

Edited by  
P Loveday

# Service Delivery to Remote Communities



The Australian National University North Australia Research Unit  
Monograph  
Darwin 1982

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 1981 conference of the North Australia Research Unit was held in Darwin in December and it attracted a large number of papers and a critical and constructive audience. Most of the papers are published either in the following pages or in the smaller companion volume on services to Aboriginal outstations, the special topic of the conference.

The success of the conference was ensured by the many people who offered papers - more than the organisers expected - and by the cooperation of the many departments of government, Territorian and Commonwealth, whose senior officers either gave papers or helped NARU staff in the preparation of their papers. To all of them the Unit expresses its indebtedness. The staff also acknowledge their debt to the people, of whom many were Aboriginal, who helped them to gather the data needed for their work.

From an organisational point of view, the success of the conference was also the result of solid preparation by the staff of the Unit - Elaine Sommer, Deborah Wade-Marshall, Colleen Pyne, Jill Risk, Jim Toner and Fred Wright. And finally, we are all very grateful for the help given by Gillian O'Loughlin, Debbie Hill and Gail Hewitt in the preparation of the texts of conference papers for publication.



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P. Loveday

## INTRODUCTION

Services are provided in remote communities in the north of Australia by a variety of agencies, some public, some private. In the remote Aboriginal communities, most are publicly provided by government departments although missions from the various churches - Anglican, Catholic, Uniting and Lutheran - still have a part to play in delivery in some places.

Increasingly, Aboriginal organisations are coming into existence to provide services, often -like the missions - in association with government departments or under governmental statutory authority and funding. Some, such as housing associations, are community based, others are regional or more general still - examples include the Aboriginal Legal Aid Services, Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association and Katherine-based Yulngu, an Aboriginal organisation handling the trust accounts and related affairs of about a dozen small communities in the area. Apart from services provided by 'voluntary' non-government agencies like these and the Uniting Church's Arnhem Land Progress Association (ALPA) for stores, few are channelled through private, especially profit-making, organisations in the remote Aboriginal places.

Many more services are privately provided in the mining towns such as Nhulunbuy (usually with much larger populations), or in small rural centres like Elliott in the Northern Territory, and in the cattle station communities. Of course, there is some government provision in these places, if only because they share in the services provided by communication networks, social security arrangements and so on, but the proportion is lower than in the remote Aboriginal communities which, as the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory observed in opening the conference, form the principal focus of this selection of papers of the conference.

Remoteness, as David Penny pointed out, lies in the eye of the beholder: Australians of British extraction once talked of Britain as 'home' and saw themselves as only temporary residents and today many southerners in the north feel that they too are living in a remote place far from home. Likewise those of us living in Darwin and providing services to places far away in the Territory are likely to think of them as remote - and of Darwin as 'home'. But the Aborigines who live in these places do not see it that way: if they come from the Western District they can feel remote in Alice Springs or if they live in cities like Sydney or Perth they may feel remote from their 'country'. Indeed many white residents of Darwin think that Canberra is remote - and uncaring. Remoteness, in other words, is not simply a matter of being away from a 'home place' and cut off from cultural roots but of being neglected, deprived and subordinated by institutions that have power and are a long way away - not only in distance but culturally as well. It was at this point that Penny made the connection between remoteness, centre and periphery and internal colonialism, referring to C.D. Rowley's work and the implication was that problems of service delivery might be problems of power just as often as they are problems of poor communications.

There are some important similarities between the public and the private provision of services in the different kinds of community. Many of these, however delivered, are not provided for profit and, even when they are, although there is a market for them in the sense that there are shortages of goods and buyers to compete for them, there is often only one seller of the goods. The seller often has a local monopoly even when the service is 'privately' provided.

Another point of importance is that few of the remote communities have local government institutions of the kind generally found elsewhere in Australia: elected councils, municipal administrative staff and legislation for local government. In the Northern Territory the only towns to follow that pattern are Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Darwin itself and, under a special section of the Territory local government legislation (part 20), the Aboriginal community of Lajamanu (Hooker Ck). The section

under which Lajamanu operates is discussed in Bill Coburn's paper in the collection which follows. Several other communities, notably Milikapiti and Angurugu, are on the point of adopting their own local government under this act. Other very small towns, such as Elliott, Adelaide River and Pine Creek in the Northern Territory, have no local government and in the Territory and in the adjoining states of Western Australia and Queensland the mining towns have a variety of special arrangements, entered into not only in recognition of the legal difficulties of providing 'normal' local government in these places but also because 'normal' local government finances would be hopelessly inadequate in these places to provide the level of services needed to attract and retain the mining workforce and to handle the special municipal problems a large scale mining operation entails for a small town. And, finally, 'normal' local government does not exist in many Aboriginal communities of northern Australia. In the Northern Territory there are many communities of 500 to 1500 people and they have a variety of councils, committees and associations for handling their collective affairs - some more active, some less active - almost all of them linked in some way or another with government departments which provide local services and most of them are incorporated under Territory legislation for registering associations. The principal object of this legislation is to enable the registered groups to hold property and receive and disburse funds and to provide for financial accountability and legal responsibility.

Accountability is as much a matter of management as of law and, as regards funds provided by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the paper by Bill Oakes presents a description of the present position. Accountability, as Oakes explains, is an important element in contemporary government self-management policies. The way in which the slogans of self-determination, self-management and, more recently self-reliance and self-sufficiency, have succeeded one another is described in Will Sanders's paper. From an analytic point of view, all of the 'self-' slogans imply approval of greater Aboriginal autonomy, but they all leave the important questions unanswered: autonomy how and in relation to whom and over what? Without autonomy, responsibility is meaningless and it is at this point that the political, the legal and even the accountants' views of business in Aboriginal communities confront one another.

In his address, the Chief Minister touched on this topic in his comment that communities would need a degree of economic independence if they were to have a measure of autonomy - and hence self-management or self-determination. For him 'self-sufficiency' - even if it is incomplete - is a necessary foundation for other 'selfs'. The papers by Owen Stanley and Nicolas Peterson throw some light - not by any means optimistic - on the likelihood of Aboriginal communities winning and retaining a measure of economic selfsufficiency and independence but much more work remains to be done in this area as they indicate.

One of the principal institutions for handling the rather basic economic activities of most Aboriginal communities is the store, the subject of Elspeth Young's paper. In Aboriginal communities stores do more than obtain and supply consumables; many of them have an important banking function, a function seldom handled by the banks, as Stanley indicates, and wherever they employ Aboriginal staff they have an important training or educational function as well - both in store management in particular and in simple retail economics in general. It is sometimes confusedly recognised that stores may also have a most important function as instruments of micro-economic development in communities, not only by stimulating demand, accumulating capital and providing education, but also by organising a market for whatever local productions might be encouraged. But before stores can play a major developmental role in Aboriginal communities, many rules regulating them and preconceptions about their 'proper' role must be re-examined. This re-examination is unlikely to be carried out by the accountancy firms chartered or hired to annually examine accounts against financial inexperience or malpractice, firms which inevitably find themselves in a position to offer advice on investments and related matters.

To be self-reliant and self-managing - not to say self-determining - entails not only some degree of autonomy but the possibility (even the likelihood) that 'mistakes' will be made by those who are entrusted with a new responsibility. Given the highly bureaucratic norms concerning administrative responsibility in Australia, many of them enshrined in complicated legislation concerning accountability for and management of money, there is bound to be a great deal of anxiety about self-management and the 'mistakes' it entails.

For many administrators, people likely to make 'mistakes' should be given the help of experienced white administrators or, better still, given the administrative training necessary to save them from making 'mistakes'. What is seldom admitted is that the 'mistakes' are not always, from a political point of view, mistakes at all, but successful manoeuvres by local politicians to secure a valued resource, to build a local following, defeat some opponent (black or white), to win local leadership. These are the topics dealt with in Rolf Gerritsen's paper on the politics of remote communities in a condition of dependency on departmental administration from a central place. From what bureaucrats might regard as a perverse point of view, to the extent that they are unable to control and regulate - administratively - the black politicians they have called into life by self-management policies, they have been successful. A measure of real autonomy, political autonomy, is passing to the governed.

Gerritsen develops this analysis with particular reference to outstations in a separate volume of conference papers (Service Delivery to Outstations, P. Loveday, ed., NARU, 1982). His interpretation has been seen as controversial, largely as a result of an over-simplified press report of an earlier exploratory paper which challenged the idealist tendencies predominant in much contemporary analysis of Aboriginal society. Gerritsen's interpretation is materialist or, as some might say, realist, but it is not 'merely about Toyotas and tents' as Bell suggests (Outstations, 85). Gerritsen is concerned to ensure that the analysis of Aboriginal society is more than a record of its ideology - or an ideology being moulded for it. The interpretation, furthermore, is of general application and not based wholly on Ngukurr, as Bell says (Outstations, 86), a point Gerritsen makes by drawing his data from a number of Aboriginal communities of considerable cultural diversity.

Several papers at the conference dealt with the servicing of outstations - a subject of considerable importance in the Northern Territory. They were on several different topics: the setting up of outstations at Maningrida, the provision of store, water, communications and mechanical services in outstations, bilingual education in outstations, the politics of the outstations and the contrasts and similarities of outstations in the Centre and the Top End of the Northern Territory.

Drawing on field work in Aboriginal communities in the region between Katherine and Borroloola, in this volume Deborah Wade-Marshall describes the ambiguities of the position women find themselves in as a result of changes brought about by contact with white society. Many arise in connection with social security services, the special subject of a paper by Will Sanders. In this, a schema is presented contrasting the more universalistic forms of bureaucratic service delivery with the more particularistic forms which develop when the social condition of the recipients makes normal bureaucratic delivery impossible. In the following chapter, I discuss related questions concerning the politics of access and these two papers are linked conceptually with Gerritsen's.

Politics and administration are dealt with from a different point of view in Alistair Heatley's account of the failure of attempts to regionally decentralise administration in the north of Western Australia and Greg Snowdon's discussion of the confusion in and degradation of service delivery which has followed from the Commonwealth's handing back to three separate state systems the responsibility for many services to the Pitjantjatjara area which had previously been handled in a more or less well-coordinated fashion from Alice Springs under the aegis of DAA. In the Northern Territory more determined efforts than in Western Australia have recently been made to provide for administrative decentralisation and for local regional coordination of various services from centres like Nhulumbuy and Katherine so that service delivery is more flexible and responsive to local needs. It is too soon to assess the changes made, but there is some doubt that they are working as intended. On a different scale and in a different field, the administration of justice, the bold experiments initiated by the magistracy in the Northern Territory in responding to Aboriginal culture in the courts, have also had disappointing results, as Ian McLeod points out in his paper.

Education, in its many forms, proved to be an important topic at the conference - an important indicator of contemporary interests, since most of the papers were offered voluntarily, not at the request of the organisers. With one exception, Ian Yule's paper on Yipiringa, none of them concerned what would be described as mainline functions by

departments of education in the south and Yule's paper, discussing a special privately funded mobile school for Aboriginal town camps in the Alice Springs area, is mainline only in the sense that it is concerned, among other things, with basic three Rs education and the special difficulties that have arisen in trying to provide it outside the official education system.

What may be described as functionally specific education is more activist and participant than 'general' or mainline education and, as a result, it appears to be more closely tailored to the needs of the Aborigines for whom it is intended, either as a result of closer consultation with them or of better understanding of the inappropriateness of the 'normal' educational processes of white society when taken for granted in relation to the black.

The electoral education program of the Australian Electoral Office is a good example, described in a chapter below, of the flexible response a sympathetic department can make to meet specific needs of the Aboriginal section of the electoral population. The methods employed by the Electoral Office are not, of course, appropriate to training in all subjects. The Office is able to provide a uniform program on a specific subject in communities of widely differing characteristics. But most special education programs must be tailored much more closely to the specific needs of the communities in which the service is to be provided. This is skilfully brought out in the discussion of the role of the adult educator by Charlie McRoberts.

The effective adult educator responds, often at very short notice and at risk of involvement in local politics, to a wide variety of demands for education and training. To satisfy these demands calls not only for sympathy, imagination and detailed local knowledge, but also for acceptance of the educator by the community from which they emerge. It is not always easy for the educator to reconcile the demands of the community and the rules and expectations of the department which provides his salary and his guidelines - and yet from the departmental point of view he must make the reconciliation.

The adult educator is, in addition, subject to the expectations not only of his own department and the community he serves, but, in the Northern Territory, he is also expected to carry out educational functions for other agencies as well - notably to help with the NT Department of Transport and Works' training program, as described by Keith Thiele, and the electoral education program. As McRoberts makes plain, the educator is normally overloaded with work; his job is undoubtedly one of the most taxing educational positions in the service.

The kind of services provided by adult educators in the Northern Territory have clearly been needed by the Woorabinda community in Queensland and Reg Shelley's paper shows how slight, by comparison with the effect of the resident educator, the efforts of the outsider are, regardless of his sympathy and skill. For Shelley, the 'problem' is as much cultural as physical remoteness, a point emphasised by Warren Snowdon too in connection with education. For him centralised, uniform, departmentally provided education is one means by which whites maintain their domination of Aborigines and, if that is to be broken down, the administration of education should be changed to allow Aborigines a much greater voice in shaping the curriculum and how the service is delivered.

Functionally specific education, perhaps better called training, has its own problems but it appears to be easier to provide than general education if the success of the Northern Territory's Aboriginal health worker training program and the Army's training of Aborigines in NORFORCE are a guide, as John Hargrave and Adrian Harrison describe them. But not all educational needs can be serviced by functionally specific programs as a totally different system of Aboriginal education shows. This is the system provided by Yipirinya school in Alice Springs where a wide range of education is provided by staff of their own choosing for people living in town camps, subject only to local Aboriginal control.

This education is perceived in much more communal terms, as much less concerned with individual self-advancement, than white education. It entails a higher degree of community initiative than a departmentally provided program.

A different kind of community initiative in defining a 'problem' is given in Margaret Hamilton's description of her forthcoming research on alcoholism in Mt Isa - undertaken at the request of local people. It is basic to the design of the project that alcoholism is recognised as a social not an individual and personal problem. It seems to be far removed from education as it is normally understood and yet, once education is identified as activist, problem solving and based in community awareness of need, the Mt Isa proposal is on all fours with many of the educational tasks which have to be carried out in other remote communities.

It became apparent during the conference that, although there were many shortcomings from an administrative point of view in the delivery of services to remote places, there had also been a number of innovations of importance in overcoming them. The wider dissemination of knowledge about these innovations is one important function of the conference. But the conference was not directed to any single theme or purpose; since so many of the papers were offered unsought that was not to be expected. Although the themes of remoteness and service delivery provided headlines for the conference - and inspired several papers not presented here for want of space - neither of them proved to be the underlying or unifying theme of the conference; it emerged incidentally that the theme was the part played by administration in the transformation of Aboriginal society.



Hon. P.A.E. Everingham

#### OPENING ADDRESS

I understand that the word 'remote' in the context of this seminar is, in fact, a euphemism for 'Aboriginal' - and that it is with Aboriginal community service delivery that this seminar is primarily concerned.

The government system of service delivery, both at the Commonwealth and Territory level, accommodates itself most easily to the centralised communities. It is, in fact, designed primarily around the large population centres, simply because that is where most people live.

Of course, what constitutes a remote community depends on where one is standing at the time. From Canberra, Darwin is a remote community; from Darwin, Umbakumba is a remote community.

In the Territory 'remoteness' has particular implications for government. In the southern States the remote communities are comparatively few. But here in the Territory they are numerous and the number is increasing as additional outstations are established. There are currently more than 550 of these community outstations and pastoral properties in the Territory. Thirty-three per cent of the Territory's population lives outside the six main urban centres. By comparison, in both New South Wales and Victoria 75 per cent of the population is located within cities of 100,000 people or more.

The questions, then, for this government are how to cater for our [scattered population] and just how far our responsibilities to do so extend.

Many people would say that the government has a responsibility to adjust its administrative system to accommodate itself to the entire needs of remote communities.

That then is the question. What slice of the budgetary pie should be given to the population minorities that choose to live well away from the main centres? To what extent should the rest of the community subsidise those who live in inconvenient areas, where distance, terrain and diseconomies of scale make the provision of services such a costly affair? It is a question we keep putting regularly to the Commonwealth Treasury and the Grants Commission which both in their way represent the extent to which the Australian taxpayer is prepared to go.

Of course, there are times when government is guilty of being over-zealous in its responsibilities to remote communities. We ought not to be chasing after people with services from which they are running away.

The humanitarian stance is that all people are entitled to the same level of services, but in practice this is not always desirable. Aboriginal groups who have opted for a lifestyle on an outstation away from such services should be helped in ways that assist them - not prevent them - from carrying out their wishes. Clearly it is no good following such groups around with a travelling circus of caravan health centres, diesel generators, chemical toilets and demountable classrooms. The proper response is to provide such a group with health and education services at the base level by training members of the community in such work.

The response should be: we will provide the teacher and health worker training - you provide the people. That is self-reliance and flexible government at its best, but there

are still many 'humanitarians' around who would call it neglect. And there are still many communities which are reluctant to let go the apron-strings, who cease to subscribe to self-management when it actually comes to withdrawing the nursing sister.

The scale of government-provided services must be matched to the aspirations of the beneficiaries, not fixed by paternalistic attitudes that 'we know what's best for you'. Anyone who disagrees should go down and visit the Commonwealth-built Ti Tree high school. I am told that at Maningrida there is a Mercedes fire engine that needs four trained operators - and the last fire was put out with buckets of water.

The costs of providing even basic local government services to remote areas is enormous - amounting to some \$760 for each person every year. The comparative per capita figure for Darwin local government is about \$60 a year.

Such grants do not only go to communities. Individuals in remote areas also receive considerable support from the taxpayer - the figures show that about 54 per cent of the total Territory unemployment benefit bill is paid to remote communities where an estimated 33 per cent of the population live. And it will continue to be the case until industries - cottage or otherwise - are built up in remote areas. Either that or people will have to move to where the jobs are - if they really want them.

In a place like Bathurst Island the desire to own a house is pretty much a wish to have a normal home of the style that any Darwin resident would aspire to.

But in another place the desirable 'home' is a lean-to, easily moved, affording protection from sun and rain, some security for a few possessions, but little else. A three-bedroom brick veneer would be about as useful as reading-glasses to an illiterate council elder.

There are many critics of government, and of its performance to date in meeting needs. Many make the mistake of assuming that a Casuarina Hospital (what a white elephant anyway!), an Alice Springs high school and a pipeline from the Darwin River Dam are the least that each community should expect. This is not to deny the urgent need of every community for potable water and basic services. But the level must be appropriate.

At almost every Legislative Assembly sitting I am asked why a drinking-tap has not been installed at this place, or why the government has been unable to re-establish a washed out causeway at that place. It is inferred - sometimes even stated - that government is withholding services for some Machiavellian end. Rubbish! I would like to be the first to admit that there are difficulties in making the system more flexible and responsive to these needs - but there is nothing conspiratorial about these failings.

My colleague, Ian Tuxworth, could have occupied the entire time allocated to this opening address on the problems he had trying to get a broken tap at an ablution block at Warrabri fixed. The entire block was surrounded by a quagmire 25 metres wide.

To cut a long story short, it was just a long way to go to put in a new washer. Last I heard he was thinking of finding a contract plumber himself and buying him a carton of beer for his trouble. And I ask myself how successful is self-management if not one person, white or black, in the whole community would not change the washer.

Perhaps understandably, communities do not welcome great batches of departmental visitors who are travelling necessarily on tight schedules trying to gauge and meet community needs. Inefficiency, duplication and toe-stomping of every kind are unavoidable features of the government effort to be responsive. I get many complaints of too many visitors from government to the various communities.

The Commonwealth's Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the Territory's Department of Community Development, the special Aboriginal liaison sections of my office, of the Health Department, of Education, the industries training commission, the Commonwealth Employment Office, Social Security and all the others, have staff specifically employed to cater for Aboriginal communities. The money, time and staff numbers devoted to remote communities is sure proof of the willingness, indeed anxiety, of government to meet needs.

I accept the right of people to choose where they live. I accept the hardest test of any government system is not how far it is able to cater for the majority, but to what extent it is capable of servicing the minorities. Any state system that concerns itself with the statistical average man or woman overlooks the individual. But in accepting those principles I also believe that those who live in out-of-the-way places must accept that government services will not automatically follow them.

Education, health, electricity, sewerage, water and all services are the product of a technologically advanced society. It took a social revolution in Europe for such services to be seen as necessary or desirable. It took an industrial revolution to produce them.

Aboriginal communities are in a fortunate position. If not sensitive in their own right, governments are sensitive enough to criticism to be cautious about enforcing change on communities. But services will bring change, and communities have to face that every benefit may bring corresponding disadvantage, either cultural, environmental or otherwise.

In its turn government must respond at the right level. Low technology solutions must be available. We should not install a mains pressure hot and cold water system where hand pumped potable water was all that was wanted. But whatever the level of services required communities must accept both the changes that they will bring, and the responsibilities that come with them.

Of course, there is no way that most communities can ever be economically self-reliant - but for the sake of increasing self-reliance and reducing dependence, communities must take on some part of the financial and decision making burdens that services entail.

Will Sanders

FROM SELF-DETERMINATION TO SELF-MANAGEMENT

When the ALP came to power in Canberra in December 1972 it introduced a new policy in Aboriginal affairs - in a word, self-determination - in place of the then long-standing and much criticised assimilation policy of the preceding government. Since then, self-management, self-sufficiency and self-reliance have been added to the list, all by non-Labor governments since 1975, in their own attempts to specify the underlying principle of Aboriginal policy in another single word.

There are, it seems, subtle differences between them: Labor used self-determination not self-management; Commonwealth Liberals and Territory CLP leaders both speak of self-management but federal ministers couple self-sufficiency with it while the Territory's Chief Minister prefers self-reliance.

A senior departmental official from Canberra who had first hand experience of these changes and thought that they meant little or nothing described them as self-indulgence. The important change, he claimed, had been made in 1972 when the assimilation policy was replaced by the self-determination policy and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs was set up to oversee the change. This is the orthodox judgment. The changes of words since then mean nothing; policy has followed a consistent course and the change of the central term to self-management in 1975 was of no consequence except to signify that the incoming Liberal-National Party government was anxious to distinguish its policy symbolically from that of its predecessor. And what more apt word than self-management which is closer to Liberals' ideas of the proper role of government and the place of citizens under it than the more challenging and, from a paternalistic point of view, provocative word which Labor chose.

But there is more to the terminology than this account suggests. The words have been called on since 1972 to carry a heavy load of justification in argument about Aboriginal policy. Part of the seemingly endless imprecise rhetoric of public debate in articles, books, reports and ministerial pronouncements, the terms have played an essentially ideological role. They have provided the unifying ideas - and ones which were apparently beyond disapprobation by all conceivable critics - by which policy-makers could simplify, explain, give order to and justify a complex policy reality. They are inevitably vague and that is of great importance: different things can then be linked together to make it seem as if they are all part of a well-thought-out policy; changes of policy over time, even reversals of policy, can be concealed or explained away as consistent with some underlying principle if it is flexible enough to be open to new applications and interpretations. Aboriginal policy has not just been the consistent working through of a bipartisan intention. New non-Labor governments have changed the emphasis of policy in line with their own conceptions of the proper roles of government and its Aboriginal constituents.

When Labor adopted 'self-determination' as the key term in its original policy in 1972 part of its aim was to project itself as totally reversing the previous 'assimilation' approach. It was keen to recognise the legitimacy of Aboriginal cultural divergence from Australian normality. It was therefore up to the Aborigines themselves, as communities and individuals, to 'decide the pace and nature of their future development'.

The Government no longer expects that they [Aborigines] will want to become like other Australians in all respects, nor that they should do so. The former policy of assimilation, which assumed that Aborigines would choose, and eventually become, indistinguishable from other Australians in their hopes, loyalties and lifestyle, is no longer part of Australian Government policy. The new policy is therefore very much an open-ended one, and because of its emphasis on

self-determination present programs are directed towards laying the groundwork to enable Aboriginals to take a real and effective responsibility for their own affairs (Cavanagh 1974).

Prime Minister Whitlam saw the new policy in rather more grandiose terms as attempting to reverse the '200 years of despoliation, injustice and discrimination' which had 'seriously damaged and demoralised the once proud Aboriginal people'. His government accepted 'responsibility for the active and progressive rehabilitation' of these people. His government's policy would 'restore to the Aboriginal people of Australia their lost power of self-determination in economic, social and political affairs' (Whitlam 1973). Self-determination was an ideology largely based on a denunciation of the past assimilationist ideas and practice of Aboriginal affairs, the associated devaluation of Aboriginal lifestyle and culture and the imposition of whitefella-made policies on blackfellas with no blackfella involvement or consultation.

The irony was that in 1972 before Whitlam became Prime Minister, his predecessor, McMahon, had himself spoken of making major changes in the government's approach to Aboriginal affairs. In his major policy statement, which resulted from a Cabinet Committee Review, he claimed that a 'greater awareness of Aboriginal wishes' had made necessary a re-statement of the objectives of government policy. McMahon's new policy objectives recognised that Aborigines 'should be encouraged and assisted to preserve and develop their own culture, languages and traditions and arts so that these can become living elements in the diverse culture of the Australian society'. His policy also recognised 'the rights of individual Aborigines to effective choice about the degree to which, and the pace at which, they come to identify themselves with [Australian] society' and aimed to encourage Aborigines 'increasingly to manage their own affairs - as individuals, as groups, and as communities at the local level' (McMahon 1972). The changes envisaged were similar to those the ALP would propose later. McMahon however was slow to move. And he had not created a new term to signify the new approach. He could not laud the present in the name of 'self-determination' while deriding the 'assimilation' of the past. Because of this McMahon failed to capitalise on the proposals for reform and the incoming Whitlam government successfully projected itself as reversing past practice in Aboriginal policy.

The actions which came to be cited as evidence of the Whitlam government's commitment to self-determination were fourfold: legislation to enable Aboriginal communities to incorporate for the conduct of their own affairs at the local level; the establishment of an elected consultative council of Aborigines with which the government would confer at the national level - the NACC; the establishment of the Aboriginal Land Rights Commission to advise on the legislative and administrative actions required to vest land in the Aborigines 'as far as practicable in ways which accord with traditional Aboriginal law and practice' and an increased level of spending through programs specifically directed to Aborigines through the newly created Department of Aboriginal Affairs (Whitlam 1973).

The first two of these followed from the intention under self-determination to involve Aborigines in the running of Aboriginal affairs at all levels. This organised involvement of Aborigines has become the predominant theme in the 'self' approaches to policy. The Land Rights proposal relied on a rather different notion more implicit in the policy of self-determination.

Self-determination implies a degree of economic independence. Economic deprivation is one of the most crippling of Aboriginal handicaps (Cavanagh 1974).

Overcoming Aboriginal economic deprivation, to some degree at least, was seen as an integral part of self-determination. Land rights and a much increased DAA spending program to promote Aboriginal enterprise, employment opportunities and vocational training were intended to give Aborigines the chance to overcome their disadvantages. These programs, which today would be justified under labels of affirmative action or positive discrimination, were part of the Whitlam government's ideological commitment to the

concepts of 'equality of opportunity' and 'equity' in all policy areas, not just Aboriginal affairs. In Aboriginal affairs they formed a second strand in the policy of self-determination. The commitment to equality of opportunity was woven into the policy of self-determination. The two parallel strands of Aboriginal involvement and equality of opportunity are evident in Cavanagh's statement:

Our aim is, quite simply, both to remove the disadvantages generally faced by Aboriginal Australians in the fields of housing, health, education, job training and employment opportunities, and to make it possible for Aboriginal communities and individuals to develop as they wish within the overall Australian Society. In all these fields, the importance of Aboriginal involvement and identity is paramount (Cavanagh 1974).

When the Liberal-National Country Party coalition became the government in 1975 the ALP's 'self-determination' gave way to 'self-management' and self-sufficiency'. In Aboriginal News, February 1976, the Minister, Ian Viner, presented 'the New Policy'. The basic principle was,

that all Aborigines and Islanders should be as free as other Australians to determine their own varied futures. ...We recognise the fundamental right of Aborigines to retain their racial identity and traditional life style or where desired, to adopt partially or wholly a European life style... (Viner 1976).

The principle of allowing Aborigines choice in their future development was maintained. The strong disapproving references to the past were not apparent because the policy was not claimed as a dramatic reversal of the immediate past as the ALP's policy was in 1972.

The policy went on to say that Aborigines 'with one voice', 'notwithstanding some diversity of view points', were making four basic claims: the right to

- self-management;
- land rights;
- additional funds;
- self-sufficiency

and that the new government was responding to these claims with 'new initiatives'. These four basic claims were, in part, a disaggregation of the ALP's self-determination policy. Land rights and increased spending, the second strand of the ALP's self-determination policy, had been separated from the 'self' label. Self-management would take over the predominant Aboriginal involvement strand of self-determination but not without a change of emphasis.

Viner's policy statement put effective self-management initiatives in the conditional.

... if a policy of self-management is to be effective, Aborigines must play a leading role in their affairs. This will include Aborigines playing a significant role:

- a) in setting the long term goals and objectives which the government should pursue and the programs it should adopt in such areas as Aboriginal education, housing, health, employment and legal aid;

b) in setting the priorities for expenditure on Aboriginal affairs within the context of overall budget allocations; and

c) in evaluating existing programs and formulating new ones.

Aborigines not only have a significant role in these matters. They must also assume responsibility for the success of the programs adopted. Only in this way will inefficiency, waste and disillusionment which have characterised many of the previous programs be removed (Viner 1976).

Much of the rhetoric has remained the same as Labor's but the last two sentences signify a shift in the ideology. Aboriginal involvement at all levels of policy and decision making is all very well and the new government had no wish to reject that but with involvement came responsibility for success, for failure and for efficient administration.

It was at this final turn that the L-NCP saw its policy differing from the ALP policy. The ALP with its enthusiasm for increased spending on Aboriginal Affairs had been, as the new government saw it, at best extravagant and at worst profligate and wasteful. In his policy statement Viner referred to his appointment of David Hay to conduct a review to ensure that funds allocated for Aborigines were actually reaching them and being used effectively. The L-NCP's policy supposedly had a hard-nosed managerialism that self-determination did not. It was not enough to give Aborigines the resources and the opportunity to participate at all levels, one also had to make them responsible. The Aborigines were expected to manage, not just determine. Likewise the government would improve its management. Hence, Viner felt able to claim that despite a \$7m cut in DAA's budget for the year 1975/76, this did not

mean that Aboriginal people will be deprived of \$7 million. Rather, the savings are being made in administration costs by not proceeding with projects which are not ready to proceed or by deferring others (Viner 1976).

The 1976 policy statement introduced the new companion term 'self-sufficiency'. Under it the government listed these programs as high priorities:

- a) appointment of additional Aborigines to liaison, advisory and training positions in such fields as education, health and community development;
- b) the maintenance and, where appropriate, the expansion of Aboriginal-managed enterprises and services such as Aboriginal Medical Services, Aboriginal Legal Services and Aboriginal housing, building and pastoral projects;
- c) the creation of a network of outback pre-schools to cater for the needs of Aboriginal and other Australian children side by side and to actively involve their parents as well;
- d) the expansion of bi-cultural education in those Northern Australian schools with predominantly Aboriginal enrolments;
- e) the introduction of Aboriginal history and culture as a full subject in the education programs available to all Australians from primary school onwards;
- f) a complete review of existing Aboriginal employment and training schemes in order to increase social and geographical mobility for those Aborigines who desire it;

- g) the introduction of an experimental 'work-out' program in rural secondary schools with high Aboriginal enrolments;
- h) the establishment of a 'parent-educator' program among Aboriginal parents in capital cities; and
- i) consultation with the Aboriginal people on appropriate ways of dealing with social problems such as alcohol and drug abuse (Viner 1976).

How these policy ideas are linked by or relate to any coherent concept of 'self-sufficiency' was left unexplained. Yet in ideology they were. Such was the vagueness of the new term at the time of the 1976 policy pronouncement.

Two and a half years later, after a review of the basic policies in Aboriginal affairs, Viner issued a new government policy statement entitled: 'Self-Management: the key to Aboriginals' future' (Viner 1978). By this time the ideology of self-management and self-sufficiency had been refined considerably. Self-management and its justifications had changed somewhat. It now had a more personal note. It was not so much Aboriginal involvement in setting government goals, ordering priorities and evaluating programs as

Aboriginals, as individuals and communities, (being) in a position to make the same kinds of decisions about their future as other Australians customarily make, and to accept responsibility for the results flowing from those decisions (Viner 1978).

The reason for self-management had also changed. It was no longer a government reaction to a ground swell of Aboriginal claims but rather an opportunity for Aborigines to restore their self-respect, to throw off the inertia and resignation generated by total dependence on others to make the decisions which affected their lives.

The Government sees this policy as offering to Aboriginals a means of breaking out from the state of dependence which has for so long enchained them. In any society, decision-making and responsibility are essential to the restoration of self-respect and to the removal of the social maladies of despondency, inertia and resignation.

The government's aim was

... to open the way to Aboriginals to enjoy the same rights as other Australians who, as individuals or in co-operation with others and in some cases with Government support, make choices as to their lifestyle, decide to have a say in their community affairs, to provide services for themselves, to conduct businesses and to make their own decisions within the law of the land, recognising the rights and obligations which flow from it (Viner 1978).

Self-management had become an opportunity for Aborigines to become more like other Australians by having a similar level of personal opportunity to participate in decisions that affect them. The central premise had shifted. Aboriginal involvement was not so much a means for achieving a successful Aboriginal policy in line with Aboriginal desires as a personal opportunity for individual Aborigines to better themselves. Self-management would uplift them personally, make them stand on their own two feet by making them responsible for their own lives. Interestingly enough, although this is a different notion from the ALP's self-determination, the evidence of the progress towards self-management which the statement pointed to was similar to the evidence that the ALP government used to cite: the formation of the NAC at the national level, and its potential use for consultation at state and regional levels; the influence of Aboriginal organisations such as legal aid and Aboriginal health; the opportunity for Aboriginal councils to provide municipal services in the larger remote settlements; and the opportunity to choose 'a tradition-oriented lifestyle' by movement to outstations.

Self-sufficiency had also changed from its rather undeveloped state in February 1976. By November 1978 it had become 'the economic face of self-management'. If self-management was the opportunity for Aborigines to make decisions about their own lives to the same extent as other Australians, self-sufficiency was to refer to giving them the economic means to do so. Having recalled that prior to contact with white settlers Aborigines had been self-sufficient, the Minister went on to say that, whatever moves back towards a traditional lifestyle the outstation may represent,

Self-sufficiency now has to be defined in terms of money incomes and the things in our society like money and property, which are the source of money incomes (Viner 1978).

The Minister admitted that in this respect Aborigines were at a disadvantage compared to other Australians because of their low level of such economic resources and that therefore the government had a series of policies to increase Aboriginal economic resources:

- land ownership
- expansion of employment opportunities
- training programs
- support for limited economic initiatives
- home ownership
- support for outstation movements
- increased Aboriginal contributions to financial and other aid projects  
(Viner 1978).

These were the aspects of Aboriginal policy which in Labor's day were justified by the notion of self-determination requiring economic independence. Now they had their own separate term, self-sufficiency, and could be distinguished from the Aboriginal involvement (self-management) strand. But more importantly their underlying purpose had changed. These measures had become ways of bringing Aborigines to the point where they were, in liberal ideology, responsible members of the Australian society - constituents who could manage their own affairs and were engaged in self-supporting productive activities. This is quite a different ideological justification for spending on Aboriginal projects than the equity, equal opportunity rhetoric of the ALP.

During Viner's period as Minister the new government's policy of self-management and self-sufficiency was developed considerably. A new managerialism had supposedly been introduced to the department and was expected of the Aborigines themselves too. This was reflected in the new central terms of Aboriginal policy.

#### The NT since Self-Government

Since the Northern Territory government was given its own form of 'self-government' in 1978, it too has adopted the central term of self-management in Aboriginal affairs. The Chief Minister, Everingham, has not invested great effort in elaborating the concept, but uses it often in his major policy statements in conjunction with the term 'self-reliance'. In 1978 he presented a progress report to the Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council on his government's 'initiatives for Aboriginal advancement and self-management'. When reporting his presentation to the Legislative Assembly back in Darwin he said:

I indicated my grave concern at the high level of unemployment that exists in many of the Aboriginal communities, particularly where school leavers are concerned. I emphasised strongly that any success of the policy of self-management and self-reliance must depend on the opportunity for Aboriginals to gain the necessary skills to enable self-management to become a reality (Everingham 1978).

Eighteen months later, when presenting his 'Policies for the Improvement of Aboriginal Communities' to the Assembly, he said:

Self-management and self-reliance for Aboriginal communities is meaningless unless Aboriginal people themselves are being given skills to bring about the state of affairs and the employment opportunities to enable them to attain a greater degree of independence (Everingham 1980).

And of one specific program he said:

The object of the community worker program is simple: to enable Aboriginal people maximum opportunity to do things for themselves in their own way rather than have other people provide services for them. This means Aboriginal people gain employment opportunities and training in areas that previously were not open to them (Everingham 1980).

Everingham sees self-management as Aboriginalisation of the workforce in government and government-supported activities in those areas which impinge on the lives of Aborigines, and which in the past have been undertaken largely by whitefellas. That this is a good thing for the Aborigines - i.e. the ideological justification - is taken for granted. Self-management is an 'opportunity' for Aborigines to better themselves, to acquire new skills and employment. For the government it ultimately means that no longer will whitefellas be needed to support the servicing of Aboriginal communities. This is the self-reliance. The policy therefore involves two things:

- (1) training
- (2) employment opportunities.

This is a very simple operative definition of self-management and self-reliance. It is different from the way the terms are used by federal ministers and reflects the more concrete operational considerations of a state-like administration which is faced with the task of providing a wide range of basic services to remote, but as yet predominantly unskilled, communities.

W.J. Coburn

#### ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY COUNCILS & THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES

When one looks at the traditional nomadic hunting and food gathering type of existence led by Aboriginal people before European influence it is hard to reconcile that picture with the manner in which the majority of Northern Territory Aboriginals live today. An even stranger phenomenon is that the real basis of their culture, i.e. religious, ceremonial and the social or kinship system of the interpersonal and intergroup relationships, remains very much alive and well.

The historical aspects of the movement into larger settled communities are not simple nor are they as yet fully understood. A combination of drought years in desert areas, missionary influence, desire for European goods and positive government programs have all contributed. But no matter what the cause the ultimate result was that the Aboriginal people were faced with adapting their own methods of social control, which had been developed over centuries to cater for small closely related groups following a set pattern of movement, to this new situation. On top of this was the European requirement for a representative group in each community with which it could converse and use as a vehicle through which resources could be introduced into the community.

Prior to self-government in the Northern Territory, during the 1950s and 1960s, the Commonwealth government as the chief representative of this European influence was forced into seeking such a representative group because of the obvious fact that, although some settlements showed outward signs of material care and prosperity, the whole fabric created to support the then doctrine of assimilation was dependent almost entirely on the talents and abilities of the Europeans involved. From the Aboriginals' point of view support would be given to an individual whom they regarded with respect and affection but the system and what the settlement was supposed to achieve had left them behind.

In the late 1950s Councils began to be established on settlements. At first they were only advisory bodies assisting the Superintendent. Later after a series of rapid changes in the political world they were faced with real power.

The 1972 change of the federal government saw the beginnings of a new era in Aboriginal development in the Northern Territory. The new Aboriginal Affairs policy of 'self-determination' was described as, 'Aboriginal communities deciding the basis and nature of their future development within the legal, social and economic constraints of the Australian society'. In short, the major effect of this policy change meant the removal of the authoritarian approach inherent in previous policies. The emphasis of the new approach was placed on Aboriginal participation and consultation. Councils, as a consequence, were not only encouraged to participate as vehicles for government funding but as a main focal point for consultation by all agencies on a wide range of issues which directly affected the communities they represented.

The later coalition government's policies of self-management and self-sufficiency added a further dimension to the general government thrust to involve Aboriginal people in their own affairs in a more meaningful way than ever before.

During this shift by councils from an advisory to an active role, steps were taken to withdraw from government sponsored communities the non-Aboriginal staff employed by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. At the same time church mission organisations were encouraged by the government to progressively pass over to councils the responsibility for the administration of those communities.

The policy shift necessitated a change in the funding approach by government. Councils which previously had little or no say in the manner in which programs were directed or how money was spent began to receive direct funding from government in the form of grants-in-aid for specific, mainly town management, functions.

Although, as mentioned previously, most of the staff were withdrawn from communities, the government retained, in many instances, resident community advisers to assist councils to undertake the new role until they were in a position to recruit their own resource personnel.

Most councils still have a need to employ resident specialist staff and are assisted to do this by a number of outside agencies including government.

Together with these changes came the introduction of award wages with its consequent rise in community income and, unfortunately, fall in employment levels. Councils became, in a very short space of time, the recipients of very large grants from government and they began to develop real power and with this a need for responsible management of their affairs.

From the other end of the spectrum the Commonwealth government as the provider and distributor of resources was constrained by its own financial regulations from providing these resources, particularly in a monetary form, to groups which had not been constituted as legal entities. The only appropriate legislative means at the time by which this could be achieved was the Associations Incorporation Ordinance. Although more suited to a football club or trading association this was then and still is the main vehicle under which Community Councils achieved this status.

In 1972 what may be termed the last-ditch effort of the then Liberal Country Party government to come to terms with this problem was the development of a draft Community Development Ordinance. Its aim was to achieve a more appropriate legal status for Aboriginal Councils and was based on village local government legislation in Papua New Guinea. Political events overtook this and it disappeared from the scene for some time. Many of its features re-appeared later in the Federal Councils and Associations Act and the Northern Territory's own Community Government Scheme.

With the granting of self-government to the Northern Territory in July 1978, the new Northern Territory government sought to extend its own influence in this area and developed the Community Government Scheme as part of its overall Local Government Act. For a while it appeared as though officers of each government, both Commonwealth and Northern Territory, would be scouting the communities seeking to convince residents of the advantages of one government scheme as opposed to the other. Fortunately reason and common sense prevailed and the Commonwealth, as far as the Councils section of its Act was concerned, virtually vacated the field and allowed the Northern Territory government to proceed unhindered with its own Community Government Scheme.

Thus we now have a situation where some 43 major communities are represented officially by Councils that are either incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act, seeking to obtain such incorporation or, in the case of Lajamanu, established under Part XX of the Local Government Act.

All these Councils, no matter what their status, are charged with the responsibility primarily for what is termed the town management and public utility (TMPU) function and most of the funding which they attract, some \$18m a year from the Northern Territory government alone for this purpose, is channelled through them. Except in the case of Lajamanu, which has legally defined boundaries and functions which it is to perform, Councils take on any other functions which the residents of the community consider they should be involved in.

We thus find that by far the greater majority of services which we endeavour to deliver to these communities have become channelled through these Community Councils.

It may be argued, and I would say with some validity, that these Councils do not necessarily represent the traditional leadership of the Aboriginal people. However we must make a distinction here between the position of these artificially created leadership bodies within the community and those of a more traditional nature. These Councils have been set up and are in the main supported by traditional leadership for the purpose of the control and distribution of European-type benefits which the Aborigines have come to accept as necessary for their lifestyle. No Aboriginal-type organisation, particularly in

communities containing several tribal groups, has been developed which could cope with this delivery of European-type services. The Councils are a European-type organisation created specifically to assist in the delivery of European-type services to cater for the European-type section of the lives of community residents.

The questions we must now ask ourselves are:

- (1) Will this remain as the only role Councils have to play in the communities?
- (2) If they are to develop further, in which direction will this development point?
- (3) How are we as a government and provider of most of the required services to cope with any such developments?

Considering the short time it has taken for Councils to develop even to their present stage it is amazing that they have achieved so much. In effect most of the major communities in the Northern Territory are now being managed by Aboriginal people. It can be said that they do not do it very well, that in some cases they are abject failures, but European people do not make all that good a fist of running local government themselves.

