none, and the indirect influence on younger persons should be written into a cost-benefit analysis. Young people approach the workforce more actively when the adults in their environment have some apparent gainful work and a degree of economic independence. Their own prospects are mirrored in the lives of their elders. At the present, anticipatory socialisation lowers aspiration and hedges effort with preparation for failure.

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF FEMALES

As has been indicated, Aboriginal women have a low rate of workforce participation, a high unemployment rate, and apparently a high dropout rate. Their occupational status is undifferentiated and low (see Table 3.5). More than 70 per cent are in personal and domestic service, mostly domestic. The next largest grouping is Not Stated which, like other residual and undefined categories, does not suggest scarce or rewarded skills. A dearth of Aboriginal women, only 6 per cent, are in the top seven occupational groups compared with 50 per cent of white women workers. A handful of Aboriginal women are shop assistants compared with 11 per cent of whites. In comparison with white women Aboriginal women are in jobs with an unrewarded present and no future.

Those Aboriginal women presently employed in jobs more nearly appropriate to their intermediate or higher education qualification, i.e. clerical, shop assistants, or lower professional work, are predominantly

Table 3.5: *Occupational distribution of females by race, 1966*

Occupational group	Aborigines N	Aborigines %	Non-Aborigines N	Non-Aborigines %	Diff.
1. Upper professional	21	0·4	11,065	0·8	0·4
2. Graziers and wheat and sheep farmers	4	0·1	11,499	0·8	0·7
3. Lower professional	131	2·5	178,338	12·4	9·9
4. Managerial	3	0·1	36,572	2·5	2·4
5. Self-employed shop proprietors	0	0·0	9,400	0·7	0·7
6. Other farmers	13	0·2	19,920	1·4	1·2
7. Clerical and related workers	133	2·5	460,132	32·1	29·6
8. Members of armed services and police force	6	0·1	2,757	0·2	0·1
9. Craftsmen and foremen	34	0·6	35,373	2·5	1·9
10. Shop assistants	47	0·9	160,362	11·2	10·3
11. Operatives	293	5·5	165,850	11·6	6·1
12. Drivers	6	0·1	5,192	0·4	0·3
13. Personal, domestic and other service workers	3,804	71·5	227,259	15·8	55·7
14. Miners	14	0·3	48	*	0·3
15. Farm and rural workers	256	4·8	38,681	2·7	2·1
16. Labourers	81	1·5	26,886	1·9	0·4
17. Not stated	475	8·9	45,307	3·1	5·8
Total	5,321	100·0	1,434,641	100·1	127·9
Index of Dissimilarity					63·9

* No significant decimal places.

Explanation:
The occupational groups are a hierarchical ranking based on skill and rewards (Broom and Jones, 1969: 651-2, 657-8).

Source: Computed from unpublished tabulations of the 1966 Census, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics.

young, under 25 years of age. Most of them are probably in trainee positions. This may presage some improvement, and it certainly suggests an enlarged social effort. However, it cannot be predicted from census data whether the young women will maintain or improve their occupational position, drop into a lower occupational stratum, or, like their elders, drop out of the workforce. Because Australia is not a country notable for using its trained woman power effectively, it does not seem sensible to expect Aboriginal women to surmount the career handicaps of race in addition to those of sex without more, more sustained, and more informed help than they have had thus far.

Despite low occupational achievement, the educational investment in Aboriginal women may not be wasted even in the strictest and most instrumental interpretation of return, because of the potential indirect

impact it may have on children. Negro-American women made earlier educational and occupational progress than did black men (Broom and Glenn, 1967: 84–8, 109–11), and their modest success probably influenced the way they socialised their children towards education. Unless, however, education is found to have instrumental value in the personal experience of Aboriginal women, the latent effects may be disillusionment rather than aspiration transmitted to the next generation. Then the double effects of sex and race may impair the performance of the maternal role as well as of the occupational role.

A SUMMARY MEASURE

For estimating the magnitude of the difference between two populations when the differentiation is made up of interrelated categories such as occupational characteristics, an Index of Dissimilarity (ID) is frequently reckoned (Duncan and Duncan, 1955; Broom and Gibbs, 1964). This statistic is simply half the sum of the differences of percentages irrespective of sign. The differences for occupational groups between Aborigines and non-Aborigines are reported in the last column of Tables 3.4 and 3.5. The ID is given at the foot of the column and the value states the percentage of Aborigines or non-Aborigines who would have to change occupations for the distributions of the two 'races' to be the same. In absolute terms the IDs of 58 for males and 64 for females must be regarded as quite high.

Although international comparisons of such summary measures are fraught with methodological complications which would require more detailed analysis and interpretation than can be presented here, it seems safe to conclude that the occupational inferiority of Aborigines in Australia is relatively much greater than that of blacks in the United States or Maoris in New Zealand and that it approaches but does not reach the level of differentiation of Bantus in South Africa.

Irrespective of the standing of Aborigines in an international context of relative inferiority, the index reported here is a useful baseline from which to estimate changes in the status of the population. This is a clear case where adequate social statistics, if systematically compiled over the years, would enable policy makers to determine whether and how fast their decisions and investments were yielding the desired results. As has been observed, the 1966 Census makes it possible for the first time to report such measures. Interested parties can now anticipate subsequent censuses with less concern that objective judgments will be obscured by ignorance.

OCCUPATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Aboriginal workers compete in spheres of declining opportunity and their jobs have little skill transfer to other occupations. Education has some effect on occupational achievement but not so much as it does for whites. To incorporate Aborigines into the Australian workforce will signal a major break with the past, but they are now largely isolated from the opportunity structure of the Australian job market.

The high occupational concentration indicated in Tables 3.4 and 3.5 is more extreme than such summary tables can suggest. In effect the clustering in specific jobs within specific industrial spheres and well-defined geographic areas in many cases amounts to occupational segregation. Aborigines are not only highly concentrated in the poorest paid jobs, in some areas they monopolise them. Consequently large segments of the Aboriginal population are vulnerable to the same economic forces and market risks: to technologically induced unemployment, to price fluctuations, to resource depletion or environmental episodes, to industry-specific recessions. Thus risks are concentrated, not spread, and because kinfolk work in the same jobs the severity of an economic event minimises the possibility of communal self-help.

Occupational status is another measure of economic power or vulnerability: 90 per cent of Aborigines in the workforce are wage earners and 7 per cent are unemployed. Of the residue less than 2 per cent of males are employers or own account workers, situations that can involve a degree of autonomy and even of power. In the total male workforce 16 per cent are employers or own account workers and qualitatively the differences are even greater.

Holding family background constant, the paradigm for personal progress in advanced and advancing societies has been first, effort and education, next income and savings, and consequently property and possessions. Given the low educational status of Aborigines, especially in areas of new mineral exploitation, an alteration of the sequence may be plausible. If enough effort is applied, the vicious circle of poor education, poor jobs, low income and poverty can be broken at any one of several points or at several points simultaneously. But no instant change should be expected. What can be quickly altered are the conditions for future change.

Just as it is important to stimulate the growing public interest in Aborigines, it is desirable to engender an informed public opinion that will appreciate how deeply entrenched and recalcitrant Aboriginal problems

are and how large the effort must be to correct generations of error and neglect. Both investment and time tables must be realistic, the former disconcertingly large and the latter discouragingly long. Thus far Australia has run Aboriginal 'welfare' on the cheap and has got what it paid for. Aborigines have paid a higher price.

It is easiest to look outside the country's borders for analogies, but perhaps the nation can look to its own experience. In a nation with policies of fostering immigration and maintaining full employment, it is natural to recognise the discordance in the position of immigrants and Aborigines and the merit of sponsoring Aborigines as if they were migrants. If migration from the Pacific is to be encouraged in response to a perceived regional obligation, it will become even harder to overlook more distinctive and earlier obligations of a higher priority to an indigenous people. Indeed it would be hard to justify inviting such migration as long as the Aborigines fall in the category of unfinished business, because Pacific migrants would be most likely to offer direct job competition to Aborigines. Repatriation programs for servicemen is another analogy that suggests applicability to the Aborigines who are casualties of older struggles (McGinness, 1966: 277).

The total population of Aborigines is less than a year's intake of migrants. How well would Aborigines be integrated into the economy if the lessons learned in administering immigration or repatriation were applied to them? How well would they be integrated into the economy if beginning in 1945 a suitable proportion of the resources, energy, and imagination given to immigration had been devoted to drawing Aborigines into the workforce—indeed, into the society? Of course Aborigines are not Displaced Persons, at least not from behind the Iron Curtain. Nor are they migrants from Malta or Greece or the Netherlands; it might be to their advantage if they were. In a sense they are further away than any potential migrant. Whatever analogy is chosen or however the problem is formulated, the task is clear—to incorporate Aborigines into full membership in the Subsidised Society.

4 POPULATION: STRUCTURE AND FUTURE GROWTH*

There are two main problems in interpreting official estimates of the size and distribution of the Aboriginal population. First, up to and including the 1961 Census the number of full-bloods could only be estimated in some states. In 1947, for example, only half the estimated number of full-bloods was enumerated in the census, and although by 1961 the census count was thought complete in most states, in Western Australia and Northern Territory some under-enumeration apparently occurred. The 1966 Census is therefore the first census in which a 'complete' enumeration of the Aboriginal population has been obtained.

The second problem relates to definition: who precisely is counted as an 'Aboriginal' for census purposes? There is no clear answer to this question, but it is certain that some part-Aborigines (persons of less than half Aboriginal origin) are not identified as Aborigines in the census. Prior to 1966 such persons were officially numbered with the 'European' population and only persons of predominantly Aboriginal origin or persons with one 'Aboriginal' and one 'European' parent (half-caste) were required to differentiate themselves from the non-Aboriginal population. Thus, the 1961 Census question read as follows:

For persons of European race, wherever born, write 'European'. For non-Europeans state the race to which they belong, for example, 'Aboriginal', 'Chinese', 'Negro',

* This chapter combines material from a report prepared by Jones for Minister-in-Charge of Aboriginal Affairs in March 1970 (The Aboriginal population of Australia: present distribution and probable future growth, Canberra: Office for Aboriginal Affairs, mimeo.), and a paper 'Fertility patterns among Aboriginal Australians', *Human Biology in Oceania*, 1 (August 1972): 245-54.

'Afghan', etc. If the person is half-caste with one parent of European race, write also 'H.C.', for example 'H.C. Aboriginal', 'H.C. Chinese', etc.

These instructions suggest that only the offspring of first generation intermarriages between Aborigines and Europeans were to count as 'half-caste', but provide little guidance for intermarriages between part-Aborigines and Europeans or even Aboriginal couples with part-European background. How such persons and their children responded to the 1961 Census question is uncertain, but it is clear that the question and the accompanying instructions led to an undercount of part-Aborigines.

In 1966 the census question was changed to read as follows:

State each person's race. For persons of European race, wherever born, write 'European'. Otherwise state whether Aboriginal, Chinese, Indian, Japanese, etc., as the case may be. If of more than one race give particulars, for example, ½ European—½ Aboriginal, ¾ Aboriginal—¼ Chinese, ½ European—½ Chinese.

In 1966, therefore, a part-Aboriginal who said he was ¾ Aboriginal-¼ European would have been classified as full-blood (i.e. more than half-Aboriginal), whereas in 1961 the only way of indicating part-European ancestry was to say 'half-caste'.[1]

The problems of interpreting recent official statistics are small compared with estimates for the past, and the figures shown in Table 4.1 for the period before World War II can be regarded only as informed guesses. They are nonetheless probably sufficiently near the mark to indicate general trends.

These figures are official estimates and with the exception of the last row (1966c) are drawn from publications of the Bureau of Census and Statistics. In general the figures relate only to persons predominantly of Aboriginal descent (that is, half or more Aboriginal; or full-bloods and half-castes, to use the census terminology up to 1961). Exceptions are the 1901 figures for Queensland and Tasmania, which do not include half-castes, since they were not at that time distinguished from the non-Aboriginal population, and the 1966(b) and 1966(c) figures, which include part-Aborigines (persons of less than half Aboriginal descent). The 1966(b) total incorporates all Aboriginal persons, including those who said that they were of mixed race but had less than half Aboriginal ancestry. It also includes Aborigines of mixed race who were half Aboriginal and half another non-European race (e.g. half-Aboriginal, half-Chinese).

Despite these problems of interpretation, the estimates in Table 4.1 do portray the rapid decline of Aborigines in the nineteenth century,

[1] For a more extended discussion of these problems, see Jones, 1970 :6-13; 39-42.

Table 4.1: *Estimates of the past and present distribution of the Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal population of Australia, 1788 to 1966*

Year†	State or Territory						
	New South Wales	Victoria	Queens-land	South Australia	Western Australia	Northern Territory	Australia*
1788	40,000	11,500	100,000	10,000	52,000	35,000	251,000
1901	8,065	521	26,670	3,070	5,261	23,363	66,950
1921	6,067	573	15,454	2,741	17,671	17,973	60,479
1947	11,560	1,277	16,311	4,296	24,912	15,147	73,817
1954	12,214	1,395	18,460	4,972	16,215	17,157	70,678
1961	14,716	1,796	19,696	4,884	18,276	19,704	79,253
1966 (a)	14,219	1,790	19,003	5,505	18,439	21,119	80,207
(b)	20,601	2,707	23,040	6,584	21,146	22,306	96,632
(c)	23,130	3,500	41,700	7,760	21,890	24,120	122,100

* This column includes Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory, separate figures for which are not shown.

† The 1966 (a) figures are for persons of half or more Aboriginal descent. The 1966 (b) figures include additionally persons who described themselves as less than 50 per cent Aboriginal. The 1966 (c) figures are estimates made by the State and Territories. See Australia, Department of Territories, *The Australian Aborigines*. Sydney, 1967: 62.

Sources:

1788: Australia, Bureau of Census and Statistics, *Official Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia No. 23 (1930)*: 687-96.

1901, 1921: Australia, Bureau of Census and Statistics, *Official Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia No. 1 (1901-07)*: 145; ibid. *No. 17 (1924)*: 951-61; and *The Statistician's Report on the 1921 Census*: 112-22.

1947: Australia, Bureau of Census and Statistics, *Statistician's Report on the 1947 Census*: 153-65.

1954, 1961, and 1966: Australia, Bureau of Census and Statistics, *The Aboriginal Population of Australia: Summary of Characteristics*, April 1969.

particularly in the states of heaviest European settlement. This decline continued throughout the first quarter of the twentieth century but was arrested in the 1930s and 1940s (the 1947 estimate for Western Australia is obviously too high, just as the 1901 is obviously too low). Since the end of World War II the total Aboriginal population of Australia has been steadily increasing. Indeed the number of part-Aborigines has been growing since the 1920s, partly from natural increase and partly because of increasing rates of intermarriage. The full-blood population has also been increasing since the mid-1950s. As is shown below, there can be no doubt that the Aboriginal population of Australia is now increasing at the rate of about 3·4 per cent per annum, one of the highest rates of natural increase in the world and almost four times the figure for non-Aborigines in 1966.

Table 4.2: *Projected number of Aborigines in 1966 compared with the census enumeration*

State or territory	Number of Aborigines		
	1961 Census*	1966 Census†	1966 projection‡
New South Wales	14,716	14,219§	17,686
Victoria	1,796	1,790	2,151
Queensland	19,696	19,003	22,938
South Australia	4,884	5,505	5,689
Western Australia	18,276	18,439	20,996
Tasmania	38	36	46
Northern Territory	19,704	21,119	22,057
Australian Capital Territory	143	96	173
Australia	79,253	80,207	91,736

* Full-bloods and half-castes.
† Persons of half or more than half Aboriginal origin.
‡ Projections from 1961, using separate schedules of mortality and fertility for full-bloods and half-castes.
§ The figure given in a preliminary publication was 13,613 persons (Jones, 1970: 41).

PRESENT DISTRIBUTION

A projection of the full-blood and half-caste Aboriginal population of Australia based on the results of the 1961 Census yielded an estimate of 91,736 persons by 1966 (Jones, 1970:35, 41). In Table 4.2 these projected figures are compared with the 1961 and 1966 census results for persons of half or more Aboriginal origin.

A comparison of cols. 2 and 3 of this table suggests that some thousands of persons identified as Aborigines or half-caste Aborigines in 1961 were not so identified in 1966. The main shift must have occurred among those formerly described as half-caste, which in every day speech serves to identify not only the first generation offspring of Aboriginal-European marriages, but also Aborigines with other degrees of mixed racial ancestry. By comparison with the preceding census, the 1966 Census gave an inflated count of 'full-bloods' (persons of more than half Aboriginal origin) and a deflated figure for 'half-castes' (persons of exactly half Aboriginal and half European ancestry). A sizeable proportion of persons formerly described as 'half-caste' presumably responded to the more specific 1966 Census question on race that they were ¾ Aboriginal and thus 'Aboriginal' under the census classification.

The extent of this shift can be seen, for example, in the New South Wales figures, where the 1966 Census enumeration amounts to only 77 per cent of the number projected from 1961 and in Queensland and Victoria 83 per cent. Similarly it makes no sense to suppose that the

identifiable Aboriginal population in Australia as a whole grew by only 954 persons between 1961 and 1966, as is implied by the first two columns of Table 4.2.

To estimate more exactly the expected numbers and distribution of Aborigines at the 1966 Census, new state-by-state projections from 1961 were made, using *weighted* mortality and fertility schedules for each state and territory. The weights used were the proportion full-blood and the proportion half-caste in each state, which were applied to each mortality and fertility schedule to obtain weighted schedules for each state. Thus, in New South Wales where in 1961 10 per cent of the male Aboriginal population were enumerated as full-blood and 90 per cent as half-caste, the weights (0·10; 0·90) were applied to the full-blood and half-caste schedules respectively, to derive a weighted average of mortality and fertility schedules for New South Wales Aboriginal males. The same procedure was used for each state to derive new estimates of growth between 1961 and 1966.

Table 4.3 gives this new projection, which yields results almost identical with the earlier one. The state estimates given by the two methods differ by no more than one per cent, a difference that can be attributed to rounding errors. The Australian total differs by an insignificant 61 persons, a discrepancy of 0·07 per cent.

Three sets of figures are shown for 1966: the census results for persons of half or more than half Aboriginal descent (formally equivalent to previous counts of full-bloods and half-castes); the results of the projection for 1966 based on the 1961 Census; and the census results for all persons of identifiable Aboriginal origin. This last set of figures includes persons who identified themselves (or were so identified by whoever filled in the census return) as Aborigines, but who are of less than half Aboriginal origin. This chapter reserves the term 'part-Aborigines' for persons of less than half Aboriginal origin, the term 'Aborigines' for those of half or more than half Aboriginal origin, and the term 'identifiable Aboriginal population' for the total of these two groups.

In the bottom panel of Table 4.3 the 1966 Aboriginal population and the estimate derived from the projection of the 1961 Census are expressed as percentages of the identifiable Aboriginal population enumerated in 1966. This total identifiable Aboriginal population *exceeds by 5 per cent* the number expected on the basis of the projection from 1961. However, the projection far exceeds the enumerated Aboriginal population (half or more), by 12 percentage points. Apparently the 1966 Census question on race encouraged many part-Aborigines who had presumably not

Table 4.3: *Aborigines in the 1966 Census: males, females, and persons of half or more than half Aboriginal origin (enumerated in 1966 and projected from the 1961 Census), and of any degrees of origin (enumerated in 1966)**

	Males			Females			Persons		
State	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
					Numbers				
New South Wales	7,343	9,106	10,563	6,876	8,851	10,038	14,219	17,957	20,601
Victoria	856	1,091	1,285	934	1,095	1,422	1,790	2,186	2,707
Queensland	9,644	11,725	11,686	9,359	11,177	11,354	19,003	22,902	23,040
South Australia	2,914	2,998	3,432	2,591	2,680	3,152	5,505	5,678	6,584
Western Australia	9,505	10,582	10,867	8,934	10,234	10,279	18,439	20,816	21,146
Northern Territory	10,651	11,060	11,248	10,468	10,865	11,058	21,119	21,925	22,306
Australia†	40,984	46,669	49,213	39,223	45,006	47,419	80,207	91,675	96,632
					Ratios				
New South Wales	70	86	100	68	88	100	69	87	100
Victoria	67	85	100	66	77	100	66	81	100
Queensland	83	100	100	82	98	100	82	99	100
South Australia	85	87	100	82	85	100	84	86	100
Western Australia	87	97	100	87	100	100	87	98	100
Northern Territory	95	98	100	95	98	100	95	98	100
Australia†	83	95	100	83	95	100	83	95	100

* Cols. 1, 4, and 7 give the figures for those of half or more than half Aboriginal origin as enumerated in the 1966 Census. Cols. 3, 6, and 9 include in addition Aborigines who gave their origin as less than half. Cols. 2, 5, and 8 give the results of a projection from the 1961 Census enumeration of full- and mixed-blood Aborigines (half-caste in the 1961 definition). The ratios express columns 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, and 8 as a percentage of columns 3, 6, and 9 respectively.
† Including Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory, numbers for which are too small to be shown separately.

identified as 'half-caste' in 1961 to do so in 1966. But it seems that an even greater number of part-Aborigines who had previously identified as half-caste described themselves in 1966 as less than half Aboriginal.

By comparing cols. 8 and 9 of Table 4.3 we can assess the extent of new identification among part-Aborigines. In Australia as a whole the increase is 5 per cent: the projection from 1961 gives a population only 95 per cent of the size of the identifiable Aboriginal population enumerated in 1966. However, marked variations exist between states. Relatively few part-Aborigines appeared to have identified for the first time in 1966 in Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, whereas in Victoria about one-fifth of the total Aboriginal population are estimated to be persons who identified as part-Aborigines for the first time in 1966. In New South Wales and South Australia the proportion of new identifiers is about one in six.

Which of the three sets of figures given in Table 4.3 provides the best estimate of the size and distribution of Australia's Aboriginal population? The 1966 count of persons of half or more Aboriginal origin is obviously deficient by comparison with the 1961 Census, yet the inclusion of persons of less than half Aboriginal origin might be said to overstate the total figure of persons of predominantly Aboriginal origin. On the other hand, the exclusion of persons of less than half Aboriginal origin gives a figure that seriously understates the known and estimated number of persons who identify, or are identified by others, as Aborigines.

The total *identified* Aboriginal population, of any degree of descent, can be regarded as the best estimate of the size and distribution of the Aboriginal population of Australia in 1966, for three main reasons. (1) The exclusion of part-Aborigines (less than half Aboriginal) gives a figure which is known to be too low by comparison with earlier censuses and with estimates made by state authorities. (2) Although the more specific form of the 1966 Census question on race probably gave more meaningful results than the question used in 1961 and preceding censuses, there is obviously some instability in the way many part-Aborigines describe themselves. The amount of change probably varies between states, because of legal and social differences in the treatment of Aborigines, both historically and at present. Since 'half-castes' are considered by Aborigines themselves and by the general population to be members of the Aboriginal population, and since Table 4.3 suggests that the number of 'half-castes' who identified in 1966 as less than half Aboriginal was more than double the number of part-Aborigines who identified *for the first time* in 1966, it seems reasonable to include the less than half with the

half or more Aboriginal population. (3) As a result of discussions between officers of the Bureau of Census and Statistics and interested parties, the 1971 Census question on race did not attempt the genetic differentiations of previous censuses (there is now no constitutional requirement to undertake such a spuriously precise identification). Instead a self-identification question was used, which should give broadly similar results to the 1966 Census question *if* the total identifiable Aboriginal population is taken as the base-line. The 1971 question was as follows:

What is this person's social origin?

☐	European origin	If of mixed origin indicate the *one* to which he considers himself to belong (tick *one* box only or give *one* origin only)
☐	Aboriginal origin	
☐	Torres Strait Islander origin	
☐	Other origin (give *one* only)	.....

Table 4.1 presents beneath the 1966 Census results for the total identifiable Aboriginal population a set of estimates (1966c) made by state authorities. A comparison of the last two rows of that table indicates that the 1966 Census count for all persons of Aboriginal descent amounts to only 79 per cent of that estimate. However, the major discrepancy between these two sets of figures is Queensland, the estimate for which is almost double the census count. It is difficult to understand why the Queensland discrepancy should be so great, when the discrepancy between the two sets of figures in the rest of Australia averages only 8·5 per cent. If one reduces the Queensland estimate to a level consistent with the degree of understatement in other states, to say 25,000 persons, then the discrepancy between the census count and the state estimates is greatly reduced. While the 1966 Census count of Aborigines and part-Aborigines falls below the estimates made by the states, it seems to have been at least 90 per cent complete in most states, if we take state estimates as the yardstick.

URBANISATION

Because Aborigines were underenumerated in some parts of Australia at previous censuses, long-term trends in urbanisation are difficult to establish. Table 4.4 shows the enumerated figures for Aborigines and part-Aborigines in the 1947, 1961 and 1966 Censuses. As a comparison with Table 4.1 indicates, in 1947 the enumerated Aboriginal population

amounted to only 69 per cent of the Bureau of Census and Statistics estimate, rising to an estimated 95 per cent in 1961, but virtually complete enumeration in 1966. Because almost all Aborigines not enumerated in previous censuses were nomadic, the figures shown in Table 4.4 understate the trend towards urbanisation.

Table 4.4: *The urbanisation of the Aboriginal population, 1947, 1961, and 1966* (enumerated figures only)*

Census year and state	Section of state						Total N (100%)
	Metropolitan		Other urban		Rural and migratory		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1947							
New South Wales	873	7·6	2,475	21·4	8,212	71·0	11,560
Victoria	157	12·3	134	10·5	986	77·2	1,277
Queensland	454	3·4	978	7·2	12,105	89·4	13,537
South Australia	268	10·2	86	3·3	2,267	86·5	2,621
Western Australia	322	3·4	270	2·8	8,915	93·8	9,507
Northern Territory	..	..	43	0·4	12,189	99·6	12,232
Australia†	2,079	4·1	3,999	7·8	44,970	88·1	51,048
1961							
New South Wales	1,397	9·5	4,428	30·1	8,891	60·4	14,716
Victoria	391	21·8	482	26·8	923	51·4	1,796
Queensland	1,059	5·4	4,142	21·0	14,495	73·6	19,696
South Australia	512	10·5	674	13·8	3,698	75·7	4,884
Western Australia	773	4·7	1,794	11·0	13,709	84·2	16,276
Northern Territory	..	..	1,868	10·5	15,892	89·5	17,760
Australia†	4,140	5·5	13,401	17·8	57,768	76·7	75,309
1966							
New South Wales	3,327	16·2	6,905	33·5	10,369	50·3	20,601
Victoria	761	28·1	1,058	39·1	888	32·8	2,707
Queensland	1,803	7·8	5,659	24·6	15,578	67·6	23,040
South Australia	1,237	18·8	907	13·8	4,440	67·4	6,584
Western Australia	1,171	5·5	4,580	21·7	15,395	72·8	21,146
Northern Territory	..	..	3,714	16·7	18,592	83·3	22,306
Australia†	8,330	8·6	22,844	23·6	65,458	67·7	96,632

* Figures for 1947 and 1961 are based on unpublished statistics for full-blood or half-caste Aborigines enumerated in the census. Figures for 1966 are based on unpublished statistics for all persons of Aboriginal origin, irrespective of degree (viz. more than half, half, less than half).
† Including Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory, numbers for which are too small to be shown separately.

In 1947 only a tiny fraction (4 per cent) of the enumerated Aboriginal population lived in metropolitan areas. In Victoria, South Australia, and to a lesser degree New South Wales the proportion was higher, but even in Victoria the figure was less than one-fifth that for the non-Aboriginal population (63 per cent). By 1966 there were many more Aborigines, in both absolute and relative terms, living in capital cities. Indeed in Victoria

the degree of metropolitan concentration now approaches half the non-Aboriginal rate. However, the main movement among Aborigines has not been into the capital cities but into country towns. By 1966 the proportion of Aborigines living in non-metropolitan towns was four times the 1947 figure. In absolute terms their number had grown almost sixfold.