The biggest problem of course has been the handling of grant or subsidy money from both the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory governments. Anything further from the Aboriginal tradition than forward planning, estimating, budgeting and accounting for large sums of money is hard to imagine. However in most cases they have come to terms with the necessity of doing this and, although many Europeans are still retained to look after this aspect, the performance of the communities in which they serve is not much better in the main than that of the communities in which Aboriginal people take this responsibility.

This concentration on the financial and material aspects of service delivery has of necessity occupied Aboriginal Councils almost to the exclusion of any consideration of matters of a more social or overall community development nature. This of course parallels the 'roads and bridges' local government experience in the rest of Australia.

For a clue as to the further development of the Council role we must look closely at the relationship between this introduced European-type organisation and the traditional leadership structure of Aboriginal society. There is insufficient time here to explore exactly the powers and functions of these traditional elders. Suffice it to say that the general pattern of traditional Aboriginal society is egalitarian and gerontocratic and that in the communities with which we deal in the Northern Territory this system is still operative.

The old men may claim that the youngsters no longer listen to them but woe betide any Councils which begin to make important decisions affecting the lives of the community without consulting with them.

There are of course many of these men of power serving on the Councils and fulfilling dual roles but, in the main, the situation is rather lopsided as, while the status of Aboriginal leaders is unquestioned in their own field, the majority of Councils have no more legal status in European eyes than the committee of a football club.

At Lajamanu the situation is different. Established under the community government section of the Local Government Act, the Council at Lajamanu has the same legal status as the Corporation of the City of Darwin or the Municipality of Alice Springs. It has defined boundaries and functions and the power to pass by-laws legally binding upon all residents, be they black or white, within those boundaries. Without going into this any further, it is I believe the combination of these two recognised legal statuses within the one organisation which will determine the manner in which Aboriginal Councils will develop in the future. To assist in this development we must be prepared to look at what we expect from a Council in the matter of delivery of services to the people of its community in a way different from that to which we have become accustomed. We must not use as our measuring stick for a Community Government Council the criteria of whether it looks like a

successful Local Government Council in any other part of Australia. Given its requirements for the responsible use of government funds it is still an Aboriginal group working in an Aboriginal situation and will therefore need to be encouraged to find Aboriginal solutions to Aboriginal community problems.

Even where there is a growing awareness within a Council of its ability to cope with the accounting requirements, etc. that we expect of it, we must acknowledge that it is not the only power in the land. The fact that we consult with a Council about delivery of certain services does not necessarily mean we have obtained a total community attitude towards these services. For example, the Iwupataka Council at Jay Creek wants to proceed with certain developments of roads, etc.; the traditional owners object strongly so no development takes place. In the eyes of the traditional leaders at Hermannsburg, the Council was obtaining too much power therefore they withdrew their support and the Council disappeared.

However before the allocation of any resources to an Aboriginal community we cannot physically consult with all traditional leaders and all other people of influence who are to be affected. We must talk to the Council and keep our feelers out and our ears open to determine any reaction from the traditional leaders.

This is not as difficult as it sounds because, in the main, Councils do keep a very strong rapport with the leaders of their society. In fact they at times come under great pressure, which it is virtually impossible for them to resist, to use Council resources for purposes for which they were not supplied but for which the traditional leaders have demanded they be used.

The Aboriginal people have always shown a great willingness to compromise with the demands and requirements of governments. We are beholden to ensure that such compromises are not one-way streets.

The days of imposing solutions upon Aboriginal communities have passed and we cannot use Councils as tame vehicles for this purpose. They must be seen as responsible organisations necessary to both government and Aboriginal people. Introduction of community government has recognised this by the conferring of third tier of government status upon the Councils who accept it. Their acceptance by Aboriginal people as a legitimate adjunct to traditional leadership will depend upon how they develop in an Aboriginal way the power and status conferred upon them by both societies.

I would like to conclude with an example of how both societies are coming to terms with this problem in one community.

The community of Angurugu on Groote Eylandt has completed its scheme for the establishment of a Community Government Council (the actual establishment to take place in the near future). The Act gives the power to a Council to determine its own means of election of Council members. This is then written into the actual scheme under which it will operate. For some twelve months the people at Angurugu have been wrestling with this problem. Initially they declared that their society was divided into fourteen clans which needed representation. Further discussions, without any assistance or interference from outside, put this matter of fourteen clans to be represented into question. The second time I visited the community they were down to eleven clans. The final count was twenty clans amalgamated into ten formal groupings to achieve a balanced representation. Another factor has been that whereas the Lajamanu Community Council passes resolutions on a majority vote, Angurugu have insisted that, as has always been their custom, all decisions be unanimous before becoming a formal resolution of the Council. The leadership of the Council has probably been decided beforehand and in fact most clans threatened to boycott the last election for the incorporated Council President unless a certain person was elected. He duly was.

The point I wish to make here is that all these decisions have been taken by traditional leadership using traditional methods yet the result of this will be seen in the operation of a non-traditional type of organisation with real power and status both in the Aboriginal and larger community. This I believe is the direction in which both Councils and we ourselves will have to travel in order to provide a co-ordinated and effective approach to the delivery of services to these remote communities.

Finally, it must be clearly understood that community government is not solely a method of local government devised for Aboriginal communities. Any small community in the Northern Territory can adopt it and in fact some mixed communities, such as Elliott, Mataranka and Pine Creek, have already held some discussions with government for its introduction.

Rolf Gerritsen

BLACKFELLAS AND WHITEFELLAS: THE POLITICS OF SERVICE DELIVERY TO REMOTE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES IN THE KATHERINE REGION

Politics at the local community level has pervasive effects on service delivery to remote Aboriginal settlements in the Katherine administrative region. The political interaction between various persons and interests within these communities and on them from outside makes it impossible to regard service delivery systems as frictionless and recipients as homogeneous groups of individuated clients (see Loveday, below, for the general discussion of this point).

The local politics provides a key to understanding two important but neglected facts of service delivery. First, the uses that services are put to in any community may reflect the structure of power and interests in the community as much as government-designated function. And second, communities are not mere pawns in the bureaucracy's organisational games; there are important areas of autonomy and initiative at the community level and even some elements of control over the bureaucracy's agents.

In this essay I offer, not a full exposition of the theme, but some examples and in particular a description of the principal actors and their interests in local politics to illustrate the forces at work at the community level.

Part 1 The Argument Illustrated

Many of the problems of service delivery to communities in the Katherine region are sited at headquarters level either in Katherine or Darwin (or even Canberra). These arise from inter-departmental squabbles which hinder co-ordination and the flow of information; the hard choices consequent upon inadequate funding; inappropriate program design; and lack of trained personnel. But many of these problems have a local-level dimension - for example the problems of unequal access to services, the frequent incongruence between Aboriginal aspirations and bureaucratic demands, and the institutionalised rivalries at the local level between different government departments.

Unequal access

There are many instances of unequal access to services in the Katherine region, both between communities and within them.

Sometimes a community can get a service because it has some particular advantage that attracts bureaucratic favour. When the Community Development and Employment Programme (CDEP) was created it was intended to go into Lajamanu. But the program requirement of fortnightly reviews led the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs (then DEIR) to pressure the choice of Bamyili, a 50-minute drive from Katherine, and a more convenient location than Lajamanu for the Katherine-based bureaucrats. There are many other examples of apparently random service delivery to communities. That the people of the homeland centre of Weemol (formed by Ngalkbum people from Bamyili) received a power generator and other facilities before other communities in greater need, as a result of their representations during a visit by the NT Chief Minister, is one instance.

Unequal access to services within communities is often a function of that community's politics, reflecting particular advantages that individuals, families or clans have obtained vis a vis the other occupants of their settlement. There is a peculiar resistance amongst those of what I have labelled the romantic 'Gee Whiz' school to the notion that there can be inequality within Aboriginal societies (cf Gerritsen 1981). Even

Marxists treat Aborigines as an undifferentiated mass (cf Hartwig 1978; White 1975). But the differentiation and with it inequality and political power are readily observed. For instance a report on telecommunications services cites the case of one multi-family group settlement where only the family of the key-holder had the use of the telephone (cf Telecom Report 1980, 3.7). In the 1970s the 'Daniels mob' controlled the Yugul Cattle Company at Ngukurr to use other groups' land and to control the benefits from the cattle company's funding by government (Thiele 1980). Currently only the direct family of the four major traditional land owners get employment from the Murra Mulla Gurindji cattle company at Daguragu. This illustration is very important: perhaps as a relic of their past as a labour force for the Northern Territory pastoral industry, Aborigines attach much glamour and prestige to stock work. Accordingly work on an Aboriginal-owned cattle station as a stockman or ringer is probably the most prized occupation open to a young man. Access to this work for one's sons can be an important prerequisite for the dominant men of the community. Disputes over access to land within the area of operations of the Gulperan Pastoral Company, and over employment with the company, create the tension between the mainly Ngalkbun community at Weemol and the predominantly Rembarrunga community at Bulman (where Gulperan is based).

The local power politics are an important factor in the distribution of benefits from government services or funding. In a period when Aboriginal communities are getting less government funding (in real terms) than they did in the 1970s, inequality within their communities assumes greater importance than it did hitherto.

#### Aboriginal aspirations versus bureaucratic functional specification

There is frequent incongruence between Aboriginal perceptions of the role of their communities' organisations and the designs of government bureaucracy.

In early 1978 a Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) review team visited Lajamanu (then Hooker Creek). Upon seeking the whereabouts of the Council workforce the DAA team discovered that they were out making rodeo yards. This incident revealed that the Council had different perceptions of (or ambitions for) their role than those intended by DAA and that the Council and community leaders were prepared to take initiatives and not merely to react passively to government demands. When remonstrated with that this activity was beyond the legitimate scope of the Council's functions, its Adviser, Maurice Luther (Jupurrula), made it clear that he saw government grants-in-aid to the Council not as functionally specific but as a total sum to be allocated as the Council saw fit. There was another element to this situation: the Council's defence was that they were seeking to create employment for the community's young men. The DAA team's insistence that they be put instead to cutting grass or other Town Maintenance and Public Utility (TMPU) works was met with the rejoinder that this was 'women's work'. Obviously the Councillors wanted to have the rodeo yards so that Lajamanu could host an annual rodeo for the surrounding communities. Other Council leaders, notably David Daniels at Ngukurr, have made a similar demand to be free to spend grant-in-aid monies as they see fit. These role disputes between administrative staff and the village councils originated during the decolonization of the 1970s and persist today. The disputes are usually and superficially about accounting procedures. Councils seek to sell off equipment originally purchased from grants-in-aid funds from government; Councils or Housing Associations buy items without securing approval from the relevant government department; their audits and financial statements reveal irregularities; loans to individuals are made from government grant monies; Councils employ too many workers and overspend their budget and so on. But behind them lurk the dynamics of village politics. A contractor seeks to acquire broken down or unused Council equipment in return for doing some dominant man a favour (the term dominant man is explained below). Unapproved purchases are most often vehicles, reflecting the keen competition for access to transport on most Aboriginal communities. Councils employ too many workers because that may be the easiest way to reconcile or postpone the conflict between dominant men competing for limited jobs on behalf of their families and retinues. Administrators try to rectify this over-employment by reasserting fiscal responsibility (i.e. putting a European bookkeeper into the Council office) without recognising that what they want to change is only a symptom of conflict. The Council office reformed, the conflict moves elsewhere - to the question of access to

credit from the store, or to the allocation of housing, or access to vehicles. For the sake of their prestige and power the dominant men have to keep up the flow of benefits to their families and retainues.

It is the politics of scarcity that these situations reveal as much as any particular incompetence in management or disinterest in financial procedures on the part of the dominant men. The average employment rate in the northern half of the NT (the northern region) is 45.4 per cent for Aborigines (compared with 89.4 per cent for non-Aborigines) over 16 years of age and not in receipt of a pension (NT Health 1980, 59). Employment for Aborigines obviously is scarce - and allocated by the dominant men in most cases.

#### Inter-departmental Rivalries

These have the potential to manifest themselves at the village level and be affected by village politics. Rivalries over training can separate Department of Employment and Youth Affairs (DEYA) field officers and the community Adult Educator. The NT Education Department has finally resolved the chronic disputes between community school Headmasters and the Adult Educators - recently rife at Banyili - by placing the latter under the administrative control of the Headmasters. But the major inter-departmental rivalries occur along the divide between the Commonwealth and NT governments.

The Aboriginal Development Commission (ADC) funds the settlements' housing associations; Housing and Construction act as their consultants. But the NT Department of Transport and Works is involved with the housing associations' contracting activities. Housing managers are only now beginning to realise that this incipient rivalry affords them room for manoeuvre. The Housing Manager of the Wundamarie Housing Association (at Daguragu) has already refused to use Housing and Construction as consultants when doing work for Health or Education on the grounds that these NT departments employ their own consultants to monitor contracts. The Manager of the Yuwarli Housing Association at Lajamanu in late 1981, fearful of the ADC cutting off funds because of the association's failure to construct houses, sought to raise Council support (and protection) by decrying the competence of Housing and Construction and advocating their replacement by Transport and Works. The proliferation of governmental departments and agencies dealing with Aboriginal communities increases the opportunities for local-level manipulation of the inevitable confusion. The village dominant men have an excuse for prevarication if that is seen as advantageous. Also the seeming complexity of government departments renders the representative function of the dominant men even more valuable for their communities.

For example, when I told one community 'boss' that, in reaction to the numerous visits from personnel of the proliferating government departments, the Ngukurr Council had decided to hold only one meeting per month at which bureaucrats could attend if they wished, his response was unenthusiastic. He noted that the various government departments would not talk freely in front of each other. I suspect that the 'boss' realised that the visits, so numerous as to prevent the full Council meeting on each occasion, enhanced his personal power because he alone attended every meeting. Also I sensed that he was unenthusiastic about the joint meeting because this would reduce opportunities to manoeuvre and tell the different departments different stories. Administrative confusion was an asset in certain circumstances. This may seem to be a rather perverse point but it is that, whilst inter-departmental duplication and functional uncertainty is 'bad' from the viewpoint of public administration theory (it is 'inefficient'), from the point of view of the Aboriginal settlement leaders it has its advantages: it enhances their community's autonomy and thus their personal power.

The duplication means that for many settlements there may be rivalry and lack of coordination between departments, and the most important is that between DAA and DCD. This is because the activities of the two departments overlap considerably. For example, Namaloori outstation near Ngukurr received experimental solar panels for generating electric light, one department's initiative, before the problems of providing drinking water to outstations in that area, the job of the other department, had been solved. What is important here is not whether one or the other development should have had priority (given the special circumstances of the area, priorities preferred for other situations

might well be inappropriate, especially if one of two alternatives was being experimentally tested), but the fact that, in conditions where water and cheap electricity were both scarce and badly needed, to have different departments providing them was to invite disagreement. This disagreement could be converted into local political conflict regardless of 'central' policy in Darwin by, for example, the personal influence and partisanship of local departmental officials and by the Aborigines' exploitation of these personal manifestations of departmental duplication and rivalry. Another example: late in 1980 DAA's local staff were worried about the unsatisfactory handling of the CDEP scheme accounts by the Bamyili Council (whose bookkeeper had recently been arrested) and threatened to transfer these to Yulgnu. The DCD Regional Co-ordinator encouraged the Bamyilis to resist and another bookkeeper was appointed. The implications of this rivalry have not been lost on Aboriginal leaders. Appeals for funds when rejected by one department can be directed to another. A technique to establish rapport with a DCD bureaucrat is to criticise DAA, and vice versa.

The view from the community is different from the view from Darwin or even Katherine. The local political dynamics vitally affect the delivery of services. Yet too often policy-makers at the centre are unaware of the particular situation within each settlement to which their department's programs are delivered. A final example from Transport and Works activity will suffice.

#### Transport and Works and 'Contracts'

This example of the local implications unforeseen at the headquarters policy-making level is about the contracts policy of the Northern Territory department of Transport and Works (T & W). Under this policy councils and housing associations are encouraged to take up works contracts in their local area. This is achieved by giving them priority in tendering. The fact that Transport and Works usually over-estimate contract prices (see Table 1 below) provides an attractive profit margin. It is envisaged that one-third by value of these contracts will be so carried out by the end of 1981/82, leaving the rest to private contractors. This laudable policy is designed to supplement the revenues of the local council/housing association through the profits from these contracts and to enhance skill levels and experience amongst the settlements' Aboriginal workers. In some cases the policy has fulfilled its intentions: the Wundamarie Housing Association of Daguragu-Kalkaringi was efficiently carrying out a sewerage contract while I was there.

But the system can be abused. In 1978 the Project Officer at one settlement privately tendered for a \$30,000 sewerage pipe installation contract, borrowed the Council backhoe on a weekend, put in the trench and then walked away with a substantial profit. This and other such cases are well known to regional administrators. But there is little evidence that Transport and Works are either worried about local level manipulation of their 'contracts' policy by resident wayfaring men or have learned from such past instances.

The Beswick Housing Association has a good contracting record. As figures in Table 1 indicate they have earned considerable profits from Transport and Works contracts.

TABLE 1

Beswick Housing Association Contracts 1979/80 - 1981

<u>Place</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Contract Price \$</u>	<u>Work Cost \$</u>	<u>Profit \$</u>
Beswick	Council: Septic Tank & Drainage	1980	1130	850
Beswick	School - Sundry jobs	680	246	442
Beswick	Internal Road Works	1000	50	950
Beswick	Powerhouse	5130	3877	1253
Beswick	Water Reticulation (Top camp)	16124	8670	7444
Weemol	Water and Power	9378	6284	2094
Bulman	School and Fencing	2209	1173	1136
Beswick	School Toilet repairs	87	42	45
Beswick	Toilet and Shower Block	34320	29590	4730
Beswick	Powerhouse disposal system	5130	3877	1253
Beswick	Station Manager's House (Laund)	2600	1229	1371
Beswick	Station Manager's House (HWS)	830	665	165
Beswick	Tripod & Fence: new bore	4983	3656	1327
Beswick	Shop Manager's House (tanks & bases)	1680	1380	300
Beswick	Maintenance to toilet blocks	1987	760	1227
Beswick	Construction 2 toilet blocks	49600	(work still underway)	
Beswick	Chlorinating shed	680	440	240
Beswick	R & M Beswick Progress Assoc.	392	60	332
Beswick	R & M Beswick School	10408	5504	4904
Beswick	R & M Health clinic	5600	2306	3394
Weemol	Shower Blk & transpiration trench	7000	6140	860
Weemol	Toilet blocks: insulation of main	400	150	250

Because of their profitability these contracts are intended to supplement Aboriginal Development Commission grants-in-aid funding to the housing association (or Community Development grants in the case of councils.) But this otherwise impressive list of Beswick Housing Association contracts does not accurately reflect the value of contracts for the training of its Aboriginal workers. many of these contracts are carried out at least in part by (wayfaring) sub-contractors, in some cases the Housing manager's own associates. The Aborigines benefit very little. In practice the contract system shields the reality that its beneficiaries are not always those for whom it was intended. Housing Associations or Councils may be tenderers, masking the fact that it will be wayfaring men who carry out the greater part of the contract. The Aboriginal community may derive some monetary profit but little training to increase their capacity to carry out future contracts.

The misuse of the intended purposes of the contract system is pervasive. Transport and Works/DCD got a Daguragu Council Works Supervisor sacked earlier this year for using Council machinery and labour for his own contracts. That these practices can exist is a spin-off from the lack of direct field officer presence on these communities - part of their 'autonomy factor'.

## Part 2 Actors (and Interests) in Community Politics

To understand the different types of interests and personalities that dominate Aboriginal village politics is to gain some insight into the dynamics of these communities and their reaction to services provided by government. They can be conveniently divided into people whose power derives from within the community and those whose power, skills or position derives from factors extrinsic to the village. This division corresponds roughly to a racial dichotomy between blacks and whites.

The 'Blackfellas' are in three groupings or grades - those I have chosen to label the dominant men; the prominent men, which two groups comprise about half to two-thirds of the adult male Aborigines; and the men of no consequence, the followers, who comprise the rest. A further group, the adventurous men, are smaller and more ephemeral; they can become part of any of these three groups depending upon their personal attributes.

The followers form the retinues of the dominant men. They are not traditional land owners, or if they belong to a land-owning family their claims are distant or of little importance. They do not belong to the families that 'own' the ceremonies that are a continuing and all-important facet of Aboriginal life. Even if they are fully-initiated into ceremony, their personalities, as befits their humble status, are too deferential to force them to the fore. Or they lack the diligence, intelligence or aptitude to make their mark in this all-important activity. The followers usually are illiterate or lack the drive to make their mark in 'whitefella' fields of endeavour - Councils, the schools (as Teaching Aides) or the health clinic (as Aboriginal Health Workers).

The followers are at the bottom of the pile when the benefits of governmental services are apportioned. They will have the least desirable houses, or be forced to accept a subordinate position in the house of a dominant man or a prominent man. Or if they live in Lajamanu they will be living in one of the humpies in the top camp. The followers are the perennial passengers, they never drive the community vehicles and seldom even sit in the cabin. They sit on the tray with the women, children and dogs. The followers are likely to be amongst the unemployed in the community. If it were not that they had reasonable access to social security benefits they and their families' condition would be hard indeed (though even here their access, because of poor information or their own diffidence, may be less than their entitlements). Any unemployed man on an Aboriginal settlement who does not have unemployment benefits can be expected (all things being equal) to be a follower. The best they can expect for the price of their support is an occasional grant of money (or access to a government service like the CDEP) from a dominant man. In the village politics of government service delivery they form an uninformed, unnoticed audience: the stage is for the big players.

### The Dominant Men

These are the biggest players, black or white, in an Aboriginal settlement. Village politics revolve about them. They are the men with whose names a newly-appointed field officer will become familiar from his first reading of his department's files. They are the subject of white bureaucrats' gossip. Outside observers of Aboriginal communities, racists and 'Gee Whiz' romantics alike, usually share a fundamental misconception about contemporary Aboriginal society: that there are no real leaders. They subscribe to a non-existent dichotomy between 'traditional' leaders who have power and 'modern' leaders who are not really leaders and have no power. This dichotomy is false for two reasons. The 'modern' (non) leaders' power is rooted as much in their traditional backgrounds and family position as it is in their expertise in 'whitefella business'. Secondly, power in Aboriginal communities (and its benefits, status and prestige - not necessarily money per se) is in control over the lives of one's fellows. Controlling access to community vehicles, housing and so on is as real and important to Aborigines as is controlling access to ceremonies or traditional lands.

The leadership of Aboriginal communities was created in the process of transition from the 'colonial' (to adapt Rowley's phraseology) custodial superintendence to the 'post-colonial' limited self-management that characterises the contemporary political relationship of Aboriginal communities with government. This process began after 1973 and was achieved in the Katherine administrative region around 1979.

The mid-1970s saw the withdrawal of the recently-created Department of Aboriginal Affairs from its direct custodial role in the villages of the Katherine district. This disengagement was first completed at Ngukurr in 1976. It coincided with the rise of David Daniels to Council leadership in that village. The leadership of the 'Roper River mob' has been described before (cf Thiele 1980). The antecedents of the contemporary leaders are in the 'herodians' (cf Gerritsen 1981) of the period of mission custodianship (1908-1969). As on most other communities Ngukurr has a strong element of continuity of leadership. At Ngukurr it is personified by Douglas Daniels (who died in 1976). Daniels was the son of one of the first 'herodians' at the Roper Mission and became extremely powerful traditionally because he 'owned' ceremonies from two moieties (an unprecedented accretion of traditional power). In whitefella business he was the head stockman for the mission, a position of some significance with the added advantage of some independence from Mission supervision. By the time of his death the mantle of community leadership had been seized by David Daniels, President of the self-management era Council at Ngukurr.

Dominant men are recruited from a particular sub-set of Aboriginal society. To become a dominant man one must be the son (or grandson in the case of Maurice Luther of Lajamanu) of a dominant man. Or a younger brother, or a relative close enough to have been in almost continuous contact with a dominant man. The contact provides the access to the day-to-day observation of the exemplar that so advantages those close to the dominant man. It provides the information and skills that, together with his own attributes of intelligence and forcefulness, decide whether the aspirant can survive the competition with his siblings, cousins, uncles and so on to himself become a dominant man. Access to this power, though meritocratic, is also largely hereditary because it is confined to particular sub-sets. David Daniels is a dominant man: his brothers, Dawson and Brian, though important, are not dominant men, they are prominent men.

The dominant men are often 'modern' leaders. But their connections with traditional power bases in Aboriginal society are intimate. Their power is based upon three elements in varying combination. First there is ceremonial power. They begin with privileged access to information about ceremonies through their fathers and uncles and develop it through their own diligence and intelligence. Second, land power, which traditionally consisted of family control or 'ownership' over sites of ceremonial significance. Control and ownership are used to convey the distinction between the 'custodian' (djungayi) and the 'owner' (Miniringi). The 1976 Land Rights Act has added 'ownership' or control over broad acres - particularly where these have economic or political potential. At Ngukurr the Huddlestons are utilising their control over the land access to the Ruined City sacred site to try to establish their own tourist project from their homeland centre base. David Daniels defeated Andrew Joshua in the 1981 Ngukurr Council elections by using the 'outstation mob' as his political base. The turning point in his campaign to get their support came when he allowed Charlie Johnson's mob to move in from their homeland centre at Lake Katrine (which suffered severe access problems to Ngukurr during the wet) to establish an outstation on Daniels land at Castello.

Whitefella power is the third element of dominant men's power. It requires literacy or at least adequate English and it encompasses the skills required to understand bureaucrats and bureaucratic processes; to represent the community in dealings with bureaucrats; to control the distribution of benefits of governmental services; to be a 'boss' of whitefella business.

Dominant men will usually have more than one of these attributes though this is not necessary. 'Old' Dulu at Borroloola, a Mara man, 'owns' the Yabaduruwa cult ceremony for that area. This singular position propels him to the forefront and compels other dominant men (and aspirants) to court him. At Daguragu, Victor Vincent, who is not very skilled in whitefella business, is neither very literate nor fluent in English, and is not very forceful, is nevertheless a dominant man. This position he has achieved by being the resident DAA employee at Kalkaringi-Daguragu (which obviates his 'whitefella business')

weaknesses) and the eldest son - and heir-apparent - of Vincent Lingiari, a traditional medicine man and leader of the Gurindji people. At Borrooloola Leo Findlay is the leader of the clan owning Vanderlin Island. He was head stockman at Brunette Downs before becoming the DAA Community Liaison Officer at Borrooloola in the mid-1970s. He is now paid as Liaison Officer by the Council and his power is virtually absolute because of his monopoly both of information from government departments and of negotiations with them. He can properly be called the 'boss' of Borrooloola. 'Bosses' in the same sense - one individual standing out from the ruck of dominant men - can also be found at Lajamanu (Maurice Luther) and Ngukurr (David Daniels) whereas Kalkaringi-Daguragu, Bamyili and Beswick each have two or more of the dominant men sharing the 'bossing'.

The dominant men control and share or compete for the government goods that flow into their communities. They control access to employment. They and their families are usually sure of employment (if desired) in the DCD-funded town maintenance public utility (TMPU) essential services gangs, or in the ADC-funded housing association gang. The only dominant man in the seven villages I studied who was unemployed (on unemployment benefits, as distinct from on a pension or special benefit) was Victor Hood, Vice-President of the Beswick Council. The NTG departments of Health and Education, in the persons of the Senior Sister and the Headmaster, consult the Council (controlled by the dominant men) before appointing Aboriginal Health Workers or Teaching Aides. The Senior Sisters and Headmasters explain this policy by claiming that they could not appoint someone without sufficient 'status'. Unless no-one from a dominant man's retinue wants the job, a literate, able son or daughter of a follower usually could not aspire to being a Health Worker or Teaching Aide.

So services that government provides to communities (government funds provide virtually all employment on these villages) are not unaffected by the local power structure. Nowhere is this clearer than with the community stores. This service is ostensibly neutral, in the sense that everyone - with money - has equal access to it, but it is also extensively modified to meet the expectations or demands of the dominant men. Whatever the policy on credit, even for stores that currently are controlled by Barrawei, the Retail Advisory Service or, as in the case of the Ngukurr and Borrooloola stores, by Carpentaria Traders (a private firm), the storekeeper gives presents (i.e. by not charging the dominant man when he gets to the cash register with an arm-load of groceries). One shopkeeper estimated that this would cost the store about \$1,000 annually for each of the three major dominant men to whom he distributes this largesse. In the stores whose accounts are controlled from Katherine these presentations are condoned by the store managers so long as they stay within the accounting limits allowed for pilfering.

The 1970s cycle of stores accumulating huge debts, going broke, appointing a new manager and recommencing the cycle is familiar to all administrators. What is not understood is that this cycle was not entirely caused by the incompetence or cupidity of the wayfarer storekeepers - which is the only aspect that has attracted bureaucratic attention. The political situation of the community's storekeeper is such that he would be foolhardy to apply the same criteria on credit or presents to the dominant men that he applies to the community in general. At Bamyili successive storekeepers have had disputes with the Council Presidents because 'booking up' at the store is regarded as one of the perquisites of the President's position. In the period 1978-1980 thousands of dollars were lost at the Lajamanu store in similar fashion - dominant men even insisting (successfully) that the store advance them loans so that they could meet hire purchase payments for their cars.

This feature of the retail service to these communities has important equity implications. Bamyili, Kalkaringi, Lajamanu and one of the Borrooloola stores have currently built into their price levels repayments of past bad debts ranging from about \$25,000 to \$170,000. In effect the general community is subsidising the past activities, not only of incompetent or dishonest wayfaring storekeepers, but the exactions of their own dominant men. For three exhilarating months early in 1981 the Bamyili Council ran its store without a manager. Starting with the dominant men booking up, a 'rush' eventually ensued in which the whole community secured access to credit at the store. This uniquely equitable situation lasted only briefly before suppliers cut off credit and the store collapsed. In communities where two-thirds of the adults are dependent upon social

security benefits ranging from family allowance to unemployment benefits, it is obviously inequitable that these poorer people subsidise the past (and to a minor extent the present) exactions of dominant men. The creation of the Katherine Retail Advisory Service should reduce this problem by providing an excuse ('Katherine boss') for the storekeeper to resist pressures for the extensive credit, loans and presents that have contributed to the ruin of stores in the past. From now on presents should be confined to below 5 per cent of turnover.

Dominant men control another centrally important government service, the community vehicles. These are provided to Councils and Housing associations. The dominant men may use them for their private purposes. Many dominant men have their own vehicles. This then affords them the luxury of adjudicating the prominent men's access to the community vehicles. Politically this is an important power because competition for access to community vehicles is intense. The vehicles are sought for attendance at ceremonies; recreation trips to the bush; hunting; trips to Top Springs, Katherine and Mataranka, the regional boozing spots; or visiting relatives. Inevitably abuses occur: the vehicles are used for scrub-bashing or are driven by drunks, and the destruction and maintenance toll is high. The performance of community services is then adversely affected because the works supervisor or housing manager has no vehicle. The Council issues strong declarations about the misuse of vehicles. The administrators' insistence that the vehicles be used only for their official purposes and locked up after work hours is endorsed. The Council establishes a regime of rules governing vehicle use. It usually lasts a fortnight before the cycle is resumed.

Banyili Council, recognising that the problem is intractable, decided to hire out the community vehicles. Dominant men still used them when they wished. But prominent men could hire a vehicle with Council approval. This system reduced the attrition rate of vehicles. Beswick Council have unabashedly allowed the dominant men to use the Council and Social Club vehicles as if they were personal property. The Council truck is used to take people to ceremonies. Other Councils continue the 'traditional' political allocation of vehicles.

This 'system' of dealing with vehicles is a result of community pressures interacting with the role of the dominant men. No other result is likely given that vehicles are the ultimate status symbol on Aboriginal communities, as well as being a vital necessity. Much of the political power of dominant men centres about the allocative control of vehicles. At Beswick the community fund is used to maintain the community's vehicles, both public and private. This means that the general community is expected to subsidise in part the six private vehicle owners in the village.

But the power of the dominant men is not absolute. They are subject to occasional checks when they have overstepped the lax bounds that Aboriginal communities allow. But a check usually only occurs if the dominant men are split; then factionalism based on clan or tribe enters the political calculus. For example, at Ngukurr the dominant men are split into two 'parties' based upon tribally-originated patrilineal lines. These rival coalitions are led by Andrew Joshua and David Daniels, and the potential threat of the 'outs' slightly circumscribes the power of the 'ins'. In September 1979 when the DAA kitchen at Beswick was to be closed some people in the community wanted the Social Club to take it over and subsidise it from the profits of the beer club. Some of the dominant men wanted the beer club money to be used instead to buy a community vehicle. A dominant man, Willy Martin (NAC Member), led the community in opposition to the other dominant men and carried the day. The kitchen, considered an anachronism by some administrators, flourishes, subsidised by the drinkers and providing access to cheap meals for everybody and employment for a group of women.

The most obvious example of some dominant men seeking to override the community's wishes and almost succeeding occurred at Lajamanu in 1979. Maurice Luther (Jupurrula) and Lindsay Herbert (Jungarrayi), the Council president, were supporting their ally, Snowden, a wayfaring man, in seeking to remove the storekeeper. They succeeded, despite universal opposition, even from other councillors. Snowden was later removed when DAA eventually gathered up the courage to cut off housing funds (thereby threatening to increase massively the village's unemployment) and the community found an alternative dominant man, Lionel James (Japanangka), later the Police Aide, to stand against Luther and Herbert.

The dominant men seek to control the delivery of services (initiative) and access to them. That is both the basis and object of their power. To do so means trying to control the government's own service agents, the departmental field officers. In this they are aided by the autonomy of their villages. On a daily basis the field officers have no idea what happens on these settlements. Since DAA withdrew from its custodial role on settlements in the 1970s the field service of the Commonwealth government has been run down. And it has not been adequately replaced by the NT administration. They both now operate a limited form of field visits, more occasional inspections than continuing observation of the usage of governmental services. In this system of virtual autonomy the dominant men flourish.

They are aided by the de facto dependence upon them of the government field officers. Because of pressure of work the senior, experienced officers in Katherine rarely visit the settlements. Young, inexperienced officers are the dominant men's usual visitors. These officers come into a community to, for example, report to Katherine office on the present state of the council. They do not know much about the community; the only names they know are those of the dominant men who are controlling the very activities upon which the bureaucrat is to report. Some of these dominant men 'own' the 'ceremony' of 'whitefella business'. Any queries addressed to anybody else will find the questioner referred to the 'owners' of that business, the dominant men. So the field officer gains access to vetted information. If he inquires as to the lack of action on a particular project it is the dominant men's version/excuses alone he will have for his report.

Also he cannot afford to antagonise the dominant men. If he does they are experienced and forceful enough to complain to his Katherine supervisor or to Darwin. This can mar the young bureaucrat's career. So he is most circumspect. If sufficiently inexperienced or naive he may believe everything he is told. He is an easy mark for 'duchessing'. The dominant men in the settlements of the Katherine region have been interacting with governments for about eight years. They are dominant because they are quick learners; their experience makes the young field officer no contest. He will return to Katherine to report that the accounts are in order, or with good excuses as to why they are not, and to convey further requests for funds and/or vehicles. He knows he will be popular at the village settlement if he succeeds. His stay has been at the most a few hours, 90 per cent of the community has not even seen him, almost everybody is in ignorance of his visit. The dominant men await his return some weeks hence with disinterest. They have seen it all before.

#### The prominent men

They are the second division of the Aboriginal village. This group comprises one-third to one-half of the adult males in the settlement. They are usually members of the extended families of the dominant men or heads of families of minor importance. If young they may be aspiring dominant men. Their ambition is revealed by their membership of the executives of the second-echelon political organisations - the housing association, the outstation resource centre or the store committee. A few older men, who failed to become dominant during the 1970s, may yet have retained status as prominent men. Some prominent men will be on the Council. If they are young this may be an indication that they are dominant men in the making. If they are older it may be that they are there out of respect for their ceremonial attainments or connections with land, or simply that they are the best person their segment (clan, tribe etc) can find.

The prominent men are not powerful enough to reject requests. They are the agents of general redistribution to the followers. A dominant man is strong enough to refuse a would-be borrower, the prominent man would be censured for evading his family or clan obligations.

A follower might hesitate to appeal for a favour to a dominant man. He would not hesitate to do so of a prominent man, especially if the latter were younger. For a prominent man obligations weigh heavily, their recipients see the discharge of these obligations as their right, not as generosity on the part of the prominent man. The dominant man however expects notice to be taken of his redistributive activities; they

are largesse and should be acknowledged as such by the recipient. The popular image of the Aboriginal as generous and sharing, as non-acquisitive, derives from the prominent men.

The prominent men have access to the better housing on the settlement. But they cannot refuse their relatives who come crowding in. So again they are at a disadvantage compared with the dominant men, who can if they wish ensure that their houses are not over-crowded with mendicant relatives. Several Gurindji said to me that they preferred living at Daguragu in a single-roomed, corrugated iron cabin without water and toilets to a multi-roomed, serviced house at the nearby 'settlement' (Kalkaringi) because their relatives could not move in with them at Daguragu.

The prominent men are usually employed if they want to be (older prominent men may be on pensions). They are sufficiently important to regard employment as a right and expect to be re-employed upon their return if they are sacked for absenting themselves without permission or proper excuse. Like good trade unionists they recognise that employment is advantageous; it provides an economic margin over social security benefits that is worth protecting. They resist various government schemes to reduce their wages to expand total employment. For instance, in May 1981 the Bamyili Council asked Community Development to provide extra funds because the Council needed more workers. DCD replied that the Council would get a \$12,000 supplement to their TMPU grant to cover the national wage increase and that the Council could choose whether to pass this on as increased wages to the workforce or use it to expand the workforce. The Council decided to pass on the increase.

There will be prominent men who own cars, often in company with a friend, brother or suchlike. But their possession of these may be transitory; a relative may borrow the car (he cannot be refused) and irreparably damage it. One prominent man at Ngukurr, the son of Charlie Johnson of Castello outstation and an assistant at the store, saved three years for a car. He had it for one hour in the settlement before an uncle borrowed it to go to Mataranka and rolled it over on the return journey! If a relative borrows a dominant man's car he will be less likely to use it recklessly.

The older prominent men focus upon outstations or homeland centres. Here they can attain a degree of autonomy. Owning an outstation provides access to DAA funding (and also to DCD-funded essential services), thereby circumventing the dominant men-controlled council. Outstations for prominent men provide an access to resources denied them by the filtering process on the dominant men-controlled settlement. Also outstations are a recognition of the paramountcy of the traditional bases of power - land and ceremony. The old prominent men are more likely to possess these than 'whitefella business' skills.

A sub-set of the prominent men are the businessmen. These are men who seek incomes from their own private endeavours. Billy Kidd at Borroloola, a professional horse-breaker and bull-catcher, is one example. The Lansen family who run the pictures two nights per week (the Council has the other two nights) are another instance from Ngukurr. There are several Aboriginal professional bull catchers in the Katherine region but they usually operate only sporadically because they suffer chronic vehicle shortages. Aboriginal businessmen are concentrated in artifacts production, usually marketing through Mimi (an offshoot of Yulngu). In many instances this 'business' is a supplement to social security benefits. Only at Bamyili are there men who make their living, albeit by whitefella standards a modest one, from artifact production. At Bamyili also Peter Mungarry produces artifacts on a bigger scale by maintaining four retainers who assist in the business. At present Aboriginal businessmen make no demands for public funding. As the scale of their operations increases they may do so. Earlier this year Billy Campbell at Daguragu made an application for an ABTA grant to purchase a bull-catcher. He may be a harbinger.

#### The adventurous men

These are Aboriginal or part-Aboriginal outsiders. They arrive in a community for a variety of reasons; if they obtain a niche they may stay. Such a man is Robert Shepherd, Town Manager of Bamyili, who has been successful enough to become a dominant man. Tommy Lewis, film star and President in 1981 of the Beswick Town Council, is another example of

a successful adventurous man. Others have a more ephemeral impact. David Lee from Milingimbi arrived at Lajamanu in late 1979 claiming to be an electrician, which the Yuwarli Housing Association then needed. He worked for a short time and then disappeared after a DAA officer asked about his trade papers.

The position of the adventurous men is based upon their 'whitefella' assets: literacy or trade skills. They flourish where 'whitefella' skills are in short supply. Their existence and success is usually dependent upon their utility to the community, though at Kalkaringi they are numerous enough to constitute a noticeable group.

The adventurous men are a phenomenon of decolonisation. They are 'whitefella' replacements. But I suspect that they will constitute a permanent feature of the settlement politics of the Katherine region. Because they are 'outsiders' they have no automatic group from clan, tribe or family support; they are clients or mercenaries of dominant men, usually of those with a low level of 'whitefella' skills. Because they have at best weak roots in the community they cannot become 'over-mighty subjects' but will remain ultimately dependent upon their sponsor. They act as a surrogate for their patron. They may fill, pro tem, a position that has been reserved by a dominant man for the future employment of his son or another member of his retinue.

For the politics of service delivery the significance of the adventurous men derives from their experience. They have usually spent considerable time in white company, or in Darwin or 'down south'. They have a higher level of expectations of services than is common in Aboriginal settlements. They escalate demands and act as a 'ginger group', pressuring councils into an attitude more demanding of government. They may create wants where none previously existed. Sometimes the dominant men use the adventurous men's intransigence and outspokenness to great effect on visiting bureaucrats. The adventurous men make the ambit claims.

The whitefellas in an Aboriginal settlement fall into two categories: those whose career interests are extrinsic to the village, and those whose job survival is intrinsic to the community. The first group are the 'service whites' and they comprise the teachers, nursing sisters and the police (and contractors who may be in the village for a time working on some particular project). The second group, employed by the Aborigines themselves, I have labelled the wayfarers.

The service whites discharge functions that Aborigines feel must be regarded as important. But Aborigines do not spend much time thinking about these services unless something goes wrong, such as excessive vandalism at the school. The service whites are seen as ephemeral; very few spend any time in the community. At Lajamanu in mid-1981 there was only one teacher who had been there two years, and he was leaving at the end of the year. If these people stay on a community for any length of time - for instance the Bamyili Headmaster or Sister Booker at Ngukurr - they do have an impact.

With the possible exception of Ngukurr (with an all-Aboriginal teaching staff) the people of Bamyili expressed more satisfaction with their school than did those at any other community in the Katherine region. This may be owing to the excellent bilingual education program at the school. But undoubtedly it is in part because the Headmaster and a core of the teaching staff have been at the school for some years. They have become known to the Aboriginal community, Aborigines taking more time about relationships than whites. If the school makes a request of the council it is acceded to with something more than the dutiful acquiescence common on other communities.

Teachers are generally political neuters. The exception occurs on the communities where a 'whitefella' wayfarer assumes a dominant role, then they form a covert opposition. But Headmasters have a strong sense of their autonomous institutionally-derived power and will resist council dominant men's directions. Late in 1980, at Lajamanu, a teacher's dog bit a child. The Council insisted that the dog be killed and the teacher put off the settlement. To the latter demand the Headmaster and the white staff countered with the threat of an exodus of all the teachers. They were motivated by a feeling that the Council 'controlled everything' and that this incident was an excuse to get 'control' of

the school. After some hectic conciliation by Paddy Patrick (Jangala), a teaching Aide and Councillor, they had their way. In 1981, in pursuit of the school's autonomy, the Headmaster was seeking (with difficulty) to form a school council comprised of people who were not under the control of the dominant men of the Council.

Similarly, at Borroloola in August 1981, Leo Findlay sought to have the Australian Inland Mission Pastor reinstated after the Headmaster had banned him from religious instruction at the school (shrewdly replacing him with Aboriginal women from the congregation). This was a symbolic contest in which the Headmaster resisted to demonstrate that he too had power. Some months previously the Headmaster had organised the affidavits and formal complaint to the Regional Inspector of Police, Peter Young, that had led to the police officer at Borroloola being charged for assault and intimidation and discharging a firearm in public. This caused a sensation in the community and made the Headmaster popular overnight. The community were not used to policemen being charged for allegedly assaulting and threatening Aborigines. Findlay's motive probably was suspicion of a popular 'whitefella', particularly of one who had political acumen and could get a policeman charged. The Headmaster was a threat to Findlay's monopoly of expertise in dealing with government.