To some extent the increased urbanisation observed in 1966 results from new identifications among part-Aborigines in towns and cities: over half (56 per cent) of persons identifying as less than half Aboriginal origin lived in urban areas, compared with only one-quarter (27 per cent) of persons of half or more than half Aboriginal origin. In Victoria the degree of urbanisation was particularly high among part-Aborigines (71 per cent, a figure not far short of that for the non-Aboriginal population, 86 per cent). Comparable figures for other states were: New South Wales, 59 per cent, Queensland 51 per cent, South Australia 50 per cent, Western Australia 47 per cent and the Northern Territory 79 per cent. In all cases the degree of urbanisation among part-Aborigines is much higher than among Aborigines.

The effect of urbanisation on the mortality and fertility experience of Aborigines is not known. It seems probable that urbanisation, by providing access to more nearly adequate health services, has reduced mortality, although this may have been partly offset by poor living conditions, overcrowding and poor nutrition. Kalokerinos (1969:185) reports an infant mortality rate of 87 per 1,000 live births among Aborigines in Walgett, New South Wales (1957-67 figures), a disconcertingly high rate for an urban area. Malnutrition and low resistance to disease are undoubtedly associated with high childhood mortality, especially between the ages of 1 and 2, but the evidence for urban and rural differentials is less clear (Moodie, 1969; Jose and Welch, 1970).

In the history of Western industrialisation, urbanisation was typically associated with decreased fertility. The evidence for developing nations is less clear, and in some countries urbanisation has been associated with increased fertility, at least in the short run (Petersen, 1969:603-8). Certainly, as is shown below, Aboriginal fertility is increasing, and the move into country towns seems to be associated with an increase in fertility. However, the move to large cities seems to be associated with lower (but not yet low) fertility (Gale 1969:73). It is possible that as health standards improve fertility will rise further. Mortality will certainly fall. Without fertility control the rate of population growth will reach very high levels. Already close to half the Aboriginal population of Australia is under the

age of 15, a proportion that will probably rise slightly before it falls (if indeed it does fall over the next twenty years).

INTERSTATE MIGRATION

No reliable data exist in Australia on the internal movement of population, whether Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal (a question on internal migration was included in the 1971 Census). However, data on place of birth and place of enumeration at census time are available, and 1966 figures are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: *Place of birth and place of enumeration of Aborigines, 1966 Census*

Place of birth	Place of enumeration						Australia
	New South Wales	Victoria	Queens-land	S.A.	W.A.	N.T.	
			Column percentages				
New South Wales	*88·9*	15·3	3·0	1·0	0·1	0·1	20·4
Victoria	2·1	*72·5*	0·1	0·8	0·7	0·0	2·6
Queensland	4·0	2·4	*93·6*	0·6	0·3	0·5	23·5
South Australia	0·3	1·9	0·3	*87·8*	0·4	0·6	6·4
Western Australia	0·2	1·3	0·1	2·2	*93·4*	0·8	20·9
Northern Territory	0·5	1·2	1·0	4·8	1·0	*96·6*	23·2
Other (including Australia undefined)	4·0	5·4	1·9	2·8	4·1	1·4	3·0
N (100%)	20,601	2,707	23,040	6,584	21,146	22,306	96,632
			*Row percentages**				(N=100%)
New South Wales	*93·0*	2·1	3·5	0·3	0·1	0·1	19,689
Victoria	17·2	*78·3*	1·4	2·0	0·6	0·4	2,507
Queensland	3·6	0·3	*95·1*	0·2	0·3	0·5	22,686
South Australia	1·0	0·8	1·2	*93·2*	1·4	2·3	6,205
Western Australia	0·2	0·2	0·1	0·7	*97·9*	0·9	20,166
Northern Territory	0·4	0·2	1·0	1·4	1·0	*96·0*	22,449
Other (including Australia undefined)	28·3	4·6	14·6	6·3	34·3	9·5	2,930
Total	21·3	2·8	23·8	6·8	21·9	23·1	96,632

* The row percentages do not necessarily sum to 100·0 per cent, because of the omission of figures for Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory.

The trends are partly obscured by the fact that 3 per cent of Aborigines did not specify state of birth. Even so, an overwhelming majority of the Aboriginal population is enumerated in the state of birth, a finding that indicates the possessiveness of institutionalised authorities. Until as late as 1967 some state authorities could exercise substantial control over

the movement of Aborigines who came under the relevant laws (Rowley 1971b:110), and restrictive laws are no doubt part of the reason for low rates of interstate migration. Victoria and New South Wales are partial exceptions to this generalisation: 15 per cent of Aborigines enumerated in Victoria were born in New South Wales, a figure almost exactly balanced by the number of Victorian-born Aborigines in New South Wales (17 per cent). In no other state, however, does the degree of migration in or out exceed 4 per cent (Queensland-born Aborigines in New South Wales), and in most cases the figure does not exceed 2 per cent. A comparison of the marginal totals for the two panels of Table 4.5 shows that there is no systematic tendency for any state to gain from interstate migration: 91 per cent of the total Aboriginal population were enumerated in the state or territory of birth. However, this pattern of relative stability may well change as educational standards improve and Aborigines become better able to exploit their newly-won legal independence.

AGE COMPOSITION

Table 4.6 depicts the age structure of the Aboriginal population in 1966, compared with the projection from the 1961 Census. The 1966 estimates are not dissimilar from the 1966 Census results for the Aboriginal popu-

Table 4.6: *Age distribution of Aborigines in the 1966 Census: males, females, and persons by state*

	Males		Females		Persons	
State and age group	1966 Estimate*	Census†	1966 Estimate*	Census†	1966 Estimate*	Census†
New South Wales						
0-14	24·9	26·4	24·4	25·2	49·3	51·6
15-29	13·0	12·3	12·9	12·0	25·9	24·3
30-44	6·7	7·1	7·1	6·7	13·8	13·8
45-59	3·9	3·6	3·5	3·2	7·4	6·8
60 and over	2·1	1·9	1·5	1·6	3·6	3·5
Total	50·6	51·3	49·4	48·7	100·0	100·0
Number	9,106	10,563	8,851	10,038	17,957	20,601
Victoria						
0-14	25·6	25·2	24·3	26·5	49·9	51·7
15-29	12·2	11·5	13·3	14·0	25·5	25·5
30-44	5·9	5·8	7·3	6·7	13·2	12·5
45-59	4·1	3·4	3·3	3·6	7·4	7·0
60 and over	2·1	1·6	1·9	1·7	4·0	3·3
Total	49·9	47·5	50·1	52·5	100·0	100·0
Number	1,091	1,285	1,095	1,422	2,186	2,707

State and age group	Males		Females		Persons	
	1966 Estimate*	Census†	1966 Estimate*	Census†	1966 Estimate*	Census†
Queensland						
0-14	22·7	24·5	22·6	24·3	45·3	48·8
15-29	12·5	11·6	12·4	11·6	24·9	23·2
30-44	8·0	7·5	7·3	7·2	15·3	14·7
45-59	4·8	4·3	4·3	3·7	9·1	8·0
60 and over	3·1	2·8	2·3	2·5	5·4	5·3
Total	51·1	50·7	48·9	49·3	100·0	100·0
Number	11,725	11,686	11,177	11,354	22,902	23,040
South Australia						
0-14	24·0	25·2	22·2	23·4	46·2	48·6
15-29	12·8	12·1	11·6	11·3	24·4	23·4
30-44	8·3	7·5	7·7	7·5	16·0	15·0
45-59	5·1	4·2	4·3	3·5	9·4	7·7
60 and over	2·5	3·2	1·5	2·1	4·0	5·3
Total	52·7	52·2	47·3	47·8	100·0	100·0
Number	2,998	3,432	2,680	3,152	5,678	6,584
Western Australia						
0-14	21·9	23·8	21·5	23·1	43·4	46·9
15-29	11·7	11·0	11·6	10·7	23·3	21·7
30-44	7·9	7·8	7·5	7·2	15·4	15·0
45-59	5·2	4·9	4·8	4·1	10·0	9·0
60 and over	4·3	3·9	3·6	3·5	7·9	7·4
Total	51·0	51·4	49·0	48·6	100·0	100·0
Number	10,582	10,867	10,234	10,279	20,816	21,146
Northern Territory						
0-14	20·8	22·1	20·4	21·8	41·2	43·9
15-29	12·0	11·4	11·4	11·2	23·4	22·6
30-44	8·3	8·2	9·1	8·8	17·4	17·0
45-59	5·7	5·0	5·6	4·9	11·3	9·9
60 and over	3·7	3·5	3·0	3·1	6·7	6·6
Total	50·5	50·2	49·5	49·8	100·0	100·0
Number	11,060	11,248	10,865	11,058	21,925	22,306
Australia‡						
0-14	22·9	24·3	22·2	23·7	45·1	48·0
15-29	12·3	11·6	12·1	11·5	24·4	23·1
30-44	7·8	7·6	7·7	7·4	15·5	15·0
45-59	4·9	4·4	4·5	3·9	9·4	8·3
60 and over	3·2	3·0	2·4	2·6	5·6	5·6
Total	51·1	50·9	48·9	49·1	100·0	100·0
Number	46,669	49,213	45,006	47,419	91,675	96,632

* These figures derive from a projection from 1961 census data on full- and mixed-blood ('half-caste') Aborigines.

† These figures include persons of any degree of Aboriginal origin (viz. more than half, half, and less than half).

‡ Including Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory, numbers for which are too small to be shown separately.

lation (that is, persons of half or more than half Aboriginal origin), but the inclusion of the part-Aboriginal population moves the centre of gravity of the age distribution sharply towards younger ages: 45·4 per cent of the 'Aboriginal' population (half or more than half) were aged under 15 in 1966 (the estimate was 45·1 per cent), but among part-Aborigines the figure, derived from unpublished data, was remarkably high, 60·1 per cent. By comparison only 29·3 per cent of non-Aboriginal Australians were under 15 in 1966. The median age of Aboriginal Australians was 16·1 years, almost half the figure for non-Aboriginal Australians (28·3 years).

A comparison between the 1966 estimates and the census results for all Aborigines reveals a uniform discrepancy of 2 to 3 percentage points in the 0-14 age group. In all cases the estimates are too low, suggesting either that the levels of fertility used in the 1961 projection were too low, or that the levels of mortality assumed were too high, or both. Whatever the cause, the identifiable Aboriginal population of Australia was 'younger' in 1966 than expected, a finding that needs to be taken into account in further projections. As already mentioned the Aboriginal population is youngest in those states where they are most urbanised, as the following figures show:

State or territory	Per cent aged 0-14	Per cent living in towns or cities
Victoria	52	67
New South Wales	52	50
South Australia	49	33
Queensland	49	32
Western Australia	47	27
Northern Territory	44	17

This again indirectly confirms the fact that urbanisation has been associated with increased, and not decreased, fertility and with increased chances of survival because of lower infant mortality.

AGE AT MARRIAGE

Fertility levels are partly determined by the age at which women marry and by the proportions marrying. Tables 4.7 and 4.8 describe marriage patterns among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women.

Despite some reservations about the accuracy of ages for Aboriginal women, according to these data Aboriginal women marry earlier than do non-Aboriginal women, but by age 30-34 the proportion of Aboriginal

Table 4.7: *Percentage currently married among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women, by five-year age groups, 1966 Census*

Age group	Percentage currently married	
	Aboriginal women*	Non-Aboriginal women
15-19	20·1	8·0
20-24	61·5	58·0
25-29	75·6	84·5
30-34	79·0	88·8
35-39	77·3	88·5
40-44	77·4	86·8
45-49	72·2	83·4
50-54	65·2	78·3
55-59	57·2	70·9
60 and over	39·6	41·1
Total (15+)	58·5	45·0

* Women of half or more than half Aboriginal origin only.

women who are currently married reaches a peak at near 80 per cent, almost ten percentage points below the figure for non-Aborigines. This difference is due both to the higher proportion of Aboriginal women who never marry and because of earlier widowhood and more frequent separation. As Table 4.8 shows, about one in ten Aboriginal women over the age of 30 is recorded as never married, a figure which is 6 or 7 per cent higher than that for non-Aboriginal women. However, the higher incidence of consensual unions among Aborigines may lead to an overestimate of the never-married among Aboriginal women. By age 40 one in eight Aboriginal marriages has been interrupted by death, divorce, or separation, compared with only one in sixteen non-Aboriginal marriages. The lower proportion of Aboriginal women currently married presumably depresses their level of fertility, and as the proportion of Aboriginal women involved in stable and enduring unions increases, so may their fertility.

Although no registration data are available for Aboriginal Australians which would allow the direct calculation of average age at first marriage, the figures of percentage single in Table 4.8 can be used to derive an estimate, using Hajnal's technique (Hajnal, 1953). This method uses the proportion single at any given age to estimate mean age at first marriage, much in the way that the proportion of survivors to a given age in a life table can be used to estimate mean expectation of life. According to this method, mean age at first marriage can be estimated at 21·3 years for Aboriginal women, compared with 21·6 years for non-Aboriginal

Table 4.8: *Marital status of Aboriginal women, by age (row percentages), 1966 Census**

Age	Marital status					N
	Never married	Currently married	Permanently separated	Widowed	Divorced	
15	95	5	0	0	0	825
16	89	11	0	0	0	794
17	78	22	0	0	0	695
18	72	28	0	0	0	676
19	58	41	1	0	0	660
20	45	53	1	1	0	653
21	44	54	1	0	0	573
22	31	67	1	1	0	548
23	29	68	3	0	0	504
24	29	69	2	0	0	498
25-29	19	76	3	2	0	2,560
30-34	12	79	6	3	0	2,419
35-39	10	77	6	6	1	2,057
40-44	10	77	5	8	0	1,668
45-49	9	72	6	13	0	1,344
50-54	8	65	7	19	1	1,056
55-59	9	57	6	28	0	842
60 and over	11	40	3	46	0	2,235
Total (15+)	28	59	4	10	0	21,724

* Women of half or more than half Aboriginal origin only. The total (15+) includes 1,117 women whose ages were not stated.

women (calculated by the same method). These calculations suggest that, since there appears to be only a slight difference in average age at first marriage between the two populations, the main factor contributing to high Aboriginal fertility is the absence of fertility control within marriage, rather than early marriage *per se*.