The community nurses who have their administrative and career sights set on Katherine and Darwin have a high staff turnover and are also usually peripheral to the settlement's politics. They provide a service that has general public acceptance, keep to themselves and remain outside the political conflict within the community. When a demand is made of them that they choose to resist, they can blame 'Katherine office' or 'government policy'. Thus successive sisters at Lajamanu have resisted community pressure for a mobile service to the homeland centres, pleading staff shortages and lack of a suitable vehicle. The latter excuse is true, the former is not; the sisters at Bamyili and Beswick manage a mobile to Bulman and Weemol with fewer staff. But the Tanami desert is a less pleasant place to travel around than southern Arnhemland! The exception is Sister Booker at Ngukurr. In November 1980 she threatened to resign if the beer club was re-established. It was not and possibly her intervention galvanised the opposition to the proposal from the women and the wowsers.

Because their career interests are extrinsic to the Aboriginal settlements where they may (briefly) serve, the teachers and nurses generally do not interfere in community politics. They deliver services as agents of government departments, they do not seek to mediate community aspirations about the content and delivery style of their services. An example is provided by bilingual education. Settlement teachers tell the community that they support bilingual education but that Darwin does not. Consequently they do not pressure Darwin for what would inevitably be a costly and administratively difficult innovation. They do not want their department to label them as troublemakers. That the majority of the teachers on settlement schools have only one or two years teaching experience and do not wish to become more dependent on Aboriginal teaching assistants enhances their passivity on this subject.

The police provide a popular service in the Katherine region settlements. Increasingly they are displaying an awareness of Aboriginal patterns of behaviour and sensitivities. The police are seen to be providing a valuable service: community order. How valuable can be gauged by the fact that late in 1980 the Daguragu Council itself funded a tracker at the Kalkaringi police station (after the previous tracker had retired) because they were worried that the position might be abolished. The Council did this even though DCD initially pressured them against it, pointing out that the action was contrary to the TMPU expenditure guidelines.

Public order is a preoccupation of Aboriginal communities. In all the Katherine region communities, except Ngukurr and Borroloola, the council employs some form of community police or night patrol. At Borroloola the councillors are organised into a roster for a nightly 'drunks patrol'. The police in all these villages co-operate closely with these public order units, which are usually staffed by dominant men (Lajamanu, Daguragu, Borroloola) or prominent men (Beswick, Bamyili). This activity has established a rapport between the police and the communities' leaders.

Ultimately the police are popular, especially with women, because they ameliorate conflict. In the settlement situation where a number of different tribes or clans are in close proximity, tensions often in combination with alcohol erupt into more serious conflicts. The police are helpful in restraining the escalation of initially minor incidents. Their largely fortuitous alliance with the dominant men and prominent men, and the fact that they are prepared to play a secondary enforcement role to the community 'public order' units, have enabled the police to more effectively and popularly deliver the 'order' segment of 'law and order' services to Aboriginal communities.

The wayfaring men are in the community but they can never be of it. In the sense that their tenure in the community is never secure, they are the white equivalents of adventurous men. They are usually employed for a particular function such as storekeeper, housing manager, tradesman (mechanic, electrician), bookkeeper or council officer (Town Administrator/Project Officer). The wayfarers come from a variety of backgrounds - ex-policemen; former navy personnel; an unemployed french polisher from Canberra; a former store liquor department manager, and so on. Contrary to popular mythology they are not misfits. Their actions stem from their reactions to their situation and the imperatives of their survival.

There are certain political necessities for the wayfarer's survival on a community. Firstly, he must rapidly learn who the dominant men are and make himself popular with them. This is achieved by a judicious combination of deference, friendliness and amenability. The wayfarer ingratiates himself with the dominant men by providing them with drink or other favours. Drink is a diminishing source of influence as the dominant men seem to be turning away from alcohol. Maurice Luther is the only Aboriginal at Lajamanu with a liquor permit; none of the dominant men at Borroloola drink, though some do at Ngukurr. Only at Beswick and Bamyili are a good proportion of the dominant men drinkers. The other favours depend upon the wayfarer's skills and role. If he is a storekeeper the wayfarer occasionally allows the dominant man to leave the store without paying for his groceries (though this activity is much reduced since Barrawei and the Katherine Retail Advisory Service intervention). The other wayfarers promise the dominant man instant attention. The mechanic or electrician will interrupt his work to fix a broken down car or a non-functioning electric stove. The Project Officer or Town Manager will allow the dominant man unfettered use of council vehicles, or will provide a council vehicle to tow a dominant man's car back to the settlement from wherever it has broken down. Several wayfarers, combining political advantage with an eye for commercial gain, have even bought cars in Darwin and re-sold them to dominant and prominent men on their communities.

The wayfarer's necessity for good relations with the dominant men provides insights into the inefficiencies of the service delivery process at the settlement level. The (administratively) improper use of vehicles is an obvious example. But there are others. If one equates the competence of housing association managers with the rate of construction of new housing, then the Yuwarli Housing Association manager (who has not built any new houses in the last 12 months) is manifestly incompetent. Yet a closer examination of his activities reveals a more complex pattern. All his housing gang's activities have been concentrated upon repairs and maintenance (R & M). A great deal of organisation and expense has been devoted to building up the equipment and materials for R & M. Very expensive sheets of very hard clear plastic for unbreakable louvres have been purchased. The whole emphasis is upon refurbishment of the existing housing stock.

Lajamanu is a settlement where, in the main, the followers live in humpies in the top camp and the dominant men and prominent men live in houses. If the housing gang's efforts are concentrated upon those already housed then substantial inequity is perpetuated. This 'inefficient' consequence is incidental to the wayfaring manager's purpose, which is to deliver the housing gang's 'service' to the community's 'influentials' (dominant and prominent men). This wayfarer, with a large family and fresh from unemployment in the building industry 'down south', is keen to stay at Lajamanu. So he attempts to create a symbiotic relationship with the dominant men and the prominent men of the community. Earlier this year he had been fined and lost his liquor permit as a result of his giving liquor to some of the community's men.

But the symbiotic relationship has been created. Late in 1981 the Lajamanu Council refused to remove this housing manager when requested by the funding agency, the ADC, which was alarmed at the lack of progress on construction of new housing.

Wayfaring men can have allocative power similar to that of a dominant man. The recently-ended career of the Project Officer of the Ngukurr Council is one case. Another is the Town Administrator of Beswick whose power as wayfarer is based upon his administrative diligence. He does the work that no one else finds interesting. The dominant men are satisfied in other ways. The Town Administrator helps some obtain cars. The President, Tommy Lewis, has his job 'looked after' while he is away on location for films. Other younger men get the free beer that goes with managing the beer club each night. This Beswick wayfarer has discovered the secret of success, make yourself useful to the dominant men.

But this is not to overstate the security of tenure of the wayfarer. He faces constant reminders that his position is tenuous. If he gets involved in 'blackfella' business or over-zealously assumes a role that the dominant men consider appropriate for themselves then the wayfarer will be finished. In April 1979 young drunks were harassing the nursing sisters at Kalkaringi. The council works supervisor arrived with a shotgun to restore order. The Council sacked him; that situation was considered the business exclusively of the families concerned and the Council. At Borroloola in 1980 the housing manager made the mistake of antagonising the bureaucrats at the same time as the community 'boss', Leo Findlay. The Beswick wayfarer above made a mistake in calling the police to an incident in which he was attacked. The feeling in the community is building up against him.

The wayfaring man seeks to create dependence upon his skills. A wayfaring manager of a housing association can be advantaged if the housing gang consists of unreliable workers or those unwilling to train; the wayfarer stoically does all the management and, for example, skilled electrical work, making himself all the while irreplaceable. The relative autonomy of the village protects the wayfaring man from the continuous scrutiny of the bureaucracy. Government officers' hostility to him if he is not training his potential replacements is ineffective. Indeed bureaucratic hostility only strengthens the wayfarer's position, other things being equal, giving the dominant men reassurance that he really must be protecting their interests. The Beswick Town Administrator repaired much of the damage done his position from the incident referred to above by publicly embarrassing Community Development over its failure to provide water bores, a failure leading to water shortages at Beswick (NT News 13 July 1981). The Town Administrator, White, had actually rung the Chief Minister's Office to complain about the delay with the bores. A staff member had advised him to 'leak' it to the press to ensure quick action. It did, but secured White the hostility of Community Development's Katherine office.

Administration staff seek to minimise the influence of the wayfaring men because they see them as the originators as well as articulators of community criticism of government programs and its officers' actions. Like the adventurous men the wayfarers can form a 'ginger group' on the settlement. Also administrative staff are impatient of the disruption to service delivery caused by the endemic jealousy and rivalry between wayfarers in the Katherine region settlements. These rivalries are often assigned simply to the result of the isolation of settlements or disputes over status and emoluments. But an element must be the competition between wayfarers for influence with the dominant men, an imperative of the wayfarers' continued existence. The administrators have had some successes. Except for Beswick they have now cleared all the council offices in the region of wayfarers, replacing them with (European female) bookkeepers and forcing the dominant men to accept the public responsibility for the performance of their settlements' councils.

The wayfaring men are unlike the adventurous men in that they usually do not have a single sponsor. But, like the adventurous men, they will be a permanent feature of Aboriginal settlements, occupying the jobs that village Aborigines presently either cannot do or cannot be bothered to do. They are the objects of great suspicion from the administrators who see them as misfits and dishonest vagabonds, not realising that their behaviour and their venality are reactions to the uncertain situation in which they operate.

## Conclusion

Service delivery has to be reinterpreted to take account of the local client level in understanding the impact of government services.

The clients are not passive, individuated targets of programs; they influence them directly. Certain groups amongst the clients seek to control access to the benefits of governmental services.

The Aboriginal villages of the Katherine region are controlled neither by bureaucrats in Katherine (or Darwin) nor by the formal political institutions of these settlements - the councils, housing associations and shop committees. They are controlled by dominant men, not all of whom are members of these political institutions. There is intense 'political' competition in these villages. Resources provided by government, whether directly (vehicles) or indirectly (employment from TMPU grants), are a major element in this political competition. It is the reason that government programs are not necessarily implemented at the village level in the manner intended by governments; frustrated or modified service implementation leads to the accusation that councils and other local institutions are 'inefficient'. The dominant men seek to control the flow of resources created by service delivery: to have the initiative in directing these resources for their own political advantage. The dominant men are aided in their control over services at the local level by the virtual autonomy of their villages. The government does not exercise control on a daily basis over service delivery and cannot even adequately monitor the distributional flows its services create. The dominant men have sufficient political power to exert some control over the bureaucracy in protecting their powers of initiative. The popular image of Aborigines, being powerless in their dealings with bureaucracy, needs to be substantially modified. The positions of the dominant men depend upon their being able to direct resources to reward their families and retainers. The struggle for resources is the dominant men's raison d'etre. The relationships between various groups, black and white, within these settlements can only be explained by reference to the power of the dominant men.

When we become aware of these facts then the way that services are applied in Aboriginal villages becomes more understandable. Instead of the current focus upon the 'problems' (and failures) of service delivery we see the consequences of the rational pursuit of self-interest. This should produce a different emphasis in the analysis of service delivery.

W.K. Oakes

MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS FOR FUNDED ABORIGINAL ORGANISATIONS ENGAGED IN THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO COMMUNITIES

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to draw attention to the need for management awareness and management skills by Aboriginal organisations which provide services to their communities.

What is Management

Modern management is concerned with making decisions. Specifically it is concerned with decision-making in the context of planning, organising, directing and controlling resources in order to achieve defined objectives.

The management of an organisation therefore makes decisions about:

- what the objectives of the organisation mean, that is, interpretation and definition;
- how to develop a plan to go about achieving these objectives;
- what is needed to achieve the plan: money, materials, manpower etc; and
- where those resources will come from.

When the organisation is actively engaged as a going concern management makes decisions about how the organisation is going in terms of its plan, e.g.

- has it been able to get the money, materials and manpower
- are these working together in the ways intended
- are the objectives/plans being achieved.

In considering these matters it requires information

- from accountants, book-keepers or bankers
- from supervisors, tradesmen and advisers
- from workers
- from the local community.

To most people involved in service organisations or in government departments there is nothing new in what I have stated. However when community service organisations are unaware of management roles and responsibilities there are unfortunate repercussions and the communities which they serve suffer through ineffective or inefficient services.

## Management Problems encountered by Aboriginal Organisations

Decisions in any organisation have to be taken in a complex framework involving different levels and groups. The decision-making framework in an Aboriginal organisation would seem to be even more complex because of the community relationships which inevitably are involved and because of the large number of bodies and agencies which exist in 'Aboriginal affairs' areas.

There are some particular problems of a management nature which arise from time to time that I would mention.

Initially, an Aboriginal community has to decide to set up an organisation in a legal sense. That is, the organisation will have a legal status quite distinct from its members. The members have to agree on the organisation's purpose or objectives and these decisions are recorded, in writing, in the organisation's Constitution. Unless we are dealing with a highly literate adult group, all these initial decisions may not be fully understood, or may not even be regarded by the members as being binding on them.

The members also have to delegate to selected individuals (a committee) the power to make decisions on their behalf in the interests of the organisation. This process is fraught with possible conflicts arising out of the distinction between the obligations inherent in community relationships and the obligations defined by the organisation's constitution.

I see a need for management awareness and management performance at two levels in an organisation. Senior staff of the organisation obviously need management awareness/appreciation and skills in management. I believe that it is also important for the committee of the organisation to have at least an awareness/appreciation of management.

However this distinction between the committee and the (staff) management can often create a problem as the Aboriginal committee (lacking management awareness and therefore appreciation of its responsibilities) may disassociate itself from the operational aspects of the management of the organisation. Financial arrangements and controls for example may then be labelled as 'white-feller business' and left to the employed management - sometimes with disastrous results.

Another problem in this context occurs when a committee decides to employ an unsuitable (inexperienced and/or untrained) person as manager of the organisation - perhaps because the person is related to significant people on the committee. Such an appointment inevitably leads to difficulties of various sorts which have an impact on the services being provided to the community and frequently creates problems for the funding body.

At the operational level we also find many situations which reflect the lack of understanding by staff and the committee of procedural requirements which are necessary for effective performance, such as

- unauthorised and unbudgetted expenditure
- inadequate controls of expenditure
- loans to members
- pre-signing of cheques

- late submission of financial statements
- purchase of goods of questionable value
- lack of control of use of vehicles
- pre-payment of wages

How does DAA interact with Aboriginal organisations?

My particular involvement in the government machinery process concerns the procedural arrangements relating to the provisions of grant monies by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA). DAA's grant conditions are broadly similar to other government funding bodies. We specify requirements to be met by the grant recipient organisation at two levels.

- (1) Consistent with the requirements of the Finance Directions under the Audit Act, we require an audited expenditure statement and a certification from the organisation that the grant was used for the purpose for which it was given. In practice the audited expenditure statement is usually the set of annual audited financial statements (balance sheet, income and expenditure statement etc) which an organisation has prepared by its auditors to satisfy the requirements of the legislation under which it is incorporated (evidence of an organisation's legal incorporation is usually required before a grant is offered).
- (2) Prior to the release of funds during the year, we also require that the organisation provide on a quarterly basis information on its quarterly and accumulated receipts and payments and its current debtors and creditors. This enables us to monitor the financial position of the organisation against its approved budget - and if appropriate to initiate early remedial action. We also seek advice of 'physical progress' by an organisation where this is relevant.

From the Department's experience, it is apparent that many organisations do not appreciate the significance of the information that we require in their management process. I would argue that any organisation of any size which is attempting to do something of substance such as to provide community services needs to know on a regular and fairly frequent basis how it is progressing during the year. I would also argue that the annual budget can be seen as a plan for the year's activities and that one simple and necessary management control would be to regularly examine financial performance to date (receipts, payments, debtors and creditors etc) against the budget.

DAA's funding conditions require the submission of financial information for monitoring purposes on a quarterly basis but many organisations really need this sort of information more frequently than that. However, the DAA conditions can be seen as a positive guide to the information requirements of an organisation and hence to improved management performance.

In a similar way our requirements for the acquittance of the grant can be satisfied by what the organisation is usually required to do by law - that is, to provide audited financial statements to publicly account for the funds it has used. We also require a certification by the chief executive of the organisation that the funds have been spent for the purpose for which they were given. These conditions should not be seen as a burden on the organisation. The organisation itself, through its committee, has a responsibility to account to its members on its management of the resources it has received for providing services to the community. The DAA conditions are consistent with that end.

Why do Aboriginal organisations experience problems with Management?

I suggest that there may be several related reasons.

There is a tendency for government agencies and politicians to be concerned with their particular areas of interest, that is, to get ideas or policies approved and to obtain funds for programs. The next stage of implementation does not receive the same degree of consideration and often seems to be regarded as 'someone else's' responsibility.

If implementation issues are considered, the technical skills of book-keeping and committee procedures are often equated with management. Management, as I have indicated, involves more than record-keeping and administrative procedures.

Within Aboriginal organisations, major attitudinal adjustments may be required, for example to throw off the historic dependency on non-Aboriginals to make decisions 'about money, materials and man-power'. Aboriginal committee members and Aboriginal managers must be prepared to accept their roles and responsibilities if they really wish to manage their own affairs.

I have one more observation to make based on our experience in the Department. I have indicated that DAA conditions for grants require the preparation of quarterly and annual financial statements and that the information contained in those statements is information that the organisation needs and must have if it is to manage itself. I quite often encounter statements prepared by (qualified) accountants which, although technically satisfying our requirements, are set out in such a way as to be almost useless as a means of providing usable information to management. My most common complaint concerns the accountant who lumps the transactions concerning several grants relating to different projects into one record. It is of course utterly impossible to use such information for management control purposes at the project level and I question the professional competence of an accountant who provides statements in that manner. On the other hand I must also say that I am finding that increasing numbers of accountants are presenting admirable, easily understood statements consistent with the requirements of modern management.

I conclude this paper with the reminder that it is federal government policy that Aboriginals should manage their own affairs. Self-management is a decision-making process and, where resources are provided, management awareness must be heightened by carefully designed strategies of support. In making the above comments I recognise that various institutions are providing suitable training courses and that much has been done in this area to improve the performance of Aboriginal managers. I also appreciate that the task of training Aboriginals in 'modern' management is not one that can be easily and quickly accomplished. I merely point to the needs which still exist.

Owen Stanley

ROYALTY PAYMENTS AND THE GAGUDJU ASSOCIATION

I

In June 1981 there were about 217 Aborigines living in Kakadu National Park and at the adjacent station of Mudginberri in the Northern Territory. About 57 per cent of these were members of the Gagudju Association Incorporated which was formed on the 8th September, 1980 under the NT Associations Incorporation Act. This incorporation gives the Association limited liability. In June 1981 there were 296 members of the Association of whom 175 were adults and 121 were children. Some 42 per cent of them lived in the Park and at Mudginberri and all of them are considered to be traditional owners of the land broadly corresponding to the existing Park boundaries. Members of the Association not then living in the Park resided at numerous places nearby such as Pine Creek, Croker Island, Bamyili, Oenpelli, Katherine and Darwin. Decisions concerning an individual's eligibility for membership are made by the Committee of the Association although membership is becoming a difficult problem and the Association may enlist the aid of an anthropologist or it may close membership.

The Association aims to improve the welfare of its members, to represent its members in negotiations with governments, mining companies, the Northern Land Council (NLC) and other bodies, to administer the collection and distribution of royalties and other incomes and to conduct business for the benefit of members. There is a Committee of ten members including a chairman which is elected by members of the Association once every three years. Children become full members in terms of voting and distribution of monies at 18 years of age. Money allocated to members under 18 years is held in a trust account but withdrawals can be made for special purposes (education, etc.) subject to the Committee's approval. To date, all distributions have been the same to child and adult members.

The Association employed a European manager (seconded from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs) and a European secretary/bookkeeper to assist in policy formation and administration of the Association.

II

The income of the Association came from mining on land owned by members of the Association, rental paid by National Parks and Wildlife Service (ANPWS) for the Park, and profits from activities carried on inside and outside the Park.

There are three large uranium projects in the area affecting the welfare of members: the Ranger Project at Jabiru, the Pancontinental Project at Jabiluka and the Denison Mines project at Koongarra. Each of these areas is excluded from the Park and are on special mineral leases but they are still on Aboriginal land.

Agreement had been reached on the Ranger Project between the Commonwealth government, NLC, Ranger Uranium Mines (RUM) and the Association. Negotiations were continuing with Pancontinental but the process had not yet begun on the Koongarra Project. The Ranger deposits were estimated to be 100,400 tonnes of U308 (yellowcake) and it was anticipated that annual production would be 3,000 tonnes per annum with it increasing to 6,000 tonnes per annum if the price of yellowcake justified the increase. The initial investment required to reach production by RUM was estimated to be \$310 million. After lengthy negotiations between RUM, the Commonwealth government, NLC and the traditional owners the following royalty arrangements were decided upon (Ranger Uranium Project n.d.). Payments were divided into 'up-front monies', an annual rental paid by the Commonwealth government, and a value-of-production based royalty to be paid by RUM. These monies were to be paid

initially to the NLC and distributed by them in a fashion to be described shortly. Total up-front monies payable was \$1,300,000 or \$4,392 per member of the Association and it was made up of the following payments:

- a) \$200,000 within 7 days of the execution of the Agreement;
- b) \$200,000 within 30 days after the date of issue of the Authority to commence work on the mine;
- c) \$300,000 within 30 days after the date on which the last pour of concrete for the primary crusher concrete structure at the truck tipping level is made;
- d) \$300,000 within 30 days after the completion of commissioning of the power generation plant;
- e) \$300,000 within 30 days after the date on which the total quantity of U308 in uranium concentrates produced in the first treatment plant to be constructed in the Ranger Project Area reaches:
  - (i) 500 tonnes of U308 in uranium concentrates of design specification, or
  - (ii) 1,000 tonnes of U308 in marketable uranium whichever is the earlier.

The Commonwealth government agreed to pay the NLC \$200,000 on the issue of the Authority and for each subsequent year for which the Agreement runs. These payments are called 'rent'. Finally, Ranger was required to pay a royalty of four and a quarter per cent on the value of ore extracted from the mine. The Commonwealth government has foregone its royalties in preference to Aboriginal interests in the Northern Territory. A force majeure exception applies to the agreement, including where it arises from strikes, labour conflicts and embargoes. The Agreement will last 26 years unless terminated by mutual agreement. Mining operations will cease after 21 years of the Agreement and 5 years are allowed for rehabilitation work in the Project Area.

The NLC acts largely as an agent for affected Aborigines. Royalties are paid into a Trust Account which is administered by the NLC. Distributions made from the Account are specified by the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976-79 in the following way:

- a) 40 per cent goes to the Northern Territory land Councils to meet their administrative costs and any surplus is distributed between the Councils in accordance with the size of the population they represent
- b) 30 per cent is paid to the community affected by the operation (most, if not all of this payment will go to the Gagudju Association); and
- c) 30 per cent goes to benefit Aborigines in the NT as the Minister directs with the advice of the Aboriginal advisory committee.

Table A summarises some data in relation to these payments. The up-front monies are in fact paid to the Gagudju Association. They have totalled \$800,000 or \$2,703 per member so far and in the financial year 1981-82 it expects to receive a further \$600,000 since it is anticipated that both the power generation plant will be commissioned and yellowcake production will be commenced. The Commonwealth government's annual contribution of \$200 000 is also paid to the Gagudju Association with the exception of one payment which was paid to the NLC to cover administrative expenses associated with the Ranger agreement.

TABLE A

UP-FRONT MONIES, RENTAL AND ROYALTIES  
FROM THE RANGER URANIUM PROJECT

ITEM	MONIES RECEIVABLE BY GAGUDJU ASSOCIATION		BY OTHER NT ABORIGINES	RECEIVABLE BY ALL ABORIGINAL INTERESTS
	<u>TOTAL</u> \$'000	<u>PER MEMBER</u> \$	\$'000	\$'000
Up-front monies received by June 1981	800	2703	0	800
Annual rental received to June 1981	200	676	200	400
Total monies received to June 1981	1000	3379	200	1200
Up-front monies and rental anticipated for 1981-82	800	2703	0	800
Total up-front monies	1300	4392	0	1300

Royalties and Rental Payments with Output of 3000 Tonnes Per Annum  
(rounded to nearest \$1000)

	\$'000	\$	\$'000	\$'000
At \$58.1 per kg. plus rental p.a. (for 21 years)	2422	8184	5185	7608
At \$72.6 per kg. plus rental p.a. (for 21 years)	2977	10057	6480	9457
At \$87.1 per kg. plus rental p.a. (for 12 years)	3532	11931	7774	11305

Estimates of income to be derived from production royalties vary considerably depending upon assumptions made about production rates, price received and the proportion of the 30 per cent of royalties which will be given to the Association. Table A presents some estimates based on an assumed production rate of 3,000 tonnes per annum. Contracts have been signed for the first five years of production only and they involve an average price for U308 of \$72.6 per kilogram. Estimates are provided for royalties assuming that price and for \$72.6 plus and minus 20 per cent. It is likely that the Gagudju will receive all of the 30 per cent of royalties allocated to communities affected by the mining and that assumption has been used in the calculation of royalties. These matters will be discussed below.

The projected uranium mine at Jabiluka is much larger than the Ranger Mine. Jabiluka is a joint venture by Pancontinental Mining Ltd. and Getty Oil Development Co. Ltd. on the basis of 65 per cent Pancontinental and 35 per cent Getty ownership. The project will

require an outlay of \$800 million to reach the production stage. Reserves of U308 at Jabiluka are estimated to be 205,700 tonnes and there is 8.1 tonnes of gold at the site. Initial output is estimated to be 4,300 tonnes per annum and from year five of the development the output may be increased to 9,000 tonnes per year if the price justifies it. The project is expected to last 25 years. Negotiations between Pancontinental, the government, NLC and the traditional land owners (the Association) are proceeding, though not without difficulty. It is probable that an agreement similar to the Ranger Agreement will result.

Finally, the Koongarra project is owned by Denison Mines Limited and is the smallest project of the three. There are an estimated 13,000 tonnes of U308 at the site. It is anticipated that annual output will be 1,000 tonnes per annum. Capital outlay required to reach production will be about \$70 million. Negotiations have not begun on this project.

These three projects were and will remain the main source of revenue for the Association.

### III

Most of the Kakadu National Park is owned by the Association and administered by the Kakadu Aboriginal Land Trust. The Trust was composed of the same people as were on the Committee of the Association. The Association leased its land to ANPWS for a rent of \$7,502 per annum. The ANPWS employed a number of Aborigines on a full-time and part-time basis. They also provided training in Park management for Aborigines. The Park agreement guarantees the traditional owners the right to continue traditional use of the land.

The Commonwealth government was in the process of acquiring the Mudginberri Station to allow a land claim to be made by local Aborigines. This station will be incorporated in Stage 2 of the Kakadu National Park. The Association may take over the running of the meatworks on the station. A small amount of royalties was obtained from buffalo hunters who work in the park. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs made a grant to the Association to aid its outstation development. The Association had also begun to earn money on investments it had made on the short-term money market. Finally, the Association was about to establish a contracting company so that it could bid for contracts in garbage disposal, minor road maintenance and town beautification offered by RUM in relation to its mine and town.

The most important investment which had been undertaken was the purchase of the Cooina Motel in the Park. The purchase was financed partly by a bank loan. The acquisition of the Motel has been important because it has allowed the community to control drinking amongst its members. The Association had imposed a limit on alcohol purchases (equal to four cans of beer to drink at the Motel and six to take away). Aboriginal campers near the Motel were banned and people were aware of the need not to offend tourists in order that the venture be successful. Some artifacts were sold at the Motel and it provided some full-time and part-time employment for the Aboriginal community. It also bought any locally caught barramundi for its kitchen. The Motel had a capacity of 30 beds (plus camping facilities) and planned new buildings with a capacity of 50 beds. The existing demountable buildings may be used for Association purposes when they are replaced. The Motel was managed by a European couple and employed five Europeans. It was operating profitably.

Apart from the Cooina purchase, the Association had invested considerable sums in improving conditions in the Park. It had purchased thirteen Toyota four-wheel drive vehicles, most of which were used in the Park, and planned the purchase of another two in the next financial year. It also intended to construct six conventional houses, to install two water tanks and three water pumps. It will also spend a considerable sum on improvements to existing buildings. Tax is paid on all monies received by the Association.

Two cash distributions had been made to members: \$1,500 per member in September 1979 and \$1,000 per member in September 1979 and \$1,000 per member in May 1980. It was anticipated that another distribution of \$1,000 be made in this financial year (1981-82).

## IV

Aborigines lived in eight outstations in the Park, at Mudginberri Station, at the Jabiru temporary and new townships and at the East Alligator Ranger's Station. An outline of conditions which prevailed at these places is provided in Table B. Data were collected in June 1981 with the exception of those for Mudginberri Station which relate to February 1981. Informal enquiry suggested that conditions at Mudginberri were similar in June 1981. Current data were not sought because the government, Mudginberri and local Aborigines were engaged in delicate negotiations during June and July 1981. Two Europeans who lived at outstations in the Park were included in the outstation population figures since they were substantially integrated into the Aboriginal community.

Aborigines are usually very mobile so that populations at the various outstations may change quickly. Population estimates for September 1979 for Denison's (previously Noranda's) Koongarra project (in Supplement to Draft Environmental Impact Statement, 2-42) show the population in the area to be 133 (compared with 217 in June 1981). The outstations had the following numbers: Nourlangie had 11 (30), Jim Jim nil (2), Patonga Airstrip nil (30), Patonga Lodge nil (4), Jim Jim Waterhole 3 (4), Spring Peak 5 (7), Deaf Adder 12 (18), Jabiru camp and town 20 (53), Mudginberri 50 (37), Cannon Hill and Ranger's Station 28 (32), Muirella Park 4 (nil). Because of this mobility, estimates such as 'per capita income' and 'per adult income' are most currently thought of as 'annual rates' rather than 'annual totals'.

The nature of the outstations varied considerably. Nourlangie was originally the base at the Woolwonga Aboriginal Reserve (now incorporated in the Aboriginal land grant) and is now a Ranger's Station. It is also the base station for Aborigines in the Park. It had a school (not used, but now serves as a games room), a large office and a large store from which goods are transported and sold to people at other outstations. One of the two principal landowners affected by uranium mining lives there permanently. Jim Jim, Patonga Airstrip, Patonga Lodge, Jim Jim Waterhole, and Spring Peak are all close to the Cooina Motel and in varying degrees provided labour to the Motel and made use of its store. Patonga Lodge was a hunting lodge and had numerous facilities including large accommodation facilities, electricity and a number of outbuildings. Patonga Airstrip outstation was a place largely for older people while Jim Jim Waterhole outstation was used by young men. Deaf Adder outstation is remote and considerable hunting was done there. Jabiru outstation is associated with the temporary town and it is intended that these people be housed in the new town. Mudginberri Station provided employment and access to facilities for Aborigines living at the outstation there. Cannon Hill outstation is associated with the East Alligator Ranger's Station and residents purchased some goods from the Border Store as well as from the Association. The other principal landowner affected by uranium mining lives at Cannon Hill.

TABLE B  
CONDITIONS AT ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES, JUNE 1981 - PART I

SOCIAL

	Adults		Chn Age Total		Members of Gagudju Assocn. Age +18 -18		Number in F.T. Employt or UB		Number receiving pensions or UB		Number of Gagudju Ass.Ctee Members		Income p.a. Per Cap. Adult			
	M	F	-16	Pop	+18	-18	Employt	or UB	receiving	pensions	or UB	Gagudju	Ass.Ctee	Members	\$	\$
Nourlangie	12	9	9	30	20	9	4	4	6	6	2	2	1648	2486		
Jim Jim	1	1	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	*	*		
Patonga Airstrip	20	10	0	30	28	0	0	0	22	22	4	4	2450	2450		
Patonga Lodge	1	1	2	4	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	3294	6588		
Jim Jim Waterhole	4	0	0	4	4	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	6240	6240		
Spring Peak	1	2	4	7	2	4	2	2	1	1	0	0	3025	7059		
Deaf Adder	10	5	3	18	12	3	0	0	6	6	1	1	1037	1245		
Jabiru	8	10	21	39	4	0	3	3	7	7	0	0	1607	3481		
Mudginberri (Feb '81)	8	10	19	37	3	0	2	2	11	11	0	0	1713	3520		
Cannon Hill	5	7	10	22	10	10	2	2	4	4	1	1	2118	3884		
E.Alligator Ranger Stn	3	3	4	10	6	4	3	3	0	0	0	0	3826	6377		
Jabiru Town	5	3	6	14	0	0	5	5	1	1	0	0	4369	8192		
Total	78	61	78	217	92	32	27	27	57	57	9	9				

\* Not shown to preserve confidentiality, highest in table

xx Excludes distributions by the Gagudju Association

TABLE B

## CONDITIONS AT ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES, JUNE 1981 - PART II

	Numbers of							Water Supply	Facilities for	
	Houses/ Huts	Caravans	Shelters	Service Bldgs	Trucks **	Cars	School		Health	
Nourlangie	3	3	0	3	1	3	Bore	None	NS <sup>xxx</sup>	
Jim Jim	0	1	4	1	1	2	Bore	None	NS	
Patonga Airstrip	0	0	8	0	1	0	Billabong	None	NS	
Patonga Lodge	2 <sup>*</sup>	0	0	3	1	1	Billabong	Planned	NS	
Jim Jim Waterhole	0	0	2	0	0	1	Billabong	None	NS	
Spring Peak	2	1	0	0	2	0	Spring	None	NS	
Deaf Adder	0	0	5	0	1	0	River	None	NS	
Jabiru	3	0	4	Town	1	0	Bore	Town	Clinic	
Mudginberri (Feb '81)	4	0	4	Station	1	dk	Bore	Station	NS	
Cannon Hill	2	2	2	0	2	1	Bore/ Billabong	None	NS	
E. Alligator Ranger Stn	3 <sup>*</sup>	0	0	0	0	2	Bore	None	NS	
Jabiru Town	1 <sup>*</sup> +3	1	0	Town	dk	dk	Town	Town	Clinic	
Total	23	8	29	NA	15+	10+	NA	NA	NS	

\* European Style House

\*\* Excludes ANPWS vehicles at Nourlangie, Jim Jim, Cannon Hill, East Alligator Ranger Station

xxx NS means fortnightly visit by nursing sister

The major sources of employment in the area were the ANPWS, the Cooina Motel, RUM and Mudginberri Station. ANPWS employed seven Aborigines permanently, had four Aboriginal trainees (two boys and two girls) and provided occasional employment for forty others (over 50 per cent being women) for 200 man-days in the year at \$40 per day. It was not possible to allocate income from occasional work to outstations and so that income was not included in the outstation income figures, although it is included in income total calculations in Table C. All 'income' figures are estimates of after-tax incomes.

TABLE C

TOTAL CASH INCOMES

Pensions, Unemployment, Family Allowances	\$233,616	46.2%
Wages Allocated in Table B	\$264,071 )	
Wages Unallocated in Table B (casual)	\$ 8,000 )	53.8%
Total Cash Incomes	\$505,687	100.0%
Per capita Income (Kakadu and Mudginberri)	\$2,330 p.a.	
Per Adult Income (Kakadu and Mudginberri)	\$3,638 p.a.	

The Cooina Motel provided permanent employment for four Aborigines and one European living at an outstation. It also employed some Aborigines on a casual basis. It was not possible to allocate these casual wages to the outstations nor to include their total in Table C. This omission, however, is of little significance to the totals.

RUM at Jabiru employed and housed one Aboriginal Liaison Officer, and employed three men full-time on town beautification. These men lived at the camp associated with Jabiru temporary township. It also employed one man on a casual basis. RUM has a horticultural training scheme with three current enrollees. They were housed in RUM's single men's accommodation. None of them were local Aborigines. Until recently there were six enrollees but three became homesick and returned to their homes away from the park. The police station at Jabiru employed a tracker permanently although that job had been filled by three different men in the previous twelve months. When not engaged in tracking he worked around the station on gardening and general station fatigues. He and his family stayed in a caravan provided by the Northern Territory Police Department.

In February 1981 Mudginberri Station employed two Aborigines on a permanent basis and employed others on a casual basis. Future employment on the station will depend on whether the Association takes over the buffalo works or whether they are closed. It is planned that Mudginberri and Munmarlary stations and all unalienated land to the west be included in Kakadu National Park.

Finally, two Aborigines made artifacts on a regular basis. These were sold at the Cooina Motel and the Border Store. A woman at Cannon Hill made baskets and mats and a man at Jabiru made bark paintings.

The Association has the policy that work will be found for all members in the Park who wish to work. It is in a position to achieve this through employment in its own enterprises or through its relationship with ANPWS. If Mudginberri meatworks is acquired even more employment may exist for Aborigines in the area. The employment policy of the Association means that its members, at least, have full employment.

Aboriginal children attended schools at Jabiru and Mudginberri although the attendance rates were poor. The Association is about to open a private school at Patonga Lodge where some facilities already exist. There will be one European teacher and an Aboriginal Teaching Assistant. It will be a bilingual school whose initial aim is to assist the children to cope with European contact. The school will be totally funded by

the Association and will cost about \$50,000 per year. A more recent press report says that

Alligator Rivers region Aborigines, frustrated by delays to their request for a school in the area, have gone ahead and built one.

The Gagudju Association had been pressing the Education Department for a public school to serve the people in the area who were forced to send their children to Oenpelli or Jabiru.

Now the Patonga school has opened with an enrolment of 21 and a staff of three.

The Gagudju Association has spent \$50,000 of its uranium mining royalties on the school and will continue to support its operation.

The students ages range from six to 16 and they come from all sections of the community.....

A teacher and two trained aides make up the present staff, but this will be expanded as student numbers increase (NT News 10 September 1981).

The nature of water supply varied between outstations: in some cases water was obtained from a natural water supply, while others had tanks and pumps. Three tanks and two pumps were to be purchased in the next financial year by the Association. The standard of housing was poor except for the three houses provided by ANPWS for their Aboriginal employees and one provided by RUM. The trainees for RUM were also adequately housed. ANPWS planned to provide housing for all of its permanent employees and all people living in the Jabiru outstation will be rehoused in the new town.

The Association planned to build six houses in the Park in the financial year. These will comprise two or three bedrooms with a large verandah and cooking area. Some houses will include an ablution block. Existing 'houses' shown in Table B were elementary houses made of iron with concrete floors. The shelters were made from bush timber, iron and canvas.

There were a number of Toyota 4-wheel drive vehicles used regularly by Aborigines in the Park. Three were private, eight belonged to the Association and four belonged to ANPWS. In some cases the Association trucks were left in the care of a particular individual while in others they were left at an outstation for more general use. The Association paid for the maintenance of Association trucks and petrol when used for Association business, and intended to buy another two Toyotas to be used in the Park next year. There were also a number of private cars of various ages and states of repair. All this meant that the community was well equipped with vehicles. Despite this, most people went to Darwin only occasionally and only for short periods.

Aborigines bought goods from the stores at Cooinda, the Border Store, Mudginberri and Jabiru. The rest were supplied from the Association's supply point at Nourlangie. About \$1,500 per week worth of goods were sold to the outstations by the Association. During the dry season deliveries were made by truck and in the wet season they were made by helicopter. Deliveries were made every fortnight to larger outstations and weekly to smaller ones. All of the outstations had access to helipad or airstrip. Much of the food for the Cannon Hill outstation was obtained from the Border Store.

Health treatment was provided at the clinic in Jabiru or from a nursing sister who visited the outstations fortnightly. The Association had requested that a clinic be established in Cooinda.

The estimates of per capita and per adult income provided in Table B show considerable variations between outstations. These primarily reflected workforce participation rates. These were high (50 per cent of adults or over) at Jim Jim, Patonga Lodge, Jim Jim Waterhole, Spring Peak, East Alligator Ranger's Station and Jabiru Township and per capita and per adult income reflected this.

If cash distribution by the Association (there has been none in the 1980-81 financial year) and goods distribution (access to vehicles, for instance) were added to these income figures the uneven distribution of income between outstations would become more evident since members have more access to jobs and goods than non-members and also received cash distributions. These inequalities were not great at that time but they will become immense and they may become the basis of discontent and resentment by non-member Aborigines in the area. These non-members will be beneficiaries under the NLC and the Minister's Trust Account but they are unlikely to be adequately compensated for being non-members.

Table C shows estimates of per capita and per adult income where the income from casual work for ANPWS has been included. The income from casual work from RUM and Mudginberri was not great and has not been included.

## v

This section is concerned with two areas of policy that affect members of the Association. The first relates to the nature of agreements being entered into with mining companies and the second concerns their investment policies.

## Mining Agreements

The Ranger Agreement involves up-front monies, an annual rental and value-of-output royalties. This agreement is undesirable in detail and in principle. Independent of the value of payments negotiated, the payments are inappropriately stated. Firstly, the \$200,000 p.a. rental is not proofed against inflation. Over the 25 years of the Agreement the total amount receivable is \$5,200,000 in the agreement year values. If inflation takes place at, say, 8 per cent per annum, over 26 years, the total of the rental payment is reduced to \$2,161,996 in agreement year values. This involves a loss of \$3,038,004 because of inflation. Table D provides further illustrations of these losses.

TABLE D

LOSSES DUE TO THE INFLATION IMPACT OF ANNUAL RENTAL PAYMENTS

Assumed annual rate of inflation	Loss in real value of rental payments in agreement year values
6%	\$2,599,367
8%	\$3,038,004
10%	\$3,367,811
12%	\$3,620,868

In fact, any rate of inflation greater than 6 per cent reduces the real value of the total of rental payments by at least half. Clearly, rental payments should have been indexed to the C.P.I. or some other appropriate price index.

The second problem of detail is that the value of royalties receivable depends on the price for U308 negotiated by RUM. This arrangement may allow transfer pricing. The classic description of transfer pricing is this: a foreign-owned Australian mining company exports ore to its foreign parent at prices below the economic prices; this act transfers the taxable profits overseas and they eventually emerge as profits of a company in a tax haven or low tax country. In that way the parent can minimize total company taxes paid to all governments. In the context of this problem, royalties and company taxes payable in Australia can be reduced by exporting the product at prices below the highest obtainable. Australian ownership of companies does not prevent transfer pricing; the reduction in price paid by a foreign company can be made up for by payments by the foreign company which appear to be unrelated to their purchase of ore. Existing provisions of the Tax Act may make it difficult to avoid company tax but the protections from royalty avoidance are more haphazard. There are two such sources of protection:

- a) Under the Ranger Agreement the Commonwealth government is to appoint an 'Assessing Officer' who is to examine the relevant company records and determine royalties payable (Articles 29.3 to 29.6). The Assessing Officer may audit transactions so as to prevent avoidance of royalties through transfer pricing. The success of this approach, however, has yet to be demonstrated.
- b) The Australian Taxation Office will be interested in the operation of the agreement because royalty receipts by Aborigines are taxable and this will provide some check on royalty payments.

Transfer pricing is always a threat whenever the company's statements of costs and revenue are used. An appropriate way of avoiding this problem is to have the price of U308 used for royalty calculations based on an average of contract prices paid by major purchasers in the world (perhaps the weighted average of prices paid by US, German, Japanese and French users compiled by the Commonwealth Statistician. There is no large spot market for yellowcake most of which is sold by long term contract). The ideal contract would involve royalties based on a weighted average of the price paid by major users, or the contract price obtained by RUM, whichever is the higher.

These problems, however, are minor compared with the structure of the agreement. The Australian Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976-1979 restricts negotiations between the government, mining companies and Aboriginal interests to compensation in the forms of lump sum payments, rental and value or volume based royalties. Royalty based taxing systems are objectionable for two reasons. Firstly, they add to unit cost of production and result in the mine ceasing production earlier than it might otherwise do simply because of the way in which tax is raised. This taxing system, consequently, reduces the profits inherent in the activity and so reduces the taxing base. Secondly, they are not likely to capture all of the supernormal profits inherent in a mining venture. Supernormal profits' (or 'excess profit' or 'economic profit' or 'Ricardian rent') is profit earned in excess of the minimum required to keep capital in its current use in the long run. That minimum is called 'normal profit'. So, if a firm is earning 20 per cent on its capital in its current use and the rate of return in other uses with a comparable degree of risk is 15 per cent, then the normal profit rate is 15 per cent and the firm is earning a supernormal profit of 5 per cent. These schemes can capture that 5 per cent for the 'taxing' authority.

For these reasons some governments have abandoned royalty based systems and others are considering doing so in favour of other systems. Aborigines ought to be free to negotiate along lines being considered and being used by governments. The pattern of negotiations for Jabiluka is already set. Koongarra negotiations had not began and there

are 44 exploration leases issued for Aboriginal land under NLC control and one under the CLC (Central Land Council), though none of these affect the Association. Subject to changes in the Land Rights legislation, negotiations over mining could be based on the improved systems about to be suggested.

One such scheme is Lump Sum Bidding. An application of lump sum bidding here would be where an Aboriginal organisation acquired the mining lease of a particular area and sold it in a secret tender. Providing there was no collaboration between bidders, the lease would be sold to the most optimistic bidder at a price that was the present value of its expected supernormal profit over the life of the mine. This system leaves the expected price of the ore and extraction and transport costs unchanged and hence does not reduce output. It does, however, allow the owners to capture the supernormal profit expected by the most optimistic bidder. The American and Canadian governments have used this system when selling gas and oil leases. Variations of the basic structure can be developed to take into account environmental and other considerations.

Another approach is Profit Bidding. A lease could be sold at secret tender where the bidding price was the proportion of total profits which the company would pay to the Aboriginal community. Care would have to be exercised in stating prices and costs to be included in the calculations of profits for this purpose otherwise the company could avoid payments through judicious allocation of joint and other costs or through transfer pricing. The welfare of Aborigines and the mining companies would be closely tied, which has both advantages and disadvantages. Providing costs and revenues are appropriately stated, this system would be nondistorting in terms of output and again Aborigines would capture all of the supernormal profits.

Even if the existing royalty system remains, improvements can be achieved. If Aborigines had the right to allocate mining leases they could then allocate them by secret tender where the rate of royalty is the bidding price. Such a sale would still capture all of the expected supernormal profits of the most optimistic bidder for Aborigines although their value would be less than the above systems because of the distorting effects of royalties.

The level of normal profits in mining ventures (and hence the level of supernormal profits that can be captured by Aborigines) depends on the rates of return in alternative similar ventures. If foreign capital was free to undertake mining in Australia then the normal rate of return could be low and hence potential Aboriginal gain high. However, the Federal government, through the Foreign Investment Review Board, restricts foreign investment for the purpose of eventually achieving fifty per cent Australian equity in mining projects. In the current circumstances where the supply of capital is limited in terms of investment opportunities, this policy means that the normal rate of return may be high since the Aboriginal owned mining leases would have to compete for capital with lower-tax lease allocation systems used in the States. Thus the government's foreign investment policy would work against Aboriginal interests.

#### Investments

Table A demonstrates that members of the Association will receive considerable amounts of money over the 26 years of the Ranger Agreement. Agreements concerning Jabiluka and Koongarra will yield much more again. However, it must be remembered that these 'incomes' will not last more than about 30 years and they are more properly thought of as receipts of capital which may be consumed or reinvested. The Association will experience considerable population growth over the future and the long-term growth of employment at Kakadu is not great for as long as it remains a Park. Thus much of this money must be wisely invested if it is to provide the basis of a viable community living at Kakadu in the distant future.

The appropriate use of these monies in the early years is obvious. Section IV above showed that people at Kakadu are poor by European Australian standards and much of the money ought to be spent improving conditions at Kakadu. Provision of housing, water and

sewerage facilities, development of school, health and cultural facilities, vehicle and house repair facilities all need to be undertaken. In addition, the consumption level needs to be raised by cash distributions. Much of the income and facility support currently provided by governments will be withdrawn as the Association's income grows and the Association will have to take over these functions.

In addition, the Association may wish to extend its control over nearby businesses. This may mean buying Mudginberri buffalo works, the Border Store, the South Alligator Motor Inn, Park tour operators, an aircraft company for Association and tour use. There are, of course, dangers in such regional vertical integration. Europeans in the area may resent their capital and labour (especially at Mudginberri, for instance) being replaced by Aboriginal capital and labour. This resentment may also be felt by non-Association Aborigines, especially if the high fixed incomes to be earned by Association members leads them to withdraw their labour so that they become major employers of other Aborigines.

Uses of funds outside the Kakadu area may include:

- Loans to other Aboriginal groups to buy pastoral and other leases so that land claims can be made over the land.
- Gifts to disadvantaged groups.
- Loans to Aboriginal groups to allow them to operate mining leases themselves or so the leases can be sold by secret tender in a manner discussed earlier.
- Purchase of assets and businesses in the Northern Territory.
- A broad portfolio of shares, real estate, bonds that are based in States other than the Northern Territory.

As with the earlier discussion there is always the problem that the Association must tread carefully between the political charges that 'they are not investing in the NT, the source of their wealth' and 'they have become the local monopolists'.

Other implications, from the Social Impact of Uranium study group, were noted in the Darwin press:

A report by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies is an in-depth study of the social impact of uranium mining.

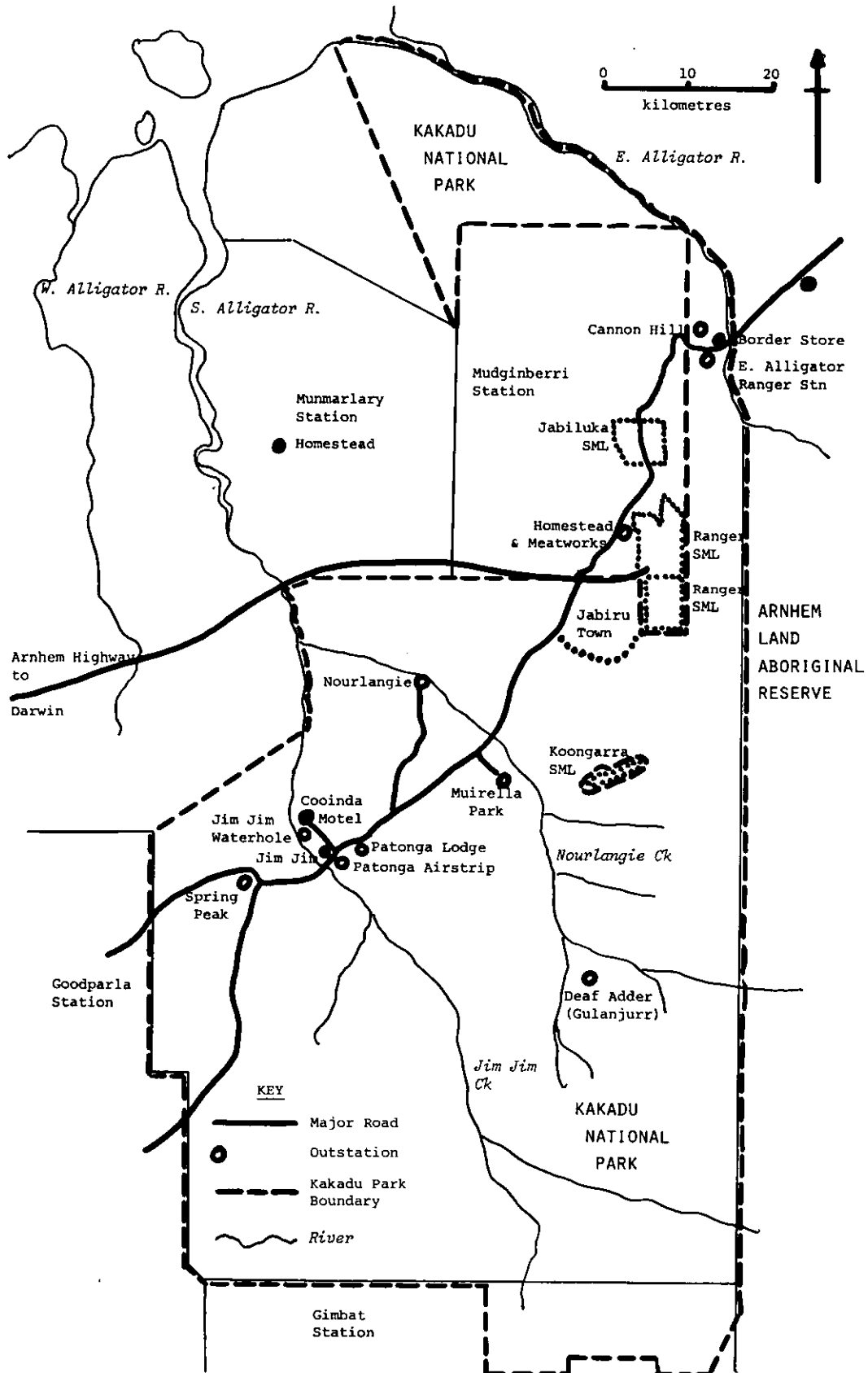
It said Aboriginal employment in the uranium industry had been very minor and attributed this to Aborigines being unwilling to accept menial employment on their own land.

Areas around the two uranium projects, at Nabarlek and Jabiru, would no longer be Aboriginal domains, it said.

Clearly the biggest threat to the lifestyle of Territory Aborigines in the uranium province was the huge royalties paid to them, the report claimed.

It urged Aborigines be helped to cope with these large sums and recommended special banks be established, especially geared for their needs.

The report does not suggest diminishing Aboriginal control over their money and property - but serious efforts have to be made to assist Aborigines in procedures for the control of their assets (NT News 5 September 1981).



Owen Stanley

SOME PROBLEMS IN THE PROVISION OF BANKING FACILITIES IN REMOTE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

The services provided by banks or other similar institutions are at least as important to Aborigines, even those Aborigines in remote communities with few contacts with the white world of commerce, as they are to other Australians. But the banking system is not well organised to provide services in Aboriginal communities, especially to Aborigines in outstations. For these Aborigines, the services provided by banks in the larger centres, the settlements from which the outstations have been set up, are indispensable. Through them, as through other services provided at the settlement level, the outstations are tied back to the settlements; the two are linked together in a complex net of social interchanges, of which the interchanges connected with deliveries of services like banking are a basic element.

Banking facilities are an essential service for many Aboriginal communities because so many of them are highly dependent on cash income which reaches the individuals in them only in the form of cheques, principally social security cheques of various kinds, cheques which can normally be converted only through a banking mechanism. But very little is generally known about the banking services available in Aboriginal communities or about their shortcomings from the Aboriginal point of view and their problems from the banking point of view.

For the outstation, the shortcomings are compounded because none of them have bank agencies, to say nothing of more substantial arrangements. And in addition, most of the outstation banking business is the business of individuals because there are few if any organisations of a financially incorporated kind at the outstation level of social life. Furthermore, their banking business is carried out at a distance through intermediaries, commonly an outstation resource centre which staffs and equips a vehicle to visit its constituent outstations at regular intervals or, in some places, through an outstation store with limited capacity to handle cheques and credit. Of course individuals do go back to settlements from their outstations from time to time and, when there, transact banking as well as other business. But what is available to them there and ties them to the settlement is rudimentary by comparison with the facilities available in even the smaller Australian townships.

Banks are important financial intermediaries which provide, for the Australian community at large, the following services: they accept deposits, they store cash and some other assets safely, they give loans, they provide cheque account facilities, they act for other financial intermediaries and provide financial advice. Community-based Aboriginal organisations such as Councils, stores and clubs need the whole range of banking services but the provision of these is not generally a problem for them. Such organisations have facilities to store cash safely, or use the local bank agency. More complicated banking business can be undertaken with trading and savings banks in towns directly through telephone contact or by visits of the organisation's principals, or indirectly through legal or accounting contacts.

The provision of appropriate banking facilities for individuals living in remote communities is a more frequent and vexing problem. The services they desire are simple: they need an institution to cash their cheques (mainly from the Department of Social Security - DSS) and to allow them to store their cash safely. The growth in cash incomes - paid mainly by cheques - has increased these needs.

Banking institutions of several different kinds have been set up to provide services to meet these needs. In the large towns, there are trading and savings bank branches and it is only if they live in or near these towns that Aborigines have access to such facilities. Secondly there are savings bank agencies also run by the banks themselves. Aborigines may have access to these if they live in or near smaller towns. Then, thirdly, in the larger remote communities, there are savings bank agencies which are privately run. These are the most common type of banking arrangement for individuals living in these

communities. And finally, on many cattle stations and some small Aboriginal communities stores provide cashing facilities and 'tick' which amounts to a restricted deposit and withdrawal system.

Most problems have arisen in relation to the private banking agencies operating in remote communities and this paper is concerned with them.

#### Nature of Private Banking Agencies

In the Northern Territory these are usually agencies of the Commonwealth Savings Bank (CSB). Prior to the trend toward Aboriginal control of such institutions the agency was usually held by a European person nominated by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) in the case of a government settlement or by a church organisation in the case of a mission settlement. In recent years, however, Aborigines have gained control of these and other activities and the legal agent is now often the local Aboriginal Council or Social Club or a similar organisation. In some cases the former agents have retained their legal status as a temporary measure while local Aborigines run the agency. There are also many examples, such as those at Lajamanu, Dagaragu, Beswick, Banyili and Borrooloola, of agencies run by Europeans; but others, such as those at Oenpelli and Nguiu, are run by Aborigines. Agencies usually employ two (the legal minimum) or three employees.

Agencies provide only limited banking services. In general, they accept deposits in the forms of cash or cheques, allow withdrawals up to a limited value (generally \$200) and often, but not always, cash DSS and other bona fide cheques where the payee and drawer are known to the agency. The cashing of cheques is not a usual savings bank service but one which has been provided for Aboriginal communities to meet their special situation. Only a small amount of money is usually left in agency accounts by individuals.

There are great fluctuations in the value of cheques that have to be cashed by the agency over the fortnight. This is so because often over 60 per cent of income in these communities comes from DSS pensions and other payments. On non-payment days there is little banking activity but on payment days and for a few days after that much activity takes place. Most of it involves the cashing of DSS cheques. The value of these cheques cashed is often very great and ranges up to \$52,800 per fortnight (in Maningrida).

Usual banking regulations must be adhered to. This includes indemnifying the bank against theft at the agency, balancing books at the end of each day's trading, rendering daily banking accounts and sending all money to the bank in excess of the limit which the agency is allowed to hold. These limits vary greatly from, say, \$2,500 to \$20,000 and in some communities they have been a constant cause of concern, as will be seen. Most communities which have agencies have air transport so that while these accountability rules sometimes cause problems, it is usually practicable to adhere to them, even in the Wet Season.

#### Problems with Bank Agencies

A number of important problems exist in the running of these agencies. The main ones may be listed separately although they are interrelated.

Firstly, agencies are unprofitable for banks. A bank pays a commission to all of its agencies whether in Aboriginal communities or not, based on the volume of transactions undertaken. The rate of commission is based on the assumption that the value of deposits left with the agency (and so available to the bank for making loans) is related to the volume of these transactions. The bank then lends these deposits and makes a profit from the difference between lending and deposit interest rates. In the agencies in Aboriginal communities, however, the volume of transactions is high but the value of deposits left with the agencies is very low. People cash their cheques as soon as they can for their immediate needs. This means that banks make a loss on their agency operations.

The unprofitability of the agencies results in the banks being reluctant to expand their facilities and they see the operation more as an act of charity than as good business.

Secondly, agencies hold insufficient cash. The banks have imposed small cash-holding limits on some of their agencies and this has resulted in individuals having difficulty cashing their DSS cheques. These limits have led to a number of unsatisfactory ad hoc arrangements. Some of these are:

Stores and other enterprises in the communities have cashed these cheques.

On request from the agencies, community enterprises have deposited cash with the agencies, when they would not have otherwise done so, to meet the demands for cashing cheques.

Church organisations have rearranged their funds so that the agencies have been able to cash cheques.

Numerous representations have been made by Aboriginal Councils, church bodies and other interested parties to the banks and politicians in an attempt to have the cash-holding limits relaxed but the banks have remained firm.

Thirdly, there are problems of security. Concern about security in agencies has increased where they have come under Aboriginal management. This concern has focused on two issues: theft and inadequate reporting of agency business.

Numerous instances have occurred where there have been discrepancies in agency records. This does not necessarily mean that 'theft' has taken place, however, since these discrepancies may occur as a result of clerical error. But on at least two occasions in recent years, Aboriginal employees of agencies have 'lent' over \$1,000 of agency funds to friends and relatives or people of importance. The money was never returned by those people. Very often, however, the Aboriginal Councils concerned have made good any losses so that the bank has not suffered loss. The possibility of theft is, nevertheless, a constant source of concern since agencies hold up to \$70,000 in cash on some days.

The bank insists on agencies carefully following its procedures in relation to records and the storing and movement of cash. Many Aborigines working at these agencies have been adequately trained in Darwin by the banks in such matters but find it difficult to follow procedures strictly when they return to their communities. Such a concern for financial detail and accountability is foreign to their background and contrasts with most things in their environment.

Problems over security have led banks to close some of their agencies, usually temporarily, until new arrangements can be made.

The Elcho Island (Galiwinku) agency of the CSB provides one example of the closure of an agency. It was closed in July 1977 and remained so until September 1977. The agency was originally run by the Uniting Church of Australia which handed over control of the agency to the Galiwinku Council in June 1976 but remained the legal agent for the agency as a result of a request from the CSB.

There had been some valueless cheques cashed since Aborigines became managers of the agency but these had always been honoured by the Council and were not the cause of closure. Instead, the bank said that breaches of administrative rules caused the closure, since these breaches increased the costs of running the agency. Three breaches were emphasised:

Late returns: the bank complained that returns from the agency were late on arriving in Darwin and this created special administrative problems. The Galiwinku Council replied that the agency dispatched the returns late on only very rare occasions and that it was the mail which created the problem.

Excessive cash holdings: the bank complained that the agency had held more cash overnight than the \$5,000 allowed. The Council replied that while the DSS cheques were predictable (then amounting to \$23,000 per fortnight) there were other organisations on Elcho Island dealing with the agency and their cash needs were difficult to predict.

Inadequate filling out of returns: the bank complained of the way in which the agency's returns were being completed. The Council replied that the visiting bank liaison officer should have given, but did not give, more instruction on this matter.

The closure of the agency left the 1,200 inhabitants of Elcho Island without banking facilities. The Uniting Church then offered the services of one of its European officers to run the agency. The Council, not wishing control to be returned to a European person, suggested that two local men go to Darwin for further training for one week. This was done but on their return the bank refused to put either in charge (even though one had had 14 months training and 9 months experience in running the agency). The issue of adherence to bank procedures remained the problem. In the end, the Council reluctantly agreed to the Uniting Church nominee and the agency was reopened.

#### Some Solutions

A number of solutions have been suggested to the problem of providing adequate cheque cashing facilities in remote Aboriginal communities.

The bank's trust in its own agency might be improved if the community selected the manager more carefully. This may result in the bank increasing the cash limit and otherwise improving the agency. Not all Aboriginal-managed agencies experience the problems discussed above. The Nguiu (Bathurst Island) agency is an example of one which runs successfully. The Ullintjinni Association is the legal agent and it employs Tiwi women as the manageress and an assistant in the agency. The manageress was trained by the previous European manageress and is reputed to be one of the best Aboriginal agency managers. All DSS cheques other than those for family allowance and unemployment must be deposited although the cash is generally withdrawn over the next few days. DSS cheques of \$36,000 per fortnight are deposited and the agency is allowed to hold the relatively large cash balance of \$20,000. Any cash shortages are remedied by prompt transfers of cash from Darwin. The Nguiu agency has had no problems meeting demands for cash.

Another possibility is that the payment of DSS cheques could be staggered over time. This would avoid the need for the agency to hold very large sums of money on any one day and so eliminate an important problem of security. It would also have the desirable effect of creating a continuous flow of cash into the community. While this seems to be a simple and appealing solution, any such variation in the terms of DSS payment is out of the question, since the DSS considers it to be discriminatory and unnecessarily costly.

Although the DSS will not stagger the payment of its cheques, the community could agree to release them to the recipients every few days over the fortnight. With this system the Council or some relevant body would collect all cheques as they arrive and release them to individuals according to a pre-arranged roster. The roster could be so arranged that at least one person in an extended family could cash a cheque every cheque-cashing day. However, this scheme is likely to be subject to objections from outside the community (the DSS for instance) and from within the community by those who are impatient for cash or unwilling to arrange their movements to conform to a roster. In one community recently, for instance, a group of men forced the manager to open the agency so that some cheques could be cashed. Such coercion could also take place over the receipt of cheques.

Another suggestion has come from Dr H.C. Coombs who proposes that:

People using the agency only for cashing cheques should be charged for that service.

The bank could be paid a subsidy by DAA on a transaction basis.

DAA could place some of its funds with the bank and the interest so earned could be used to compensate the bank for servicing such communities.

The aim of these changes is to make agency operations more profitable for the bank and they may result in banks expanding their agencies when they are run by Europeans. The fear of theft and poor reporting in some agencies run by Aborigines, however, is not alleviated by these changes and so they will not improve the service provided by agencies when managed by Aborigines.

It has been pointed out that the DSS pays banks a commission of 20 cents per DSS cheque deposited and that this payment could be extended to the agencies. This change would have little impact on the losses involved in running the agency and would have little impact on their problems.

A fifth suggestion is that Community Councils could give concessions to agencies as an encouragement to the bank to develop their facilities. These costs (such as rent and power charges), however, are generally minor and such concessions would have little effect.

Another similar suggestion is that communities which expect to receive substantial royalties may pressure the banks to develop their agencies in return for the communities' business in relation to royalties. Often, however, mining towns are being developed nearby and problems with the agencies would not be great. It is possible that the Land Councils could pressure banks in the same way for communities generally.

Yet another possibility is that Aboriginal Councils could take over all cheque-cashing functions. While this change would free the problem from the confines of the Banking Act and bank cash restrictions it leads to greater security problems. Councils in the large settlements like Elcho Island and Maningrida would need about \$30,000 and \$60,000 respectively on days when DSS cheques were being cashed. Clearly, very careful bank-like procedures would have to be developed to secure such transactions.

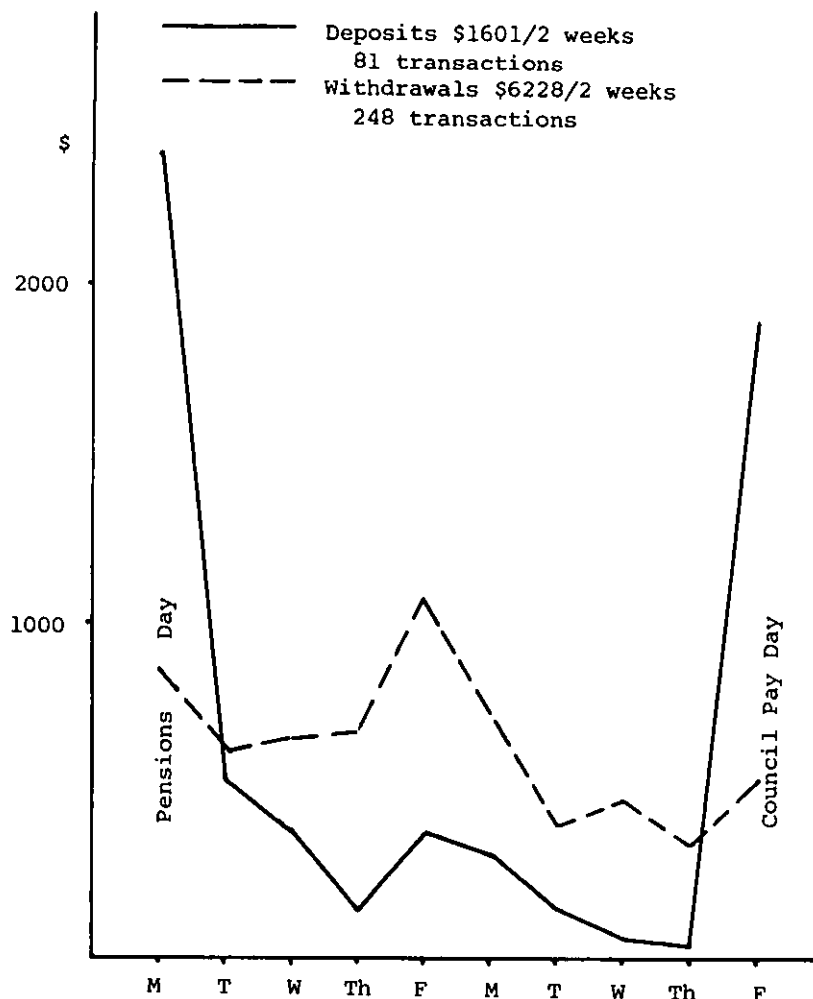
Mobile banks have been tried in Western Australia and on Groote Eylandt. With this system the agency travels to centres of population to cash cheques and accept deposits and withdrawals. These were very unprofitable operations. In addition they cannot be at all places on the days DSS cheques arrive and so cheques can be lost. While this system results in the total cash held in the community being divided between the community centre and the mobile agency, it raises additional security problems because of poor supervision and the mobility of the agency.

Community and station stores have usually accepted DSS cheques, sometimes giving cash and generally allowing the recipient to establish a deposit with the store against which purchases can be made.

Sometimes advances, in the form of 'tick', are given to customers. This system works reasonably well in most places including those where the stores are run by the Aboriginal community. It has the distinct advantage of minimizing the amount of cash which must be held in the community but may lead to a restricted choice of goods for the cheque recipients. The Island Industry Board of the Queensland Government runs such a system through its stores in the Torres Strait and Peninsula reserves and reports suggest that it also operates satisfactorily. This system is capable of considerable development in the future including the introduction of credit cards, as communications and accounting facilities are improved in the communities. Such a development would greatly reduce the amount of cash required by the community. However it is a premature and an unnecessarily indirect solution to the problem of cheque-cashing.

### Conclusion

The best solution to the problem is the most direct: the community must convince the bank of the efficiency and trustworthiness of its agency staff. Once this is done the bank is likely to relax cash-holding limits and to further develop its banking facilities. In addition, some of the suggestions above deserve pursuit for their own sakes although their suitability will depend upon conditions prevailing in the community concerned.



Commonwealth Savings Bank, Yuendumu  
Average over 4 fortnightly periods, Oct-Nov 1978.  
(Data supplied by Elspeth A. Young.)

Nicolas Peterson

SERVICE DELIVERY AND DEPENDENCY - THE ECONOMIC WATERSHED OF THE EIGHTIES

In an economic study of Willowra and Papunya made in 1974-75 Penny concluded that almost all economic activity at these two communities was of European origin and that the Aborigines were almost wholly dependent in the economic realm. Government disbursements at Papunya totalled \$2,475,000 or \$2940 per Aboriginal resident and \$529,000 or \$2300 at Willowra (Penny 1976, 2,43). The value of goods produced and sold at both localities was negligible being in the region of \$22,000 in art works at Papunya (Pascoe 1981, exhibit III:2) and \$27,000 from cattle sales and store profit at Willowra (Penny 1976,8). This situation has changed little even though 1979 was an exceptionally good year for cattle sales, Willowra realising \$350,000 (see Young 1981, 139-141), and the price of Papunya artworks has risen dramatically.

Most remote Aboriginal communities are equally dependent. Nowhere is there a high level of sustained economic production for exchange and everywhere the communities survive on government disbursements, even in the case of those receiving royalties. While it might follow logically that, as a consequence of this community economic dependence, Aborigines as individuals are also dependent, I will argue that this has not been the case. However I believe there is about to be a dramatic rise in individual dependency created by consumerism and the costs associated with the improvement in the range and delivery of services. In the context of an end to quantum increases in income, such as have been taking place over the last decade, this will lead to a radical change in individual economic status, a consumer-based dependency and a sense of relative deprivation.

After briefly outlining what I mean by dependence, I will look at patterns of individual income and expenditure in the early 1970s and compare these with more recent figures. This will be followed by a case study of Yuendumu and the conclusion in which I will look at the implications of the changes and speculate about the consequences of the impending impacts on the economic status of the people in the communities.

By speaking of dependence I mean no more than a person living at another's cost and therefore being subordinate or potentially subordinate to the control of that other, to some degree. Two aspects of this dependence can be distinguished: first, the extent to which income is or is not of a kind that is potentially subordinate to the control of an other; second, the extent to which the independent income covers needs. It goes without saying that in a weak sense we are all dependent on each other and the state. Here when talking of the first aspect of dependency I am concerned with relationships like that between employer and employee where, according to the kind of contractual relationship, there is always some degree of control or potential control. Income from employment contrasts with independent sources of income like interest, royalties or money from self-planned and directed activity on which there may be dependence in the second sense but where it is received as of right. In the context of this paper it is important to emphasise that certain social security payments are independent income since, in theory, once allocated they cannot be taken away during the period of eligibility.

Income and expenditure in the early 1970s

Aboriginal people had three sources of income, independent of gift-giving and gambling, in this period: wages, social security payments and sale of art and craft work. Until 1974 wage rates paid to Aborigines in remote communities were called training allowance and fixed at less than 62 per cent of the minimum award wage for most recipients (Altman & Nieuwenhuysen 1979,44-45). With the termination of the training allowance scheme in October 1974 Aborigines in remote communities became eligible for unemployment benefits for the first time, although most Aborigines in these communities did not receive

them until near the end of the decade. They had, however, been directly receiving child endowment and pension payments since 1968-69.

Accurate figures on the value of the craft industry at this period are hard to come by but even at Amata and Yirrkala where there were flourishing industries it was generating only \$1.76 to \$2.14 per capita per fortnight respectively (Peterson 1977, 141 and Pascoe 1981) and these would certainly be among the higher incomes from this source. Thus in short, wage levels were well below awards, not all social security payments were available to Aboriginal people in these communities and income from art and craft was small on a per capita basis, although particular individuals could make quite substantial amounts, particularly from bark painting. Table 1 sets out the only available information on per capita per fortnight incomes in 1970 for four communities, all of which are in the desert regions, and indicates the percentage of income that was independent.

TABLE 1

Income in four desert communities in 1970

	Income per capita per fort. \$	Income from		% income independent	independent income of est. min. cash need
	\$	Wages \$	Social Security \$		
Warburton	4.55	0.46	4.08	89.7	81.6
Ernabella	8.49	4.55	3.93	46.3	78.6
Amata	11.97	6.45	5.53	48.2	110.6
Docker River	14.43	10.12	4.30	29.8	86.0

The final column estimates the extent to which this independent income covers the estimated minimum cash requirement. Accurate estimation of this amount is not easy, but a general estimate is possible. The Northern Territory Welfare Branch estimated in 1970 that \$9.08 per capita per fortnight was adequate for all needs including the rent of unimproved housing, clothing and food (see Middleton and Francis 1976, 74 and 79). In the same year I found that the people at Warburton Mission were living off an income of \$4.55 per fortnight (Peterson 1977, 140). Undoubtedly people spent more on food and clothing if they had it but from figures collected at the same time at Docker River, where the per capita income per fortnight was \$14.43, it is clear that not all of the income difference between these two communities went on food and clothing. The evidence for this at Docker River came from the high involvement with cars and the fact that less than half the eligible male workforce was employed although jobs were available for all (see Peterson 1977). I have therefore rounded the Warburton figure to \$5 per fortnight as the minimum cash requirement and used it for making the estimates in the last column.

The general point is clear. Well over three-quarters of the income necessary to survive was independent income. It is no secret how people survived on these low cash incomes. They lived largely off cheap filling carbohydrates and tinned meat supplemented by some bush foods. Pleasure in hunting trips to relieve the boredom of community life, plus the general prevalence of an economy of limited objectives (Sahlins 1972) and a cultural emphasis on sharing, combined to make the low standard of living tolerable.

In 1970 the only outlets for expenditure in the communities were the stores. At that time Amata and Croker Island alone had self-service stores. The rest were counter service with an extremely limited range of goods, poorly displayed. Detailed information on expenditure patterns is lacking except for some evidence from Yuendumu on the range of goods bought (see Middleton and Francis 1976, table 24) and evidence that purchases of tape recorders, transistors, cars and the other goods which became common in the late 1970s was minimal at this stage.

## Income and expenditure in the late 1970s

From Table 2 it can be seen from comparison of the figures for 1970, standardised to 1979 values, with 1978-79 figures that there has been a real increase in income.

TABLE 2

Comparison of 1970 and 1978-79 per capita incomes standardised to 1979 values (after Young 1981).

1970	Income per capita per fortnight at 1979 value	% Income from	
		wages	social security
	\$		
Amata	29	69	31
Docker River	35	77	23
Ernabella	20.5	64	36
Warburton	10.9	13	87
1978-1979			
Yuendumu	47	57	43
Willowra	61.7	36	74
Numbulwar	62	74	26

It can also be seen that while the percentage of wage to social security income in the communities differs markedly from one to another in both periods, the general relationship has not changed over all.

The real increase in income was produced by the introduction of award wage levels for all jobs in the communities in 1974-75 and more recently the payment of unemployment benefit to many people without jobs. Although craft income grew in some communities during this decade, such as at Maningrida, there was an overall decline in real terms in the value of artworks produced (see Pascoe 1981, exhibit III:3).

Table 3 indicates how money spent at three communities in 1978-79 was divided between food and other items, and the extent to which community incomes were spent in the store. The significance of these figures has already been mentioned by Altman and Nieuwenhuysen (1979, 54-57) who point out that the average Australian household spent only 15.7 per cent of income on food in 1974-75. Despite the high percentage of income spent on food, the cash sum is half or less than the Australian average in most communities and additional income is not proportionately allocated to food but most of it goes to non-food items, including alcohol (see Taylor 1977, 156; Turner 1974, 178; Altman & Nieuwenhuysen 1979, 55).

TABLE 3

Expenditure at three community stores in 1978-79 (after Young 1981).

	<u>Store Expenditure</u>		% Community Income spent in store
	% on food	% on other	
Yuendumu	44.5	45.5	89
Numbulwar	65.0	35.0	90
Willowra	76.9	23.1	80

Yuendumu: a paradigmatic case?

Some indication of significant trends concealed by these aggregate and patchy figures can be gained from the information on Yuendumu.

Table 4 shows the growth of per capita income between 1970 and 1978 in the community. It confirms that the major jump, in real terms, came with award wages in 1975. More significant, however, for the argument being developed here is that the payment of unemployment benefit, which now makes up half of the social security income, did almost nothing to improve real per capita incomes. This is alarming because the payment of unemployment benefit was the last substantial source of new income available to the people of Yuendumu. Unlike the introduction of the award wage which produced an aggregate quantum improvement in incomes of 63 per cent, unemployment benefit kept them only just in front of inflation.

TABLE 4

Growth of per capita income at Yuendumu between 1970 and 1978 standardised to 1979 values (after Young 1981).

Yuendumu	Income per cap. per fort. at 1979 values	<u>% Income from</u>	
		Wages	social security
	\$		
1970	28.3	-	-
1974	27.33	-	-
1975	44.50	84	16
1978	47.00	57	43*

\* Half this amount was made up by unemployment benefits.

Expenditure patterns confirm that the people are doing no more than keeping up with inflation. From Table 5 it can be seen that almost the same percentage of income was spent on food in both 1975 and 1978, despite the increase in income. Usually as income rises the percentage spent on food declines.

TABLE 5

Expenditure on food and non-food items at Yuendumu in 1975 and 1978 (after Young 1981).

	1978	Average 1978	1975
Flour/Bread	7.8		
Tea	1.3		
Sugar	1.3		55.1-59%
Tinned meat/Fish	9.6	55.5%	
Fresh Meat	4.2		
Soft drink/Juice	10.5		
Other food	20.8		
Non-food	44.5		44.9-41%

Comparison of 1979 with 1978 purchase patterns (see Table 6) points to the dramatic increase in the significance of soft drinks.

TABLE 6

Food expenditure by percentage of money spent on food at Yuendumu in 1970 and 1978 (after Young 1981).

	1970	1978
Flour/bread	10.89	13
Tea	2.29	2
Meat	22.80	23
Soft drink	6.56	18

The figures conceal, however, another significant shift highlighted by Young (1981, 115). In 1970 only 21 per cent of the money used for flour and bread was spent on bread, whereas in 1978 this had jumped to 72 per cent. This shift has a real economic and nutritional cost: the 4000kg. of flour bought in October 1978 provided more protein and energy than the 5000 loaves at a third the cost.

#### Conclusion

There is every reason to suppose that the incipient consumerism indicated by the trends at Yuendumu will become entrenched within the next five years. The single most important factor will be the introduction of television into the communities with the launching of the satellite in 1985. But already Aboriginal people are more involved with material goods than they were ten years ago: they are better dressed; own cars; expect their stores to stock a wide range of non-food items such as cameras, tape-recorders, transistors and the like; and are accustomed to a wider range of goods.

At the same time as the range of consumer goods is expanding and the pressure to purchase them increasing a new range of economic demands are likely to emerge in the latter part of the 1980s. These will come from improvement in the range and delivery of services and improvement in housing. It seems inevitable that the pervasive ideology of 'user pays' will reach remote communities sooner or later and that charges for

electricity, water and municipal services will be added to more realistic rents for better housing. Better housing will lead to greater demand for some electrical goods such as refrigerators and furniture, all increasing cost pressures. Services that have always been free to Northern Territory Aborigines are already beginning to be charged for. The latest issue of Junga, the Warlpiri newsletter (1981,2:12), alerts people to the need to obtain health cards, or if they earn 'too much' to be prepared for a minimum \$10 per fortnight insurance premium.

Where is the money to come from to meet these demands and costs? Community per capita incomes have peaked, and unless added to by direct royalty payments, they are unlikely to increase in real terms as they did in the mid 1970s. Only dramatic development projects in which Aborigines are directly involved offer the prospect of real increases and the number of these is likely to be small as compared to the number of communities, assuming Aborigines want to be involved in them.

The demise of the economy of limited objectives among the young seems inevitable. Social security which once provided a high proportion of independent income will quickly become, if it has not done so already, a high proportion of an inadequate income. Cost inflation in remote Australia runs way beyond the CPI to which the social security payments are linked, leading to an inevitable decline in Aboriginal purchasing power. Television will fuel expectations and desires, to create an awareness of relative deprivation which is likely to be unsettling in the longer term.

The consequences can only be guessed at. It seems likely, however, that many young people will migrate to the towns for some period of their lives as they have done elsewhere in the world. Older people, perhaps encouraged by government grants, may continue the move into outstations where the costs to both parties will be substantially reduced. Neither consequence would necessarily lead to a decline of the communities but, by reducing their population, might well lay the foundations for their transformation into materially more normal outback communities inhabited by salaried municipal and service officials, the retired and young married couples with children.

Elspeth A. Young

ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY STORES: A SERVICE 'FOR THE PEOPLE' OR 'BY THE PEOPLE'.

The stores in remote Aboriginal communities have increased in importance as people have become more dependent on the money economy. Not only do stores provide the major, and often the only, retailing outlet but they also offer facilities, such as banking and money exchange, which in towns would be carried out by more specialised institutions. As centres where people congregate they have assumed an additional role - that of a meeting-place, where news is exchanged between different sections of the community - which is perhaps of equal importance. Failure to perform these roles, that is, to provide services 'for the people' has serious repercussions for every member of the community. Such failures, resulting in store closure, have, unfortunately, been all too common. Most can be attributed to bad management practices, the result of inadequate understanding of the problems involved in providing an efficient retailing service in an isolated place. While many have occurred in stores under non-Aboriginal management, the failure rate for those run by Aboriginal members of the community has been much higher. In other words it appears to be very difficult for stores run 'by the people' to provide the necessary service; the practice of self-management and the welfare of the majority may be incompatible. Using case-studies of various types of Aboriginal community store this paper examines this apparent incompatibility, and discusses some measures now taken to resolve it.

The Historical Development of Aboriginal Community Stores

Prior to 1969, the year when the Training Allowance Scheme was introduced, Aborigines in remote communities had only limited access to cash, and had become dependent on receiving rations in kind - food, tobacco and clothing - or in being provided with meals cooked at communal settlement kitchens. Retail stores catered only for extra needs bought with 'pocket money' (that portion of the pension actually passed on to individual recipients). They were owned and managed by settlement administrators (government or mission) or, on cattle stations, by the pastoralists. Since store-keepers also supervised the distribution of cash to customers, they could, by stocking certain lines and charging certain prices, exert undue influence on how that cash was spent. At the same time, they often enforced regulations covering the cleanliness and behaviour of their clients. Few Aborigines can have regarded the store as anything but a white institution.

From 1970 onwards store operations were affected by two factors. First, the increased flow of cash and resultant higher demand for all kinds of goods forced stores to vary the range of their stock and improve facilities for storing fresh and frozen goods. Secondly, the transfer of some powers to Aboriginal Community Councils was, in government settlements, paralleled by the transfer of store ownership to a community body, for example, the Yuendumu Social Club, a non-profit-making organisation concerned with the promotion of social, cultural and recreational activities for all residents. In theory, since all Yuendumu people were members of the Social Club, such a transfer provided Aborigines with the opportunity to state what kind of service they wanted and to influence elements such as stocking policy. In practice little changed. Not only were Aborigines, through lack of broader experience, unlikely to suggest changes, but, since the Social Club committee was composed mainly of non-Aboriginal residents of Yuendumu, the Aborigines had no clear way of expressing their views. Moreover, those Aborigines who worked in the store were employed only for unskilled tasks, such as unpacking stock and replenishing the shelves. In 1970, according to Middleton and Francis (1976, 92-3), European shop assistants in Yuendumu still tried to control their customers' behaviour by asking those who talked or laughed too loudly to 'lower their voices' and to queue so that store staff could 'avoid the stench of unwashed clothing and bodies'. By 1974 little had changed although, as Coombs and Stanner (1974, 16) note, some Aboriginal employees had then been trained to operate the check-outs and self-service, as opposed to

counter-service, had been introduced. Aboriginal knowledge of and control over the operation of the store scarcely existed.

The development of retailing at Yuendumu must have been similar to that on other large government settlements. In mission stations the control of the store was often retained by the parent administration who felt that, since they could ensure that codes of honesty were upheld, they had the best interests of the community at heart. While such motives were generally laudable, their influence on Aboriginal customers tended to be highly paternalistic, and Aboriginal input into store organisation was minimal. In cattle station communities the opportunity for Aboriginal involvement in store services was even more limited. As sole owner/manager the pastoralist had complete control of all elements of the operation and, if he was unscrupulous, could charge high prices, control credit facilities and generally ensure that, as far as possible, the cash resources of the Aboriginal community came into his own pocket. While such abuses no doubt occurred, some pastoralists did try to provide a friendly and helpful service in a congenial atmosphere, and their efforts were much appreciated by their customers.

This brief summary highlights some important factors which have affected the contemporary development of Aboriginal community stores. First, even with the transfer of stores to community control, Aboriginal involvement in all spheres, but particularly in management, remained at a very low level. Secondly, stores retained their control over cash flows to individuals, as well as their monopoly of the retailing function, and hence people had little opportunity to learn how to cope with money within a broader framework. Finally, the need to provide a basic service 'for the people' took precedence over the provision of that service 'by the people' in clear contravention of the ideals of a self-management policy.