AGE PATTERNS OF FERTILITY

The youthful age structure of the Aboriginal population guarantees extremely rapid rates of growth over the next generation, even if fertility levels were moderate. But the evidence is that Aboriginal fertility in almost all parts of Australia is already high, and is probably increasing.

According to Table 4.9, by age 25 Aboriginal women have given birth to an average of 2·97 children, a number almost double that for non-Aboriginal Australians (1·57). By age 40 the difference is less marked in relative terms, but even so Aboriginal women have on average given birth to two more children than their white counterparts. The completed level of Aboriginal fertility stabilises at around 5 children per wife, a

Table 4.9: *Average issue of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal wives in Australia, by single years of age, 1966 Census*

Age of wife	Average issue		
	Aborigines*		Non-Aborigines
	Recorded	Smoothed†	Recorded
15	0·68	0·68	0·38
16	0·73	0·73	0·46
17	0·94	0·94	0·56
18	1·20	1·16	0·67
19	1·37	1·39	0·69
20	1·56	1·59	0·74
21	1·89	1·86	0·79
22	1·95	2·11	0·91
23	2·53	2·38	1·12
24	2·61	2·60	1·33
25	2·94	2·97	1·57
26	2·99	3·14	1·79
27	3·77	3·43	2·00
28	3·39	3·54	2·17
29	4·05	3·85	2·35
30	3·50	3·96	2·49
31	4·54	4·29	2·62
32	4·33	4·41	2·71
33	5·02	4·64	2·80
34	4·66	4·67	2·84
35	4·65	4·92	2·89
36	4·67	4·93	2·90
37	5·58	5·10	2·92
38	5·07	4·99	2·90
39	5·52	5·08	2·91
40	4·13	4·98	2·86
41	5·11	5·06	2·84
42	5·06	4·91	2·82
43	5·47	4·89	2·81
44	4·77	4·79	2·77
45	4·05	4·87	2·72
46	4·62	4·78	2·69
47	5·42	4·77	2·67
48	5·03	4·65	2·60
49	4·72	4·55	2·60
50	3·48	4·65	2·53
51	4·12	4·68	2·51
52	5·89	4·51	2·49
53	5·19	4·59	2·48
54	3·89	4·55	2·42
55	3·86	4·38	2·41
56	3·90	4·23	2·41
57	5·08	4·18	2·36
58	4·40	4·05	2·38
59	3·67	4·09	2·38
60 and over	3·19	3·75	2·49
All ages	3·75	3·75	2·40
N	12,721	12,721	2,577,276

* Women of half or more than half Aboriginal origin only.

† Moving 5-year average.

figure which seems comparatively low under conditions of near-natural fertility (Henry, 1961:84). However, indirect estimates from registration data in the Northern Territory presented below suggest higher levels of fertility for Aboriginal women currently of child-bearing age.

It is interesting that by about age 35 the average issue of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women tends to stabilise. In the case of non-Aboriginal women this doubtless reflects fertility control, but in the case of Aboriginal women the explanation is less clear—most probably a combination of lowered fertility under conditions of malnutrition and high rates of pregnancy wastage, and possibly the failure of older women to report children who died in infancy or have matured and left their parental home.

Data on the effect of malnutrition and ways of life on levels of fertility are scarce. However, Henin (1968:153) found substantially lower fertility among nomads in the Sudan compared with settled sections of the same tribe, and in Australia unpublished census data indicate higher fertility among Aborigines living in urban areas than among those living in rural areas. However, as Aborigines move from country towns into metropolitan areas their fertility seems to decline (Gale, 1969:87), perhaps because of better access to methods of family planning. The 1966 census data indicate the same trend. Moreover, experimental data for pigs and rats indicate that regimen (the regularity of feeding) as well as the amount of food ingested has a marked effect on reproductive capacity (Cooper *et al.*, 1970). Nomadic life and irregular food supply may thus increase the rate of spontaneous abortion, but even among settled and affluent populations the rate of spontaneous abortion is probably as high as 25 per cent (James, 1970:245). These data, together with Henry's finding (1961:88) that even under conditions of natural fertility actual levels of fertility vary from one population to another, provide a basis for expecting further increases in Aboriginal fertility as the Aboriginal population becomes increasingly urbanised and better-off.

DURATION OF MARRIAGE AND FERTILITY

Table 4.10 presents data on average issue by duration of marriage. It is at first sight surprising that duration of marriage figures indicate a higher maximum fertility for Aboriginal wives than the age data, but it should be explained that 29 per cent of Aboriginal wives did not state duration of marriage. For this reason Tables 4.9 and 4.10 relate to different datasets. Those who failed to state duration of marriage tended to have lower

Table 4.10: *Average issue of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal wives in Australia, by duration of existing marriage, 1966 Census*

Duration of marriage in years	Average issue		
	Aborigines*		Non-Aborigines
	Recorded	Smoothed†	Recorded
0	0·74	0·74	0·17
1	0·85	0·85	0·48
2	1·28	1·28	0·80
3	1·88	1·74	1·14
4	2·22	2·18	1·46
5	2·49	2·55	1·73
6	3·04	2·88	1·95
7	3·12	3·17	2·15
8	3·52	3·35	2·30
9	3·68	3·62	2·45
10	3·38	3·88	2·52
11	4·45	4·21	2·65
12	4·37	4·51	2·69
13	5·15	4·75	2·77
14	5·22	4·99	2·77
15	4·56	5·22	2·78
16	5·66	5·33	2·79
17	5·49	5·59	2·81
18	5·74	5·58	2·81
19	6·52	5·65	2·83
20	4·51	5·83	2·79
21	6·01	5·95	2·81
22	6·39	5·87	2·83
23	6·34	6·06	2·79
24	6·09	5·98	2·70
25	5·46	5·88	2·71
26 and over	5·63	5·73	2·92
All wives	3·75	3·75	2·40
N	12,721	12,721	2,577,276

* Women of half or more than half Aboriginal origin only.
† Moving 5-year average.

average completed fertility. Why? A first hypothesis might be that many Aboriginal women dated their marriage from the birth of a first child, so that a high proportion of wives who did not state their duration of marriage may have had no children. In fact the opposite is true: only 10 per cent of wives with duration of marriage not stated had no issue, compared with 13 per cent of those who stated their duration.

Age and regional differences in the reporting of fertility and duration of marriage partly explain the discrepancy between Tables 4.9 and 4.10. Older women experienced (or reported) lower fertility than younger

women, and older women more frequently failed to give duration of marriage. Moreover, in regions where Aborigines have less contact with Europeans, living conditions are harsh, health provisions especially inadequate, and data collection difficult. Fertility is also low because of poor nutrition and high pregnancy wastage. There is also presumably a higher incidence of traditional unions than Western marriages, and as a result of all these conditions duration of marriage is not stated in a high proportion of marriages. Thus failure to state duration of marriage is associated with low fertility, and for this reason the duration of marriage data presented in Table 4.10 selectively identify a more fertile population. It is also important to note that women with long durations of marriage have been involved, *ipso facto*, in stable and unbroken unions, which is conducive to higher fertility.

Because Table 4.10 truncates the distribution of average issue at durations of marriage over twenty-five years, a comparison can be drawn only with women aged about 45 and less on Table 4.9. Note that the completed fertility of non-Aboriginal Australians peaks at just under 3 children in both sets of data, but for the reasons already given completed Aboriginal fertility reaches a peak of about 6 children after 22 or 23 years of marriage—about one child more than the age data indicate.

FERTILITY RATES FROM REGISTRATION DATA

The duration of marriage figures indicate a level of completed fertility which is well supported by other evidence about the current fertility of Aboriginal women. Although registrations of births and deaths occurring in the Aboriginal population are not available, Aboriginal registrations have been included in annual registration statistics from 1967 onwards, as a result of the repeal of Section 127 of the Constitution. This change provides an opportunity for comparing registration data in 1966 and earlier years (which exclude Aborigines) with registration data for 1967 and subsequent years (which include Aborigines), in order to make an indirect estimate of fertility and infant mortality rates. However, since Aborigines constitute such a small proportion of the population of most Australian states, this technique can be used only for the Northern Territory where in 1968 Aborigines comprised 33 per cent of the total population.

The estimation procedure is as follows. (1) Estimate the age structure of the female Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population of the Northern Territory in 1967 and 1968 by applying the recorded age distribution of

each sub-population in the 1966 Census to the estimated age distribution of the total population in 1967 and 1968. Because the time difference is only two years, and because only the adult population of child-bearing age is concerned, mortality can be effectively ignored. Migration is partly taken into account in the total estimate, but not any change in differential migration between Aborigines and non-Aborigines. (2) Having estimated by this method the number of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women in each age group of the child-bearing period in 1967 and 1968, apply the 1966 age specific fertility schedule for the Northern Territory (which excludes Aboriginal mothers and Aboriginal births) to the estimated age distribution of non-Aboriginal women in 1967 and 1968. This yields an estimate of births to non-Aboriginal women in both years, assuming the continuation of the 1966 fertility schedule. (3) Obtain the estimated number of births to Aboriginal women by subtracting births to non-Aborigines from all births, classified by age of mother. (4) Calculate age specific fertility rates for Aborigines by relating births by age of mother to the estimated age distribution of Aboriginal women in 1967 and 1968.

The results of this estimation procedure are given in Table 4.11. The plausibility of these estimates, which indicate an increase of 57 per cent in the completed fertility of Northern Territory Aboriginal women in about a decade (Jones, 1965:242), can be gauged by estimating the infant mortality rates from the *Demography Bulletin 1967 and 1968*. In 1967 there were 122 infant deaths recorded in the Northern Territory for persons of all races. In 1968 the figure was 101. Applying the 1966 non-Aboriginal infant mortality rate of 20 per 1,000 to the 1967 and 1968 estimates of non-Aboriginal births derived in the preceding analysis, we can estimate that 20 of the 1967 infant deaths and 21 of those in 1968 occurred to

Table 4.11: *Estimated age specific fertility rates of Aboriginal women in the Northern Territory, 1967–8*

Age of woman	Estimated age specific fertility rates (per 1,000 women)		
	1967	1968	1967-8
15-19	269	218	242
20-24	315	466	391
25-29	240	253	247
30-34	229	211	220
35-39	163	130	146
40-44	42	53	48
45-49	22	27	25
Gross total fertility	6·400	6·790	6·595

non-Aborigines. This implies that Aboriginal infant deaths numbered 102 in 1967 and 80 in 1968. These estimates yield infant mortality rates of 111·6 per 1,000 live births in 1967, and 78·5 per 1,000 live births in 1968.

These high rates are in line with figures quoted by the then Minister-in-Charge of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr W.C. Wentworth, who stated in Federal Parliament on 4 March 1970 that infant mortality rates in the Northern Territory were 101 in 1967 and 81 in 1968.

In the projection that follows a set of age specific fertility rates has been used which in fact assume lower fertility in the Northern Territory than these estimates suggest is warranted. But given the basic uncertainty about any set of estimates of the age pattern of Aboriginal fertility, it is difficult to be dogmatic about the matter, except to say that the pattern is early peak and high total fertility.

Table 4.12: *Estimated age specific fertility rates**

Age of woman	Age specific fertility rates by state					
	New South Wales	Victoria	Queens-land	South Australia	Western Australia	Northern Territory
15-19	146	149	160	160	162	176
20-24	370	365	336	334	329	289
25-29	372	366	328	327	319	220
30-34	307	302	266	265	257	209
35-39	227	222	193	191	186	146
40-44	103	102	98	98	97	90
45-49	25	24	15	15	14	3
Gross total fertility	7·750	7·650	6·980	6·950	6·820	5·665

* Fertility schedule used in projection to the year 2001.

As a final comment on the plausibility of the age specific fertility rates used in this study, we may compare them with those presented in Table 7.1 of the *Population Bulletin of the United Nations*, No. 7, 1963. The total fertility rate for Australian Aborigines as a whole is given as 6·840 (high estimate). Over recent years similarly high figures have been observed for the following countries: Dahomey, Guinea, Niger, South Africa (coloured population), El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Venezuela, Malaysia, the Philippines, Sarawak, Singapore, Thailand, Albania and Fiji. While the Australian Aborigines must be regarded as one of the high fertility populations in the modern world, they are not unique in this respect.

MORTALITY

Although non-Aboriginal Australians have one of the lowest mortality rates in the modern world, particularly at young ages, Aborigines are much less fortunate. Depending on where he is born the probability of an Aboriginal infant dying before his first birthday is four to eight times as great as the probability for a non-Aboriginal infant.

Reliable statistics relating to Aboriginal mortality are difficult to obtain. Except in the Northern Territory, where relatively good records have existed for about fifteen years, no reliable data on the age pattern of Aboriginal mortality exist. Moodie (1969) has made a valuable effort to trace Aboriginal deaths in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia. He was able to show that in the early 1960s the proportion of total Aboriginal deaths which occurred to persons under the age of 5 was nearly as high in New South Wales as it was in the Northern Territory (41 and 44 per cent respectively), suggesting similar levels of infant and childhood mortality. The proportions were much lower in Western Australia and Queensland (20 and 16 per cent respectively), but Moodie attributed this not to different levels of mortality but a differential coverage in his study of child and adult deaths. His conclusion was that 'conditions for Aborigines in Western Australia and Queensland are generally similar to those in the Northern Territory—if as favourable—and it would seem likely that their mortality is also similar' (Moodie, 1969:181). This is hardly an encouraging conclusion,[2] for Moodie goes on to present infant mortality rates for the northern division of the Territory and the Territory as a whole which indicate very little decline in the high mortality levels observed in the late 1950s (Jones, 1963:93-9).

Year	Infant mortality rates		
	Northern Division	Central Division	Northern Territory
1958-60*	122	208	145
1965†	114	201	144
1966†	111	216	149
1967†	105	95	101
1965-7†	110	168	131

* Jones (1963: 93-9) † Moodie (1969: 182).

[2] Nor is it a conclusion that agrees with the assumptions used in the projection below. As Tables 4·13 and 4·14 indicate, it is assumed that the mortality experience of Aborigines in the Northern Territory is less favourable than in Western Australia, Queensland and New South Wales. The differences in the proportion aged 0-4 in each state indirectly support this assumption, although differences in fertility also probably play a part.