#### Case Studies of Contemporary Stores

While stores in remote communities share some common features, such as their monopoly of the retail service, high freight charges and problems of obtaining a continuous flow of supplies, they also vary significantly in characteristics such as ownership/management and the population which they serve. Table 1 compares three stores in communities, Yuendumu, Numbulwar and Willowra, of different sizes and types of organisation (see Young 1981, 94-7; 114-5; 155-7; 210-13; 225-6). All three communities were, by the time in question, administered by Aboriginal Councils with non-Aboriginal assistance in financial matters. However, in Numbulwar the Council had functioned for only about a year, while in both Yuendumu, an ex-government settlement, and Willowra, an Aboriginal-owned cattle station, Aboriginal Councils had been established for at least six years. This difference is, to some extent, reflected in store-ownership. Yuendumu Store belonged to the Social Club, which, by 1978, had an all-Aboriginal committee instead of, as formerly, a committee dominated by non-Aboriginal residents of the community. Willowra Store had been run by the Aboriginal community until it suffered severe financial setbacks in late 1978 and then, with the agreement of the Community Council, it was run on private contract by a local businessman. Numbulwar, however, remained under the complete control of the parent organisation, the Church Missionary Society (CMS).

TABLE 1  
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF STORES

	Yuendumu 1978	Numbulwar 1979	Willowra 1979
Region	Tanami Desert	E. Arnhem Land	Lander River (Tanami)
Population (Approx.)	1200	500	300
Type of Store	Supermarket	Supermarket	Counter/Self-Service
Owner	Yuendumu Social Club	Church Missionary Society	Private Contractor
Management	Non-Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Staff: Non-Aboriginal	2	2	2
Aboriginal	10	9	-
Annual Takings	\$1.2m	\$750000	\$200000
Food (% takings)	55	65	77
Takings (% community income)	80	90	80
Price mark-up (%) on nearest town	17	50	50
Banking facilities	No	No	Yes
Physical problems	Occasional shortlived disruption to transport	Wet season causes frequent transport problems	Occasional transport disruption - may be prolonged
Aboriginal complaints	Management inadequacies stock fluctuations	Restricted hours inappropriate stock, high prices	Irregular hours, limited stock, high prices, management problems

All stores had non-Aboriginal managers and one, Willowra, employed no Aboriginal workers except on a casual basis, for example when stock had to be unloaded. The ratios of non-Aboriginal to Aboriginal employees in Yuendumu and Numbulwar were similar but, while the Yuendumu manager was appointed independently by the Social Club, the Numbulwar manager was a CMS appointee. In theory Yuendumu people thus had more influence in deciding who came in to run their store. In practice this could cause problems because of their inexperience in assessing the qualifications of applicants. A strong argument put forward by CMS for their retention of control at Numbulwar is that they will be able to protect the community from store failure due to inefficient and dishonest management.

Aboriginal employees in both Yuendumu and Numbulwar worked in a variety of jobs - unloading and sorting stock, cleaning and replenishing shelves, operating the checkouts. However, while Yuendumu store had appointed an Aboriginal trainee assistant manager, no such step had yet been taken in Numbulwar. Although this suggests a serious attempt to involve Aborigines in the practical organisation of the Yuendumu store, progress was slow because it was difficult to find a suitable person who was committed to the job, and because no suitable training was available. Plans to send the trainee to Adelaide on a short course did not eventuate and, in any case, were of dubious value because the nature of such a course was unlikely to be appropriate to the Yuendumu situation. The Numbulwar manager stated that management training was generally unsuccessful because of frequent absence among Aboriginal staff. In both cases these problems could be related to lack of interest by Aboriginal employees, primarily because they had not been given responsibility.

Willowra store was operated by 1979 as a private non-Aboriginal enterprise within the community and hence, as far as the Aborigines were concerned, offered no benefit apart from the service which it provided. This unfortunate situation had developed despite the insertion of contract clauses relating to Aboriginal employment and training. When the store was owned and managed by the community it was run by three young women who had received basic training in book-keeping, checkout operations and stock organisation as part of their post-primary course at the school. They received financial advice and assistance from the resident non-Aboriginal book-keeper. When the store went bankrupt and was transferred to the private contract, all the former employees were working elsewhere, for example at the school, or were unavailable. Plans to include store training along with the Willowra office training course, run in 1979 by staff from the Institute for Aboriginal Development, proved untenable because trainees were fully occupied in learning how to operate the radio and radio-telephone and to keep the daily accounts. These factors, combined with lack of effort on the part of the store manager to carry out further training, and lack of determination by the community to enforce the terms of the contract, explain why no Aborigines were working in the store.

The retailing facilities offered by all three stores were in many ways similar. Self-service had replaced counter-service although in Willowra, where the store building was a dark, Nissen-type hut, the arrangements were haphazard. Customers prefer self-service because it extends the choice, particularly when people are unfamiliar with some of the goods on sale, and it also increases the speed of the service. All stores provided a range of foodstuffs, but concentrated particularly on basic goods such as flour, bread, tea, sugar, tinned and fresh meat and soft drinks. The variety of other foods available at the larger stores, Yuendumu and Numbulwar, was much greater than at Willowra but in all stores these basic items accounted for at least 60 per cent of food expenditure. Numbulwar store stocked many foods which rarely form part of an Aboriginal diet, and people sometimes complained that there was too strong an emphasis on European tastes. Since the store sometimes ran out of items considered by Aboriginal women to be essential (such as baking powder, sugar) such complaints seem justified.

Stocks of fresh and frozen foods fluctuated according to the efficiency of storage facilities, organisation of supplies and demand. In all stores fresh fruit was purchased whenever money was available, and supplies were soon out. Fresh/frozen meat was also popular but demand in Numbulwar and Willowra, both of which have access to alternative supplies (fish and killer bullocks respectively), was less than in Yuendumu. Yuendumu and Numbulwar stores had larger and more reliable freezer facilities than Willowra, and hence could organise a continuous supply of frozen goods more efficiently.

While foodstuffs accounted for over half the takings in each store, all also stocked other goods - clothing, bedding, blankets, tools, cigarettes and tobacco, tents, cooking equipment and luxury items such as transistor radios and cassette players and toys. As with food, such variety of goods was brought in only at the specific request of the customers. Thus, in February 1979, people asked for tent sheets and mosquito nets because of seasonal rainstorms and high humidity.

The total takings in each store accounted for a similar proportion of the community income (80-90 per cent) but varied on a per capita basis because of differences in that income. Numbulwar in 1979 had an annual per capita income of \$1,640, compared with only \$850 at Willowra. This demonstrated the importance of the connection between money available and store takings, a result of the virtual monopoly over retailing held by each outlet. In Numbulwar, where access to other stores involved travelling long distances over an extremely rough road or, in the wet season, by plane, monopoly was almost complete. People made the effort to shop elsewhere only if the store had run out of stock and if they had the resources, as, for example, when a group of teachers used part of their holiday pay to charter a plane to shop in Groote Eylandt. In Yuendumu and Willowra the opportunities of using other shops were much greater and people travelled to Alice Springs or to adjacent stores at Mount Allan, Anningie and Ti Tree if they could not buy goods locally. However, Aborigines adopted such measures less freely than non-Aborigines, who would also order goods to be sent by plane, and many older people in the Aboriginal community never made outside shopping trips. They preferred to depend on those supplies which remained, and hope that their younger kin would bring goods back for them when visiting other places.

The cost and convenience of obtaining supplies for stores varies according to their physical isolation from main centres and according to the size of the market which they serve. Both Yuendumu and Willowra were within five hours drive of Alice Springs and their road links were only occasionally disrupted during heavy rain. However, when such breaks did occur, they made a much greater impact at Willowra, where the road is not a main through route like that at Yuendumu where the needs of other road users ensured speedy repair if necessary. A rainstorm at Willowra in January 1979 caused a break of almost two weeks in the store supply line, and led to shortages of basic foodstuffs such as flour. Numbulwar, on the other hand, depends entirely on barge-freighted goods for about six months of the year, and imports bulky supplies by this method at all times. While the service is fairly regular (every four to six weeks), it occasionally fails because of difficulties arising at other ports which it serves. It also requires efficient ordering procedures, as omissions cannot be rectified until the next barge arrives. The high freight costs on the barge are the main reason for the high mark-up on goods bought in Numbulwar, which cost approximately 50 per cent more than they would cost in Darwin.

While both Numbulwar and Yuendumu have sufficiently large turn-over to buy in bulk, Willowra has to limit its scope because of its smaller market. Yuendumu store imports supplies by container direct from Adelaide while Willowra buys through relatively expensive dealers based in Alice Springs. The price difference, handed on to consumers, affects the mark-up in the two stores, with Willowra costs about 50 per cent and Yuendumu only 17 per cent above Alice Springs.

Between 1978 and 1981 two of these three stores, Yuendumu and Willowra, incurred heavy financial losses and were forced to close for a period of time. More detailed consideration of these failures reveals some important factors affecting both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal management. Willowra community took over control of the store in 1977 when they decided to dispense with the services of their consultants, the Australian Agricultural Consulting and Management Co Pty Ltd, and run their cattle station on their own. The shop continued under Aboriginal management, and made a profit equivalent to about 9.7 per cent of the takings in the financial year 1977/78. In October 1978 it went bankrupt, with debts of approximately \$40,000. Three main factors contributed to the failure. First, the shopkeepers were inexperienced and, as younger members of the community, came under strong pressure from influential kin looking for easy credit. Secondly, they did not receive adequate support from the non-Aboriginal book-keepers, some of whom stayed in the job for only a short time, were not meticulous enough in checking the financial side of the operation, and did not provide advice on stocking as needed. Thirdly, because the store was run as a component of Willowra Pastoral Company, store

stock used to provide rations for Pastoral Company employees (the stockcamp) were never actually paid for from Company funds. This loss, which accounted for a large part of the debt, was actually a book-keeping error. Altogether the Willowra failure can be attributed as much to poor non-Aboriginal support as to lack of experience on the part of the Aborigines. Until such time as Aboriginal managers can accumulate a greater breadth of knowledge on retailing, appropriate non-Aboriginal support will be essential.

Yuendumu's failure, in 1981, followed the build-up of debts of over \$200,000, the result of non-Aboriginal management deficiencies over an indefinite but probably extended period. This situation, which caused considerable hardship for a town of over 1,000 people, was retrieved by a grant of funds by the Aboriginal Development Commission, which thus assumed a supervisory role including the responsibility for appointing a new manager. The basic reason for failure, apart from sheer inefficiency, was lack of systematic control over financial operations, a need which may now be supplied by officers of the Aboriginal Development Commission.

Failures like those at Willowra and Yuendumu generate strong community feelings about store operations. People then realise how dependent they are on access to an efficiently stocked store which opens regularly and, within reason, does not charge excessively high prices. They also realise that lack of a store can lead to other social problems because, when people are forced to move elsewhere to shop, family life may be disrupted and higher amounts of cash are likely to be used to buy alcohol. They would then place strong emphasis on the need for a store to provide a service 'for the people'. However each community also contains members who are interested in bringing stores under Aboriginal control. Willowra people have frequently stated that they intend to take the store back into the community whenever they feel able to do so, and Numbulwar Council, resentful of the continuing dominance of CMS, would like to bring the organisation of the store under an Aboriginal committee, possibly along the lines of Yuendumu Social Club. These examples therefore illustrate the importance of finding some means of combining efficient management, for the good of all, with meaningful Aboriginal involvement at all levels.

#### Steps Towards a Solution

From this evidence, it is apparent that there are two main problems: the lack of experience and facilities for training Aboriginal employees, especially store managers, and poor servicing of stores, both in terms of providing supplies and in terms of supervision, particularly of the financial side of their operations. In recent times steps have been taken to deal with some of these difficulties.

#### Training of Aboriginal Workers

In 1981 the Arnhem Land Progress Association (ALPA) established a store training school at Galiwinku, in Elcho Island. The school has now run 13 short (one or two week) courses for stock-keepers, supervisors, storemen, stock controllers and check-out operators. While over half the 67 places were taken up by people from communities whose store is run by ALPA (many of whom were from Galiwinku itself), others came from other parts of the Northern Territory (including Papunya and Areyonga) and also from Queensland and Western Australia. Courses were devised and taught by a staff of three, two of whom are Aboriginal. They catered for people with different levels of experience, from new staff learning how to operate checkouts to supervisors with at least a year in retailing, ready to assume management responsibilities. All courses are designed to fit in with ongoing training and follow-up programs are designed so that students can, with the help of managers in their own communities, extend their experience.

While the training school is still too new for realistic assessment of success, certain points have already emerged. The organisation of training within an Aboriginal community is much more appropriate than sending trainees away to courses based in towns

and cities, particularly in southern and eastern Australia. Applicants tend to be people who already have some experience and have shown some commitment to the job by staying in their jobs for some time, often over a year. They require intensive training in basic arithmetic in particular. They also require strong ongoing support from their communities and, realising this need, training officers hope to provide this by carrying out follow-up visits to discuss needs with students and shop managers. Although none of the Aboriginal trainees has yet taken full responsibility as a store manager, they are beginning to accumulate the skills which they will need if they are to do this in future.

#### Servicing of Stores

Types of organisation set up to improve the servicing of stores are ALPA and the Retail Advisory Service and associated Baruwei Enterprises in Katherine. ALPA, an umbrella organisation set up in 1975 to oversee store operation in Arnhem Land communities, currently runs seven stores and assists an eighth with management. It has a bulk store in Darwin and supplies all its outlets, at the same time as providing assistance in the employment of managers. No major financial crises have yet occurred and its annual turnover in 1980 was approximately \$3.5m. Profits from each individual store go back to that community and have so far either been invested in capital improvements or set aside to provide support for when the community wishes to take full control.

Baruwei Enterprises, set up with a grant from the Aboriginal Loans Commission in 1978, was designed to service the numerous small stores on pastoral stations and Gibb communities in the Katherine region. As a large organisation it could buy goods in bulk, freighting directly from Adelaide. Store operators were responsible both for placing their orders and providing transport with which to collect them. Baruwei did not limit its service to Aboriginal community stores but also sold to non-Aboriginal operators. This resulted in some criticism, but was justified by the manager on the basis that many non-Aboriginal store-keepers were in fact providing a service for Aborigines.

In 1981 the Yulngu Association, an Aboriginal organisation in Katherine set up to handle the trust accounts of a dozen local communities and associated transactions, after consultation with ALPA, Baruwei and other interested parties, established a Retail Advisory Service, with money from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Aboriginal Development Commission. This service is designed to improve management; to help Aboriginal people to understand how their store operates; to stop financial losses and bad practices; to engage non-Aboriginal staff; to prepare regular financial statements and carry out stock checks; to provide simple book-keeping procedures; to develop training courses for Aboriginal managers; to advise communities how to apply for grants for the improvement of their stores. Some of these aims obviously coincide with work already being carried out by ALPA and Baruwei. A similar type of organisation has been planned for Central Australia, based in Alice Springs, and its establishment is planned for 1982.

#### Conclusion

Measures such as those described above are designed to resolve the apparent conflict of self-management in retailing (stores run 'by the people') with efficiency (stores run 'for the people') by providing a midway point, where partially trained Aboriginal managers can rely on outside support in those components of the operation in which they lack confidence. Such support also seems to be necessary for many non-Aboriginal managers, both because they are providing a service in physical isolation and on a small scale, and also because many of them also lack all the skills necessary for efficient operation. While many Aboriginal communities presently appear relatively content with efficient non-Aboriginal management, this is probably not the ideal situation because Aboriginal ideas on the role of the store may not receive much attention. At present these ideas are rarely expressed, simply because people have had little opportunity to consider alternatives and, in communities such as Numbulwar, still see the store as a non-Aboriginal institution.

Deborah Wade-Marshall

AND DEBORAH WILL TALK TO THE WOMEN

Introduction

Women in remote communities have a different experience of service delivery from men. To obtain information about the experience and attitudes of women was one object of several field trips made into Aboriginal communities between July and October 1981. The communities are all in the Katherine administrative region - to the east Borroloola, Bamyili, Beswick, Bulman and Weemol, to the west Lajamanu, Kalkaringi and Dagaragu. The larger ones were visited for up to a fortnight, the smaller, less populous ones for only a few days.

'...and Deborah will talk to the women....' Before setting out on the first trip this sentence in our letters to communities had annoyed me - is there need for sexual differentiation of the recipients of services, either public sector or private? Considering infrastructure, initially I thought not. If, for example, water supply was unsatisfactory I imagined that men and women would suffer alike. In reality this is not so - the women remain so totally charged with the responsibility of children's maintenance that on a day-to-day basis they are worse affected. Washing, cooking and bathing is after all the women's province! From this point of view 'women' do not stand as individuals but rather stand with the complement of children and so constitute 75 per cent of the population. This then compels us to think about women as consumers of services in Aboriginal communities from a different perspective. We must ask what are their tasks and how are they affected by services delivered. We also need to explore the separation of the sexes, now and in the past. The separation persists but the context and evaluation of the sex-specific domain shifts. Tasks which once indicated a secure and high status (e.g. economic roles) are now classified as 'domestic' and second class.

Two themes run through the paper regarding women's relationship to services. Because of their social and economic status in their communities women are disadvantaged relatively to men, and because of their responsibilities they have different service requirements from men. Neither of these themes can be understood without reference to women's role and status in the past and the nature of the changes wrought by dispossession of lands, disruption of a foraging economy and the concomitant dislocation of female and male domains.

Services are being provided as if Aboriginal communities were homogeneous entities. This is illusory; the reality is that many restraints - social, economic and cultural - exist that either prevent women from obtaining access to services, or qualify what access they do gain. These work in complex ways as they are the product of the interaction of many factors over generations.

The Changing Social and Political Position of Women

Initial European contact put the lives of Aboriginal women into a state of transition - continued contact since has served to maintain this state.

With regard to the transformation of their position Annette Hamilton made the assessment:

Without doubt the transfer from a nomadic food-gathering economy to a cash-based European one is the change with the most dramatic implications for all Aborigines. I suspect that it is even more important for the women than for the

men in the early stages of contact; if women as food-producers are the means of production, and therefore of intrinsic value to men, the transfer to a cash economy immediately makes them redundant (Hamilton 1975, 167-79).

Dr Hamilton, referring to a 'Top End' situation, went on to say 'At one blow the whole economic significance of Aboriginal women was removed'. And so Aboriginal women became dependent in the sense of needing to be provided for whether by their husbands or by the system as it was to become. Bell and Ditton argue that a similar situation pertained in Central Australia.

Women, by virtue of their role as hunters and gatherers in the desert, produced up to 80 per cent of the diet. They were thus critical to the survival of the group. They were potentially economically independent of men who caught the prized portion of the diet. Men did not contribute with the same regularity and certainty as did women. Further, although women were expected to feed their male kin, they only did so after they had satisfied their own needs (Bell and Ditton 1980, 19).

Provision for wives and offspring was not a traditional, nor has it become a modern, practice for Aboriginal men. Traditionally women were independent in their day-to-day activities and their food-gathering provided a large proportion of their own and their children's diets. The destruction of this economic independence alone was a massive upheaval in women's lives and points to an aspect of the transformation of the economy of the Aboriginal family. Granted, men had important kinship obligations and a network of relationships built around them which sustained the family as a social unit, but so too were women enmeshed in a web of obligations which established their ties and responsibilities in ceremonial, marriage and trade relationships.

'Contact', although bringing many changes, has not transformed the Aboriginal family into something approximating the western model of a male 'breadwinner' providing support for a nuclear family. But for the purposes of delivery of certain services, administrators assume that an Aboriginal family group functions within the categories established by departments to fit a white Australian family structure. Aboriginal women may still try to behave as an independent sex, but they are classified as dependents.

With reference to Social Security Bell and Ditton comment

Their [women's] new dependence on social security payments has (further) undermined their position as independent members of their society. Most payments are made to household heads. Thus U.B.is paid to the male (Bell and Ditton 1980, 20).

Another upheaval was of course dispossession of land. In this process, which is still continuing, although land rights offer some relief, Aborigines became residents of missions, government settlements and pastoral properties. Some 'employment' was created - but on settlements and missions it was often of a repetitive or seemingly meaningless nature. However, on pastoral properties women workers were of extreme importance to the industry. They worked hard, long hours for little or no pay. Recompense for labour came in the form of rations and sometimes residential or marital security. Accommodation was usually a camp compound away from the homestead. I spoke about the past to women with a station background, and while many said they had been employed in the homestead or surrounding gardens where work included cooking, cleaning, polishing, laundry, sewing (seemingly their own clothes) and collecting wood, many others were employed as stock workers. Where domestic animals were kept it was the women who looked after them. Hours

were long and, in response to the question 'how long?', I was told by one woman '5 o'clock in the morning until darktime'. When pregnant, women worked almost until giving birth and returned to work shortly afterward - the child apparently being cared for by others at the camp or taken with the mother.

These are not stories from long ago but rather the very recent history of Aboriginal women, some still in their later twenties.

#### Women's Perceptions

Since women in immediate post-contact situations were so often in a state of material impoverishment, it is not surprising to hear expressions of satisfaction regarding their circumstances today. Satisfaction, although hardly justified except by reference to the abysmal standards of the early post-contact period, can only be sustained for as long as women lack the information for making comparative judgments of the necessity, quality and efficiency of services.

To make judgments and evaluate services it is necessary to have knowledge not only of the services but also an understanding of the alternatives. This knowledge and understanding are difficult to come by for most of the population in Aboriginal communities. Many people are not literate in English and have only a low level of education, so that the printed media of information are of little use to them. And radio is seldom an alternative because reception is generally poor.

The difficulty is compounded by the plethora of different government attitudes and policies that have been directed at the Aboriginal population. Certainly each generation has experienced a different 'contact' and often one generation has lived through numerous policy changes that have affected their lives. 'Contact' also varies between communities and so makes generalisations hazardous at best.

Further blockages to 'finding out' occur when a 'select few' control the information coming into a community. These 'few' are typically Council Presidents, Liaison Officers or Town Clerks. It is to them that correspondence is addressed, it is they who have better access to radio telephones. Knowledge and information are recognised as sources of influence and power; and it is impossible to say how much of what the leaders have at their disposal is disseminated to the community at large.

Women are at a particular disadvantage here because they are seldom in the positions in the community where information about services becomes available and because the information reaching those not in these positions is sifted, misunderstood and misreported on the way to them. Such sifting is not necessarily intentional or deliberate but it certainly is a fact of life.

In only one community that I visited did a woman have an executive position on Council, (Asst Secretary - Daguragu). Both there and in other councils women were proportionately under-represented. For example, at Borroloola four out of thirteen councillors are women, at Beswick two out of nine and at Lajamanu one out of nine.

These councils are elected bodies, generally instituted in settlements in recent years under white guidance and, as Bell points out (1980, 249), these 'new political forums' have been 'elaborated and exploited by Aboriginal men in distinctive ways. Men have derived some advantage from the male chauvinist bias of frontier culture'. Statistics are not available but my impression is that women are underrepresented not as a result of not being voted for, but rather because they do not stand. It does not follow from the fact that women are underrepresented in councils that they do not have influence, responsibility and authority in matters that are important to them, but rather that they see councils as being an inappropriate forum. But to the deliverers of services these bodies constitute 'management' within the community and are treated as such on a consultation and liaison basis. They have an institutional bias towards dealing with institutions (in which men predominate) rather than the informal 'non-authorised'

structures through which women conduct business. When one acknowledges that the vast majority of 'service delivery' representatives who visit Aboriginal communities are men and that the majority of people with whom they deal are men one must also acknowledge that women's requirements can easily be overlooked.

With little solid information, it is not surprising that people are often not aware of their rights and eligibilities or are confused about them. It is also common to find that, when women did not understand 'the system', their rights in it and the mechanisms by which services reached them, they placed great importance on the personality of the individual 'service deliverer', i.e. services came to be regarded as a function of a person rather than an institutionalised provision.

A practical example of this is often found in the retail area. If, for instance, a storekeeper is disliked, the response to the store itself will be unenthusiastic. This has nothing to do with the store's efficiency, stocking rate or prices and will not affect purchasing patterns (particularly in the monopoly situation that exists in all but one of the communities). The same estimation of personality affects school teachers and nursing sisters.

The importance of the person is also underlined because many services are provided by Europeans. Since they usually do not stay long at a community, Aborigines soon discover that the 'same' service can be delivered in different ways depending on the person. But when the service delivery comes to be regarded as a function of the person delivering it, the recipients are deprived of standards of delivery by which to criticise incompetence and malpractice, or even simple bias in favour of one sex, on the part of the service deliverer. They have no means for protest and learn to regard themselves, not simply as clients, but as dependents who have to accept what is given to them and be grateful for it.

#### Women's Requirements: Restraints Acting Against Them

Although women continually discuss, grumble and chat about their requirements in their own sex-specific groups, they seldom articulate their needs to potential suppliers of services. This is in spite of some services - those upon which they are particularly dependent - having special importance for them. These are the services connected with family maintenance, especially the care of children. Women are expected to keep children clean, healthy, clothed and well-fed. If they are not able to do this they feel shame, face the disapproval of their husbands (this can take the form of anything from expressed dismay to violence) and the criticism (stated or implied) of the European residents of their community.

Personal cleanliness need only be a function of reliable water supply. The women suffer most when this breaks down, when it is not available or is located too far away. In addition clean clothing, considering the general dusty and dirty environment, really requires a washing machine. This is white man's technology with which most Aboriginal women are familiar. Laundry facilities have existed in a number of communities but none are now operating. Equipment maintenance is a problem for both men and women in Aboriginal communities but, given that the decision-makers are men, Toyota replacement assumes a higher priority than washing machine repair or replacement irrespective of cost. But Aboriginal women know that the machines exist in the homes of Europeans and have often used them during periods of 'employment' as domestics.

Women and children are the most frequent users of a health facility. This should be a place that is not intimidating and in which they feel comfortable. Feelings toward a Health Centre are largely shaped by the personality of the sister(s). The work is taxing and often disappointing; to be angry or peremptory is bound to deter mothers. And yet it is easy to sympathise with the frustrations that a sister is likely to feel when, for instance, a child is frequently returned to the Centre in a state of dehydration; unlimited patience is required of a nursing sister.

In most communities there is close liaison between the Health Centre and the school, and children receive instruction through the sisters and health workers in basic hygiene and nutrition. Although this is commendable, it should not stop there. There is an obvious and continuing need amongst the women for instruction and guidance. Such guidance would wisely be offered away from the Health Centre (which is associated in the popular imagination with sickness). This is done at Borroloola where sessions are held either in the school or at the Adult Education Centre. Guidance was not given in this way in any other community visited. The sister acknowledged frustration with the erratic attendance of the women, but she was willing to persevere. The extension service did not reach into the camp environment in any community; this is unfortunate and it is a service which could easily be developed through the Aboriginal health workers. Extension services are not widely and enthusiastically conducted as the results of preventative medicine are impossible to tabulate and prove and it does not come under the official brief of sisters.

Another area where Health Centres could play a far larger part is in the field of general sex education and contraception. The contraception policy of the Centres (that is, of the Department) is to provide it when it is requested. But since people are generally poorly informed about contraceptives they fail to voice their requirements. As a general rule contraception is not inquired about or sought until after the birth of the first child; this suggests that knowledge of reproductive function is scant until closer contact occurs with the Health Centre in the pre-natal stage. Few women are using contraception but a number told me that they did not want any more children. But at Lajamanu, for example, where there are 155 women in the 15-44 age group only 11 use contraception, 6 IUD and 5 oral, according to the sister's records. Both methods present Aborigines with difficulties. IUDs need to be fitted by a doctor but the Aeromed doctors are all men and the resident sister speculated that the necessity to consent to a pelvic examination could inhibit the women from having the device fitted. She wished that she were competent and qualified to examine and fit them because oral contraceptives need to be taken with a regularity which Aboriginal women may not always maintain.

The importance of improving local information about and administration of contraception is suggested by the experience of Bamyili and Beswick. A few years ago a sister who had served these two communities had a marked effect on population growth by putting young women on the pill. Statistics were not collected but head teachers at both communities commented that the effect of her work showed up in school enrolment levels. Since her departure sisters with different attitudes have followed and both schools are now planning for higher enrolments in 1982 and 1983.

Women's use of services is limited not only by lack of information and knowledge, but also by their inferior economic position. Admittedly, some services are still free, notwithstanding the introduction of 'user pays' health charges, notably the attention at community clinics. Water is also supplied on a community basis and is not individually metered. But clothing and food do require an economic transaction.

The way in which money is shared around within a community varies but my experience indicated that, given the range of transactions carried out by women, they had control of very little money and so their access to consumables for themselves and their children was immediately limited. Theoretically, Aboriginal women could get money from four sources - social security, husband's wage, income from sale of artefacts and their own employment. Each of these is governed by some sort of cultural or social constraint.

Firstly social security: here possible claimants need information about the range of benefits available and the tests of eligibility and entitlement. The Department makes an effort to ensure that such information is available to communities as a whole, but it too functions under the illusion that Aboriginal communities are homogeneous and that everyone has equal access to this information. DSS feels that it is not its responsibility to solicit clients and therefore applications for benefits have to be made to it or its agent in a community. In two of the smaller communities (Bulman and Weemol) social security was handled through the Yulngu Association; in Beswick and Kalkaringi it was handled by Europeans (despite the fact that in Beswick there is an Aboriginal husband and wife team employed by Community Development who have received DSS training).

In the three remaining communities, Bamyili, Lajamanu and Borroloola, social security is dealt with by Aboriginal men. When the person to whom application is made is male, women may well be disadvantaged because they are hesitant to approach him. Very few women in these three communities receive unemployment benefits. In view of the lack of work opportunity, and notwithstanding the number of women on supporting mother's benefit, this suggests women either do not know they are eligible or are too shy to claim their entitlement. To have more women field officers in DSS and to train a woman in each community to handle enquiries and disseminate information to women would facilitate women's access to some services.

Some recent departmental administrative and policy changes of particular benefit to women must be mentioned at this point, particularly because they indicate that sympathetic and imaginative measures can go a long way towards overcoming problems of access. These are: special benefits, splitting of cheques, second wives' and supporting parents' benefits. Of course, until knowledge of these becomes widespread, women have only child endowment and family allowance to rely upon. Husbands, for instance, may be on unemployment benefit, but regard that money as under their control.

A woman at Borroloola gave an example which reflects this: husband gets unemployment benefit of \$133 per fortnight, wife gets family allowance of \$36 per month. Husband is a non-drinker but is inclined to 'book things up' on his own behalf at the general store (store policy is that this debt, or part thereof is cleared as the next cheque is cashed). The constant clearing of this debt means that they are always behind. Response to the question 'Does your husband give you money toward food?' - 'Sometimes he gives me \$20'. 'Is it ever so bad that you go hungry?' 'Then we go hunting', [includes fishing]. This woman has no access to transport and the likelihood of her successfully hunting anything within walking distance from the township is slim. There are older children who seem to help out occasionally.

Bell and Ditton (1980:20) comment on a similar situation in the Centre:

Today women are expected to cope on the money [they] receive (i.e. child endowment) and men are free to spend their money (i.e. U.B.) on their own needs.

Men's wages are similar: they are largely regarded as being earned by the man for the man. Women's loss of economic independence has already been commented on and I do not want to generalise too broadly and stigmatise all employed Aboriginal men as 'mean', but the women suffer hardship because resources are allocated and delivered on the assumption that men will bear a share of the cost and responsibility for feeding and clothing the family. This hardship has two elements: firstly there is the shortage in real terms of cash available to women to purchase necessities which results from the non-equitable division of income amongst household members. The obligation for a wage earner to provide for his dependents, commonly accepted in western families, has little weight with Aboriginal men and the great proportion of a man's income may be spent on alcohol and transport for himself and for any male kin to whom he may feel obligation. The expenditure on transport alone can be high: from Lajamanu, where alcohol is not available on site, to Katherine by private, European-operated bus costs \$90 return. On top of this is the cost of alcohol consumed. Add to this the often violent behaviour of the people who are drunk and it is no wonder that women speak out against alcohol and, by implication, against social security payments to men.

The second element of 'hardship' for women maintaining families arises from their inexperience in budgeting or their inability to regulate expenditure and demand when they do have money. Lack of experience and expertise is not surprising considering the transformation through which Aborigines have passed. The passage from hunting and gathering (food available upon the exercise of local knowledge and enterprise) to ration dispensation (pre-determined food available upon willingness to camp at the depot) to a cash economy and expectation of self-management (money variously available for conversion to foodstuffs and other consumables) has been, to say the least, a confusing one for the Aboriginal population generally. Because the children are largely their concern, women

are the front line battlers in this jumble. Furthermore, even if they know how to make meagre funds last and go round, it is doubtful whether they would have the patience or authority to regulate incessant demands for expenditure.

I found that budgetary guidance was offered in only one community visited; this was by the Adult Educator - a woman. The lack of control is also shown by the 'lumpiness' of patterns of expenditure at the store during a pay or pension period. Expenditure is massive on the day income is received and for a few days afterwards, tapering off drastically before the end of the pay period. Bearing in mind that Aboriginal housing usually has no refrigeration or storage facilities, consumption must be correspondingly erratic, both in quality and quantity. That people are stuffing themselves full of food on pay or pension day and are hungry well before the end of the fortnight points to a need for specific instruction in handling money and regulating its expenditure.

In none of the communities visited was the sale of artefacts either regular or lucrative enough to enable women to become economically independent. The actual manufacture of items is time-consuming, their market values are low and do not reflect the work put into them and the required materials are not often available close at hand. A vehicle is needed to collect pandanus, dyes, bark and other raw materials and vehicles are controlled by the men who are not particularly sympathetic to women's needs. If a vehicle were available for collecting materials more women would be involved, but the activity would still only be a paying hobby. That it is not an economic alternative is not to detract from its importance. Artefact production is something that the women enjoy and it can provide some relief from the boredom which is endemic for women in Aboriginal communities.

There exists both an absolute lack (finite supply) of positions currently available to women, as well as a favoured employee situation. I notice in the communities I visited that the Council often acted as 'nominee' with regard to who obtains positions, i.e. teaching assistants, healthworkers. Although councils are ostensibly representative there is scope for those on the outside of a council 'clique' to suffer.

Virginia Huffer (1980, 153) reported the potential of a similar situation at Mornington Island (Queensland):

Another area of concern centred around the influence of kinship. Many felt that those in power would favour their relatives with the better paying jobs and other types of favouritism.

The following table itemises the total number of jobs available to women in each community. Each of these positions is currently filled and there seems little hope for expansion.

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

	School Teaching Assistants	Health Workers	Council Office	Retail Outlets	Council Work (Cleaning & Gardening)	Other Manual School cleaners Laundresses	Other incl. sewing, cooking craft instructors	Female Population 15-19
Borroloola	9	3	2		1 p/t		3 p/t	110
Bamyili	7	2	2		2 p/t		2	127
Beswick	2			4	1 p/t		4	52
Bulman		1 p/t					1	na
Weemol								16
Kalkaringi & Dagaragu	3	3	2	4	4		2 p/t	na
Lajamanu	3	3	3	6	15 p/t		6 p/t	213

This paints a very bleak picture for young girls returning from Kormilda or Yirara, the colleges in Darwin and Alice Springs, so bleak that communities tend to 'lose' a number of their educated girls because there is no scope within the existing framework for their potential to be put to use. These girls are in a difficult situation. After having been away, experiencing new things and absorbing new ideas, they return to their home communities to find themselves totally bored and with no escape other than returning to Darwin or Alice Springs. But it is these young women who might otherwise serve as a catalyst to make other women aware of the conditions that affect them and that these can be challenged and changed. We may imagine that a solution lies in education but as long as this has to be undertaken away from the home community it is only a partial answer.

#### Conclusion

Landrights, mining royalties and the current 'white backlash' notwithstanding, the Aboriginal population remains as a disadvantaged group. Within this group, Aboriginal women can be seen as being doubly disadvantaged.

The temptation to advocate that women need to take the initiative to speak out and become vocal in meetings if they are dissatisfied with their situation and want change needs to be balanced against the fact that such action is culturally inappropriate for many Aboriginal women.

The realisation that their communities now function in a larger majority Australian context does not, in itself, assist women's position. Inequalities are created and maintained through several mechanisms, including in this case white male supremacy. Aboriginal women, after having been an independent sex, have been bureaucratised into a role of dependency over which they have very little control.

Alistair Heatley

REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND PLANNING STRUCTURES IN THE KIMBERLEY

Across the north of Australia there has been considerable interest in regional concepts of administration. The Commonwealth, the two northern states - Queensland and Western Australia (WA) - and lately the Northern Territory government have all experimented with programs designed to deal with the problems of isolated areas remote from major administrative centres. This essay focusses on one northern region, the Kimberley in WA. Its major objectives are to describe the patterns of regional administration, both historical and contemporary, and to evaluate their effectiveness and relevance.

Despite the recurring argument that the Northern Territory frontier arbitrarily divides the natural economic unit of its eastern area, there is no doubt that the Kimberley forms a discrete geographic region within WA. It has well-defined boundaries - the desert and semi-arid country to the south, the seas to the west and north, and the political border to the east. Although the term 'the Kimberleys', referring to the eastern and western sections of the region, is often used and has some historical significance, it does not correspond to geographic reality. In economic terms, both historic and contemporary, the Kimberley has been seen as a coherent unit. Originally dependent largely on the pastoral industry, its economic base has since been broadened to include significant mining, irrigated agriculture and tourism sectors. It is a vast, sprawling region; its 42,451 sq. km comprise fully one-sixth of WA's land mass. Intra-regional distances are, by any standard, substantial; over a thousand kilometres of road separate Broome in the south-west and Kununurra in the north-east.

The Kimberley is sparsely settled; its population was estimated to be 17,670 in 1980. Population density was therefore about one person to 24 sq. km. Nearly 70 per cent live in the four major towns (Broome, c. 3,800, Derby, c. 4,000, Kununurra, c. 2,500, Wyndham, c. 1,900). As in other northern regions, there are large numbers of Aborigines, both in the urban and non-urban areas. Estimates of the Aboriginal population range from about 50 per cent to 65 per cent. Whatever the precise population, the Kimberley has one of the highest (if not the highest) regional concentrations of Aborigines in Australia. There is also no doubt that they form by far the largest group of permanent residents in the region. By way of contrast, comparatively few of the non-Aboriginal population can be said to be permanent residents. Public service employees usually serve in the Kimberley for short periods; they are often referred to as 'two-year tourists'. Workers in the pastoral, mining, tourism and agricultural sectors are also notoriously mobile. As these categories comprise the bulk of the non-Aboriginal work force, it is not surprising that permanency is so low. The nature and distribution of the Kimberley population raises a number of points pertinent to the questions of regional cohesion and consciousness. Longer term non-Aboriginal residents frequently refer glowingly to a Kimberley identity and loyalty nurtured, it seems, by the experience of isolation and remoteness. Socialisation processes undoubtedly operate quickly in northern Australian regions but it is difficult to accept that the sizeable transient population share a similar attachment to the Kimberley. In fact, in discussion with such people, it is barely apparent and one is left with the impression that the vaunted Kimberley sentiment is esoteric. The increase in and the mobility of the present non-Aboriginal population have been two potent forces in sapping what has been seen in the past as a formidable group consciousness.

Intra-regional parochialism and rivalry, always a factor in Kimberley history, have been sharpened in recent years despite the vastly improved communication network. With economic growth and diversification, each major centre has become more specialised and insular. Within the wider regional setting, three major sub-regions, centred on Wyndham-Kununurra, Broome and Derby, have become important entities in their own right. Sub-regions can and do provide an alternative focus for community identification.

Parochial sentiment is not only confined to the non-Aboriginal population. Despite the creation of pan-Aboriginal organisations, notably the Kimberley Land Council, and a number of recent incidents (like Noonkanbah) which have acted as catalysts for regionally-based activity, primordial local attachments remain dominant among the basically tradition-oriented Aboriginal people of the Kimberley.

The co-existence, often uneasy and fragile, of two largely self-contained racial groups in the region is perhaps the most important element in regional fragmentation. Even if the effects of population change and parochialism is discounted, there would still be two broadly distinct voices in the contemporary Kimberley.

In the past, Kimberley regional sentiment, however it is interpreted, was sustained by 'the tyranny of distance' - isolation and remoteness. Physically, the region today is no closer to Perth, but developments in communications have dramatically lessened their impact. Air transport is fast, frequent and regular; the major road network has been, and continues to be, improved; telecommunications, although still substandard in most of the Kimberley, are being progressively upgraded. Television is now available in the major centres and STD facilities, already provided to Broome and its hinterland, will be extended to Kununurra by 1984. The introduction of the domestic satellite will also serve to break down isolation even in the more remote areas.

Another historical factor which promoted a regional identity was the feeling that the Kimberley was neglected by the Perth-based administration which was seen as ignorant of and insensitive to the special problems and aspirations of the region. Although that opinion still exists, at least among some of the politically articulate, its edge has been blunted by the obvious commitment to northern development evidenced by WA governments since the mid-1950s. Occasionally, claims are made that the Kimberley should be separated from WA and attached to the Northern Territory but, by and large, there does not seem to be a deep-seated regional resentment to Perth control. Indeed, there is little to distinguish the Kimberley in its relationship with its metropolitan centre from other remote regions in WA, like the Goldfields or the Pilbara where similar factors have been operative.

Given the absence of a general Kimberley orientation, it is not surprising that there has been little recent demand for institutions of regional government or organisations which transcend narrow parochial boundaries. Where regionally-based groups do exist, they represent exclusive economic, racial or functional interests and often they are internally divided by sub-regional loyalties. Contemporary regional identity, in short, is largely shored up by outside agencies, particularly by the regional administration and planning activities of the State government.

With the exception of two active periods of regional activity by federal Labor governments in the late 1940s and early 1970s, and some involvement by non-Labor governments in specific economic projects, regional administration and planning in WA has been the province of the state. Since the 1920s, a series of systematic regional divisions for the purposes of statistical analyses, social and economic planning, or public administration have been undertaken in WA. In so vast a state with a dispersed non-metropolitan population and a number of reasonably well-defined geographic subentities, the state government has recognised, at least in theory, the value of the regional perspective. However, it is the general verdict that recognition has not been translated into practice in any significant way.

One student of public administration in WA has argued that 'the outstanding feature of the executive's development' in that state has been 'the high degree of centralisation' (Forrest, 1979, 93). Although the notion of regional administration has been used frequently in political rhetoric, he sees little manifestation of it in concrete terms. Overall, he concludes that:

Regionalism, greater local autonomy, consumer councils and the growth of community-sponsored groups...are of course concepts which are basically anathema to the way politics is practised in WA (Forrest 1979, 94).

That sort of analysis, of course, could also be made about the regional programs in other state jurisdictions. It is a comment on the limited nature of regionalism rather than on regional administration per se; it is a lament that no devolution of authority was contemplated, that no democratic structures were involved, and that no effective devices to facilitate regional input into decision-making were established. In effect, it is arguing for regional government, a development to which all states (and successive federal governments) have been reluctant to commit themselves. Studies of regionalism elsewhere in Australia have demonstrated that they have not reduced the degree of centralism. In some cases, they have actually strengthened it.

The motives behind regional decentralisation of administration in WA were also similar to those of other states. First, it was a means of muting regional demands for more responsive, more sensitive, and more expeditious administrative processes and blunting separatist sentiments in areas remote from Perth. Secondly, in electoral terms, a commitment, however vague, to decentralisation, or regionalism, is valuable in attracting extra-metropolitan support. A third factor, which was particularly relevant to the early 1970s, was the promulgation of a state regionalisation policy as a defence against an externally imposed regional system. As one commentator has noted:

The regionalisation thrust of the Whitlam government was responsible to a large extent for some of the non-Labor States setting up regional frameworks of their own or strengthening ones already in existence (Wiltshire, 1977, 78).

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, regional programs have been promoted as a means for more efficient state-wide administration. A recent assessment concludes that:

...there is ample evidence that the State Governments see regionalism primarily as a means of ensuring the better coordination of their own departments and authorities in the field. This is an important aim, but it falls far short of offering significantly new opportunities for the involvement of regional and community interests in policy formulation and resource allocation (ACIGR 1981, 94).