The picture given by these statistics indicates a minimal decline in infant mortality between 1958 and 1967. The 1967 figures, if reliable, suggest the beginning of an improvement. The infant mortality rate for 1968 was even lower—81 per 1,000 live births. However, this improvement does not seem to have continued. Although in 1969 the total infant mortality rate in the Northern Territory (for Aborigines and non-Aborigines combined) continued to fall, the rate has since increased sharply. In Federal Parliament on 26 October 1971, Dr Richard Klugman stated that whereas infant mortality in Central Australia was 89 per 1,000 live births in 1969, in 1970 it more than doubled, to 182 per 1,000. In 1971 the rate was even higher, 200 per 1,000. Unless a large number of infant deaths went unrecorded in previous years, such a reversal in trends indicates that the causes of infant and childhood mortality among Aborigines are not under control, and that health and nutrition standards are far below what would be tolerated by white Australians.

Continued high mortality in the Territory is also indicated by the raw figures for births, deaths and total population presented in the annual reports of the Welfare Branch of the Northern Territory Administration (Annual Reports 1965-66; 1966-67; 1967-68), which give the following crude rates:

Year	Crude birth rate*	Crude death rate*	Rate of natural increase*
1965	30	16	14
1966	40	18	22
1967	39	19	20
1965-7	36	18	18

* Per 1,000 mean population in each calendar year.

These rates may be compared with those for the period 1956-60 (Jones, 1965:241), when the crude birth rate averaged only 28 per 1,000 (reflecting the lower level of fertility at that time) and the crude death rate was 16 per 1,000, slightly below that for the period 1965-7. Thus, the higher rate of natural increase has resulted not from a decline in mortality but from rising fertility.

Data on infant mortality in other parts of Australia are meagre. A recent figure is available for Walgett, in western New South Wales, where in 1967 Kalokerinos (1969:185) counted 45 infant deaths among 515 Aboriginal births, an infant mortality rate of 87 per 1,000 live births.

(These numbers relate to births and deaths between 1957 and 1967.) This is over four times the national average for non-Aboriginal Australians in 1966 (*Demography 1966*:121), although little more than double the rate for non-Aborigines in Walgett (35 per 1,000 over the same period). To some extent the high infant mortality rate of Aborigines can be attributed to their low degree of urbanisation, since infant death rates are higher in rural areas, even among the non-Aboriginal population.

The earlier study (Jones, 1970) assumed a life expectancy at birth for the full-blood population of about fifty years, an infant mortality rate of about 135 per 1,000 live births, and a childhood mortality (children 1 to 4 years) of around 22 per 1,000. These rates were based on the mortality of Aborigines in the Northern Territory between 1958 and 1960. For mixed-blood Aborigines, where the evidence is almost non-existent, a mortality experience similar to that among New Zealand Maoris in the mid-1950s was assumed and a model life-table yielding an expectation of life at birth of 60·4 years was applied (United Nations, Department of Social and Economic Affairs, 1956:81).

As in the case of the fertility schedules, state-by-state estimates of mortality were made by weighting the survival ratios for full-bloods and mixed-bloods according to the relative proportion of each group in the Aboriginal population of each state in 1961.

It must be stressed that these schedules are derived systematically from prior assumptions about the relative levels of mortality as between full-bloods and mixed-bloods. Consequently, states with high proportions of mixed-bloods in 1961 have lower mortality than those with high proportions of full-bloods. This seems a reasonable assumption but cannot be supported by direct evidence. Until a question on race is added to vital registration forms, it will not be possible to make more than reasoned guesses about the pattern of Aboriginal mortality, except in the Northern Territory. The Minister-in-Charge of Aboriginal Affairs (Mr W. C. Wentworth), in response to a question by Mr K. Beazley, indicated a concern with this issue (Australia, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 1 May 1968), but no action has so far been taken to provide reliable information on birth and death registrations for Aborigines.

It is likely that mortality, particularly at young ages, will decline. The rates chosen imply similar mortality experience for New South Wales and Victoria, higher mortality in South Australia and Queensland, higher mortality again in Western Australia, and the highest mortality of all in the Northern Territory. In other words, mortality is assumed to decline as the degree of urbanisation increases.

Table 4.13: *Male survival ratios used for projecting the Aboriginal population*

Age group	Survival ratios by state					
	New South Wales	Victoria	Queens-land	South Australia	Western Australia	Northern Territory
(Births)	(·9438)	(·9438)	(·9070)	(·9070)	(·8877)	(·8703)
0–4	·9818	·9818	·9708	·9708	·9648	·9584
5–9	·9937	·9937	·9909	·9909	·9893	·9876
10–14	·9928	·9928	·9900	·9900	·9884	·9867
15–19	·9893	·9893	·9848	·9848	·9824	·9798
20–24	·9873	·9873	·9819	·9819	·9789	·9758
25–29	·9866	·9866	·9811	·9811	·9781	·9748
30–34	·9849	·9849	·9792	·9792	·9760	·9725
35–39	·9808	·9808	·9746	·9746	·9711	·9671
40–44	·9728	·9728	·9658	·9658	·9617	·9575
45–49	·9596	·9596	·9516	·9516	·9469	·9419
50–54	·9400	·9400	·9306	·9306	·9250	·9189
55–59	·9098	·9098	·8985	·8985	·8919	·8847
60–64	·8639	·8639	·8502	·8502	·8423	·8338
65–69	·7963	·7963	·7794	·7794	·7698	·7598
70–74	·7012	·7012	·6816	·6816	·6708	·6594
75 and over	·5000	·5000	·5000	·5000	·5000	·5000
Expectation of life at birth*	65·3	65·3	58·4	58·4	56·0	53·7
Mortality level*	E21	E21	E18	E18	E17	E16

* For explanation, see text.

The survival ratios shown in Tables 4.13 and 4.14 were derived by progressive modification from a life-table constructed from recorded mortality rates for Northern Territory Aborigines between 1958 and 1960 (Jones, 1965). However, it is of some interest to compare them with the more extensive sets of life-tables prepared by Coale and Demeny (1966). The family of life-tables which closest resemble the pattern of Aboriginal mortality is the East Family, based mainly on Eastern European mortality experience in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This family of life-tables is characterised by high mortality rates in infancy and at ages over 50 (Coale and Demeny, 1966:12). The level of the most similar Coale and Demeny life-table, including the expectation of life at birth, is given in the last two rows of these tables.

To illustrate the close fit between the Coale-Demeny rates and the rates used to project the mortality experience of Aboriginal Australians,

Table 4.14: *Female survival ratios used for projecting the Aboriginal population*

Age group	Survival ratios by state					
	New South Wales	Victoria	Queens-land	South Australia	Western Australia	Northern Territory
(Births)	(·9535)	(·9535)	(·9208)	(·9208)	(·9036)	(·8882)
0-4	·9844	·9844	·9731	·9731	·9669	·9607
5-9	·9948	·9948	·9914	·9914	·9895	·9874
10-14	·9941	·9941	·9906	·9906	·9886	·9865
15-19	·9914	·9914	·9865	·9865	·9838	·9809
20-24	·9896	·9896	·9839	·9839	·9807	·9771
25-29	·9884	·9884	·9826	·9826	·9792	·9756
30-34	·9868	·9868	·9811	·9811	·9777	·9739
35-39	·9841	·9841	·9783	·9783	·9749	·9710
40-44	·9788	·9788	·9727	·9727	·9691	·9650
45-49	·9700	·9700	·9631	·9631	·9589	·9543
50-54	·9570	·9570	·9482	·9482	·9433	·9377
55-59	·9351	·9351	·9238	·9238	·9175	·9104
60-64	·8971	·8971	·8825	·8825	·8743	·8653
65-69	·8345	·8345	·8162	·8162	·8059	·7948
70-74	·7422	·7422	·7197	·7197	·7073	·6940
75 and over	·5000	·5000	·5000	·5000	·5000	·5000
Expectation of life at birth*	70·0	70·0	62·5	62·5	60·0	57·5
Mortality level*	E21	E21	E18	E18	E17	E16

* For explanation, see text.

the correlation coefficient between the rates shown on Tables 4.13 and 4.14 and the rates given by Coale and Demeny can be calculated. For Aboriginal males in Western Australia, the correlation between the survival ratios shown in col. 6 of Table 4.13 and the ratios given in Level E17 of Coale-Demeny is +0·9989. The corresponding calculation for Aboriginal females in New South Wales (col. 2 of Table 4.14) and Level E21 of Coale-Demeny gives a correlation coefficient of +0·9998. Similarly, the mean difference between the two sets of ratios (calculated without respect to sign) is 0·012 for Western Australian Aboriginal males and 0·006 for New South Wales Aboriginal females. Quite obviously, such small overall differences have no major effect on the projection given in Table 4.16. Indeed, since the projection makes no allowance for declines in mortality over the period considered, the rate of growth shown is, if anything, an underestimate.

FUTURE GROWTH

Given the present size, age and sex composition of a population, its future growth is a function of three factors: the level of mortality, the level of fertility, and the rate of migration. The rate of external migration is of course irrelevant to the growth of a racially unique population, except to the extent that intermarriage with persons of other races can be regarded as a form of 'migration' from outside. Very little is known about the rate of racial intermarriage between Aborigines and non-Aborigines, although it should be possible to establish the general pattern from census results by relating the racial origin of husbands and wives.

Migration can of course affect the internal distribution of the Aboriginal population, both between states and between urban and rural areas. Evidence from the 1966 Census shows that although small transfers of Aborigines do occur between states they are two-way movements in which no particular state gains at the expense of another. The state-by-state distribution appears to be relatively stable over time, except for differences in the rate of natural increase (the surplus of births over deaths). This pattern may change now that legal restrictions on movement have been removed—especially if the Northern Territory becomes an Aboriginal 'mecca'.

Within each state the process of urbanisation is associated with net transfers of population from rural to urban areas and with higher rates of natural increase, at least in the short run. However, no explicit account has been taken of urbanisation in this projection. Clearly, the Aboriginal population will become more urbanised as it grows in size, and this will undoubtedly pose problems for the provision of adequate services in smaller country centres (especially housing and employment; see Ch. 5), and for the integration of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal families.

It is a commonplace that mortality control is more easily achieved than fertility control. This is the basic cause of population pressure in developing countries. Among a 'fringe' population such as the Aborigines, mortality control to date has not been very successful. Aboriginal population growth has been achieved, despite high mortality, as a result of high fertility.

Considered as a whole, the Aboriginal population of Australia has not yet begun the demographic transition to low mortality and low fertility. The first stage in this transition will probably be declining mortality, especially at young ages. The rate of decline will depend upon the provision of adequate medical services and the achievement of better nutrition among Aborigines (Jose and Welch, 1970). The first requirement may

be easier to achieve than the second, but mortality control should be readily achieved in an affluent society, *provided* funds and services are made available, and living conditions in settlements and fringe communities are improved.

Fertility control is more complex, and typically takes longer to achieve. Particularly in rural areas, where educational achievements may be low and the workforce underemployed in low-skill occupations, there may be positive advantages in having relatively large families. For example, a large family provides support for parents as they grow older, especially in a population, such as Aborigines, who suffer a much higher rate of morbidity, invalidity, and physical disabilities. For persons with low levels of living and low socio-economic expectations the incremental costs of additional children may be negligible. Moreover, the minority status of Aborigines may in itself be conducive to the continuation of a high fertility pattern (cf. Day, 1968).

Table 4.15 presents some summary statistics relating to the projection, which has been extrapolated to the end of the century simply to give some notion of the growth potential of the Aboriginal population *if* levels of mortality and fertility remain unchanged over the intervening period. Although a projection is not a 'prediction', the mortality and fertility estimates are within the range of recent experience, in other populations as well as among Aborigines. Even if fertility does not remain so high for the next thirty-five years (about two generations in the Aboriginal population), mortality will almost certainly be lower than estimated, at least towards the second half of the period. For example, in New South Wales and Victoria, for which relatively low mortality has been assumed, the survival ratio from birth to the age group 0–4 years is 0·9438. This value shown in the first row of Table 4.13 implies a male infant mortality rate of about 50 per 1,000 live births—a figure more than double the white Australian rate today.

Table 4.15: *Crude birth and death rates* by state, 1966–71*

State	Crude birth rate	Crude death rate	Rate of natural increase
New South Wales	4·9	0·7	4·2
Victoria	5·3	0·6	4·7
Queensland	4·5	1·0	3·5
South Australia	4·5	1·0	3·5
Western Australia	4·2	1·2	3·0
Northern Territory	3·9	1·3	2·6
Australia	4·4	1·0	3·4

* Per 100 total mean population during the period.

According to Table 4.15 the growth rate for the Aboriginal population of Australia as a whole is estimated at 3·4 per cent per annum, implying a doubling of the Aboriginal population by 1986. This rate of growth arises from a crude birth rate (1966-71) of 44 per 1,000 and a crude death rate of 10 per 1,000, rates quite consistent with patterns elsewhere and with the known age structure of the Aboriginal population. The New Zealand Maoris have maintained a comparable rate of growth for the past twenty years.

The results of the projection are given in Table 4.16. It shows that Australia's Aboriginal population will double between 1966 and 1986 and treble by 1996. This means the net addition of about 100,000 Aborigines in the next twenty years, and a further 100,000 in the ten years after that. With half its number under 15 years of age, the Aboriginal population has very high growth potential whatever assumptions about mortality and fertility are made. The projection yields an age structure very like that observed in 1966, with 47·5 per cent under the age of 15 years in 1971, rising slightly over the period of the projection. In New South Wales and Victoria, where extremely rapid growth rates are expected, the proportions under 15 are even higher (around 51-52 per cent). These are almost identical with the figures observed in the 1966 Census.