The Kimberley region, either by itself or as part of the greater North-West section of WA (north of latitude 26 N), has featured prominently in the regional administrative experience in WA. One of the long-standing grievances in the Kimberley has been the inadequacy of the state administrative apparatus. Since 1885, there has been a series of demands for an improved system which would take account of the region's special needs and which would give local residents more influence on decision-making. Agitation of that sort was partly responsible for the growing awareness in Perth that the remote areas in the northern parts of the state were entitled to special administrative consideration. However, a more important factor in the decision to create regional structures was the desire to stimulate and control economic development in the North-West.

In 1920, a Department of the North-West, with a small staff in Perth, was created under the control of a Minister and, in the following year, a Commissioner was appointed to serve in Broome. The Commissioner's role was 'to watch generally over all Government activities in the North', to liaise with and assist in coordinating departmental and local government operations, to develop proposals for economic development, to maintain public facilities, and to plan and carry out a program of minor public works. He was also required to be an administrative 'troubleshooter' dealing with urgent problems on the spot. To facilitate his understanding of the particular needs of the area, he was enjoined to travel widely throughout the north.

The system lasted only five years as, in 1926, the Department and the post of Commissioner were abolished. Government administration in the north reverted to the pre-1920 situation where each department discharged its appropriate operations on a functional rather than on an area basis. Several factors contributed to the Department's demise. Created under the auspices of a Liberal government, the administrative changes had never been fully supported by the Labor Party. With a change of government in 1924,

the necessary political commitment to sustaining the system was missing. As well as being expensive to maintain, it was seen as duplicating services which were adequately provided by other agencies. Even allowing for its short existence, it was considered that the objectives of providing a more efficient and responsive administrative structure and of promoting northern development had not been materially advanced.

Despite the continuing protests and occasional proposals for regional advisory councils by northern residents and politicians, little of substance was done to change the prevailing system until the 1960s. Although the position of Minister for the North-West was resurrected between 1933 and 1936 and after 1939, without a departmental structure it was largely a nominal one. Some note should, however, be made of the establishment of an informal semi-official advisory committee set up by the Liberal Premier in the late 1940s for consultation on planning and development matters concerning the North-West. In it, local viewpoints were represented. A strengthening of regionalisation also occurred in some government departments. For example, the Department of Agriculture, in response to the increasing interest in irrigated agricultural projects in the area, set up a separate North-West Branch in 1950.

During the 1960s, under the general auspices of the Brand Liberal government and, more particularly, its spokesman on industrial development and regional matters, Charles Court, concepts of decentralisation and regionalism received renewed attention. In order to achieve some regional input into planning and administration, a number of structures were established by government departments - Zone Development Committees, Consultative Councils, Regional (or sub-regional) Planning Committees, Industrial Development Committees. Some bodies were set up as a result of local or regional pressure, but all of them were essentially advisory and their direct influence on government activity in the regions was, at best, slight. Yet, the involvement of local citizens in such organisations did represent, at least in the planning process, a shift from the almost complete monopolisation by departmental officials.

In the north where the pace of and prospects for economic development had been accelerating since the mid-1950s, new regional organisations were created. Based on the recommendations of the Baron-Hay Report, commissioned by Court as Minister for the North-West, a Department of the North-West was revived. Within it, there were two divisions - the Administrative division substantially based in Derby and a North-West Planning Authority located in Perth.

The former consisted of an Administrator (appointed in 1962), assisted by a small staff. Later, an Assistant Administrator (who later became Administrator on the retirement of the original incumbent) was appointed to Port Hedland. The title of 'Administrator' was a misnomer as, except for their divisional staff, they had really nothing to administer. Their role was similar to the Commissioner of the 1920s, with the significant omission of the public works functions. Although they were supposed to coordinate the various departments in the region, there is little evidence that they did so. The strongly vertical links within departments, their centralised structures and their innate particularism made the task of coordination in the field almost impossible. What coordination was achieved was largely done in Perth at senior departmental levels. Therefore, the Administrator's role was one of being a sounding-board for local complaints, an expeditor and a transmission agent between the North and Perth. To assist and advise him, Consultative Councils (one each from the Kimberley, Pilbara, and the North-West), consisting of nominees from local government and the pastoral industry, were established. The Administrator was also a member of the North-West Planning (and Coordinating) Authority.

That Authority, set up in 1964, was primarily responsible for resource and project planning in the North-West, the coordination of state instrumentalities involved in development and liaison with Commonwealth authorities and private sector organisations. It was composed entirely of senior public servants (the Directors of Engineering and Agriculture, the Under-Treasurer, the Commissioner of Main Roads, the Surveyor-General, and the North-West Administrator) from departments most vitally concerned with northern development.

The new regional structure was completed in 1969 with the appointment of a Kimberley Regional Manager, a position which was the product of local pressure from Ord River farmers and pressure groups who were dissatisfied with the administration of the irrigation project. Originally, they had demanded an Ord Irrigation Commission but Court considered that premature and offered the post of Regional Manager instead. Resident in Kununurra, the Manager was responsible to the Chairman of the Planning Authority which he represented in the Kimberley. Again, his title was somewhat misleading as his prime role was the oversight of major public works projects in the region. Yet, because he was required to spend considerable time both in Perth and in the Kimberley generally, he did provide a second institutional channel (with the Assistant Administrator in Derby) for the transmission of Kimberley grievances to Perth.

After the defeat of the Brand government in 1971, the administrative and planning structures in the northern regions were radically altered. Under the influence of the Deputy-Premier and second Labor Minister for the North-West (H.E. Graham), the Court arrangements were scrapped. Graham considered that the north had no special claim for separate administrative status and that the various functional departments could handle northern affairs satisfactorily. In that view, he was probably correct as, despite the overarching regional structure, the departments had in fact continued to administer the bulk of northern matters. As a consequence of one of Labor's election commitments, a Department of Development and Decentralisation had been set up and the old Planning Authority was subsumed into it. The Administrator's offices in Port Hedland and Derby, and the Perth office were all abolished (although at Hedland, a Pilbara Regional Office staffed by the Department of Development and Decentralisation was substituted). By 1973, only the post of Minister for the North-West remained.

On Graham's resignation from Parliament in 1973, A.W. Bickerton, a northern (Pilbara) politician, became Minister and he promptly set about restoring a regional organisation for the north. He was, no doubt, sensitive to the loud chorus of criticism from the north which had greeted Graham's policies. Bickerton was instrumental in setting up an Office of the North-West with a Director (the erstwhile Kimberley Regional Manager) and staff in Perth and field offices in the Kimberley, the Pilbara and the Gascoyne. The officers were appointed to the Department of Development and Decentralisation and seconded to the Office of the North-West, the role of which was loosely and generously described as assisting the people of the North and promoting the North.

Partly as a response to the federal Labor government's regional activities, the Liberal Party's platform for the 1974 WA state election had included a detailed program for regional administration. Under the heading 'Back to the People', it was claimed that the democratic process had been damaged by excessive 'bureaucratic centralism' which had deprived regions of their full initiative and created a public service 'less able to be aware of the realities of regional living'. Emphasis was placed on the need to decentralise administration and decision-making into the main regional centres, to increase the responsibility of local authority substantially and to make central instrumentalities in Perth more sensitive to local needs, demands and complaints. To those ends, the platform committed the Liberal Party to establish 'a substantial Government centre' in each region headed by a senior officer who would have 'clearly-defined delegated responsibilities for on-the-spot decision-making' on local matters. His office would be staffed by public servants 'selected for their dedication to the regional concept'. Moreover, each centre would 'be representative of all departments with a substantial concern in the region' (Liberal Party, 1974).

In less rhetorical, but in equally general, terms, the regional administration program of the late 1970s was seen as having six major objectives. They were:

- the initiation of increased decentralisation of all departments and instrumentalities with increased authority and decision-making powers for the regional officers;
- assistance to local government bodies to increase their responsibilities and involvement in regional affairs and the provision to them of more forward planning information;

- assistance to community groups and individuals to achieve their aims and fulfil their requirements in the region;
- the coordination of development on a regional basis;
- the preparation of long-term regional plans in conjunction with all community groups, instrumentalities, local government and government bodies; and
- the promotion of all social, economic and cultural interests in the region (Office of Regional Administration, 1979).

There are obvious difficulties in evaluating the implementation of such a program with so generalised a set of objectives. Some - departmental decentralisation, the role of local government and planning processes - can be assessed more easily than those which deal with broader community activities which are not strictly regionally-based concerns at all. In what follows, comments are largely confined to the former narrower category. As the program was obviously planned as a long-term commitment, and as it has only been in operation for a few years, no judgement can be made on its final outcome; only a mid-term evaluation is possible.

A central part of the Liberal program was the creation of the position of Regional Administrator. Eventually, they were appointed to seven of the ten non-metropolitan regions of WA. Two of the larger - Goldfields and the Pilbara - were provided also with an Assistant Administrator. Their role, as set out in general official guidelines, was that of a motivator, an activator, a facilitator and an ombudsman; they were expected to promote the concept of regional administration, to take the appropriate action to encourage and stimulate regional social and economic development, to prepare immediate and longer term development plans, to disseminate information, to be a sounding board for local opinion, to carry out protocol and public relations functions, and to be a liaison and coordination focal point in the region. In public service terms, they were given a high status and salary which made them, if not the most senior officials in the regions, certainly in the top rank. However, other than being a gazetted officer for state government instrumentalities not represented in their regions, they were accorded no significant administrative functions or any formal control over other regional government officials (except for their own meagre support staff). On the other hand, they did possess avenues for influence through their ability to correspond directly with departmental heads in Perth and with government ministers whom they met regularly in the field. If the Regional Administrator served his full five years - a term substantially longer than the average incumbency of senior regional officers - he could also have been expected to develop considerable informal and personal influence in government circles in Perth and in the region. In fact, of the three Regional Administrators interviewed, all considered that the success of the position depended to a great extent on the personal attributes, the application and the approach of the people appointed.

As the infrastructure of the Office of the North-West was already in place, the first Regional Administrators were posted to northern regions. The Kimberley position, located in Kununurra, was filled in 1975. Kununurra was selected because of the prior location in the town of the Kimberley Regional Managership, the influence of the Director of the Office of the North-West, and the WA government's decision, in a time of acute depression in the Ord irrigation scheme, to expand the regional administration functions of the town as a counterweight. The selection of Kununurra has given rise to some dissatisfaction in other Kimberley towns but, in an area with no definable regional centre and marked intra-regional rivalries, any choice would have been contested. Given the Kimberley's huge size and the bipolarisation of the 'urban' population, in the east and in the west, it is surprising that the region was not given an assistant administrator as was done in the Pilbara, another region with sub-regional salience. In order to overcome problems of distance and diversity, the Regional Administrator, if he is to perform the function of promoting the concept of regionalism, has to travel widely - an activity often constrained by financial stringency.

Since 1975, there have been three incumbents, a situation which, on the face of it, runs counter to the intention of having long-term appointees. The comparatively short tenures and the different perspectives and personalities of the Administrators have militated against the effective development of the position. With the basic limitations and nebulousness of the position and the difficulties of acceptance by established administrative agencies and community groups, the role has never become well-defined. The present incumbent, in office since early 1981, considers that, even with his considerable liaison with regional organisations during that time, he has yet to forge a credible place in the system. Although he sees the concept of regionalism growing, he admits it will be a very slow process with no certainty of ultimate success. In administrative terms, he lays most of the blame on the rigidly hierarchical lines of departments operating in the region and their reluctance to concede the need for some loss of autonomy and local coordination and direction. The only way to achieve the latter, in his view, is to upgrade the Regional Administrator's executive powers. Indeed, the position was a far cry from the 1974 promise of a senior officer with clearly-defined delegated responsibilities for on-the-spot decision-making on local matters.

The Regional Administrator also has a part in planning procedures. He chairs and sets the agenda of the Kimberley Regional Development Committee which, like the old Zone Development Committee, considers matters pertaining to development and tenders advice to the Minister of Industrial Development (to 1980) and later the Department of Resources Development. Composed of representatives from local government and tourist, pastoral, farmers, mining and education interests, it meets three times a year at locations around the Kimberley. As an advisory body, its influence is difficult to measure but it does provide a forum for regional opinion and it has been instrumental in persuading government to undertake several research studies on the Kimberley resource base. At times, also, its meetings have been attended by senior government officials and it does provide a vehicle, however limited, for improved understanding of diverse objectives. However, there remains a wide gulf between officialdom and the community on questions of planning; in mid-1981, the Minister of Resources Development strongly urged departments to work more closely and openly with Development Committees. For his part, the Regional Administrator claims that a substantial proportion of his time is spent informally in discussing and promoting development options and strategies.

Although the Regional Administrator is nominally responsible to the Director of the Office of Regional Administration and the North-West (the former function added in 1977), there has been almost no direct supervision and little advice or assistance given outside periodic general conferences. In his region, the Administrator has been largely a free agent. The Perth Office, in fact, is treated somewhat as a joke, as having little relevance to regional matters. Its field staff are mainly concerned with supplying trees to northern residents from nurseries and providing advice and managerial assistance on agricultural and horticultural projects now operated by Aboriginal groups. Its Perth-based activities have been confined to disseminating information and undertaking basic research on northern and regional themes.

Both the Office and the Regional Administrators seem likely to become casualties of the state 'Razor Gang' review of 1981. Although details are sketchy, it appears that the Office is to be absorbed into the Department of Resources Development (or Industrial Development) and lose its separate identity. Most of the Administrators are to be phased out but those in the north are likely to be retained as a continuation of the policy of providing special consideration to the most remote regions. What title they will have and how their functions will be redefined are as yet unclear. In retrospect, however, except for the different location and the smaller area, there was very little to distinguish the Administrator of the North-West in the 1960s and the Kimberley Regional Administrator of the late 1970s. The 1980s' model will no doubt be the same.

If the experience of the Kimberley was typical of other regions and if there was no intention of augmenting the role, then the position of Regional Administrator was ripe for consideration by 'the Razor Gang'. Without the motives of 1974, the political commitment to retain the full edifice of administrative regionalism was absent.

A second part of the decentralisation program was the proposal to strengthen local government responsibilities and involvement. On the Kimberley record, it has been unfulfilled. However, it should be recognised that the four Kimberley Shires have shown little overt enthusiasm for regionalism. Certainly, shire representatives, both elected members and officials, attend Kimberley Regional Development Committee sessions and liaise closely with the Regional Administrator but their orientations are basically parochial. They do co-operate on matters of common interest, share some professional staff, and form a separate ward of the Country Shires Association, but they are normal activities of small contiguous rural shires. As with local government elsewhere in WA (and Australia), what the Kimberley Shires desire is increased funding to service their existing responsibilities rather than expanding them. Indeed, in recent years, they have progressively shed instrumentalities several essential service functions (water, electricity and sewerage). Under the operation of the State Grants Commission, the shires in the Kimberley have received substantial funding increases and are currently in a reasonably sound financial position but there has been no pressure, from within or without the councils, to widen their activities either in the shire or in the region. Where regional activities have been attempted, as in the Australian Assistance Plan, the problems of distance, remoteness, and particularism have proved intractable.

Perhaps the major thrust by the WA Government on decentralisation of administration has been in the departmental structures themselves. All departments and government instrumentalities with substantial non-metropolitan operations were instructed to establish a network of country offices, to increase the responsibilities and delegations of senior officers in the field and to devolve a degree of decision-making on local matters to the regions. To facilitate co-ordination, similar regional boundaries and centres should be used wherever possible. Although the degree of compliance has varied widely, there has been a general move towards some regionalisation in administration.

Unlike the more populous southern regions where there is less commonality in boundaries, the Kimberley is usually treated as a discrete region. But its size, its dispersed population, the lack of a natural regional centre and a variety of political and economic factors have led to a complex distribution of offices - some regional, some district, and some divisional - spread among the major towns. For example, of the regional offices, Education and Regional Administration are in Kununurra, Public Health, the Regional Hospital, the Medical Service and Community Welfare are in Derby, and Crown Law and Police in Broome. Regional prisons are located at Wyndham and Broome. The functions of Public Works, Main Roads and Agriculture are split between Derby and Kununurra. Although the reasons for distribution may be logical for individual departments, the task of local co-ordination is made extremely difficult especially if there is no effective co-ordinating agency in the region.

An interpretation of regionalism which places some store on the value of community participation and accountability will see little merit in administrative decentralisation. Some critics, in fact, eschew the term, preferring 'deconcentration' instead (Wettenhall 1978). They argue that the government's intention is not to make administration more democratic but more manageable. Greater delegation of field officers and the posting of more senior staff to non-metropolitan areas, in their view, does not infer the lessening of central control. Rather, it is an adaptation of administrative processes to fit modern conditions of communications. As one commentator has put it:

The development of the field-office networks of central departments is clearly a product of the rapid technological advances evident in transport and communications, leading to the shortage of administrative space and to the possibility of organising effectively over much larger areas...(Wettenhall 1978, 30-1).

Reactions from (non-Aboriginal) Kimberley residents to the decentralisation of service departments have been mixed. It is generally agreed that, in dealing with local complaints and demands of a minor nature, the system is more responsive, more flexible and more expeditious. But there was considerable disenchantment among those prominent in the non-government sector that major policy and planning issues were still the province of remote agencies in Perth. Nor were they satisfied with what they considered to be the lack of identification with the region exhibited by most public servants who spent comparatively short periods in the area and regarded regional service as simply an unfortunate requirement for promotion. With that motive uppermost, there was little likelihood that career-oriented public servants would place their promotional chances at risk by 'rocking the boat' or by actively associating themselves with local campaigns for radical reform of administrative and planning procedures. Some public servants agreed with that criticism, mainly of course in private. Occasionally, however, there has been open criticism of the degree of central direction and the compliance, notably in the area of public health and community welfare administration, by public officers in the Kimberley. It is undoubtedly fair comment to suggest that, without sufficient commitment to and understanding of local conditions and aspirations, any decentralisation of decision-making to field officers will not necessarily involve greater community participation and accountability or even sensitivity to specific regional or sub-regional needs. In the view of most, administration has become more efficient, more accessible and palatable, but the essence of centralised control has remained.

Some note should also be made of Commonwealth government administration in the Kimberley. The number of Commonwealth public servants in the region is small and many are professional or technical officers in departments dealing with communications, science and research functions. With the large Aboriginal population, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs is especially prominent. Like the state government, Commonwealth agencies have established a network of regional or area officers in the Kimberley, again distributed among the major centres. Motives for decentralisation have also been similar. For example, the setting up of regional offices of Social Security and the Commonwealth Employment Service (in Broome) was largely a response to local circumstances and the consequent local demand whilst, in the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, policy ramifications necessitated a regional and area approach. Problems of co-ordination between Commonwealth departments on a regional basis are not as acute as those of the state although Commonwealth-State co-ordination, particularly in the area of Aboriginal affairs, remains a sensitive area. Between 1973 and 1975, several regional initiatives were attempted in the Kimberley as part of the regionalism program of the federal Labor government - notably the Australia Assistance Plan and the Regional Organizations of Councils - but little was accomplished except the recognition that any broad regional programs would be difficult to organise and implement. That conclusion was also reached by the Task Force on a Regional Basis for Australia Government Administration which visited the Kimberley in 1974 (Regional Task Force, 1975). An interesting aspect of the Task Force's resume was its discussion of the need for co-ordination of services and the possible creation of an Australian Government Representative in the region. The lines of argument were very similar to the rationale given by the WA Liberal Party (and subsequently the WA government) after 1974 for the need for decentralisation generally and the Regional Administrator in particular.

Developments in regional administration and planning in the Kimberley should not necessarily be seen as typical of all those in WA. With other northern areas, it has had a history of special treatment which, however limited, has distinguished it from southern regions. That distinction may continue in the future. Yet, two aspects of the Kimberley experience have wider relevance. First, it demonstrates the administrative problems inherent in vast size, remoteness and sparse and dispersed population which are common attributes of other like regions in WA (and Australia). Secondly, as it was part of the general decentralisation program of the 1970s, it can be used as a case study of its characteristics and failings, of the difference between rhetoric and reality. Based on the Kimberley evidence, it is difficult to disagree with that interpretation which sees centralism as the fundamental tenet of contemporary administrative behaviour in WA. The changes in the regional administrative and planning structures in the 1970s did not disturb the reality of central control and direction.

Greg Snowdon

THE NEW FEDERALISM: REMOTE CONTROL FOR REMOTE COMMUNITIES

Pipalyatjara is a medium sized Aboriginal community with a population ranging between 80 and 150 people. It is situated in the far north west corner of South Australia 20 kilometres from the West Australian border and 30 kilometres from the Northern Territory border. It is about 750 kilometres by road from Alice Springs, the nearest town. Kalka, the base for the Pitjantjatjara Homelands Health Service (PHHS) and resource centre for the Pitjantjatjara Homelands, lies about 15 kilometres away. The closest communities are Wingellina 130 kilometres to the West and Amata 200 kilometres to the East.

The delivery of services currently being administered by state or Commonwealth agencies form the subject of the following discussion. Remote Aboriginal communities in the area are also serviced by the Pitjantjatjara Council. This is a council of all the communities in the area bordered by and including Warburton, Docker River, Ebenezer and Indulkana. Initially it was formed to lead the fight for Land Rights in the area. Along the way it started to pick up other functions including legal aid, a special projects officer (who also doubles as a general financial administrator for the council funds), the essential services officer, an anthropologist, an office administrator and a resource person who deals with requests from communities for parts and services to be obtained from Alice Springs, and a secretary.

It functions through a two-monthly general meeting and frequent but irregular executive meetings. The executive is composed of three members each from the Western Area, the Central Homelands Area, and the Eastern Area, plus a chairman. The executive members try to implement policies which are adopted at the general meetings and act as channels for dissemination of information for meetings.

Over the last few years the majority of services delivered to these communities have been funded directly through the Alice Springs section of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. These include such areas as community management and services, community development and employment projects, housing, outstations, essential services (the provision of power and water), sport and recreation, and certain aspects of health (mainly the PHHS), education and training. The South Australian government has provided the main educational input through its Department of Education with primary school facilities in all the major communities throughout the area and has also provided health care facilities in the communities between Indulkana and Amata. A similar situation prevails in the Western Australian communities.

It is the field of Commonwealth-state involvement in the area and the changing nature of their relationship to each other, especially over funding and responsibility for programs and policy and also their relationships to communities in the area that I wish to explore in greater detail.

The major state government service being provided at Pipalyatjara is the school operated by the South Australian Department of Education. Through its Aboriginal and Isolated Education Section in Adelaide, this department has total control over the education process in schools throughout the area. The state government provides funds to cover the costs for teachers' salaries for the area. However, all other goods and services are provided by the state government with grants-in-aid from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in Canberra. These grants cover all other expenses incurred by the Education Department other than basic teacher salaries. This covers such things as all textbooks and materials, vehicles and associated running costs, installation and maintenance of teacher housing and the district allowance paid on top of normal salaries.

At various times in the past two years, the community at Pipalyatjara has attempted to have some input into the way the school operates. The first eventuated when the Education Department wanted to place two first year single male teachers there in 1980. The community reacted very strongly to this because it felt that being single and male and inexperienced, the teachers would find it difficult to acclimatise to both the isolated

nature of the community and to the cultural gap between white and black society as well as trying to cope with their first year of teaching. The Aboriginal and Isolated Section of the Education Department responded to these concerns by stating that the community should trust the selection panel in Adelaide to choose the most suitable and available people to teach at Pipalyatjara. Furthermore the community should concern itself with ensuring that the school was kept clean and tidy. An impasse was reached at this point, for about two months, until the community, worried about the lack of schooling for their children, gave in and accepted the two teachers initially proposed by the Department. In the end the community was proved right in its doubts as both teachers had an extremely hard time in many ways, one because of the isolation and lack of social life, and both because of their lack of experience and lack of advice from local experienced educators.

Since that time, when there was some press coverage of the event in the Adelaide papers, the Department has shown a greater interest in appearing to take note of the community's wishes and interests regarding education. This has involved flying half-daily visits by the regional officer or by the Section Head with, as on one occasion, a hastily called meeting with concerned parents to discuss the issues of future school appointments, curriculum development problems and how the school administration functions. Most of the time of these and other visits is taken up with heart-to-heart talks to the teachers, basically telling them to keep their chins up and remember to keep sending those administrative forms in. The visits of these people left local people more confused than ever as they still have no realistic say in the selection of teachers and no say in school curricula or administration. The fact that over half the money being spent by the Education Department in the area comes directly from DAA in Canberra seems to create no obligation for the Education Department to pay attention to the wishes of the community. The Education monolith seems unable to provide for Aboriginal people in remote communities to exercise a voice in the control and running of their schools despite the creation of the special section for them. This section seems only to exist to provide a framework to administer the funds provided by DAA. Yet Aboriginal communities are special communities with conditions which necessitate special and different methods of education to take into account the preservation of traditional culture as well as educating children to gain the necessary skills to cope with the wider white society. The total separation of the school from the wider community, especially from parents and the older people, is a sad, but seemingly inevitable, result of having a hierarchical command structure centred in Adelaide.

The South Australian Department of Further Education (DFE) is totally funded by DAA to provide for the education and training needs of adults throughout the area. The whole concept of adult education as something separate from the school system, and as an afterthought, seems to be wrong. To educate the children separately from parents and grandparents in these small enclaves of white society in the English language and the problems of the European concepts of number suggests there is an official determination to retain sole control of education regardless of resulting inefficiencies. The advantages of community schools have been shown at Strelley and Noonkanbah. Here the involvement of the whole community in the education process has raised levels of literacy and interest and lowered rates of delinquent behaviour amongst the children and also given adults the chance to learn and direct the learning process.

DFE has operated to a large extent on the assumption that what is good for people down south and what works for them will necessarily work in this area. DFE has the laudable policy of responding only to expressed needs of the people and not to set up programs independent of such requests. This policy has failed, however, for two reasons. Firstly there has never been any consistent approach to discovering the adult education needs of people throughout the area. In fact DFE lacks the necessary tools to make such an evaluation which requires a long and involved process of discussion and analysis of the position of Aborigines in the wider society. Secondly DFE's response to the needs expressed by people at the annual planning meetings and in other ways through the year is dictated by the structural constraints in which it operates. It operates from a head office in Adelaide and only this year appointed a regional lecturer/co-ordinator on a part-time basis. Like the school system, it tends to compare itself with other DFE sections and areas throughout the state. By its very nature, DFE can act only in a piecemeal way in adult education and is unable to seek out and utilize the traditional authority structures.

One example of this attitude was the edict, still in operation recently, that people opting for homelands did not require DFE support. This decision was made on the basis that as they were leaving the larger communities to get away from white European systems they did not need DFE involvement. In fact it was these people who were moving back to their own country and demanding more independence who required the greatest support in adult education. These people also incessantly asked for help but were continually refused. In the small 'nguras' or camps, the people do not have white people on hand as they do in larger communities to perform the administrative and technical tasks necessary for survival. The need for these experts in the smaller communities is recognised, but only on the assumption that from them Aborigines would learn skills they need to be self-supporting and to develop the homelands as a viable, but not necessarily a spartan, alternative to the larger more heterogeneous communities. Even when this understanding has been accepted to some extent by the DFE hierarchy it is impossible for them to respond to the peoples' initiatives as it would mean restructuring and reorienting their whole involvement.

The other major state service through the area is the Health Commission. One or two sisters are placed at most of the larger communities and a clinic, vehicle and staff housing are provided. Ninety per cent of the funding for the service provided by the Health Commission in the Pitjantjatjara area is provided by grants-in-aid to the state. There is virtually no community involvement in the structure and operation of this service apart from the employment of one or two Aboriginal health workers in each community. Recently the Health Commission set up a board of Aboriginal people to advise/control the activities of the Commission with Aboriginal people. Being a state-wide body it is doubtful if it can cater to the needs of the various regions effectively. A recent report of the federal government has stated that Aboriginal and community controlled health services are more responsive and effective than state ones.

In the Pipalyatjara area a community and Aboriginally controlled health service has been established to operate from Amata to Warburton (excluding these two places) covering a distance of 500 kilometres and around 500 people. The staff consists of an Aboriginal director, a white administrator, a doctor and two nurses and about 18 Aboriginal health workers. Even here with a philosophy of Aboriginal control and direction, it is very difficult to get medical staff to be responsive to the wishes of the director, the senior health workers or the communities. Medical people seem 'locked-in' to an attitude that they know what is best for people based on their experiences of working in hospitals and in white society where the doctor's word is law. The 'monopoly of knowledge' of the medical profession and their determination in maintaining it prevents them from going beyond the purely medical and 'curative' mentality to one of health policy and 'preventative' medicine. Not all illness in this area can be cured by drugs or hospitalization. In areas such as Pipalyatjara where a large percentage of men, women and children is often sick, the causes are often ignored while the effects are treated - only to recur a short time later. If an inappropriate approach cannot be overcome in an organization ostensibly run by Aboriginal people, it becomes almost impossible with state-run services which are structurally constrained from being involved in any consultative process to improve the health and living situations of the people. Funding for almost all of this work comes from DAA and is, in principle, Aboriginal money, but accountability and responsibility to the Aborigines is almost nil.

These major state-run services in communities in the Pitjantjatjara area show that the Adelaide-based bureaucracies think of the area as 'on the fringe' of the state. For them the communities are isolated outposts struggling to survive in a harsh and alien environment and the best service that can be given is a bastardized version of the services available in the white centre two thousand kilometres away. This is in stark contrast both with the reality of integrated and interacting groups of families continuing to live and develop in country they have lived in for thousands of years and with Aborigines' perception of their situation.

The Commonwealth government seemed to recognize this when it established a Central Region to be administered by its Alice Springs office to handle the area bounded by that which is now considered under the jurisdiction of the Pitjantjatjara Council. This meant that communities in three states - Western Australia (Warburton, Blackstone, Jamieson, Wingellina, Warakuna), Northern Territory (Docker River, Ayers Rock and Ebenezer), and

South Australia (Pipalyatjara, Kalka, Amata, Fregon, Ernabella, Mimili and Indulkana) - would all have a single office in Alice Springs as their administrative centre for the functions outlined above. This then led to closer relationships between the administrative office and the region involved. Area and field officers made, and still make, regular trips to various communities ostensibly to discuss budgetary programs and accounting and policy formation. This information is then fed back into the regional office, where programs and policy evolve.

This system has many advantages over that of the state supplied services. Since DAA offices were based in the large town nearest to communities, people often visited them, knew the staff and could come in for meetings on a reasonably regular basis. It also meant that most of the major services provided to communities could be dealt with under the one roof. This not only saved time, it also meant that should areas overlap, it was possible to get two or three officers with responsibilities in different services to meet together with community representatives on the spot and thrash out problems. As a model for a regional administrative structure it had a number of very worthwhile elements - accessibility, feedback from the region, a comprehensive view of problems in various areas, ability to move reasonably quickly and in tune with the needs as expressed by various communities. However, like all government administrations, it did have its problems. Most of the information acquired as base data provided by the field officers comes from trips to communities which often lasted only a few hours and mainly entailed discussions with local white advisers. There are four reasons why discussions with Aborigines were often perfunctory. Field officers were inadequate in Pitjantjatjara and many Aborigines in the area lacked English. To discuss some issues adequately would call for knowledge of or lengthy explanations of budgets, planning figures, public service structures and relations of public service to parliament and yet time for officers to sit down with communities to do this was lacking. Officers found it easier to relate to white people with 'decent' places to visit, to have cups of tea with and who are of similar culture. Finally, DAA placed responsibility for budgetary and financial administration upon the white community adviser rather than the community or community council, which led to the conclusion that the pressing business matters should mainly be discussed with the community adviser.

Another shortcoming of the DAA approach involved a lack of realistic community input into regional policy. Nearly all policy formation was on a community-by-community basis using the data prepared by field officers of DAA or administrative officers in communities with their quarterly physical progress reports. The overall policy was mainly left to the Area Officer in Alice Springs. This means that the direction of the region is shaped largely by one person. On one occasion when there was a regional Budgetary Planning Meeting it ended up as a farce (and probably started as one) when communities were given the choice of working out regional priorities at the meeting and then allocating funding accordingly or allowing the Area Officer to suggest the funding allocation. The latter course was taken when communities realized the scope of the question and their lack of basic data and a regional philosophy.

To a certain extent, the development of the Pitjantjatjara Council has redressed some of these imbalances in that many of the decisions affecting the region as a whole are now taken after consultation with staff at the Pitjantjatjara Council. Again, however, it is difficult for feedback to be gained by Pitjantjatjara Council staff from communities because there is no regional development policy and because DAA, which sets the deadlines, does not allow enough time for discussion. Furthermore, the Council has limited staff and at the moment limited responsibilities.

Over the past eighteen months, there has been a concerted move to divest the Alice Springs DAA Regional office of many of its functions and disperse them either to state departments, to other Commonwealth departments or to the Aboriginal Development Commission (ADC).

The devolution of responsibility to state departments has been attempted most strongly in the field of essential services i.e. the provision of power and water. Funding for the recent Environmental Health Scheme has been made through the state departments as had power and water services in the previous few years. Some communities with highly developed white staff structures have been able to cope with a certain amount

of the installation and maintenance of power and water services and reticulation, but many of the others were left dependent on the state departments to do this. Most communities had no one to argue for what might be appropriate energy or water requirements. Again this situation has been remedied to a certain extent with the employment of an essential services adviser by the Pitjantjatjara Council. This person is liaising with the state departments responsible for the provision and maintenance of essential services both with funding for normal essential services and for funding under the Environmental Health Scheme. In doing this he has attempted to get more community involvement in assessment of needs, appropriate provisions of services, employment of people in providing services, maintenance and repair of services and in alternative technologies available. This person's work has increased community awareness of the energy question and problems of providing power in the area. A greater range of options has been introduced and communities have been given greater scope to be actively involved in the design and construction of these services.

The involvement and effectiveness of this regional essential services officer is limited by a number of factors. He has only an advisory role with the state departments, and it depends very much on the nature of the state departmental Area Officer how much notice is taken of his advice. In South Australia, there is a great deal of co-operation between the two, but in the other states less so. The main policy decisions are taken at a level higher than that of this officer and even the state Area Officer and are made either at state head-of-department level or, more often, in policy and programming departments in Canberra. This is seen, for example, in decisions about the use of essential service monies to provide alternative technology options to provide energy; whether essential services should also be provided in the homelands and to what extent, and about the amounts of money to be spent in each community. Thirdly, because he is expected to maintain existing services, he is hooked into what already exists in each community. Another constraint arises from the fact that when a community has white advisers, they will want services as received 'down South' - e.g. three-bedroom homes with all modern conveniences, power 24 hours a day, hot and cold running water. These are often provided by DAA through their state grants programs and often at the cost of providing the same services to the Aboriginal people in communities. Finally, the area to be covered and number of communities with their individual needs and problems are beyond the time and effort that one person can give to them.

High costs are also incurred when state or government employees work in the area. Because it is seen as a fringe area, the high costs of transport and accommodation are compounded by high district and living away from home allowances on top of the basic award wages and conditions. One example of this is that the Public Works Department (PWD) of Western Australia quoted \$1000 per 100 metres to reticulate 2 inch polypipe for water. At Kalka it took three days to dig trenches, lay the pipe and fill in the trenches for 800 metres of piping using local labour, at a cost of around \$1000. For the PWD to provide the same service it would have cost \$8000. It should be possible for a team of Aborigines to be trained and employed on salaries on a regional basis to perform the tasks of installation and maintenance of essential services.

The state departments operating in the Pitjantjatjara area have a separateness and untouchability about them that does not seem to apply to the Commonwealth departments. This seems to be closely connected to the whole grants-in-aid program.

Overall specific purpose grants have strengthened the States because they have enabled the States to appear to be the provider of funds, have permitted them to carry out functions which they could not otherwise do and have reinforced their administrative and policy making capacity (Cranston, 1979, 131)

The direct funding grants through DAA are considered at general budget meetings where representatives from all communities come and discuss (often to no avail) the funding allocations and priorities. Changes can be made to budget allocations and people realize it is their money being spent. Within communities, these budgets are often discussed and changed according to people's needs and demands. People either know, or are in a position

to find out very quickly, how much money is available, where it is being spent and what the balance is.

With the state departments, however, especially education and health, no such public airing is given. Budgets, spending patterns and priorities are closely guarded secrets. Schools are built and extended, teachers are appointed and numbers increased, staff houses are built and furnished all on the decision of the Education Department. The same situation applies to the Health Commission. There is no accountability to the community for the reasons or manner of the expenditure of these funds. The DFE does have a discussion of budget allocations, but this is confined mainly to DFE staff and revolves around who is to get the personnel which are made available by the funds and who are mostly selected by DFE. There is no feeling within communities, especially the larger ones, that state employed functionaries have any responsibility to the community.

The state, far from being ready to accept its responsibilities under the federalism initiatives of the Fraser government, seems more determined than ever to expand its bureaucratic and administrative framework. The federal government is handing over responsibility for many functions and programs it initiates and it seems to hope that states will find themselves locked into these programs by public expectations and then, as the federal funds dry up, replace them with state funds. This may apply to programs in the major population centres of the state but where it is with regard to the 'fringe' areas with a low electoral impact then the pressures on the state government to keep programs going out of their block grant allocations will not be very strong.

State borders in this area divide the Pitjantjatjara people and hinder arrangements for an effective regional approach to common problems of their communities. For a while some administrative activity for the region was obtained through DAA's regional office in Alice Springs but with administrative devolution to the states, communities like Pipalyatjara and also Wingellina have to deal with administrations in Alice Springs, Adelaide, Perth and Canberra. How there is to be an integrated approach to the development of communities and the area when this happens is beyond explanation.

The housing question is yet another that exemplifies this piecemeal bureaucratic approach and the seemingly inevitable disasters which accompany it. For years housing has been dealt with on a community to community basis and in terms of what stage of European style housing is acceptable aesthetically and available financially to the people in these communities. Now, in community after community, one sees the same depressing progression from one room tin sheds to transportable units to prefabricated 1 or 2 bedroom houses to 3 or 4 bedroom houses. The same spectacle of derelict shacks and windowless, battered transportables and houses confronts observers to all the large communities.

Some places have passed through these stages to designing and constructing houses that take account of the needs of the people for ventilation, elevation and separation, of the geographical and climatic conditions of the country and of the cultural demands of the people. In many communities similar designs are reached but only after the same long and frustrating process.

Housing raises yet again the question of the homelands movement and its relation to the administrative hierarchies. DAA and now ADC have both vetoed expenditure of housing funds in the homelands, presumably for reasons like those behind DFE's refusal to be involved there. These government departments seem unable to accept that when people wish to return to their country they do not wish to deny themselves the many services available to people in the larger communities.

The homelands movement thus finds itself caught. People are told that services such as bores, vehicles, housing, education, health and supply runs will not be available until people show their good intentions by living there first and people are refusing to live in these places unless the services are provided. Meanwhile separate government departments acting on a community to community basis support the moves to homelands and, at the same time, are committed to the maintenance and enlargement of services to the larger communities. Is it possible to develop larger communities as resource bases to service

the smaller homelands movements, which is the way many 'anangu' (Aboriginal people) see these places, while white bureaucrats see the situation in terms of stable, expanding European-style towns?

The main thrust of the preceding discussion has been that government services being delivered to Pipalyatjara in particular, and the Pitjantjatjara communities in general, lack co-ordination, responsiveness and responsibility, local participation and accountability. I now wish to argue that a regional approach would provide more satisfactory administration under each heading than existing approaches.

The fundamental purpose of regions, the ultimate objective is integrated planning and delivery of programs, the engagement of local energy and expertise and the generation of co-operative federalism utilising all three levels of government (Riddell, 1974, 9).

Holding this dictum in mind, we can therefore see that the main purpose of regionalism would be to assist the formulation of regional solutions to regional problems and facilitate the initiation of projects of a regional nature; to provide a geographic framework for the collection, aggregation and analysis of data and for some physical, social and economic planning purposes and to co-ordinate Australian government functions with social and economic planning.

Regionalism can be seen as a process, the essence of which is the identification within appropriate time references of the needs and aspirations of regions and their expressions in ways which can become inputs to decision making on a wide range of subjects. Of prime importance then is that the regional administration should be a clearing house able to

co-ordinate programs, prevent overlaps and above all ensure that local needs are the ones being attended to and not needs perceived centrally ... (and that) centralized decisions are sensible, economic and in tune with local aspirations (Riddell, 1979, 6-7).

As well it must initiate programs and set priorities.

In order for a regional administration to be able to undertake comprehensive planning it should incorporate the following elements:

- (1) information about
  - future demands of communities for services
  - economic structure of region
  - social structure of region
  - ecological, structural, aesthetic, geographical and general environmental resources and conditions of region
- (2) provision for substantial public involvement in the planning process
- (3) co-ordination of state and federal agencies
- (4) development and maintenance of an adequate data base on resources and finances
- (5) expression of planning decisions in accessible programs and budgets
- (6) appropriate appeals systems and conflict resolution systems
- (7) appropriate arrangements for implementation of long term plans.

The implication is that the responsibility for the process must rest with one agency if it is to be cohesive, such an agency being multi-functional and multi-jurisdictional.

The question which is facing the communities of the Pitjantjatjara is whether or not the Pitjantjatjara Council can perform the function of such a regional administration. I believe that given sufficient funding, sufficient staff, an appropriate administrative framework and the clear policy of continual consultation and full disclosure of all information, then the Pitjantjatjara Council and other councils like it in the centre and north of Australia are viable regional administrative bodies.

It would seem that if an organization were to handle the functions currently being provided and serviced by state and commonwealth departments a number of criteria would have to be satisfied.

The first is accessibility. It must both be and be seen to be very accessible to the Aboriginal people from the region. It would probably mean situating the administration centre within the Pitjantjatjara lands, preferably not at an already established community and in a position where it can be plugged into the telephone system.

This concept also relates to staff selection and training i.e. all white positions should have either an Aboriginal trainee or an outsider from the region to accompany advisers and communicate just what their role is.

Another is accountability. Such an organization must be able to take instructions from people in specific areas being affected by particular issues. Consultation is a process often talked about but very infrequently accomplished. For meaningful consultation on technical or complicated issues involving input from white advisers an interpreting/translating section is essential.

People must see that there is a direct link with the ideas they propose and policy formation and implementation. Where there is dissonance the reasoning behind the change must be made public. White advisers and administrators have to learn that to effectively enable principles of self-determination or self-management to be enacted it is necessary to give as much information as one possesses no matter how long it takes, how 'classified' the information, or how trivial it may seem.

Thirdly, mechanisms must be developed to ensure that major issues are actually confronted, that all available and possible options are canvassed and that decisions which are eventually reached are cautiously implemented so that reaction and consequences are measured to ensure that decisions are appropriate and acceptable.

It is also essential to avoid over-administration and over-compartmentalisation, the twin evils to be overcome by regional administration. If the Pitjantjatjara Council took over the functions currently held by the various state and commonwealth departments operating in the area, the actual size of the administrative staff may be small, perhaps thirty to forty with a field staff of 200-300, yet this could easily become a juggernaut out of control if not carefully instituted. The formation of the new Anangu Pitjantjaraku administration to look after issues related to the new legislation could be informative in this respect.

Finally, the functions of community advisers and advisory staff in general would have to be fairly drastically reviewed. At present these people are the linch-pin in the decision making process of communities. With an often total monopoly control over the information flow coming into and out of communities they are also often the people state and federal departments use to channel information. There is a tendency to become 'de facto' superintendents, creating a virtual hierarchical authority structure with that person at the top. In many ways it is outside the person's power to do otherwise, as the constraints of government policies dictate that he be accountable for the spending of funds, for the preservation of capital equipment and often responsible for the general economic viability of community enterprises such as stores, cattle projects.

To effectively limit these outsiders to a purely advisory role can only occur, I feel, when there is more decentralisation to homeland communities and more people are aware of and in control of monies being made available for them. There must be a clear articulation of regional policies and a clear understanding of authority roles both within the region and within the communities.