Table 4.16: *Estimates of the future growth of the Aboriginal population to the year 2001*

Year	New South Wales	Victoria	Queensland	South Australia	Western Australia	Northern Territory	Australia
				Number			
1966	20,601	2,707	23,040	6,584	21,146	22,306	96,632
1971	25,509	3,428	27,492	7,819	24,588	25,380	114,510
1976	31,435	4,355	33,047	9,352	28,936	28,988	136,463
1981	39,504	5,502	40,010	11,266	34,437	33,337	164,478
1986	49,217	6,884	48,563	13,608	41,169	38,509	195,452
1991	61,318	8,584	58,909	16,445	49,241	44,494	239,606
1996	76,447	10,721	71,415	19,880	58,916	51,393	289,515
2001	95,390	13,417	86,614	24,058	70,594	59,384	350,346
				Growth Index			
1966	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
1971	124	127	119	119	116	114	119
1976	153	161	143	142	137	130	141
1981	192	203	174	171	163	149	170
1986	239	254	211	207	195	173	202
1991	298	317	256	250	233	199	248
1996	371	396	310	302	279	230	300
2001	463	496	376	365	334	266	363

Table 4.17: *Age structure of the estimated Aboriginal population, 1971, 1986 and 2001*

Year and age group	New South Wales	Victoria	Queens-land	South Australia	Western Australia	Northern Territory	Australia
1971							
0-14	51·1	51·4	48·4	47·8	46·2	43·5	47·5
15-29	25·4	26·3	25·0	25·2	24·3	23·9	24·7
30-44	13·4	12·3	13·9	14·2	14·0	15·9	14·2
45-59	6·5	7·1	7·8	8·0	8·8	10·6	8·3
60 and over	3·6	3·0	4·9	4·8	6·7	6·2	5·2
1986							
0-14	51·9	53·6	49·1	48·4	47·7	43·0	48·4
15-29	25·8	24·9	26·3	26·4	26·3	27·1	26·2
30-44	12·7	12·7	13·4	13·7	13·6	14·6	13·5
45-59	6·4	5·6	7·1	7·4	7·4	9·2	7·4
60 and over	3·2	3·2	4·1	4·2	4·9	6·1	4·5
2001							
0-14	52·0	52·1	49·2	48·8	48·0	43·6	48·9
15-29	26·1	26·8	26·4	26·3	26·5	26·3	26·3
30-44	12·8	12·3	14·0	14·1	14·4	16·3	14·1
45-59	6·1	6·0	6·8	7·0	7·1	8·4	6·9
60 and over	3·1	2·8	3·6	3·8	4·0	5·4	3·8

In view of the fact that the projection implies a crude death rate of about 10 per 1,000 and an infant mortality rate (for Australia as a whole) of approximately 90 per 1,000, it is clear that even if fertility rates fall, declining mortality will probably be sufficient to maintain high growth rates over the foreseeable future.

Moreover, the more inclusive race question used in the 1971 Census will probably result in an increased number of persons identifying as Aborigines. If so, these estimates will need rescaling. If estimates by state authorities are correct (Table 4.1, 1966c), and if there were as many as 120,000 Aborigines in 1966, then all these estimates will need to be scaled upwards, to about 443,000 persons by the year 2001. Assuming a continued growth of the non-Aboriginal population of a little less than 2 per cent a year (1 per cent natural increase, plus 1 per cent migration), Aborigines will by then account for at least 2 per cent of the total population, compared with about one per cent now.

In summary, it is likely that the 1966 Census results provide a reasonably complete enumeration of Australia's identifiable Aboriginal population and is at worst 90 per cent complete. On this assumption, some

upward adjustment of the projection may be warranted, to perhaps 400,000. The important point, however, is that whatever the precise size of Australia's Aboriginal population, it will at least double in size within twenty years, and treble within thirty. The rapidity of this growth, combined with the young age structure of the Aboriginal population, spotlight the crucial areas for effective social policies. High fertility and high rates of dependency already strain inadequate, and sometimes non-existent, health, education, housing and welfare services. The cost of implementing effective policies for Aboriginal advancement is undoubtedly high, but it is, as Schapper (1970:133-6) has convincingly argued, preferable on all counts—except short-run financial costs—to the present patchwork system which has maintained Aboriginal Australians as outcast dependants. The cost of advancement now is high, but it is less than it will be at any time in the next few decades.

5 TOWARDS A SOCIAL POLICY

The development of coherent social policies involves description, explanation, evaluation, and utilisation. This chapter focuses on descriptive data in the form of social indicators that are necessary for understanding the position of Aborigines in Australian society. Indeed, this whole book emphasises the need to clarify the true status of Aborigines because such information is a precondition to efficient progress toward betterment. It is also necessary to record in a systematic and orderly way the form, magnitude and trend of investment by state and commonwealth governments in Aboriginal betterment.

A LAST CHANCE FOR OBSCURANTISM

We have repeatedly referred to the administrative obscurantism that clouds and frustrates objective analysis, interpretation, or even the location of responsibility for Aboriginal welfare. Obscurantism overhangs any attempt to estimate how seriously governments take their obligations to Aborigines and what kinds of resources in personnel and funds they are prepared to commit. That governmental services allocated to Aborigines are often archaic, inadequate, and inappropriate is certain. In Western Australia the now-defunct Department of Native Welfare has been characterised as 'unprofessional, unspecialised [and] multi-functional' with a dearth of personnel in special, administrative and professional categories (Schapper, 1970:86-7). A good indicator of commitment would be the degree to which persons providing services for Aborigines were professionally qualified in their respective fields. An additional

criterion of competence in knowledge about Aborigines and, where appropriate, their languages, would suggest whether personnel were being mobilised for a clearly understood task which was taken seriously.

Without reliable and continuous descriptive information on social problems, the development of coherent social policies is impossible. Policy proceeds in a knowledge vacuum and there is therefore no reliable method of evaluating the effect of social policy in inducing social change or of evaluating the results of planned social intervention. The concept of economic indicators has long been widely accepted as a means of monitoring the performance of the economic sector of society. The concept of social indicators reflects a growing conviction that governments must act increasingly in the social, as well as the economic, field. Social indicators are sometimes collected in advance of adequate theories to integrate them, but the collection of systematic data contributes to a clearer understanding of the underlying processes and their importance for policy. Explanation, which links indicators into a coherent causal system, builds upon description. However, social intervention cannot await the development of such a body of knowledge, but must be made on the best available information. Future decisions can, hopefully, be made with better information and greater understanding.

It is obvious that bringing together reliable and meaningful information about the position of Aboriginal Australians in contemporary society is far from easy. The general absence of adequate information is itself an indicator of established neglect and lack of constructive purpose on the part of governments. Throughout this century the most important inventories of social information—the census system and the system of vital registrations—have failed to provide comprehensive and reliable data about Aborigines. Given the lack of such data, whether on economic participation, health, or welfare, one might expect the reports of agencies specifically entrusted with the care of Aborigines to fill the gap and to provide faithful inventories of the Aboriginal condition. That expectation is unfulfilled. The annual reports of Aboriginal Boards in the states and the Northern Territory are notable for their incompleteness, non-comparability, and self-serving blandness. The reports, if any, of missions are less useful, if possible. No public reports at all are expected from cattle stations and similar settlements where numbers of Aborigines live and work.

Budgetary routines should make it easy to extract from public records the total size of government investment and financial allocations, but in no case are confident estimates possible. In part this is due to the fact that non-governmental agencies such as missions and cattle station

managers have been subsidised to provide services to Aborigines without requiring public proof of performance or financial responsibility. Funds are commingled, the contribution of Aboriginal work to the operation of a mission is not costed, and monetary proceeds from Aboriginal output generally go 'to the Mission funds or to consolidated revenue' (Gibb, 1971:39). 'The best [Aboriginal] workers often become important if not essential to the continued operation of the Missions and Settlements' (Gibb, 1971: 40). In other words Aborigines are locked into highly segregated and specialised institutions either because they are competent, or because they are incompetent. Proper accounting would prevent the competent worker from being institutionalised and would provide commensurate rewards. Responsible Ministers should require a full and continuing summary of fund allocations and disposal, including enough retrospective information to establish trend lines.

Despite the fact that high mortality rates among infants and young children are recognised by Aborigines themselves, by medical authorities, by administrators, by politicians, and even by the general public, no mortality data are ordinarily published in official reports. So far as one can judge from such documents there is no program of policy evaluation or any effort to assess the impact of administrative measures on the most elementary facts of life, including life itself. As indicated by their own reports, officials and public servants charged with the welfare of Aborigines lack the information to estimate accurately the magnitude of their tasks and responsibilities, and no one has the information with which to evaluate the performance of civil servants or missionaries. The management of a rubbish tip is more carefully monitored.

With the abolition of specialised Aboriginal Welfare Boards (or their equivalents) in most states, there is a risk that even the meagre data currently available will be lost or obscured. There is growing recognition that the system whereby Aborigines were dealt with almost exclusively by multi-functional native welfare boards gave Aborigines a lower level of service than that afforded to white Australians. Under the emergent system this will be changed. For example, if an Aboriginal family has a housing need, it will be met by the same housing authority as any other eligible Australian family. The same administrative procedures will be followed with health needs and with unemployment.[1] However, this

[1] The recent Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act in Western Australia embodies these concepts and also provides for an Aboriginal Advisory Council and an Aboriginal Land Trust. If the concepts are backed by funds the impact on Aboriginal welfare should be profound. *Canberra Times*, 8 July 1972.

shift to consolidated administration and consolidated records raises the risk that the inferior status of Aborigines will be submerged in general statistics dealing with the total population. The needs of Aboriginal people may be underestimated rather than revealed and perhaps not met with the necessary urgency that betterment requires.

One obvious solution to this problem is to require authorities, state and federal, to collect routine information on the race of their clients. We have already urged this in the case of vital registrations, but we believe that the need is no less urgent in those institutions responsible for the welfare of Australian citizens. It is hard to see how a government charged with making special provision for Aboriginal welfare can discharge that responsibility without such information.

To ask questions about race may seem to be racist. Indeed a decade ago some minority leaders in the United States were demanding that any reference to race be expunged from official records. The more sophisticated leaders have now changed their position, realising that without information on ethnic and racial inequality pressure for improvement can more easily be turned aside. Both Mexican Americans and blacks are now criticising undercounts of their respective groups, and are arguing that unless the true numbers are known insufficient resources, and resources of the wrong kind, will be allocated. Aboriginal leaders would be warranted in making similar assertions.

MIGRANTS AS COMPETITORS

Recent expenditures by governments on Aboriginal advancement have increased to fairly substantial levels. But for years Australian governments have spent much larger sums on sponsored immigration while Aboriginal Australians were degraded and dispossessed. In competition with imported settlers Aborigines have come a poor second.[2] Rowley (1972:12) and Schapper (1970:110–43) have both contrasted generous expenditure on migration with the lack of money spent on Aboriginal advancement, and have called for a once-and-for-all effort to divert funds from migrants to Aborigines, arguing that a large investment should be made now to overcome problems that will otherwise worsen before they begin to improve—especially in view of current rates of population growth.

[2] The total number of Aborigines is approximately equal to the average annual intake of immigration since the end of World War II, that is, roughly one-twenty-fifth the size of post-war immigration.

While this call rests on a sound assessment of national priorities, it does not explicitly take account of the fact that many immigrants are direct competitors with Aborigines for jobs, services, and scarce resources. Lately it has been recognised that immigrants place a heavy burden on the infrastructure of the state. Bringing in more immigrants requires more capital investment for schools, houses, hospitals, roads and other services as well as specialised facilities to assist their adjustment to Australian society. The Aborigines are present; they are non-optional members of the society. In the narrowest economic interest it is wasteful not to offer them the opportunity to contribute their potential to the country. It seems downright foolish to introduce, at considerable expense, competing immigrant labour when indigenous labour is not fully utilised.

Darwin, for example, has both a large immigrant and a large Aboriginal population. According to the 1966 Census, about 11 per cent of the male population came from Italy, Greece, Spain, or Yugoslavia. Most of such immigrants probably worked in unskilled, semi-skilled or service occupations, a pattern typical of other urban areas. These are precisely the kinds of jobs into which Aborigines might move, but by importing unskilled labour the Australian government creates a situation of job competition in a region where Aborigines are concentrated and underemployed. In short, unskilled immigrant labour is a direct impediment to the integration of Aborigines in the labour force (cf. Gibb, 1971:68).

Indirectly immigrants compete, and compete successfully, with Aborigines for remedial education facilities. The funds allocated to special education programs for migrants greatly exceed the sum allocated to remedial education for Aborigines. In the case of migrants there is a clearly recognised and formulated need; in the case of Aborigines the need is vaguely appreciated and loosely described. Migrants are present in Australia as a result of open political decisions and governmental investment. The immigration policy has a powerful momentum and the migrants themselves are becoming a political force, as they have every right to be. Furthermore, the government sees the need to protect investment in migrants.

Aborigines are not seen in the same light. The merit of sponsoring Aborigines as if they were migrants is apparent (Chapter 3), and the diversion of some funds from additional sponsored immigration towards Aboriginal advancement commends itself not only on intrinsic humanitarian considerations as a means of rectifying the inferior status of Aborigines, but also on economic and labour force grounds.

SEGREGATED SETTLEMENTS

Settlements, the home of perhaps 50,000 Aborigines, are a relic of the past. According to Stanner (1969:45), 'there was no more terrible part of our 19th century story than the herding together of broken tribes, under authority, and yoked by new regulations, into settlements and institutions as substitute homes'. Some settlements have disappeared as Aborigines died or moved to the fringes of white society. Others have developed into communities and Aboriginal towns (Cawte, 1972:51). But others are little more than feeding posts *cum* detention centres, where people lie in the sand and dust and the only modern buildings are the police station and lockup, and a few European-style houses for white policemen and visiting civil servants (Australia, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 26 October 1971:2500).

In the middle of 1972 there were probably between 120,000 and 140,000 Aborigines in Australia. Of these about a third lived in settlements.

> Such institutional communities include not only the missions properly so called—communities established by church authorities and run by missionaries—but those established or taken over by government departments or boards and staffed with resident full-time officials. (Long, 1970:1)

The proportion of Aborigines living in such communities varies markedly by regions, and is highest where the full-blood population is largest—in the Northern Territory, Queensland, and South Australia, but not Western Australia. In the 1950s the Commissioner of Native Welfare in Western Australia, S.G. Middleton, pursued an assimilationist policy in which government settlements were shut down and Aborigines encouraged to settle in white communities.

Two broad categories of settlements can be distinguished: those in the more densely populated southern and eastern parts of the continent and those in the north where there are few whites.