The concept of regionalism is more and more coming into discussion throughout the area. Recently there have been moves to establish a regional store cooperative (and in fact a tour of Aboriginal store organizations in Katherine, Darwin and Elcho Island was conducted recently), including a buying and credit agency, a regional transport service, a regional air service, and a regional arts and crafts wholesaling industry. An association has been formed of the community advisers to try and break down the parochial mentality of many of the European staff throughout the area who live and work in one community and feel that the community deserves the best even at the expense of other communities in the area. A regional road building and maintenance gang is on the agenda for future discussion. Moves have recently occurred to establish an Eastern Pitjantjatjara Health Service under the control of the Pitjantjatjara Council to take the functions at present under the South Australian Health Commission. More and more issues are being referred to the Pitjantjatjara Council for discussion and comment. At this stage, all these initiatives are being bogged down mainly because of poor information flow between communities and lack of funding to employ people as coordinators to discuss the issues and to organise meetings and strategies.

The suggestion I wish to make by way of conclusion is that remote control by remote state and federal authorities is not peculiar to the Pitjantjatjara area. It would seem to be an inevitable by-product not only of distant administration centres, but also of non-responsible and non-accountable public services. In order to remedy this in the centre and north of Australia in particular, I suggest that regional councils are the only truly effective medium for regional administration. It should be a fairly straightforward matter to work out regions for Aboriginal people as defined by tribal, linguistic and traditional affiliations, and use these to set up Aboriginal Councils to oversee the administrative services of their particular regions. They would be autonomous bodies, responsible to Canberra for funding requirements, but co-operating fully with other regional bodies to promote policies in common and take political stands where necessary. This does not constitute setting up a black state within Australia but the provision of an effective and efficient framework for the provision of services to Aboriginal communities in keeping with the cultural, traditional and regional needs of the people.

Will Sanders

DELIVERING SOCIAL SECURITY TO THE REMOTE ABORIGINES - PATTERNS OF CONTACT

All public administrative structures which allocate public resources to individuals or organisations rely on complex systems of service delivery. Distribution of public resources inevitably involves organisation arrangements and procedural rules within the allocating bureaucracy, relies on other organisations to provide complementary or ancillary services and requires certain steps to be taken by the individual client or applicant or his agent. The Australian social security system is no exception to these necessities of public allocation. Equally, the Aborigines in remote areas are no exception as a client group - if they wish to receive income maintenance payments they must establish and maintain a contact point through which to gain access to the social security system.

The patterns of personal contact which Aborigines in remote areas have with the social security system are quite different from those of urban 'whitefellas'. This is hardly surprising when one considers that this potential client group is small in number, has high levels of illiteracy, has a life-style markedly different from that of urban white Australians and resides in small communities which are at great distances from the urban and regional counters or offices of the Department of Social Security and may even be seasonally inaccessible by surface transport. These factors are the principal causes of the different patterns of personal contact with the system.

The observation of difference of itself tells us little - but it is the necessary starting point for discussion. It is the related questions which raise the interesting issues:

How do the patterns of contact differ?

Why have they developed in the way they have?

What consequences do the different contact patterns have for the broader process of service delivery and for the Aboriginal clients?

Do they enhance or inhibit the Aborigines' access to social security?

What is the Department of Social Security's attitude to the patterns of contact that exist and what has it done to influence or change them?

To discuss these questions, it is useful first to construct a simple model of the relationship between the individual client - the recipient of some service delivered - and his immediate contact, to be referred to as the service deliverer. I will then provide a range of examples to illustrate the patterns of contact which remote Aborigines as clients have before discussing the local political implications of these patterns of contact.

Client contact - a simple model

The rational/legal ideal of a system of public allocation envisages abstract rules of eligibility applied by a bureaucratic staff with specific delegated authority to perform certain administrative tasks. Clients are treated as 'cases' in a spirit of formalistic impersonality (Weber, ed. Parsons, 1964, 324-41). In this ideal the point of personal

contact is with an administrative official who is specifically delegated the responsibility of being the service deliverer or counter officer. The relationship of the service deliverer to the client is ideally:

- impersonal, if not in fact anonymous
- isolated in time to the single service delivery event (or at least the considerations involved are)
- single-faceted, as it is restricted to the specific task in hand
- dependent on official delegation to the service deliverer of authority to perform the specific administrative task in hand.

Using this ideal as one extreme we can construct a simple continuum of service deliverer/client relations. At the opposite pole to the above rational/legal bureaucratic ideal is a relationship which has reversed each of the defining characteristics. It is highly personalised, is extended over a long period of time, involves many service functions or tasks and is independent of any official delegation. This could be set out as follows:

Non-Bureaucratic  
Service Deliverer-Client  
Relationship

Personalised  
Extended over time  
Multi-faceted  
Unofficial

Ideal Bureaucratic  
Service Deliverer-Client  
Relationship

Impersonal, anonymous  
Time isolated  
Functionally specific  
and single-faceted  
Dependent on official  
delegation of authority  
to the deliverer

These simple distinguishing characteristics will, I think, be useful in analysing and discussing the different patterns of contact which Aborigines in remote areas have in their attempts to gain access to the social security system vis-a-vis their white urban counterparts.

The personal contacts of urban white Australians with the Department of Social Security and ancillary service organisations tend towards the bureaucratic end of the service deliverer-client relationship continuum - impersonal contact with a counter officer, anonymous encounters with postal and banking service staff. The remote Aborigines' patterns of contact vary greatly from place to place but tend by greater or lesser degrees to be further to the left on our continuum of service deliverer-client relations, some examples of which I will describe. Indeed this type of observation is nothing new. Anthropologists, who as a profession specialise in viewing the world in terms of personal relationships, distinguish urban society from non-urban by pointing to precisely these sorts of differences in interpersonal relationships. Our concern is not just to observe the differences but to contemplate their consequences for a major task of public allocation.

The patterns of Aboriginal client contact

When the remote Aborigines as a group first became potential clients of the social security system in 1960, the Department of Social Security did nothing to adapt its organisational arrangements to the special circumstances of this new client group. In the

Northern Territory's two offices, one in Darwin and one in Alice Springs, things continued to operate as before and no mobile field extension staff were appointed. In the absence of any departmental initiatives a large number of rather ad hoc local arrangements have developed over the years to provide the immediate contact point for Aborigines in remote communities. Some departmental initiatives have been taken in the late 1970s but the informal and ad hoc arrangements which developed outside the department's organisational structure still predominate. The consideration of these departmental initiatives will therefore be deferred till later.

Typically the remote Aborigines' immediate contact with the social security system is through a local intermediary who becomes thereby both an unofficial adjunct of the public allocative structure and an agent for the Aboriginal applicant.

In his speech introducing the legislative changes in 1959, the Minister for Social Services, Mr Robertson, foresaw the pattern of contact which would predominate during the 1960s. He indicated that the white individuals in the remote communities who shared this 'responsibility' for Aboriginal welfare - missionaries, pastoralists and state government welfare officers (in the Northern Territory, superintendents of Welfare Division settlements) - would be involved in delivering social security to the Aborigines (CPD, R, 3 September 1959, 930-1). In fact, because the benefits 'may be more than adequate - if not excessive - for the present needs of the natives concerned' and that therefore they could be 'misused' or even 'deteriorate the conditions of some natives' payment could be made to the authority rather than to the individual Aborigines. This practice was common during the 60s until, in 1968, the new Minister, Mr Wentworth, increased efforts to bring it to an end (Report, 1976).

Analytically it is arguable that this arrangement should not be considered as service contact with Aborigines at all since it was the local 'whitefella' who was the client receiving the government benefit and who in turn maintained a distinct custodial relationship with the individual Aborigines.

Alternatively one may emphasise the point that it was the individual Aborigine who was eligible for the social security benefit and was therefore the ultimate client. If this latter approach is adopted the local custodian then becomes the service deliverer. As a service deliverer the custodian's relationship with the client falls at the extreme left of our continuum. It is outside the official delegation of authority to officers of the Department of Social Security. It is so time-extended and multi-faceted that the custodian purports to attend to the client's total so-called welfare including the management of his benefit and even perhaps the determination of his consumption patterns by the rationing of food rather than money.

The custodial service deliverer-client relationship, as a genre of social security service delivery to remote Aborigines, is in decline. Mr Wentworth's efforts in 1968 to phase out the practice of paying the authority figure rather than the individual beneficiary in remote communities, and the major changes in federal government policy towards Aborigines since 1972 have all but extinguished custodial service delivery relationships. One new variant has re-emerged in Western Australia where thirteen communities have a bulk warrantee arrangement whereby all social security moneys for the community are paid by a single cheque to one warrantor. The justification for this arrangement when it was introduced in 1978 was the administrative convenience and efficiency of dealing with one literate person in relatively closed and isolated communities where factors relevant to social security eligibility, such as availability of employment, would change slowly if at all. These justifications were quite significantly different from the welfare/protection-from-self arguments used by Mr Robertson in 1959. The bulk warrantee arrangement's shortcomings - basically its ability to allow an old style custodial relationship between warrantee and warrantor to develop - soon became apparent to the Department of Social Security and led to a ban on further extensions of the arrangement.

For the great majority of Aborigines in remote areas, however, this form of custodial service delivery whereby the social security money for which they are eligible is paid directly to some authority figure in the community is a thing of the past. What has arisen instead is a variety of arrangements whereby payment is received in the beneficiary's name but is delivered through a variety of more or less unofficial channels.

These arrangements are themselves continually changing in response to local, state (territory) and national political developments and are as varied as the communities in which they operate. In those communities which developed from the Welfare Division settlements it was common, immediately after 1972, for the local officers of the newly formed Department of Aboriginal Affairs to be involved in delivering social security, since this department had taken over responsibility for these settlements (DAA, 1975). As local level administration has, under Department of Aboriginal Affairs policy, been increasingly handed over to Aboriginal councils there has been a tendency for council employees (or occasionally councillors) to become the immediate contact point for the Aborigines attempting to gain access to social security - and for Department of Aboriginal Affairs officers to take a lesser role. On the communities that grew from missions the change in the patterns of contact may not be as uniform - some still maintain strong mission control while in others strong local councils now undertake the immediate contact tasks.

In 1978 the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Department of Social Security surveyed a number of the major Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory to determine who, in fact, was doing what amount of social security related work. The answers were subjective and sometimes at variance with one another (and perhaps therefore unreliable). However the sample tabulated below is indicative, if nothing else, of the variety of arrangements that existed at that time in the major communities which had developed from the missions and Welfare settlements of the 1960s. In some the bodies which had always handled the service still played a major part in its delivery and guarded that role jealously while in others the council or some other Aboriginal organisation had taken it over.

FIGURE 1

Social security related work and who did it  
in some major remote Aboriginal communities - 1978

<u>How much work is done</u>	<u>Who does it</u>
10 hpw	Aboriginal social worker employed by council
< 10 hpw	Bank and mission
40 hpw	Various people
10 hpw	Council clerk
< 10 hpw	Administrative staff, medical staff and council staff
1 hpw	Council chairman
40 hpw	Various people
-	Should leave to departmental officers who visit from time to time
10 - 30 hpw	Council adviser
-	Mission office does it on a voluntary basis and would like to keep it that way

Source: Compiled from information made available by Department of Aboriginal Affairs Darwin

Since Territory self-government in 1978 and the subsequent transfer of many Department of Aboriginal Affairs functions to the Territory Department of Community Development officers of that department - both the Aboriginal Community workers based in particular communities and departmental field officers - have also become mediators between the individual Aborigines and the Department of Social Security. Officers of other government departments stationed in communities such as Vocational Officers of the Aboriginal Employment and Training section of the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs can also act as contact points.

Other patterns of contact have emerged in response to the changing position of the pastoral station Aborigines. With the introduction of pastoral award wages in 1968, the fluctuating fortunes of the Northern Territory cattle industry during the 1970s, and the possibility of Gibb or Special Purpose lease excisions from pastoral leases for Aborigines, there have been major changes in the relationship between many pastoralists and Aborigines living on the stations. Some stations such as Hodgson Downs have been left unworked for some time - leaving the Aboriginal community to fend for itself. On others only a relatively small number of Aborigines (usually those employed and their families) now live near or have much to do with the pastoralist. A far greater number live on excisions from the pastoral lease (of varying legal status) some distance from the homesteads. These new Gibb-type communities do not have the inheritance of administrative infrastructure on which the process of immediate service delivery in the older Aboriginal communities has been built. Some still deal with social security and acquire stores through their parent station. Others have become involved in alternative arrangements.

One such community, Bulla Camp, is serviced once a week by a part-Aboriginal missionary from the town two hours drive away. He acts as the postal address for their social security payments and once a week drives to the community bringing cheques for cashing, the Department of Social Security forms for completion and stores for purchase. The only alternative of which a couple of members of the community have availed themselves is to receive cheques via, and rely on the help of, the local post office/store keeper at Timber Creek half an hour's drive away.

In Katherine in 1976 the Yulngu Association was established under the interested eye of a local Department of Aboriginal Affairs officer, specifically to service the Gibb communities in the region. Yulngu now operates trust accounts for nine such communities. Individuals direct their social security cheques to Yulngu's address in Katherine. Every two weeks the community liaison section of Yulngu visits the communities. The individuals sign Yulngu's schedule of 'cheques received', are paid one-third of their entitlement in cash and the various social security forms are completed. The other two-thirds of the social security money is put into the community trust account (family allowances are usually excluded and paid in full to the individual) to be used for food supplies, which the Yulngu truck delivers every alternate two weeks, and for other community expenses such as vehicle and machinery repairs.

At Fitzroy Crossing in Western Australia, officers of the Western Australian Department of Community Welfare were for some time operating a similar postal, cheque cashing, form completion service for the communities of Aborigines in the area who had moved away from the cattle stations. As with Yulngu the operation was closely linked with the supply of stores.

The outstations of the 1970s have similarly given rise to new arrangements for social security service delivery. The Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation (or Outstation Resource Centre) at Maningrida is probably the most developed example. In their report on the Outstation Resource Centre in 1977 Gillespie et al described social security services as among the general community services provided for the outstations. Tasks typically undertaken were collection, recording and distribution of social security cheques, preparation of applications, pursuit of inquiries for lost and delayed social security cheques, cashing of social security cheques in conjunction with the mobile canteen service (Gillespie, Cook and Bond 1977).

Other Aboriginal organisations such as Kalano in Katherine and the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress in Alice Springs provide among other things a social security service to the Aborigines in the town camps around the urban centres in the Northern Territory.

In towns along the track, such as Elliott, it is common for someone like the local storekeeper/bank agent/post office to help Aborigines with the completion of Department of Social Security forms and even with credit when procedural problems appear to be holding up social security payment.

One final example of the variety of contact patterns comes from the Torres Strait Islands. There the social security benefits are paid in bulk to the Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Islander Advancement which then transfers the money on a weekly credit basis to the individual Aborigines through their Island Industries Board savings passbooks.

#### The consequences of non-bureaucratic service contact

The patterns of contact are many - but all tend to be further to the left on the service deliverer-client continuum than the contact we urban whites have with the social security system.

Among the local consequences of these ad hoc arrangements the first is that when unofficial they may lead to intermittent failure of the service and no delivery at all. If there is no willing volunteer to mediate some remote Aborigines may just miss out. Young has described precisely this situation at Willowra in early 1979 (Young 1981, 152-4). A recent turnover in staff had led to a situation in which no-one was carrying out the administrative tasks necessary to initiate social security payments. When someone did take on the service deliverer role the amount of social security money flowing into Willowra rose from \$7,460 per fortnight in June 1979 to \$10,800 in November. Since the person undertaking social security work is always doing it unofficially the Department of Social Security has no control over factors such as high staff turnover which can often create such failures in delivery. The problem can arise whether 'whitefellas' or 'blackfellas' take on the role. Altman has noted that the attitude of white administrators in deciding whether they will help Aborigines obtain social security income is one of the main determinants of income level in a community and can be used to explain some of the major inter-community variations in income level (Altman and Nieuwenhuysen 1979, 52).

Non-delivery is also important in understanding the dynamics of the service deliverer-client relations that do exist. It is indicative of the strong dependency of the client on the actual or potential voluntary service deliverer. The number of alternative channels through which the client may establish or maintain contact with the social security system are very limited even in the larger communities where help could be obtained from a number of separate organisations or people - council, store, mission, representative of government department. In some of the smaller communities, such as the Gibb-type communities serviced by Yulngu, the alternatives may be virtually non-existent (this, of course, accounts for the establishment of bodies like Yulngu). The client is therefore very vulnerable to the whims or other interests of the unofficial mediator and since the mediators typically also have other roles in the community their interests are more complex than simply to deliver social security payments. In fact, since these people act as social security service deliverers on a voluntary basis it almost goes without saying that this is not their primary interest - though it may be closely allied to or a useful adjunct to that primary interest. The relationship between service deliverer and client is characterised by a high level of dependency and by the complexity of interests involved. It is, in short, an intricate power relationship born of dependency and not unlike that which Gellner has described as a patronage relationship:

Patronage is unsymmetrical, involving inequality of power: it tends to form an extended system; to be long term, or at least not restricted to a single isolated transaction; to possess a distinctive ethos; and whilst not always illegal or immoral, to stand outside the officially proclaimed formal morality of the society in question (Gellner 1979, 4).

The patron, be he Aboriginal or white, may use his position of power for his own interests and act selectively against the delivery of a particular service. The relationship may not be a simple instrumental service deliverer-client one at all, but may involve a complex balance of political power. For example, in several communities, among them some with continuing strong mission influence, the patrons/service deliverers have been against the payment of unemployment benefits and they have used their position to inhibit service delivery sometimes quite selectively. An example of this process may be cited from Bathurst Island. In late 1977 the Department of Social Security began receiving a number of claims for unemployment benefits from the Island. The payment cheques for those judged to be eligible were sent. They were sent back to the Department of Social Security with advice that the claimant had returned to work and that the local council at Nguiu, the principal settlement, always provided jobs for the unemployed. The Department of Social Security doubted that the beneficiaries had ever seen the cheques and believed that resistance was coming from the Catholic mission and tribal elders. During 1978 the Department of Social Security continued to receive unemployment benefit applications from Bathurst Island and cheques were sent accordingly. In October 1978 the Council decided to allow the Shire Clerk to receive and distribute unemployment benefit cheques to applicants as weekly payment in return for the agreement of the beneficiaries that they would perform certain voluntary duties. The Department of Social Security was apprehensive about the arrangement and commented, after investigation in January 1979, that the group of beneficiaries concerned was ignorant of and in some instances misinformed about their entitlements and their right to receive individual payment without performing work duties. The Department of Social Security also noted that, although at that stage there were twenty-five people on Bathurst Island receiving unemployment benefits, their estimate of the numbers unemployed was one hundred.

Early in 1981 the Nguiu Council approached the Department of Social Security once again in connection with the payment of unemployment benefits. This time their request was more specific - to stop paying unemployment benefits to a group of about twenty young males. The Department of Social Security refused but in consultation with others suggested that the Council put off some of its older employees onto social security benefits and offer the young men work. Today there are approximately fifty people on employment benefits on Bathurst Island.

In other communities the resistance to certain classes of benefit has been far more effective. At Yirrkala no unemployment benefit is received at all as the result of pressure from the council and tribal elders and there has been strong pressure against the payment of supporting parent benefits, which give young single women with children a degree of economic independence.

There is no simple explanation for the political contention about social security in some Aboriginal communities. My concern here is to use these examples simply to demonstrate that the patron's multiple interests in his relations with his clients can lead to inhibition of service delivery as easily as its facilitation. In other examples, the patron's influence over the social security flow may be a useful adjunct to some other function which he fulfils. In this regard one should note the common combination of social security services with the provision of stores. The mutual nature of the operations was seen as self-evident by one Department of Social Security officer in 1978 when assessing proposals whereby a council employee would act as social security contact person at Oenpelli.

The Council acknowledges that a large proportion of the Department of Social Security payments is spent at the Oenpelli store, which is soon to be handed over to the Council. It is in the Council's interest to ensure that all people with an entitlement do receive it (Department of Social Security 1978).

This complex of mutually reinforcing council interests was thus seen, rather too simplistically, as ensuring the success of the proposed arrangements for service delivery.

In other instances, such as those involving Yulngu and the Maningrida Outstations Resources Centre, since social security is a major proportion of the total income flowing to these communities, facilitation and stabilisation of the flow becomes essential for the service organisation's existence. For Yulngu, social security provides the only income of its trust accounts; for Maningrida outstations, local income has been boosted by unemployment benefits paid since 1977.

The empirical consequences of unofficial non-bureaucratic service delivery are, as these examples demonstrate, as manifold as the variety of service delivery arrangements. Non-delivery, selective inhibition of delivery, mutual reinforcement of the service deliverer's other interests or attempted subtle modification of client consumption behaviour are all possibilities. Each of these consequences is a manifestation of the exercise of patronal power whether it be subtle or blatant, whether it negates or reinforces service delivery, or if it aims merely to affect Aboriginal consumption patterns. The patrons vary in their ability and their desire to use their position for ends other than service delivery. For some, such as officers of other government departments, although their role is unofficial, it is often not time-extended or multi-faceted enough to allow great influence. Their relationship with Aboriginal clients tends towards the bureaucratic rather than the patronal. In some of the larger communities the number of possible paths to the social security well is large enough to undermine real patronal power. Even in those communities where alternatives are few and dependence on a particular patron is high it should not be assumed that all exercises of patronal power are contrary to the interests of the client, even when those interests are defined subjectively. Individual Aborigines may freely approve of the unofficial arrangements in which they are clients and the unofficial consequences that are concomitants of those arrangements. Equally however, some exercises of patronal power clearly interfere with an Aborigine's wishes - as when, despite his own efforts to gain a social security benefit, a disapproving patron who controls the postal inflow loses or returns the beneficiary's cheque. Or, more basically, the Aborigines may just accept the unwelcome concomitants of patronal service delivery as the necessary cost of an arrangement which at least gives them access to social security.

Whether the outcome reflects the Aborigine's interests or wishes or runs against them, the basic consequences of unofficial patronal service delivery is always the same: the Aboriginal client is potentially exposed to the power of his patron and has a limited capacity to circumvent that power if it happens to be exercised in a way that he does not approve of.

However, to balance this discussion of the consequences of unofficial patronal service delivery one should observe not only the client's potential subjection to the patron's power but also the relationship from the patron's viewpoint. The last two elements of Gellner's description of patronage - its tendency to possess a distinctive ethos and to be seen as not always illegal or immoral, even though it stands outside the officially proclaimed formal morality of the system - indicate that patrons may have coherent, ethical justifications to support their positions despite their lack of official status. The patron often sees himself as performing tasks which, although unofficial, would, but for his voluntary intervention, have been left undone. Therefore, from the patron's point of view, his position is not only justifiable but can be seen as a charitable and morally desirable form of filling the gaps which the official system of service delivery has overlooked. The consequence of patronage from this viewpoint is some service delivery - as conditional as it may be - rather than none at all. Furthermore the patron may contrast the personal nature of his service with the rule-bound bureaucratic service of administrative departments, contrasting his speed with their delays, his interest with their disinterest.

The Department of Social Security's reactions to non-bureaucratic service contact

The Department of Social Security's reactions to this array of unofficial service deliverer-client is of considerable interest. Does it approve of them all? Has its attitude changed over time? What is its present attitude?

In the 1960s and early 1970s the Department's approval of the indirect delivery arrangements was unqualified. It made no attempt to interfere with client-deliverer relationships beyond the counter. The policy change of 1968 in which the Department of Social Security insisted on payment to the beneficiary and not to the custodian was the only restriction it consciously imposed.

It was in fact the Department of Aboriginal Affairs which first expressed dissatisfaction with this informal pattern of service. Soon after its formation late in 1972 the Department of Aboriginal Affairs began lobbying the Department of Social Security, up to the ministerial level, pointing out that its field officers were carrying out inordinately large amounts of social security related work. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs suggested that the Department of Social Security appoint field extension officers to relieve them of this burden. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs felt that such changes would reflect the new government's policy of transferring functional responsibility for services to Aborigines away from the Department to the appropriate functional department. The Department of Social Security, however, saw the matter differently. It argued that since the problems arose solely because the clients were Aborigines, responsibility for their consideration lay with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. This reaction is indicative of the rather ambiguous nature of the tasks that intermediaries undertake. Typically they do things which the urban client is presumed to be able to arrange for himself - read, understand and reply to letters requesting certain information, complete and return forms, or arrange for necessary ancillary services such as postage, banking and retailing. Consequently, when a remote and illiterate client has trouble arranging these things for himself the question of who ought to take on these tasks can easily become a point at issue - and the Department of Social Security had argued until 1977 that it had no role to play. By thus refusing to go beyond the counter, the Department of Social Security had allowed, if not encouraged, the development of the pattern of informal patron-client relations described above, and its consequences.

In 1977 the Minister for Social Security, Senator Guilfoyle, announced the establishment of an Aboriginal unit with the department. One of its responsibilities would be to

administer a scheme of Aboriginal Liaison (or Welfare)  
Officers to be attached to all State offices and selected  
Regional/District offices of the Department (CPD, S, 27  
October 1977, 1855-6).

The Aboriginal Liaison Scheme at the state/territory level was almost still-born. Although the initial plan envisaged forty-seven Aboriginal Liaison Officers Australia-wide (seven in the Territory), by the beginning of 1980 there were only five (two in the Territory, two in Melbourne, one in Perth). Inaction at state headquarters level and the tight staff ceilings of the time blocked the proposal. However by the end of 1980, with some special help from the Director-General of Social Security, the Aboriginal Liaison Unit in the Territory had increased its staff to seven (one co-ordinator, three field staff in Darwin, one in Katherine and two in Alice Springs), putting it well ahead of any of the states.

Since 1978, therefore, the Department of Social Security in the Northern Territory has had a slowly growing team of Aboriginal field extension officers. They have not by any means replaced the large number of informal extra-bureaucratic service deliverers which are described above but they are a new and significant addition to the service delivery system at the point of client contact.

In 1981 the Aboriginal Liaison Officers have visited the major communities at a frequency of about once every three months - for some small settlements, such as outstations or Gibb communities, the frequency may be less, while some pastoral properties have not as yet been visited at all. With visits of this frequency the Aboriginal Liaison Officers are not taking over the roles of the informal service deliverers and could not do so even if they wanted to. In fact quite the opposite is occurring. The Aboriginal

Liaison Officers are tending to reinforce and formalise the role of the informal service deliverer. In most communities the Aboriginal Liaison Officers have someone whom they identify as their 'community contact' - a person through whom they can work during their short stay in the community and who can perhaps deal with the social security related work between visits. In fact the Territory Aboriginal Liaison Unit has now gone as far as providing these community contact people with elementary training and a filing system to help them perform their informal 'duties' in some communities such as those where a council employee is specifically designated to do social security work.

When the Aboriginal Liaison Officer visits he sorts out the more difficult cases that have built up over the period - someone whose benefit has terminated because they moved and failed to notify the department, someone whose circumstances have changed and requires a new or altered application.

Although the Aboriginal Liaison Unit is reinforcing rather than usurping the role of the informal contact person/service deliverer it does in the process also perform a watchdog role. In a couple of instances now the Aboriginal Liaison Officer, with the backing of senior staff, has intervened to put an end to some practice of which the Department of Social Security did not fully approve. These instances are precisely the situations where the contact person/service deliverer is, in the Department's view, misusing his patronal position to exercise undue influence over the way Aboriginal clients handle their social security money. Some of the cases which the Department of Social Security has been unhappy about have involved arrangements in which informal payment systems infringed what the Department sees as the individual's right to receive social security directly. The Department's concern arises legally from section 123(i) of the act which stipulates that unemployment and sickness benefits must be paid to the beneficiary or to some other party as approved by the Director-General. The schemes in question are those which operate through a community patron who has not been approved by the Director-General.

In practice the fine line to be drawn is that between a 'strings attached' payment which infringes the Aborigine's right to receive individual payment and one where the benefit is considered to be paid to the individual who then makes voluntary arrangements regarding the cashing or use of that benefit.

The Bathurst Island system of weekly payment of unemployment benefit on the basis of duties performed, when unemployment benefits were first introduced there, was one arrangement of which, on investigation, the Department of Social Security did not wholly approve. The Department was of the opinion that the individual Aborigines did not understand their right to receive the benefits without having to work. Another example was at Maningrida where, in 1979, the Outstation Resources Centre was operating a community trust account system in order to allow, as they saw it, communities to apply blocks of their 'capital' to particular projects. Again, investigation by a senior Department of Social Security officer and the Aboriginal Liaison Unit found that the individual Aborigines were apprehensive and did not fully understand what was happening to their government money. The Department of Social Security directed therefore that the system be changed.

The line is, however, always a hard one to draw. The Yulngu arrangement is, in many respects, similar to the Maningrida outstation example. Yet the Department of Social Security tacitly approves of Yulngu while insisting that its Aboriginal Liaison Officer in the area ensures that each individual fully understands the nature of the voluntary cashing arrangement he is entering into. In reality the Yulngu arrangement depends for its very existence on sympathetic treatment by the Department of Social Security. Being a community trust account arrangement it relies on the vast majority of people in each community being in the arrangement. If the number of 'free riders' who get their benefit delivered through some other channel, but who receive the trust account benefits, grows too large the whole arrangement can collapse - as indeed it has in a couple of instances. The crucial variable, from the Department of Social Security's point of view, is to be satisfied that each individual fully understands such an arrangement and enters into it voluntarily.

Hence, although the Aboriginal Liaison scheme from one viewpoint has formalised the informal roles of community contact persons, it has also acted in a regulatory role to curb what it sees as any excessive uses of patronal power. Needless to say that the Department of Social Security's power to regulate and modify the behaviour of the various patrons relies more on persuasion than authority, since it has no formal connection with these community contact people. The Aboriginal Liaison Officer's job can involve as much diplomacy with the patron as service delivery to the clients. When it comes to the crunch, such as in communities which refuse steadfastly to allow certain benefits, the Department of Social Security is not in a very strong position to push its case for the individual's right to receive benefits. Whatever its limitation, the Aboriginal Liaison Scheme has been the Department of Security's first attempt to monitor and occasionally to modify the variety of informal patron/client relations that have grown between the regional office counter and the remote Aborigine in the Northern Territory. As such the Aboriginal Liaison Officer scheme is an important adjunct to informal patronal service delivery - at the very least, even if it cannot change a patronal arrangement of which it does not fully approve, it can provide a rather intermittent alternative channel for the Aboriginal client. However, in by far the great majority of cases, relations between the Department of Social Security Aboriginal Liaison Officer and the informal contact people in communities are open and amicable. The Aboriginal Liaison Officers do not pretend to be able to handle the large volume of social security related work which has been done informally for so long and are therefore usually willing to operate in conjunction with these informal arrangements.

Peter Loveday

ACCESS TO SERVICES - SOME SOCIAL AND POLITICAL COMPLICATIONS

Administration is the main though not the only vehicle for delivery of services to remote places, and when things have 'gone wrong' the administrative machine - the departments, the staff and so on - is one of the first things people criticise. And a great deal then depends on the point of view of the person making the diagnosis.

One point of view of importance is that of the administrator (or the minister in parliament at question time) who is convinced that, if there is something wrong, it is not in the department. It must therefore be that something has 'gone wrong' with 'other people', that is, the recipients of the service. They may lack some necessary resource to enable them to make use of the services provided - for example, literacy, understanding of 'the system'; they may have come to tolerate corrupt practices which divert services from their intended objects; they may have become politically organised and stirred up in some way by people anxious to challenge the government rather than improve the service.

This list may be elaborated. It is possibly the most elementary kind of analysis. It implies a model of the good administrative arrangement for service delivery: the recipients are essentially a collection of individuals who are not (as far as the service is concerned) socially structured or politically organised in any way. They are in need - or there would be no service - but they do not react collectively in relation to administration to express or satisfy the need. They should uncritically accept what is provided for them. The administration itself, in this model, is the ideal of a transparent or frictionless organisation of staff, positions, departments, budgets which provides to the recipients exactly what governmental policy prescribes. There is no loss, no distortion, no delay. And there is no administrative department and no serviced population which fits the model.

In practical life, it is not always the recipients of the service who are treated as 'other people' and the source of the disturbance, whatever it is. The individual department may well defend itself by blaming one or more of the following

- political masters for making 'bad' policies;
- other departments for not cooperating;
- treasury and public service authorities for being mean with the budget or the staff or the positions;
- public service unions for making life difficult;
- outside 'stirrers' for arousing unrealistic expectations among recipients.

This leads us to the next kind of administrative point of view: that of the administrator who agrees that the organisation might have shortcomings and could be improved. There is a large, often 'managerial', literature on this subject. By managerial I mean a literature which optimistically suggests that the organisation, staff, arrangements and rules can be 'got right' so that things do go on more or less without friction to intended ends. It is the job of top and middle managers to 'get it right'. But in addition there are pessimists who say that administration has inherent defects which cannot be removed, only mitigated.

The shortcomings include such things as

- inflexibility from being rule-bound and paper-bound; rules concerning record keeping; the proper flow of information and paper for taking decisions; staffing and budgeting;
- the conduct of operations in the field and so on;
- centralisation and hierarchical authority with consequent remoteness, perhaps both geographical and social, from the people whose needs are to be serviced; departmentalism, the

determination to preserve or enhance departmental resources (staff, budget) and to protect its 'policy line', with consequent conflicts with other departments, reluctance to cooperate.

Remedies for shortcomings of these kinds commonly include things from the following list:

- organisation on a task force basis instead of a departmental basis;
- developing mechanisms for interdepartmental cooperation and consultation, perhaps joint decision making, mechanisms for coordination;
- decentralisation of administration, sometimes called regionalisation;
- mechanisms for consultation with the people to whom services are to be delivered;
- changing (loosening up) the public service itself by breaking down barriers between levels, allowing lateral outside entry to higher positions, devolving responsibility within the service.

Whatever the remedies, once it is agreed that there are shortcomings in administration and that they are of these kinds, it follows that there is conflict (politics) about resources, policy and decisions (and so about power) within administration. It is unlikely that it could be made 'frictionless' and that is why the managerial approach may be described as optimistic.

Of course, the administrator who agrees that things might 'go wrong' in his own department, may also say that his difficulties are compounded because things can 'go wrong' too with the people receiving his services, things of the kinds already mentioned. The sophisticated response then is to say that administrative changes should be made not only with a view to removing administrative shortcomings, but also with a view to counteracting or offsetting the difficulties which arise from the recipients. If they lack understanding of 'the system' and suffer other disadvantages perhaps a special class of officers should be found, or trained, who are able to mediate between the culture of the recipients of a service and 'the system' from which the service is provided. Aboriginal liaison officers in several services, Aboriginal health workers and Aboriginal aides in the police and education services have 'mediation' functions in the Northern Territory.

The administrative point of view is not, of course, the only one. There is also that of the recipients. As one conference paper title provocatively puts it, on behalf of Aborigines, 'We've got the Culture, You've got to change'. It is easy to slip at this point into a fruitless argument about which is the 'proper' point of view, which should take precedence when there are disagreements about priorities and methods in service delivery. This takes us to the question of access, a term now well known in the literature chiefly from the writings of Bernard Schaffer and his associates (Schaffer 1972, 1973, 1977; and Huang, 1975; and Lamb 1976; and O'Keefe, 1978).

Ideally, there should be no 'problems' about access or, if there are, they should be removed. But before we come to Schaffer, it is worth noting that there are simple physical hindrances to easy access to services in the Northern Territory. Transport is difficult and communications systems in the more remote parts leave much to be desired. Some people, we may say, have much better access than others to the services provided by government if only because they have better transport and communication links to the centre. Thinking along these lines, it is possible to argue that, from the recipients' side of the interaction, his access would be improved and with it the equitable distribution of services, if only the investment in the appropriate technology were made. But this is not the whole story.

The theory of access, as Schaffer presents it, is an analysis of what happens in administrative (i.e. non-market) service delivery on the recipient side of the interaction with officialdom. To simplify: the place where the interaction occurs is the counter, the officials on one side acting according to the bureaucratic rules of impartiality, incorruptibility, equal treatment of all citizens entitled to the particular service they provide. On the other are the recipients and Schaffer asks - in an attempt to explain why there was 'inadequate takeup' of development program services in third world countries - what happens on their side of the counter.

When a service is distributed in a bureaucratic administrative situation, access to items is restricted to various applicants who fall into discrete, objective, universalistic categories. Access is possible for those who have the resources to demonstrate that they have those rights. Once individuals have demonstrated their rights to be placed in the category of applicants, there is no further way of distinguishing between one applicant and another; they are in that sense equal. Therefore, systems of distribution of bureaucratic administrative services impose on applicants the acceptance of three conditions. The first is that they have to demonstrate their eligibility for the services being distributed...

The second condition is that the applicants have to accept whatever rule is being applied to the serial ordering in which...they will be handled, will be brought face to face with the point at which the allocating decisions are made...

These rules for ordering those applicants who have been admitted are frequently the order of arrival: the waiting time. In some situations, though by no means all, people may even stand in line.

The rules of admission and of ordering taken together are meant to simplify the task, to minimize the discretion of the distributive decisions to be taken by the rank-and-file servers. These are the officials behind the counter. An applicant must encounter them once the rules of admission and of ordering have together demarcated that applicant as the next to be dealt with. This is the third condition.

Where these three conditions of admission, ordering and encounter are imposed and accepted, the system can be called a queue. Where the rules about admission, ordering and consideration or encounter work perfectly all rank and file server decision-making is completely simplified. Perfect queues mean perfect routine (from Schaffer and Huang, 22-3).

They may also entail what we may call the 'individuation' of recipients. Schaffer then goes on to say that, once a service is handled by a queue, 'the burden of politics and responsibility' is removed from the interactions between official and recipient on either side of the counter.

We may pause to note that it is not necessary for Schaffer's analysis that there should be an actual counter as there is in a bank or a post office in the service situation. A queueing procedure can be established by a filing system which enables clerks to handle forms in serial order of one kind or another. An outstation resource centre truck, the health department's aeromed plane are material elements in 'counter' situations which arise well away from the world of offices and clerks at desks. I put quote marks around counter to indicate that in Schaffer's analysis the reference of the

word counter is extended analogically. He is not concerned with the hardware of the counter but with the administrative structure of rules and procedures which apply at actual counters and in many other places.

Where then is the politics? Why talk about social complications on the side of the recipient? To answer these questions it is necessary first to look a little more closely at the counter situation. The simple queue (we can leave complicated queues out of the discussion) has rules for admission, rules for ordering the individuals who are admitted and rules for defining what will be done at the point of exchange, counter rules. In Schaffer's account there are no political and social complications in this situation - the recipient is, as I noted, 'individuated' and the official has no 'political burden'. So the politics, according to Schaffer, arises outside the counter situation when an applicant who has no alternative source for a service but the administrative one (the typical remote community situation) is dissatisfied with what is offered. The

applicant then might attempt some control or influence, aim at redress or correction, or promote improvement of the service. That is to say he can act 'politically', speak up for himself, use his 'voice'.

But he cannot do this on his own as an individual - and he may 'team up' with other dissatisfied individuals 'to express an interest in changes in the particular service - which gives us interest groups - or, alternatively, he may team up with many other people to express discontent not with one but several different things - which gives us political parties and other 'aggregating organisations'. This is a fairly conventional view of the matter and not the less important for that, especially since it emphasises the collective nature of political action in contrast to the individuation forced on the applicant in the queue.

Schaffer notes a third type of action for the dissatisfied applicant without saying it is political - he may 'activate existing social ties' from within his community, 'attempt to employ authority and influence', 'exploit knowledge and experience', 'attempt to use payments where they are not formally called for. This is stigmatised as corruption'. If these forms of action 'work' it is only because the official is 'susceptible' for some reason and consequently the rules of the queue are broken. Before following this lead further we need to note a couple more elements in the model.

The dissatisfied applicant may take other steps which Schaffer evidently thinks are non-political. He may 'exit', that is, refuse to 'participate in the system', or he and others like him might accept the system uncritically (unpolitically) and 'invest as much time and resources as seem to be required' to get what they want. 'They establish a sort of "camp", waiting without calculating'. (To what extent are outstations and town camps either 'exit' or 'camp' reactions to the frustrations of administration? Is the Yipirinya school an 'exit' reaction?) Or, thirdly, if the administrative unit has rules permitting appeals the dissatisfied applicant may protest within them - 'but only if they exist and if he has the resources, like knowing how' to do it.

I return to the activation of 'existing social ties' and breaking the rules for the queue. The dissatisfied recipient who takes actions of these kinds to get what he wants is clearly acting within the service delivery system, not outside it as he would be in a party or an interest group (except in those instances, now increasingly numerous, where the interest groups get official sanction and become effectively part of the administrative machine). This is the typical reaction of the recipients in remote Aboriginal communities almost all of which lack organisations such as the trade unions and local party groups to be found in the remote European communities such as Nhulunbuy in the Territory and other mining towns.

Where the orthodox organisations of white society do not exist the elements of the textbook administrative situation do not long survive in the remote communities. At a very simple level an official moving around who has administrative linkages and know-how and access to means of transport and communication is a basic 'resource' in the bush for people who want help on a wide range of subjects - especially if whites turn up

infrequently from Darwin. Even resident whites in a remote place will take the view that someone from Darwin has a social duty to fix things up for them that are outside the terms of his official duty. At the counter, recipient and official alike bend the rules.

There is, perhaps, no great novelty in this. In administration elsewhere, especially in the social welfare and educational areas, it has been well known that the culture and social structures of those who are the recipients have a bearing on the success or failure of administrative programs. One administrative response has been to enrol the interest groups or other voluntary agencies which operate in the area into assisting in the delivery process. They may actually be made responsible in place of public servants for delivery at the point of contact - they sit on the official side of the counter. 'Aboriginalisation' is a somewhat similar process. There is little doubt that in areas as diverse as those of education, social security, social welfare, law and associated services, attempts have been made to improve the delivery of the services by changes on the official side of the counter which facilitate not only administrative adjustment to the social conditions and the cultures of those they have to deal with but also the reverse, namely the influence of the recipients of services on the officials.

What this leads to is fairly clear: the 'problems' of administration in remote communities are not simply those of a too bureaucratic system, nor those of communities which lack the appropriate communications systems or have a low socio-economic status or a different culture: they are problems which arise from interaction between the administrative structures for service delivery at the point of contact and the assorted social structures of the communities in which the individual recipients live. Though the detail varies from place to place (an important problem for a service which tries to do the same for all places and citizens), the principle is that at each place there will be a power struggle of some kind going on and that access to and control over the services government provides is likely to be one of the most important prizes of and resources in the local community power struggle. This is the more salient for each community because if they are very poor and highly dependent, government services are likely to be the most valuable and to provide the most transferable goods in a community. The importance of this way of looking at it may be indicated by considering what 'Aboriginalisation' of a service might mean: it may well mean not that the administrator now has someone who understands Aborigines and their language and culture to help him, someone with a black skin to do white things, but that he has someone who is in a preferred position, compared with others in his group, to favour political friends and disadvantage political opponents. The implication of this is that the 'politics' in service delivery will include not only the 'internal' politics of any administrative structure and the politics of dissatisfied recipients seeking redress at the point of delivery or at some other place in the process but also elements from the politics of the recipients themselves.

Ian McLeod

COURTS IN REMOTE AREAS

It had been the practice until mid-1981 to deploy the seven stipendiary magistrates in the NT by stationing five in Darwin and two in Alice Springs. Following the resignation of one of the Alice Springs magistrates, one magistrate sat in the summary courts in Alice Springs and the outlying courts of Yuendumu, Papunya and Hermannsburg. The five remaining magistrates covered the three Magistrate Courts in Darwin: Casuarina Court in the northern suburbs and the outlying courts of Port Keats, Garden Point, Maningrida, Jabiru, Oenpelli, Nhulunbuy, Katherine and Alyangula on Groote Eylandt. The Tennant Creek and Lajamanu Courts, formerly serviced by one of the Alice Springs magistrates, were transferred to the Darwin based magistrates.