> The first category includes all the exclusively or predominantly part-Aboriginal communities. They are located in sheep and agricultural country, not in metropolitan areas, but most are not far from towns and most are to some extent integrated into the local communities. They were established to provide for the needs of Aborigines and part-Aborigines . . . who had been exploited and demoralised by contact and were living in unsightly, unhealthy and disorderly fringe camps. Some were originally started by mission organisations but today all are administered by State government authorities. . . .
>
> The settlements in the sparsely populated north have almost wholly Aboriginal populations and a large proportion are administered by missions, rather than by governments. . . .

> Most of the communities in the remote north are largely self-contained. They are isolated physically by distance and poor communications from the society outside and the residents for the most part find their employment, their recreation, and their education on the settlement, and are born and die there. (Long, 1970:5-6)

Settlements of this kind cannot prepare Aborigines for integration in the wider Australian community. They are a legacy of outmoded views about the survival capacity of Aboriginal Australians, and their continued existence owes little to independent decisions by Aborigines and much to judgments by bureaucrats and churches—judgments made decades and sometimes generations ago. They are 'well suited to maintaining [Aborigines] . . . in their present socio-economic condition which is dependency and subsistence, and to sheltering them from personally harmful influences, such as alcoholism and prostitution' (Schapper, 1970:34).

Settlements cannot be abolished overnight but their continued existence should be made dependent upon the demonstration of two necessary conditions: (1) that they serve the long-term interest of the Aboriginal people rather than administrative convenience, historical accident or the preferences of missionaries and churches; and (2) that Aborigines are significantly involved in their local government, with Europeans acting as resource persons and not as controllers.

We considered but rejected a third condition: that the settlement should have some prospect of economic viability. The word economic may over-emphasise short-run considerations and inappropriate cultural preconceptions. The worth or worthlessness of a residential situation should be evaluated primarily on its merits as a living and learning environment where healthy persons can develop their personal resources and can achieve social competence (Schapper, 1970). Undeniably this must involve enhancing the capacity of individuals to develop marketable skills and to cope with productive work. But to require whole communities to become self-sustaining and economically competitive in a market economy is unrealistic and potentially destructive of personal adequacy.

For demographic reasons, and because of the heritage of past neglect, Aboriginal communities will for decades into the future include a disproportionate number of dependent persons (see Chapter 4). The level of living must be raised so that the most competent persons will not be defeated by the weight of social and economic burdens imposed upon them by their numerous kin, near-kin and neighbours. In other words civic and social criteria must prevail over a balance-sheet mentality that would rigorously test each settlement against a strict economic standard. Perhaps it should be recalled that the performance of the Australian

economy is hedged about with such countervailing considerations as the protection of marginal industries and the maintenance of foreign exchange rates favourable to exporters of primary products. The same ability to subordinate *laissez-faire* principles would improve the likelihood of achieving a successful Aboriginal policy.

Economic viability is one of several *long*-term criteria for assessing how long settlements ought to survive, but it cannot be an overriding immediate consideration. It may be that the idea of independent development is an exercise in self-delusion and that only one realistic goal remains: full absorption into European society. But it is not known how many Aborigines share that goal and with how much enthusiasm, or how clearly they perceive the alternatives. Probably only those Aborigines living on reserves, settlements and stations have any choice left, but their choices, informed by as much relevant information as possible about available alternatives and available support, should take priority over the choices of non-Aborigines, whose folk wisdom has proved wrong and counterproductive.

ABORIGINES AS ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Emphasising the role that Aborigines must play in determining their future does not imply that after two centuries of uninvited intervention governments should passively wait for Aborigines to map out their own futures before attempting to rectify past actions which transformed them from 'semi-nomadic hunters to sedentary unskilled labourers and from freely self-determining persons to degraded dependants' (Schapper, 1970:141). We seek only to stress the difference between partnership and paternalism, between joint determination and token consultation. It would be better if Aborigines had programs of their own, tightly formulated and rigorously argued. But governments can strive to do the next best thing: to propose carefully spelt out alternatives to which Aborigines could critically respond and from which Aboriginal individuals and groups could learn and choose. The fact of discovering that there are alternatives to malnutrition, illiteracy, powerlessness, and helplessness would be a first step towards renewed self-confidence.

Irrespective of their proponents, plans require systematic information if they are to be coherent and workable. It would not harm the cause of clarity if policy makers and their executors were obliged to justify their propositions to their clients. Or is it expected that Aborigines should establish their own bureau of statistics and their own vital statistics

registry and workforce survey, agencies recognised as essential tools for managing advanced societies and for understanding how well or how poorly they are functioning?

For too long Aborigines have been the objects of the acts of whites and the subjects of the words of whites. Rarely have Aborigines been able to react effectively to the impact of white society and almost never have they initiated sustained efforts to influence their own destiny, efforts that could be characterised as implemented policy. In a sense the *ad hoc* treatment they have received has elicited extemporised *ad hoc* responses geared to the immediate situation and apparently to superficial day-to-day adjustments. Deeper responses or longer-term task-oriented responses are simply not examined. It is hard to believe that they are non-existent. The demonstrative behaviour of the Aboriginal 'Embassy' movement in 1972 was unique in its duration and the amount of public attention it attracted. That the symbolic thrust was clearer than the programmatic detail does not gainsay the effectiveness of the movement.

An increasing number of public displays oriented to slogans about black power and land rights can be anticipated and future movements and public reactions to them should be carefully observed while they are going on, as the Embassy movement should have been observed but was not. The model of the mass observation studies is especially appropriate. Strongly toned, verbal behaviour such as threatening, fearful, or wishful predictions of violence should be studied as indicators of the height of feeling, and the sources of predictions should be identified if possible because of their bearing on political motives and action.

Collective behaviour can be more important for its secondary than for its primary effects or, as is sometimes said in sociological terminology, for its latent rather than manifest functions. For example, a land rights demonstration may have little or no influence on land rights but it may have an impact on one or more of the following tendencies:

1. Increased Aboriginal self-awareness and self-confidence.
2. A broadened Aboriginal identity.
3. Creation of conditions for more durable relations among Aborigines and their mobilisation in organisations.
4. Crystallising of competition between Aborigines and between Aboriginal organisations.
5. Increased awareness of Aborigines and their plight with consequent sympathy (or resentment) from whites.
6. Widening or narrowing of support for Aboriginal causes among non-Aborigines.

Organisations with a strong interest in or antipathy toward Aborigines deserve continuous sociological monitoring because for the foreseeable future non-Aboriginal organisations will continue to be highly influential in determining the fate of Aborigines. In the past Aborigines themselves have been weakly organised, a condition to be expected of a widely dispersed population with low educational qualifications and historically a low level of political involvement. The organisations should be examined to understand the following characteristics: the role, if any, of whites, the size and breadth of the membership base, the source of leadership and financial support, stability of membership and of active participants, the degree of overlapping membership between organisations, and the extent and kind of co-operation or competition between organisations. This sort of information needs to be at least tentatively assessed before one can pay more than lip service to the often-expressed notion that Aborigines should 'decide' what is going to happen to them.

When the attitudes of Aborigines are discussed it is tacitly assumed that a coherent and clearly formulated consensus exists. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact the opinions of Aborigines have never been ascertained on any topic that bears upon their present life styles and life chances. Aborigines have been studied for the most part to extract the specialised knowledge of which Aborigines are the unique custodians. Because the conventional informant role, which Aborigines share with the descendants of many other preliterate peoples, is essentially backward looking, it has limited benefit for living Aborigines and their descendants. While no one can deny the value of preserving as much as possible of knowledge that is rapidly disappearing, thus far little thought has been given to considering how and whether traditional knowledge could be turned to the benefit of Aborigines or to the society as a whole.

Much is known about traditional Aboriginal kinship, less is known about contemporary Aboriginal kinship patterns, and little or nothing is known about the present Aboriginal view of Australian society and of the Aborigines' place in it. Few scholars have tried to tap the living memories of Aborigines to discover the unwritten history of the *recent* past. Anthropologists are more interested in the day before yesterday than in yesterday but yesterday is more instructive about today. If more Aborigines had a reasonably high level of literacy the deficiency might be smaller. At least today can be studied today, hopefully by Aborigines as well as by others and for Aborigines as well as for scholarship.

A study of the images of Australia perceived by Aborigines, compared

with white immigrants and compared with white non-immigrants, would have significant documentary and policy value. Similarly, measures of personal competence and alienation would also be instructive. The intending researcher knows that Aborigines have not been studied much along these lines because it is difficult and costly to do so and because most researchers have been interested in other things. Many difficulties could, however, be surmounted with small, purposive samples and relatively modest question formats. The studies should enlist the active participation of Aborigines at all stages and in all roles of the research enterprise. In other words Aborigines must be graduated from their exclusively informant status.

In summary, if Aborigines are to gain a larger role in determining their present and future, light must be thrown on the alternatives available, on Aboriginal perceptions of the alternatives, on the decision-making process and on the ordering of priorities. Aborigines need this information no less than do responsible governments. The answers will be difficult and expensive to learn, and the lessons will be hard and perhaps painful to follow. There are no cheap and easy answers to difficult questions embedded in a matrix of ignorance and neglect.

SOCIAL INDICATORS AND PUBLIC POLICY

It is easier to suggest social indicators than to lay down a program for their measurement, evaluation and utilisation in public policy. Until an adequate system of social indicators is available, policy decisions will continue to be extemporised on the basis of incomplete knowledge and unformulated priorities, but the area of uncertainty should be made as small as possible as fast as possible (Schapper, 1970:111-43). However, even if a system of social indicators already existed, disagreement and conflict over goals would remain. There is no consensus among Aboriginal spokesmen or white Australians about the kinds of social change that should be encouraged. There is especially disagreement about long-term goals such as assimilation, integration, or independent development.

For the reasons indicated in the first chapter of this book, we favour integration. If Aborigines are to achieve equality in their citizenship rights, a degree of integration is essential: integration in the legal system, in the political system, and in the socio-economic system. To share rights equal with those of other Australian citizens presupposes integration in the major subsystems of the society. It is meaningless to talk about equal citizenship without common participation.

Intervening in social processes requires an understanding of their causal interrelationships. The principle of the interrelations among factors involved in the status of minorities has long been recognised (Myrdal, 1944: 75-8, 1065-70). The complexity of social processes is at once the despair of those striving to contribute to Aboriginal advancement, an excuse for those who believe or prefer to believe that efforts will not be rewarded, and a methodological difficulty for those who design and interpret social indicators. Because life is complicated, simplistic explanations and solutions offer a ready substitute for adequate diagnosis. While not minimising the problems, we believe a start must be made.

From the standpoint of an informed social policy, the major task is to identify points in the chains of causation where intervention will produce quick and lasting social change. Some handicaps, for example poor health and poor housing, present problems so poignant that they command maximum effort on humanitarian grounds irrespective of their origin or longer-term consequences. No one is willing to recommend that many Aborigines should die young, should experience life-long poor health or should live in sub-human conditions; but in fact they do. If these disabilities were ameliorated, visibly good deeds would have been done.

Health, housing, and education make up a complex of interrelated factors that mutually reinforce one another. Poor health is often caused by poor housing, and poor health retards future growth, mental as well as physical. Moreover, whatever happens in the schools is likely to be wasted unless a parallel effort is directed to improving the home environment. It is a well established fact among white populations that educational performance is a function not only of innate intelligence and educational exposure, but also of the reinforcement that a child gets from the home. To make effective gains in health, housing, or education, inputs are needed in all three areas simultaneously.

HEALTH

As already pointed out, many Aborigines experience poor health throughout their lives. Poor health is transmitted from generation to generation through poor nutrition, an impoverished environment, and inadequate medical services. Recent research points to profound and lasting relations between maternal nutrition and foetal development. If the mother lacks adequate protein calcium nutrition in middle to late pregnancy, or if an infant's nutrition is deficient in the first few months after birth, lasting brain damage will result. Children will never fulfil their genetic potential

and their social competence will be similarly reduced (Brown, 1966; Dubos, 1968:85-7). They will be burdens to themselves, their group, and the larger society to which they belong, instead of contributors to them. These and other facts underscore the need to improve maternal and infant nutrition.

As a result of European contact, Aborigines subsist on poor Australian diets in common with other poor Australians. The nutritional status of both groups needs measurement and correction. The construction of nutritional indicators is within the capacity of the health sciences; the improvement of nutritional standards is within the capacity of an affluent society. A recent national seminar on Aboriginal health services (*Medical Journal of Australia*, Vol. 2, 59th year, 23 September 1972:693-4, 740) has called for the establishment of a National Advisory Body and the participation of Aboriginal people in health services, regarded too often as an external system over which they have no control. It also stressed the need for adequate statistics on Aboriginal morbidity and mortality, and the need for a comprehensive approach, at the community level, including drastic improvement in education, housing and economic opportunity, as well as in health services.[3]

Indicators of nutritional status for different age and residential groupings are therefore urgently needed. The analysis of such data could lead to programs for raising the nutritional status of Aboriginal and other Australians. No modern society can afford the luxury of explaining away on pseudo-genetic grounds deficiencies which in whole or in large part are demonstrably situational, environmental or nutritional. The nature-nurture argument will go on for a long time. Fuller and more rigorously compiled evidence may suggest that there are residual 'intelligence' differences related to race, but who will come out first on which kind of test and which kind of skill remains uncertain. Any country that pretends to be concerned about its human resources must use the techniques at its command to husband, develop and maximise all the potential of its human resources. This should be done out of enlightened self-interest as well as out of standards of common decency and humanity.

The arguments for morbidity and mortality measures are obvious. Attention should be given to incidence at different ages and to incidence by specified causes. This is already done for the population as a whole

[3] There are specific peculiarities of Aboriginal environments that require measurement—for instance the large dog population which competes efficiently for the scarce protein resources of Aboriginal settlements. The person/dog ratio is one indicator that should be calculated and controlled.

but Aboriginal Australians cannot be distinguished in the total. High rates of premature death identify situations that can be remedied. Morbidity measures should emphasise the identification of debilitating illnesses that can be controlled by public health measures. Such health indicators can guide public health policy and improve the chances for a healthy youth and a productive middle life for Aborigines.

SHELTER

Like health, decent housing is recognised as an elementary right. Aborigines are among the worst housed people in the world. A semi-nomadic population has been transformed into a sedentary one for the convenience of someone else. But the consequences of sedentary life and the conditions for successful adjustment have not been well considered. For example, as late as 1971 the committee to review the situation of Aborigines on pastoral properties in the Northern Territory felt obliged to ask for an expert report on the disposal of excreta (Gibb, 1971: Appendix D).

This book does not document the poor housing conditions of Aboriginal Australians, which accurately reflect their past low earning power and their status in Australian society as economic dropouts and cast-offs. However measured, Aborigines are the poorest housed of all Australians. The structures in which they live are made of the most fragile materials. They are the most segregated group, they have least access to community facilities such as schools, sewerage (but not sewage), rubbish removal (but not rubbish), paved streets (or streets of any kind), reticulated water, or adequate and clean water of any kind. The difference between Aborigines and other Australians in these respects is not accurately known, but it is very great. A clear indication of its magnitude is necessary so as to suggest the investment required to bring Aboriginal housing up to minimal standards. It has been estimated that between $20 million and $30 million would be needed to overcome the immediate housing problems of Aborigines in Western Australia (*Canberra Times*, 10 August 1972). This suggests an Australia-wide cost of between $90 million and $140 million.

Housing indicators present no measurement problems. Over and above the usual categories, attention needs to be given to distinguishing substandard transitory dwellings from substandard dwellings in general. From the standpoint of planning, transitional shelter needs to be distinguished from cast-off housing or housing constructed from cast-off materials. As in the case of nutrition (and clothing) it has too often been assumed that the natural path from nomadic to sedentary life passes

through the rubbish tips of Australia's towns. A clear specification of Aboriginal housing characteristics would pave the way for planned and costed alternatives keyed to specific environments and adjusted to the needs of the residents. Housing should be constructed in such a way that it can be efficiently used by Aborigines and not to standards that require educational skills which they do not possess. Transitional housing should be transitional in the sense that it provides an adequate living environment suitable to Aboriginal needs and capacities at a given time in a given location; it should be a learning environment as well as an amenity.

Unlike health or nutrition, housing directly confronts the problem of segregation. Special attention needs to be given to assessing intergroup tensions and on the basis of that information to encouraging positive social relationships between black and white Australians, especially in country towns where an influx of Aborigines will add to existing problems of limited employment opportunities and residential segregation. Many country towns are economically weak and offer restricted job opportunities to Aborigines and others alike. If governments now attempt to improve the housing of Aborigines in such areas, expressions of overt resentment from unemployed whites can be expected. Moreover, housing once provided constrains future decisions. The location of special housing in towns rather than on reserves or settlements implies a policy of integration, not separate development. The policy issues are considerable but they can be critically examined. The need is urgent and cannot await a leisurely examination.

Adequate health, nutrition, and shelter are basic needs, and Aboriginal Australians should be assisted to reach reasonable levels. Some whites may oppose what they perceive as too great an expenditure, but there can be no doubt that improved standards of health, food and housing are essential and achievable. The Australian economy has been able to provide these, and other, services for almost two million additional settlers since 1947; it should not be too much to do the same for 140,000 Aborigines during the next five years.

EDUCATION

The role of education in Aboriginal advancement is more controversial than health or housing because of its deeper impact on traditional ways of life. As an agency of socialisation, the educational system promises, or threatens, depending on one's orientation, to assimilate Aborigines into the dominant culture. Yet the very fact that black and white Australians

live together within the general framework of a single nation-state forecloses part of the decision about educational participation. Unless Aborigines are to remain social and political outcasts, they must be able to participate on an equal footing in the central institutions of the society. To do that, they must achieve educational levels which permit them to manipulate the symbol-system and the legal-bureaucratic system. There can be no escape from that conclusion, except into a policy of separate, and unequal, development.

Yet to argue for basic rights of equality and to point to the necessity of a basic education designed to equip Aboriginal Australians for participation in the wider society is not to argue for total absorption, or for monolithic and one-way assimilation. Indeed, once equipped for participation some Aborigines may opt for a degree of separation and for the preservation or resurrection of traditional values instead of those of an industrial society. The cultural and political systems of complex societies already contain within them basic oppositions, conflicts, and tensions, institutionalised in politics, the workplace, and the schools. National loyalties intersect with differences in religion, class, age, sex, and ethnic origin. Pressure groups representing sectional interests already abound, and their number has been increased by Aboriginal Australians, themselves divided into factions pressing for divergent and sometimes conflicting goals. That their voices can now be heard reflects the fact that some at least have earned an education that permits them to participate in the dominant system and to express dissenting views about their place in it.

The educational retardation and low educational status of Aboriginal children is documented in Chapter 2. Compensatory education at all levels—for children below school entry age, for those in school, and for adolescents and adults, especially adults interacting with children—is urgently required. The cost will exceed the cost of improving health and housing, the technologies for which already exist. So far as education is concerned, the technology is still developing, although experiments with other socially disadvantaged groups can point the way. While committees do not in themselves solve such problems, they can direct effort, integrate results, and formulate appropriate policies. A research and policy committee is urgently needed within the Department of Education and Science to co-ordinate and stimulate research into the educational needs of Aborigines, especially into the design of special curricula and the training of teachers with special language abilities. As with health and housing, the active involvement of Aborigines in identi-

fying and implementing appropriate educational policies is essential for social planning to be effective. An encouraging amount of research, basic and applied, is under way in the educational field, and basic changes are already being made (Lester, 1972; De Lacey and Taylor, 1972).

JOBS

Jobs and income come last in the chain of causation that maintains Aborigines in a depressed status. In the absence of good health, jobs are uncertain. In the absence of education, unskilled and poorly paid work is the only realistic expectation. In the absence of a living wage, housing will be poor, overcrowded, and insanitary. Poorer health follows as a consequence. And so the chain of causation continues. To break it requires the implementation of the existing network of social services, which means ensuring that those in remote places, whites as well as blacks, receive the social insurance benefits due to them as citizens. It means providing adequate housing suited to people with a different kinship system from white Australians. It means education for adults as well as children to establish confidence, competence and self-respect, and to provide the basis for successful social participation with other Australians. It means providing jobs in rural areas, where the trend is away from labour-intensive to capital-intensive techniques, sometimes for reasons not wholly economic. It means encouraging, perhaps requiring, pastoralists and mining companies to employ local labour in preference to imported labour or labour-saving devices such as helicopters for mustering and extensive fencing for stock control. It means maximum feasible participation on the part of Aboriginal 'clients' and the difficult task of reconciling and resolving basic conflicts among Aborigines themselves as well as between Aborigines and other Australians.

INFORMATION FOR POLICY

Participation in policy formation and implementation requires information on present conditions, on objectives, on intervention measures, and on their effect over time. Without such information public expenditure will be spasmodic, unintegrated and unduly responsive to immediacies which may be counter-productive in the longer run. Decisions about where to provide health services or new housing require data on informed Aboriginal preferences on the relative merits, economic and other, of different sites, data on job opportunities, and data on educational needs. Administrators charged with Aboriginal welfare have operated for two

centuries without the benefit of such information and many decisions cannot await an adequate data base. Nonetheless the basis for informed action must be established now because there is at last a commitment to Aboriginal welfare that can be discharged.

The basic data requirements for developing adequate policies can be outlined in a brief span. Once available, they will serve to clarify social processes which, when related to specified goals, will allow the development of more effective social policies. This discussion has concentrated on health, housing, education and jobs, but indicators of life style and of social and political participation are required as well.

Table 5.1 sets a minimal list of proposed indicators. Some, based on the census and unemployment figures, are already available but in most cases even these indicators suffer from the brevity of time-series and substantial measurement errors, including under-reporting as well as misreporting. They are also based on divergent definitions of who an Aboriginal is. A first need is to establish a common definition: the 1971 Census self-identification question seems to offer the best solution (see Chapter 4).

It is clear that next to income, health information is the least readily available of the information required. Yet health is the field where the need is best recognised and least controversial. Unless race is added to the registration forms used in hospitals or available from state registrars of births and deaths the situation will not improve.

We have indicated the need for information specific to different regions. The needs of Aborigines differ from one region to another and different contexts call for different approaches: the urban slum, the rural fringe, and the remote settlement require different administrative strategies in the provision of health, housing, schools, and jobs.

Much of the necessary information can be provided by the census, but the census is conducted only once in five years, and there is an inevitable lag in processing and releasing such a large body of findings. Data compiled at shorter intervals and with quicker access are also necessary, and simple changes in official record keeping would go far toward satisfying that need. If public instrumentalities, such as hospitals, housing and education authorities, unemployment bureaus, welfare agencies, and local registrars of births, deaths, and marriages differentiated their clients by race, it would provide a routine basis for analysing needs and agency performance.

There would remain the need for occasional special studies and for continuous monitoring of the total Aboriginal population, not just that

part of it which appears in agencies as clients. The Current Population Survey (CPS), conducted quarterly each year by the Bureau of the Census and Statistics, is uniquely capable of developing time-series data, especially on the critically important topic of employment.

At present Aborigines are not identified in the CPS, and there is no way of knowing whether they are under-represented in the sample, as is believed, or grossly under-represented, which is almost certain. As is so often true for Aborigines, surmise substitutes for information. Once a question on racial identification is added to the CPS, attention can be given to ensuring that Aborigines are adequately sampled. Difficulties in using such sample surveys for studying small and atypical parts of the population would require the CPS to make procedural and field adjustments in their operation. Specially trained interviewers, including Aborigines, and a special sample design would be necessary to represent, or for technical reasons to *over*-represent, Aborigines. The CPS uses a sampling fraction of 0·66 per cent (reduced recently from 1·00 per cent). As Aborigines comprise little more than one per cent of the total population, the sampling error for some statistical breakdowns would be unacceptably large. Furthermore, Aborigines tend to be undercounted in many official records. In this respect they resemble minorities in other countries (Sudman, 1972).

Field methods must also be adjusted to overcome problems of rapport and other biasing influences that stem from Aboriginal residence, education, and employment patterns. All of these difficulties can be surmounted by skills that lie within the competence of the CPS, although perhaps not within its current budget. The first few surveys in which Aborigines are identified will uncover the need for further adjustments in field technique, sample design, and analysis, and they will afford invaluable training for future studies. These, however, are the problems of growing knowledge, and are far better than the problems of impacted ignorance. It would be surprising if the first surveys of Aborigines did not suggest topics that call for urgent research.

During the last decade the Australian public has become aware of the poverty, ill-health, and despair to which most Aboriginal Australians are condemned at birth. That awareness has grown out of many events, including black protest. Over a longer period, information compiled by journalists and scholars gradually brought about the recognition that black Australians were living under legal restrictions and social conditions that no white Australian group would tolerate. Now that Aboriginal rights have been legitimated as a public issue, there may be a tendency to

Table 5.1: *Proposed social indicators for Aboriginal policies*

Field	Basic Data*	Proposed Source	Constructed Social Indicators
POPULATION (see Chapters 3 and 4)	Births, deaths, age and sex composition	Vital registrations and Census†	Population growth rates. Age structure. Sex ratios. See also under HEALTH and DEPENDENCY
HEALTH (see Chapter 4)	Number of deaths by age, sex and cause	Vital registrations	Infant mortality rates by sex, cause and geographic area. Maternal death rates by area. Childhood mortality rates by region and cause. Expectation of life at birth, and ages 1, 15, 30, 45 and 60.
	Reportable illnesses	Physicians' and Public Health records	Age specific morbidity rates. Expectation of healthy life at birth.
	Hospital bed occupants by age, sex and cause	Hospital admission records	Hospitalisation rates by age and sex. Hospital admissions and discharges.
DEPENDENCY (see Chapter 3)	Age, sex and family composition	Census and Current Population Survey	Dependency ratio.
HOUSING	Nature of dwelling by number of occupants	Census†	Crowding index by housing type and region.
	Nature of dwelling and nature of occupancy	Census†	Owner-occupancy rates by housing type and region. Classification of dwelling as transitional or non-transitional.
	Number of bedrooms by age of household members, and nature of dwelling	Census†	Crowding index by housing type.
	Material of construction and nature of dwelling	Census†	Quality of material by household type and region. Life expectancy of dwelling.
	Facilities of dwelling	Census†	Availability of town water supply, sewerage, electricity and gas by region. Deficiencies in specified amenities.

Field	Basic Data*	Proposed Source	Constructed Social Indicators
EDUCATION (see Chapter 2)	School enrolments by age, sex, and grade	School statistics	Education participation rates. Rates of retardation as indicated by disparity between age and grade. Rates of dropping out.
	Educational level by age and sex	Census†	Proportion achieving stated levels of achievement by region.
EMPLOYMENT (see Chapter 3)	Occupational status by age and sex	Census† Current Population Survey	Unemployment rates by region and age of worker. Proportion of own-account workers by region and age of worker. Proportion full-time workers.
	Occupation and industry by race, sex, and region	Census† Current Population Survey	Proportions unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled by industry. Industrial concentration.
	Unemployment by sex, age, cause, and duration	Unemployment registrations†	Numbers unemployed by age, sex, and cause. Duration and frequency of unemployment for specific age groups.
INCOME	Earned and unearned income by sex, age, occupation and number of dependants	Census and Current Population Survey	Income and poverty rates.
URBANISATION	Population by age, sex and family status by size of place	Census†	Concentration and segregation rates.

* All basic data would be compiled and classified by race and by region or smaller areas as required.
† Already available in partly usable form.

say that the work of scholarship is finished because the nation has been sensitised to the problems. Money is being made available, reserves are being returned to Aborigines by way of land trusts, legal discrimination is virtually a thing of the past, and the paternalistic, segregated departments of native welfare are being disbanded. To maintain the trend and to give it the most constructive direction requires continuous and searching evaluation of achievement and change. A commitment to betterment is a commitment to knowing exactly what progress is being made and where the national purpose is being frustrated. The mobilisation of detailed, accurate, and up-to-date knowledge about the social condition of Aborigines is essential to the wise, efficient, and economical mobilisation of resources for their benefit.

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Designed by Philippa Walker, AIDIA

Text set in 11 point Bembo one point leaded and printed on 85 gsm Burnie English Finish at The Griffin Press, Adelaide, South Australia

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Printed in Australia
Jacket designed by Philippa Walker
Photograph by Professor W.E.H. Stanner

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Australian National University Press ISBN 0 7081-009-45