The court sittings at Lajamanu then had a magistrate and Correctional Services Field Officer from Darwin, (Central Australian) Aboriginal Legal Aid Solicitor from Alice Springs and Remote Area Team Officer (for children's court matters) also from Alice Springs. Each body attending Lajamanu court had plausible reasons for the source of the service. In the case of the magistracy it would have been unrealistic for one Alice Springs based magistrate to cover the same area previously covered by two magistrates. Lajamanu was the extremity of the Alice Springs Area and was the natural choice for transfer. Until Correctional Services has a regional office, a Darwin Field Officer is the logical person to cover that area so clients could be transferred expeditiously. Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service (CAALAS) had traditionally been identified with Lajamanu as the community were mainly Warlpiri, like the community of Yuendumu, also serviced by CAALAS. The Remote Area Team, like CAALAS, had affinity with the desert people of the centre of which Lajamanu is representative. Despite these perfectly reasonable decisions for these different groups attending Lajamanu court it is not difficult to see how a certain amount of confusion arises in the affected community. Alice Springs is soon to regain its second magistrate so it remains to be seen whether there will be a reversion to the former service delivery pattern from Alice Springs.

A number of changes in the make-up of the magistrates' courts take place when the court sits in an Aboriginal community. From some outlying centres 'clients' travel to the court held in Katherine, but the court itself goes to other places such as Oenpelli, Port Keats, Maningrida and occasionally Numbulwar and Borroloola. Going into the communities was a policy one magistrate considered should be encouraged and stepped up. Court would be more relevant, the long travelling distances imposed on those obliged to attend court from Borroloola or Kalkaringi (Wave Hill) and similar places might be eliminated and non-attendance reduced. But the real advantage was the community involvement in the process, an involvement impossible if the court was held in the unfamiliar environment of Katherine.

**Court Sittings at Aboriginal Communities**

Any consultation with Aboriginal JPs on sentencing or discussion with community councils over their attitude to certain offences is virtually ruled out if defendants from communities such as Bamyili, Beswick, Borroloola and Kalkaringi have to attend court in Katherine. In the court sittings at Maningrida, Oenpelli, Port Keats, Garden Point and the occasional sittings at Borroloola and Numbulwar the court comprises the magistrate, prosecutor and the North Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service (NAALAS) solicitor. In most of these places the court flies in by the one plane. There must inevitably be some delay as the legal aid solicitor and field officer take instructions from those due to appear in court. The Katherine court has at least three different practitioners attending court, which allows the NAALAS solicitor the opportunity of taking instructions while other matters proceed. The NAALAS solicitor appearing at Katherine is now based in that centre, the first attempt at regionalisation by the agency. An officer in Katherine

offers a wider range of legal services than the migratory solicitor who visits communities as one of the party on the court plane. Civil matters, workers compensation and legal advice are more accessible with a Katherine office.

In the case of 'fly in and out' courts, some communities and the solicitors flying in with the courts have expressed misgivings about the procedure. As one legal aid solicitor observed, 'It is difficult to inspire confidence when you fly into a community in the morning and out in the afternoon always being conscious of the constraint of time'. Ideally, the legal aid solicitor and field officer should be in the community at least a day before the court starts taking instructions and talking with the community. Such 'luxuries' are not available given the present (November 1981) staffing arrangements of NAALAS where two solicitors service top end courts and one of those is based in Katherine. For want of sufficient money legal aid solicitors and field officers share charters with the magistrates and prosecutors and even with an increase in staff it seems unlikely solicitors will be able to spend that extra one or two days in the community prior to court sittings. Faced with that perpetual gap between the ideal and the reality of transport links there will be no short term change in remote area sittings being a 'stop-start' affair with the court having to wait until the next batch of instructions can be taken before continuing.

Aboriginal JPs sitting on the bench with magistrates have been the most striking adaptation in the courts sitting in remote areas. The idea simply is that on sentence matters community attitudes and knowledge of the offenders' reputation in the community can be taken into account. Court is no longer an outsiders' affair. Reservations about this innovation have centred on preferential treatment for members of the same clan and the abstract difficulty in determining what is meant by community attitude or consensus. Community consensus is a convenient label often used to embrace what the council or men of the community determine, although in some places more widespread discussions do occur, especially in enquiries conducted by the Liquor Commission before it decides what restrictions a community wants on local alcohol consumption. In any case, these often result in a divided, rather than a consensual, community.

The presiding magistrate does have the final say on the question of penalty and in courts where the same magistrate consistently sits, family rivalries or sympathies are more observable. In the past Aboriginal JPs have sat on courts at Port Keats, Maningrida, Yirrkala and Oenpelli but recently the JPs have sat with the magistrate less frequently. Courts at Maningrida have been postponed on at least three occasions in the past six months and the liquor problems at Port Keats which stemmed from the closure of the club have not assisted the scheme. The Port Keats experiment, where two Aboriginal JPs sat with the presiding magistrate, has all but collapsed. The magistrate who had consistently travelled to that community noted that there was a decline in the involvement of the JPs. The scheme involved considerable demands on timetabling of courts throughout the Top End particularly with the opening of new courts at Casuarina and the inclusion of Tennant Creek and Lajamanu in the Darwin area.

Because of the tight schedule facing courts in the Top End there is virtually no opportunity to add an extra sitting day to the allocated number of days in remote centres. If a list of cases is not finished then matters have to be adjourned, usually for another month. If matters are adjourned most of them will be the less serious offences where bail is no problem. What may develop, as appears to be the case during the October 1981 sittings on Groote Eylandt, is a build up of adjourned cases adding to the already excessively long lists. Additional courts were scheduled on Groote Eylandt during October but still could not clear the list of defendants. Two murder committals in the second October sittings contributed to the pressure on court time and were no doubt the major reason for the deferral of ten matters to the next sittings. An adjournment of a defended matter in summary courts of some remote communities makes the organising of witnesses in the case a trying process. Both prosecution and defence are not infrequently disadvantaged in defended matters by the non-appearance of witnesses. Non-appearance is not the only problem: as one magistrate remarked 'Aboriginal witnesses didn't have much interest in events that had become dated'.

Interpreters, although often needed, were seldom used in summary courts in remote areas, mainly because they were not available. In the lower court proceedings of the Ti-Tree case the presiding magistrate considered an interpreter was needed for one of the Aboriginal witnesses who appeared to be in difficulty relating his evidence in English. The witness had been confused between 'baton' and 'nulla nulla' and had been using the two interchangeably. Clarification, through an interpreter, changed the testimony and its significance markedly. At present there is no interpreter service for Aboriginal speaking people in courts. Even if a service were set up, and a recent working party of the Department of Community Development is investigating this possibility, an official interpreter would probably not be available in remote communities. The Aboriginal Community Worker might provide that service for courts in these remote places.

#### Sentencing Options in Remote Area Courts - Adults

The orthodox view of sentencing is that there should be parity - a consistency reflected within the jurisdictional limit of the law's operation. On the other hand magistrates are at pains to make the law as relevant as possible to the community, to take cognisance of Councils' views on certain offences and balance customary factors when they are involved. The two approaches are not easily reconciled. One Darwin based magistrate I interviewed thought that sentencing in courts of summary jurisdiction in the NT is a more subjective process than it is in other jurisdictions because of the remoteness of some communities and the need to deter a particular offence that is widespread in that community. There are of course pronounced changes in sentencing patterns among the magistrates themselves not only in the NT, but in all jurisdictions. The magistrate in Alice Springs has particularly strong views on the illegal use of motor vehicles and his 'tariff' for that class of offence would be generally higher than that of Darwin magistrates, irrespective of whether the defendant was appearing in a remote or the urban community. The remoteness of a court seems to afford a discretion in sentencing not normally available in larger urban centres where media reports of offences provide a greater public circulation of news about penalties imposed by courts.

One of the advantages of having the same magistrate regularly attend court in a community is that he acquires a local knowledge which assists the long term effectiveness of sentencing. From a community's viewpoint it could identify the magistrate and his approach through consistency in penalty. This 'follow up' has been taken into account in setting the time-tables of court sittings but as demands made by Darwin courts in completing part-heard cases have grown it has become difficult to apply this policy.

The penalties imposed in remote communities are loosely of three kinds: fines, bonds and gaol. Variations of these broad groupings occur with the use of the long adjournment, monitoring the defendant's behaviour in the intervening period. The community service order, still largely untried in remote communities, is a sentencing option worthy of recognition. In the case of adult offenders fines are usually reserved for street offences, offences of bringing liquor into dry areas and motor vehicle registration offences. The use of the bond in these cases is particularly inappropriate as the supervision associated with a bond is, in theory, a way of diverting a more habitual and prolonged antisocial behaviour. The bond may also be used as a back up to a short term of imprisonment, say for example where a defendant is sentenced to three months imprisonment and upon release is required to serve a further year on probation. It is not only the courts which look for new kinds of penalties which may give a more relevant means of punishment. Councils in some communities have expressed concern over what they consider inadequate penalties. The council at Angurugu recently wrote to the Chief Minister, requesting stricter penalties from the court at Alyangula. In an interview with the Angurugu Council President it emerged that the Council wanted higher penalties for alcohol being brought onto the settlement. The maximum fine was \$1000 and the President believed that was the appropriate penalty - even for first offenders. He also considered that too many people were being given bonds yet, at the same time, believed that gaol 'didn't do much good'.

In the view of one magistrate the courts in remote areas should be more aware of the social problems in sentencing. The magistrate referred to consultations with the councils and members of the community but was careful to point out that if any person tried to malign a defendant that person would have to be prepared to say those things in court. Consultation gives, in effect, an on the spot pre-sentence report.

There is evidence suggesting some members of communities see the court or the magistrates as a means of gaining support and assistance in handling social problems in their communities. An Aboriginal woman, employed as the truant officer by the Angurugu council, consulted with the magistrate during court on measures that might be taken in tackling the truancy problem. She was dissatisfied with the council's action, despite the letters written from the council to the Education Department seeking details on possible prosecution for the parents of truant children. This incident highlights two things. Firstly, magistrates seem to accept that social problems are legal problems in the pipeline and that the court has a wider role to play than convicting and sentencing persons. Secondly, the access question for the Aboriginal woman was not a question of finding out the relevant departmental official and addressing her complaint to that officer. Access means presence in the community and the authority of the magistrate was sufficient for the truant officer to seek support. Similarly, the Remote Area Team Workers, who probably have a closer and more regular contact with communities than other agencies based in urban centres, provide an access channel to other departments by their presence in a community. People in remote communities are not loath to approach any departmental officer about a variety of problems and the categorisation and transfer of problems to the relevant departments in Darwin and Alice Springs was in some areas a means of access provided by members of Remote Area Teams.

Fines have been discounted by some Aboriginal organisations as an effective penalty because the individual is not always punished. In the communities collections among relatives are sometimes made to meet fines. A proposal emerged from the Aboriginal Organisations Conference, convened by the Chief Minister's office during the year, to redirect fines levied by courts back into the community. There is scope for court-ordered fines to be used for payment of community service order supervisors within a remote community or for purchasing materials and equipment for community service orders or even for funding civic improvements. The example given by a representative from CAALAS at the conference, of \$9,000 in fines in one month's sitting at Papunya, causes concern when the long term effects of that outflow are considered.

Bonds and recognisances are widely used for remote community offenders but the supervision available is quite different from that available to probationers in the major centres of Darwin and Alice Springs. Field Officers from the Correctional Services Division use courts in remote areas as a focal point for delivering their service. Visits to clients in the communities usually coincide with court sittings, to avoid the duplication of travelling the five hours by vehicle in some cases.

When a magistrate considers that extra background information is needed before sentencing a defendant a pre-sentence report is usually requested. The report will usually contain information about the defendant's education, family and employment. The Division of Corrective Services gives eighteen hours as the average time for compilation of these reports. This includes preparation and interviews, travelling time, typing and time spent at court. Clearly, the travelling time component for remote community clients will be magnified particularly where reports are requested for clients living in Bamyili, Borroloola and Beswick which are still serviced from Darwin. In these cases the compilation of pre-sentence reports can run into several days. Yet the Court has the right to expect that all relevant information will be placed before it and this is more crucial when the sentence is likely to be a custodial one. As one magistrate stated, factors like the time and difficulty in preparing pre-sentence reports must be secondary to the court's requirement of having adequate information not normally available to the defendant's solicitor. Yet one field officer, in the first ten months in Darwin, had prepared only one pre-sentence report for courts she attended outside Darwin. In the same period she had prepared twenty reports for the Darwin area.

The imposition of bonds has other drawbacks apart from the supervision problem. Field Officers explain a bond as a kind of promise which, if broken, means that the probationer must come back and face the court for sentence. Where the bond has been breached by a further offence this has the effect of making the offender face a double sentence. However, the original bond must be present in the court before action on the breach can be taken and one of the administrative difficulties in remote courts has been the location of the original bond, held by the courts office in Darwin. The Field Officer stationed at Nhulunbuy cited one example where a probationer was breached, brought before the court, sentenced for the offence resulting in the breach, but action could not be taken on the bond because the whereabouts of the original was not known. The prisoner had all but completed his sentence before the original bond was traced. Only then could action on the breach be taken.

Community service orders have been suggested as a positive sentencing alternative in remote communities. They provide for the person, the subject of the order, to perform unpaid community work without disrupting employment and family ties. The scheme in the NT is still in its embryonic stage, but the advantages of a service order as a sentencing option are that it

1. results in community improvements;
2. is a more understandable and relevant sentence than a bond;
3. it reduces the need to transport prisoners to and from gaols;
4. it eases the pressure on prison accommodation;
5. it provides for a devolution of control to the communities.

Supervision of the work orders is basic to the successful operation of the scheme and it is essential that different and appropriate supervisors be chosen for different groups of offenders within a community. Testimony to the effectiveness of the program is given by Yuendumu where nine offenders were placed on an order and, with one exception, satisfactorily completed it. In the Yuendumu example, the Aboriginal Community Worker supervised the order. He was a person with some authority in the community and had the backing of the council. Where communities approve of community service orders and have supervisory problems, alternatives such as using police aides might be considered. Although police aides are under departmental control, they are nominees of the councils and have an authority gained from their position. If programs which go some way in devolving control to the communities are allowed to flounder because of departmental demarcation disputes then social and welfare services in the Territory will be the poorer. If supervision of community service orders cannot be undertaken and all other requirements are met then police aides offer an excellent means of getting the program operational. The alternative may be the demise of a scheme offering a utilitarian sentencing initiative.

#### Sentencing Options for Juveniles in Remote Areas

Fewer sentencing options are available to magistrates in juvenile courts in the remote centres. There is no juvenile detention centre in the Top End and community service orders are not available in the children's court jurisdiction. Fining juveniles is not a constructive approach given that the fine will be paid by parents or relations. In effect, sentencing becomes a question of determining what type of bond should be imposed. Magistrates have adopted one variation by using the Griffith bond method - the practice of adjourning the case for say six months or so and then discharging the defendant if no further offence has been committed.

The perennial problem of supervision is more pronounced in children's courts. At Katherine Court, which services many communities in the Top End, non-appearance of parents or relations posed difficulties for one magistrate in finding a community member who would

take responsibility for the child. An Aboriginal woman from Bamyili regularly attended the Katherine sittings when children from that community attended court and accepted the supervision of those children. Community involvement in supervision reinforces the undertaking and supplements the official role of the Welfare Caseworker.

In practice it could be appropriate to delegate the supervisory role to the community council where parents are unable to cope. Numbulwar provides a recent example of the effectiveness of a strong council in applying supervisory guidelines and even de facto sentencing techniques. Eleven juvenile offenders had been scheduled to appear at Groote Eylandt Court for four months. Transport was only possible by air and in fact one juvenile did attend the Groote Eylandt Court. During the intervening period the Numbulwar council had decided that the offenders (whose offences related to petrol sniffing) should go with their parents and live on outstations. At Yuendumu the council has made similar decrees to exile juveniles causing problems within the community to outstations or the bush. The authority of the council is the key and in communities where there are strong councils social control is more marked. This view was held by one magistrate who considered that a number of offences committed by juveniles in the Aboriginal communities of remote areas was not reported. The magistrate's hypothesis was that other forms of punishment were available and the community leaders had a choice of involving the court in sentencing. On this basis courts may be used by communities when their alternatives are ineffective. And yet differences of approach can result in disagreement.

It is not unusual that departments, manned by staff trained in different disciplines, have difficulties reaching agreement on appropriate methods of handling problems in remote communities. For example the legal background of magistrates in some cases is incompatible with that of a social work philosophy. There is nothing novel about this; frames of reference and professional conditioning are naturally quite separate. What may result is the insoluble question, 'Who has the expertise in dealing with legal or quasi legal issues in the remote areas?' By definition matters coming before courts are legal problems but cause and post sentencing after-care have strong social overtones. If councils and welfare caseworkers prefer particular sentencing options for juvenile offenders they may become embittered when magistrates consistently disregard their recommendations. Conversely, welfare workers in the courts may find themselves in conflict with magistrates and councils in promoting the interests of an individual above the interest of the community. Councils at Angurugu and Yuendumu have at different stages expressed dissatisfaction with the different Aboriginal Legal Aid Services because they thought solicitors 'were getting too many people off'. This was usually a reference to people being released on bonds whom the council thought of as troublemakers. The psychology of remote area courts and the interaction between the characters involved can have consequences which extend beyond the courtroom. In situations where rifts develop between the Departmental agents in Darwin repercussions can inevitably be felt in the field. One control against divergent departmental policies is a Welfare Task Force, meeting monthly and thrashing out remote community problems in the areas of courts, welfare and corrective services.

Australian Electoral Office

AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL OFFICE AND ABORIGINALS

The two basic functions of the Australian Electoral Office are to maintain and produce the electoral rolls and to conduct general elections. In performing these functions the Office works to the philosophy that elections are for people - not for candidates, not for parties and not for governments. The Commonwealth electoral law confers on people the fundamental democratic right of freedom of choice through the ballot box. The operations of the Office are designed to ensure that people are able effectively to exercise this right.

Particularly in recent years, the Australian Electoral Office has therefore seen its role as very much more than just that of counting bits of paper every three years. It has attempted, within the confines of staff and finance, to provide the electorate with information and educational programs which will help voters record meaningful votes. The Office has as a consequence produced electoral education kits for use in secondary schools in Australia. For the benefit of migrant citizens it has adopted the practice of producing much of its information material in a multi-language form. It has also developed programs to try to assist those Aboriginal people who, through language and cultural background differences, may encounter difficulties in taking full advantage of the electoral process. This paper deals with the attempts which the Australian Electoral Office has made and is making to provide a service to Aboriginals, especially those living in remote communities.

It was only in 1962 that the Commonwealth Electoral Act was amended to provide all Aboriginals with an entitlement to have their names placed on the Commonwealth electoral roll. The amendments followed the recommendation of the House of Representatives Select Committee on the Voting Rights of Aboriginals to the effect:

1. That the right to vote at Commonwealth elections be accorded to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander subjects of the Queen, of voting age, permanently residing within the limits of the Commonwealth.
2. That, for the time being, the enrolment of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders be voluntary, but when enrolled compulsory voting be enforced.

Since 1962 then, Aboriginals have had the right to choose whether or not they have their names placed on the electoral roll for Commonwealth elections. If Aboriginals choose to enrol, then they are bound by the compulsory voting provisions of the Act and must vote.

In the period following the 1962 amendments the Australian Electoral Office conducted some electoral education and information courses at Aboriginal settlements and missions, but these visits tended to be spasmodic rather than part of an ongoing program. Since 1977, however, more intensive efforts have been made.

The first major effort in 1977 was made prior to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly elections. The Electoral Office conducted a short information/education program for Aboriginals in the Northern Territory on voting procedures. Posters and pamphlets were produced and were widely disseminated amongst Aboriginal communities.

It is of course very hard to say just how effective this program was. We do know, however, that the informal vote in the Legislative Assembly elections in 1974 was 5.08 per cent of the number of votes cast (29,428) and that this informal percentage was reduced to 3.18 per cent at the 1977 elections when 32,849 votes were recorded. And this was in an election, it should be remembered, at which there was full preferential voting rather than the optional preferential voting which had previously applied in 1974.

Later in 1977 additional information/education programs were conducted by the Australian Electoral Office in conjunction with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs prior to the National Aboriginal Conference election of 12 November and the General Election of 10 December.

As a consequence of these 1977 initiatives it was decided that an ongoing program of electoral education involving visits to Aboriginal communities should be developed and conducted outside the election cycle. A program was therefore drawn up in consultation with the South Australian and Western Australian government agencies concerned with electoral and education matters and two teams of two electoral education officers each were formed in June 1979. Essentially, one was to operate in South Australia and the other in Western Australia. A third team began in the Northern Territory in January 1981 - also following consultation and agreement with Territory government agencies responsible for electoral and education matters. The teams' programs cover both federal and state or Territory enrolment and voting requirements and procedures.

While a long-term objective is to provide a comprehensive program for Aboriginal people and communities throughout Australia, including those in urban situations, it was decided to begin where there were significant numbers of traditionally-oriented communities and particularly in the more remote areas. This was firstly because the people in these communities are, among those entitled to enrol and vote in Australian elections, likely to be the ones who have had the least previous contact with the electoral process, and secondly because in such remote areas it is obviously more difficult to obtain electoral information from the standard resources available to urban residents.

The main aims of the program are to:

- a) introduce Aboriginal people to the functions and workings of the federal, state and Territory parliaments;
- b) encourage Aboriginal people to value the rights and obligations implicit in the operation of a parliamentary democracy;
- c) develop amongst Aboriginal people an awareness of their right to have their names placed on the Commonwealth, state and Territory rolls of electors and an understanding of the procedures for enrolment;
- d) develop amongst Aboriginal people an understanding of the purpose of elections and voting procedures; and
- e) assist Aboriginal people to acquire the basic literary and numeracy in the English language which are needed to cast a formal vote.

In developing the Aboriginal Electoral Education Program, the Australian Electoral Office has sought to follow a number of basic principles generally considered essential in education programs for remote communities and Aboriginal groups.

Firstly the program is conducted in the communities. Teams visit communities usually for periods of four or five days, during which time both formal and informal discussions are held. Each team has a landrover, a truck and a caravan giving them mobility between communities.

Secondly, there is consultation with individual Aboriginal communities over matters such as arranging the visits, the electoral experience and needs of communities, and the conduct of each course.

A third principle has been flexibility. While curriculum guidelines have been drawn up to define the main areas to be covered, the actual content and level of courses will vary between communities depending on what is felt necessary after consultation. A wide range of teaching aids is available to meet differing situations, while the teams are able to be flexible in their movements between communities.

The teams are concerned to be sensitive to the local social and cultural structures and, following consultation, classes are conducted with groups considered appropriate by the community.

The program is specifically designed so that a lack of literacy or numeracy does not prevent participation. Films and cassettes are widely used and classes are also held to improve literacy and numeracy where this is necessary.

The program is practically-oriented, with much practice in dealing with necessary situations and forms. Courses in each community culminate in mock elections.

A more recent development is the training of residents or regular workers in communities (e.g. Aboriginal Teaching Assistants, Adult Educators, Part-time instructors, etc.) to enable them to provide continuing electoral education throughout the year. This approach was used effectively for the 1980 Northern Territory Legislative Assembly elections when the Office, in collaboration with the Northern Territory Departments of the Chief Minister and of Education, conducted two-day intensive seminars in Darwin and Alice Springs for participants drawn from communities. The Northern Territory team has used this approach in larger communities and the development of this technique is something the Australian Electoral Office has in mind.

Finally, concerning the Aboriginal Electoral Education Program the Office is currently investigating the introduction of Aboriginal language versions for the written and audio-visual materials which are used.

As well as the Aboriginal Electoral Education Program, it is also important to note the additional measures to assist Aboriginals which have been taken by the Australian Electoral Office at election time.

For example, from the 13 August 1977 Northern Territory Legislative Assembly election onwards Poll Clerks, fluent in Aboriginal languages and English, have been employed as much as possible at polling booths where there were likely to be significant numbers of Aboriginals who do not speak English.

Special instructions for presiding officers, assistant presiding officers and poll clerks, have been issued in order to explain what assistance can and should be given to non-literate voters.

For the 18 October 1980 general election, cassettes giving election information in English and 24 selected Aboriginal languages were produced. A total of 1000 English tapes and 2200 tapes in various Aboriginal languages were produced and distributed to some 200 Aboriginal communities. The cassettes conveyed such information about what the federal election was for, who could and was required to vote, where and how to vote, etc. A poster 'You Can Have Your Say' was designed for display at focal points for Aboriginal people. A total of 5000 posters were printed, with some 2000 distributed to Aboriginal groups and organisations throughout Australia. The poster was also displayed in electoral and other government offices.

The needs for which the Aboriginal Electoral Education Programme was designed will continue for some time. The circumstances of communities will change, their electoral knowledge will increase, and the Office will gain from the experience of operating the program. The form of the program will need to be adapted as time passes, but given the sound basis of the current program and the flexibility and initiative applied in developing it to this point, it will continue to be able to provide valuable assistance to Aboriginal people.

Reg Shelley

WOORABINDA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Concern about Queensland politics as they relate to Aboriginal affairs is not new. A Port Moresby-based missionary, Dr John Lawes wrote to a colleague in England in 1873, horrified that Queensland was intent upon annexing Papua. The abominable treatment which had been accorded Queensland Aborigines by that time was already well known and Lawes suggested in no uncertain terms that Queensland was the state on earth least qualified to rule Papua.

Establishing the Communities

The establishment of the Queensland Aboriginal communities during the early part of the century was an attempt to 'tidy up' the living arrangements of fringe-dwelling Aborigines scattered across the state.

It was argued by Meston (1896) that:

the Aborigines scattered among the settled districts and wandering about the towns .. required collection on suitable reserves, complete isolation from contact with the civilized race to save them from that small section of Whites more degraded than any savage; kept free from drink and opium and disease, the young people and the able-bodied taught industrious habits, and to raise their own food supplies; the people being decently cared for ... (Long, 1970: 95).

However, not all were forced to live on these firmly controlled settlements. Those employed on the land in various capacities were permitted to remain; thus some young girls were not forced to live apart from their family in dormitories, as was the case on the communities. The justification for this practice seems to have been based on concern about presumed promiscuity.

There are some former Woorabinda residents (Doyle, Hopkins, Jard, 1980) living in Rockhampton who recall nostalgically the 'good times' they had growing up on the community. On probing these recollections it becomes clear that there was much about the highly organized and firmly controlled community life that seemed designed to facilitate assimilation as Meston's remarks suggest. For example, being caught speaking an Aboriginal language resulted in several days in confinement with bread and water; work on the community was compulsory and it started early and finished late; there was little in the way of cash wages, though all families were given food produced on the property, namely fruit and vegetables and one piece of meat each day for each person.

The conditions imposed on mixed race children were a particularly pernicious aspect of the 'round-up' of Queensland Aborigines. Perhaps there was some sense of shame or obligation resulting from the existence of such offspring when miscegenation was prohibited. The government introduced the policy of taking these mixed race children from their families to be institutionalised on the outskirts of Ipswich at Purga Mission. There seems to have been no awareness or concern in the bureaucracy or the government about the awful trauma these children suffered in being wrenched from their families.

The chief architect and prosecutor of the Queensland scheme of enforced collectivization was Archibald Meston. Some Aboriginal mothers adopted the practice of blackening their lighter coloured children with charcoal to avoid being 'cared for' at Purga. The 'caring' approach of the Queensland government has in more recent times been

exemplified by Mr Charles Porter, former Minister for the Department of Aborigines and Islanders Advancement (DAIA). He has proudly claimed that Queensland Aborigines are 'the best cared for people in the world'. There is little doubt that the caring paternalism of the Queensland Government is the major obstacle to Aboriginal advancement. It has successfully inhibited Aboriginal people from maintaining their cultural practices and values and thereby undermined their identity development.

#### An Invitation

Woorabinda is one of the Queensland communities established in 1927. During 1978 the deputy chairperson of the Woorabinda Aboriginal Community Council wrote seeking assistance. The concern was that members of the elected Council were expected to undertake tasks for which they had limited expertise. I had been making visits to the community over the previous three years with teacher education students for practice teaching purposes. These visits gave me opportunities to meet the local people and discuss aspects of life on the community. The Woorabinda Community Council asked for an educational program 'to help Council members do their job better'. The tasks for which the community council is responsible would depend a great deal on the manager appointed by DAIA. While the Queensland Aborigines Act 1971-75 and Regulations set out something of the role which councils are expected to undertake, the reality depends a great deal on the ability of the council members and the willingness of the appointed manager to encourage council members to exercise initiatives within the limits of their role specified in the Act.

The Council is expected to make a range of minor administrative decisions including the following:

to sit in judgement on their peers who have been apprehended for minor legal infringements; decide who may be granted resident status on the community; allocate vacant housing to tenants.

#### The Workshop

The program which was developed for Woorabinda Community members consisted of three stages. The first stage, held over one weekend, set out to establish community needs as perceived by community members.

Their stated concerns were grouped under the following five headings:

Community Self-Management,  
Law & Order in the Community,  
Education for the Community,  
Community Finance & Services and  
Community Employment.

These topics were considered in detail during the five days of stage two. A workshop approach was employed in stages one and two, the purpose being to maximize the involvement of participants in the hope of increasing the impact of the learning which took place. The daily program provided for guest speakers to be present at each morning session to answer questions. Included in this group were solicitors, public servants and educators. They addressed themselves to the specific concerns stated by the Woorabinda Community

members, after which they left the conference centre. Open discussion followed concerning the most appropriate method of utilizing the information provided, in order to achieve the community's objectives.

Generally people who were invited to participate in the program as resource persons showed a high degree of interest and support for the workshop concept. They demonstrated a keenness to assist in whatever way their particular expertise permitted. Representatives from the Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and the Police Department did not accept an invitation to participate.

The keenness of the participants was indicated by their determination to pursue the objectives of the workshop. The suggestion from one participant that the daily program should conclude prior to the evening meal was rejected out of hand by most of the group. They enthusiastically followed up the issues until well into the evening. The planned third stage of the program did not take place. My attempts to follow up the earlier stages yielded a very slight response from participants.

#### An Assessment

The outcome from these workshops may be measured by changes that occurred within the community, resulting directly from efforts of the participants. While a number of identifiable changes took place, it is not possible to attribute them directly to the efforts of workshop members. At least, there was no acknowledgement from DAIA that the workshop had influenced them in the provision of the services. The following noticeable changes occurred:

- (1) The sergeant of police was permitted to test applicants for their driver's licences, instead of having them travel 25 miles to the nearest town.
- (2) A qualified specialist in early childhood education was employed to teach at the Woorabinda Kindergarten. Before this a much less well qualified person had the job.
- (3) The manager initiated a meeting with the community to discuss the perceived needs of the people. This was a very rare occurrence.
- (4) Visits to the community by Social Security personnel increased in frequency.
- (5) Finance was provided by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to meet the cost of a secretarial assistant for the Council, where DAIA staff had been utilized previously.

Although these gains were reasonable for a first intervention, a number of factors prevented the program from having an even greater impact. While there was no question about the enthusiasm of those who attended, their influence on their community at the conclusion of the workshop appeared to be slight. What may have contributed to this apparent inactivity?

#### On Being Remote

The ninety-mile distance of Woorabinda from Rockhampton has clearly contributed to service delivery problems. The cost and logistics of transporting participants to a conference venue; arranging the many details of what was to happen; consultation with the participants regarding the shape of the program, all created a range of difficulties.

Beside the physical distance between Rockhampton and Woorabinda, there is another facet of remoteness which helped to shape the workshop outcomes. I refer to the cultural difference between Aborigines and others which resulted in a social and cultural distance between the two races. Some aspects of participation in this community development workshop have been discussed. This limited involvement may be considered as a product of the cultural distance or cultural remoteness experienced by members of the Woorabinda community.

#### Possible Reasons for Minimal Community Change

The pressure of the peer group certainly contributed towards the maintenance of current community behaviour. Combined with the inertia of the status quo this may have been sufficient to immobilize the relatively small group of keen workshop participants and to prevent them from serious attempts at community change. It is worth recalling that it is no mean task to take on the restructuring of a community which has been relatively unchanged for much of one's lifetime. Another possible influence lies in the motivation which brought the workshop participants together. Stacy (1979,18) was faced with a similar community program in her attempts to improve community health awareness in and around Alice Springs. The students were keen and learnt their work well but there was no appreciable change in community health.

She suggests that significant differences of values neutralized the impact of the program:

It had been assumed that because the Aboriginal parents showed concern when their children became seriously ill or died they would wish to do something to alleviate this concern. This assumption was found to be part of the way of thinking of the white health workers. It was not shared by the Aborigines.

Is it possible that when the Woorabinda people were faced with helpful community development workers, in response to the Council's request for assistance, they made the same adjustment as the Pitjantjatjara, with whom Stacy worked?

Perhaps the participants had insufficient opportunity to identify with the objectives and content of the course; it may have been interpreted as an interesting program, but nevertheless somewhat imposed upon the community. Attendance at the workshop provided a variation to a rather monotonous community lifestyle, but there may well have been little or no commitment to community improvement amongst the participants.

The high importance which Aboriginal people attach to the maintenance of personal relationships is likely to be another factor contributing to a lack of change in the community. It may be that the participants decided it was preferable to live with those aspects of community life which they thought less than satisfactory, rather than run the risk of impairing relationships by introducing novel ideas for change.

How then can we reduce the effects of remoteness and provide services for those in isolated regions similar to those available to urban dwellers? This question assumes that the remote communities want services equal to those available in the towns. The movement of some people to outstations or homelands in the Northern Territory may be interpreted to indicate that for some there are advantages in remoteness. Perhaps these advantages have yet to be discovered by those who regard remoteness with some distaste. There is little doubt that the questions raised in this paper can best be answered by Aboriginal people: a situation which is unlikely to arise until the Woorabinda people have some genuine control over their own destiny.

Margaret Hamilton

ALCOHOLISM IN CONTEXT - RESEARCH AT MT ISA, QUEENSLAND

Introduction

During 1981, preliminary work has been carried out toward an improved understanding of, and possible intervention into, what is seen as a heavy drinking problem in Mount Isa, Queensland. Problems associated with alcohol consumption in Australia are widely recognised. Though we know something about total amounts consumed and, at the other end of the spectrum, about the detailed drinking histories of some who have been labelled alcoholics, the attitudes and practices of the general population have not received such detailed attention. Increasingly, writers, researchers and workers in the 'treatment' realm of this field recognise the importance of understanding general consumption patterns, as well as the specific difficulties some experience.

It is in this context that the following questions are posed. The aim of this project is to assist the Mount Isa community to devise an appropriate strategy (in response to better understanding and documentation) to respond to perceived problems associated with alcohol consumption.

Summary of Questions Proposed

- (1) What is the pattern of alcohol consumption in Mount Isa?
- (2) What are the factors involved in explaining this pattern of drinking (general and specific)?
- (3) Which of these factors might be open to alteration or influence (which might, in turn, alter alcohol consumption patterns)?
- (4) What might be done to reduce the negative consequences of the drinking of people in Mount Isa?
- (5) What might be an appropriate intervention plan with regard to perceived drinking problems for Mount Isa in response to information gathered?

Behind these questions lie various 'hunches', sub-questions and propositions regarding alcohol consumption, problems associated with alcohol consumption and the logic involved in trying to 'do something' about heavy drinking in any community. I do not believe that any program which might be implemented in a city such as Mount Isa could or would alter drinking patterns in a short time (such as a year). It might not even be desirable to.

I am keen that this should be an action research project which has, as a long-term aim, some service orientation which might eventually be implemented and evaluated. I believe that it is highly unlikely that this will mean a specific purpose-built new service with a sign reading 'alcohol clinic' over the doorway. I believe that this is perhaps the least likely recommendation to emerge. My own bias is to think in terms of those services already existing and those which might be needed which have a broader base and offer health and welfare services to families and individuals through general channels, and the possible support and re-orientation of these to cater more appropriately with alcohol-related difficulties, education and prevention.

## Background - Theoretical Context of Problem Definition Australians Drink Alcohol

Most Australian adults (and, increasingly, children) drink alcohol. Many Australians drink a lot of alcohol. Some Australians drink too much alcohol. Most Australians enjoy drinking and occasionally experience associated, temporary problems with their consumption (such as a hangover; having to refrain from driving because of a raised blood alcohol level; temporary impotence; loss of co-ordination and concentration and so on). Some Australians have difficulties associated with their alcohol consumption which affects their physical, social, emotional and mental health in various significant ways. Lists of complications associated with heavy drinking abound in the literature. Many more Australians' lives are directly affected by the heavy consumption of alcohol by one or more of their family, colleagues or work-mates, or fellow drivers on the roads.

Alcohol is the principle addictive drug most widely used in Australia. Men drink more than women (though women are fast 'catching up') and drinking among young people is increasing. Whitlock suggests that heavy drinking is increasing and that younger people are more likely to be heavy drinkers by the age of twenty than was the case in the past (Whitlock 1980).

About 80 per cent of all adult men and 70 per cent of women currently drink alcohol (NHMRC 1975). During the period 1966-76, absolute alcohol consumption per head of population increased by 35.6 per cent. Beer (still the most popular beverage) consumption per head rose by 20.4 per cent; wine by 101.5 per cent and spirits by 62.5 per cent. Beer consumption (1976-77) is 997 glasses (almost three a day); wine - 27 bottles; and spirits - 163 'nips' per adult per year.

Taxes on alcoholic beverages are a significant source of government revenue through Commonwealth excise, customs duty, and state and local authority liquor taxes. Total government revenue from taxes of beer, wine and spirits in 1976-77 was \$1058.2 million. This was 5.2 per cent of total government revenue (Commonwealth Department of Health 1979).

'So what if Australians drink alcohol ... its the acoholics we've got to worry about'

I wish to avoid discussing definitions here; that is, the definitions of abnormal, problem, excessive, abusive drinkers; misuse of alcohol and alcoholism. These definitions are somewhat culturally determined and there have been many papers devoted to definitions alone. At this time it is difficult to say what 'abnormal' or 'excessive' drinking might be in Mount Isa (or what 'normal' drinking is). Beliefs, attitudes, myths, folklore, general socialisation and expectations regarding drinking have a powerful influence on choice of beverage, location and times of drinking, amount consumed and effect on mood and behaviour.

Drinking alcohol is a complex, learned, ritualised activity. The social 'set' and setting play an important role in determining the subjective effects of alcohol consumption. Even drunken behaviour, which we might all describe or define the same way, is culturally determined to some extent. McAndrew and Edgerton concluded from their study that behaviour while drunk was learned by members of society as part of socialisation in each culture (1969); for example there are some peculiarly Australian practices, such as shouting in rounds, which influence consumption practices and levels.

The 'culture' of drinking in Mount Isa seems, from preliminary discussion, to be important since residents speak of the expectations of drinking with either great concern or near reverence (depending on their particular perspective).

One consequence of the relativity of definitions in this field is that it is important to consider all drinking and not just that which might be regarded as problematic drinking; i.e. drinking behaviour patterns form a continuum from those who drink no alcohol to those who drink a lot; with most of us in between. There is no substantial difference, I believe, in the physical make-up of those who fall into the

different groups along this continuum, be they black or white Australians. (It is perhaps important to acknowledge here that some studies do suggest some possible genetic factor in pre-disposition to alcoholism. If this is the case, then it is merely one among many factors which contribute to a person drinking heavily and experiencing difficulties as a result. Other social and emotional, general health, opportunity and access, influence and socialisation factors are at least, if not more, important).

From a study of drinking generally, it might be possible to begin to define these relative concepts for Mount Isa (or sub-groups within the Mount Isa population). Thus the drinking of alcohol in the community will be the focus of attention (and not an attempt to identify so-called pathological or problem drinkers). There are studies which show that men will generally experience health and other difficulties with long-term excessive drinking at a level of between 80 and 100 gm. ethanol per day (slightly less for women) which represents between eight and ten standard 10 oz. glasses of beer a day, and in this sense, excessive drinking.

There are sound theoretical reasons for studying general consumption in trying to understand health and welfare problems associated with drinking in any community. The linkage between problematic drinking and the general level of consumption has been closely studied in different countries and researchers maintain that there is a direct relationship between the two, i.e. that the number of problem drinkers (or 'alcoholics') in any community is directly related to the overall per capita consumption of alcohol (though the proportions vary with different cultures), so that if alcohol consumption increases overall, so too will the numbers of problem drinkers. Although this model has been challenged by some writers, I believe there are still powerful arguments for considering the overall drinking in a community.

So, although there are many factors which determine how the individual's drinking pattern relates to that of the community or a particular community group, as Drew maintains, the major factor which determines the drinking patterns of the community as a whole is the average daily per capita consumption (1978, ch.3). A major aim of the proposed project, therefore, is to gain some appreciation of the per capita consumption in Mount Isa. This data is more difficult to accurately collect (and to use retrospectively) than would at first appear. Recent attempts in the Northern Territory to compare consumption rates over time and with that of Australia generally have proved difficult with regard to the reliability of the data used at different times. The quantity consumed and culture associated with alcohol consumption for the whole community (and sub-groups within the community) will, therefore, be a major focus of investigation.

#### People in Mount Isa drink alcohol

I doubt that anyone would dispute this. It is, however, difficult to get an accurate picture of the details of this statement. In an effort to describe, more precisely, the pattern of drinking in Mount Isa the following question contains many sub-parts: Who drinks how much of what beverage(s) under what circumstances for what reasons with what effect (including short and long-term consequences) in Mount Isa? Many might offer ready replies to this complex question from their own experience, impressions and from limited data. These answers are notoriously imprecise and unreliable, based, as they usually are, on quite divergent understanding of definitions and experience.

What can be said at this point is that some people in the north of Australia believe that many people drink a lot and that more people drink more than is usual with more consequent problems than is desirable in the community. Though there are some areas of data to support this, few details are reliably available. We do not know, for example, what these details would look like if compared with, say, a mining town in the more closely settled, temperate climate, eastern states or a relatively isolated mining town in the south. Some attempt will be made to establish in what ways Mount Isa is similar to and different from other Australian communities, comparing features such as the population profile. The lack of precise data is one of the problems that health and welfare people have in determining appropriate responses and in convincing relevant public bodies of a need for particular services.

In considering factors which might be relevant in explaining the drinking pattern in Mount Isa, some general features will be considered (such as gender, age, social class and status, employment, cultural heritage, ethnic background, and so on), as well as those which might emerge as particular factors, including geography and the impact of climate, isolation, the nature of employment, availability of alcohol (including outlets, regulations regarding access, times and the like), and the 'culture of drinking' in the north of Australia.

It is hoped that as these factors are identified, further work will help to establish which of these might be amenable to change but it is daunting to contemplate changing drinking behaviour which is apparently so well entrenched. It might be possible, however, to consider the impact of altering some of the factors which seem to be associated with particular patterns of drinking within the population if these are better understood. Better understanding would also aid planning of services and interventions which might help to reduce the negative impact of drinking for at least some of those currently affected (whether these be the drinker or his/her associates - especially family members).

This means that the aim of any project in Mount Isa will not be to 'cure alcoholism'. The project is also not 'anti-grog' and eliminating the drinking of alcohol is not its intention. In fact, it is realised that there might be quite functional uses of alcohol by some people in Mount Isa and the debate regarding choice of drug is also well recognised. Thus, the questions are intended to describe the drinking patterns within the Mount Isa community, to identify possible factors which influence these patterns, to identify the problems associated with alcohol consumption and to attempt to identify possible measures which might reduce their incidence or impact.

#### Families

In the past, the identified heavy drinker (or 'alcoholic') was the focus for study and intervention (or 'treatment'). Over the past twenty years, this field, like many related areas, has been influenced by systems theory and has shifted its focus, to some extent, to the family as a system.

Of those affected by a close drinking person, perhaps the family members suffer most profoundly. It is also likely that family members become locked into a pattern of relationships, communication and expectations as well as role definitions which might contribute to the drinking (initial or continued) of one or more of their members. Thus, families might provide a useful focus in considering both the etiology and the consequences of heavy drinking in a community. This central institution in society is also the one which has a profound impact on each individual's attitudes toward, and practices regarding, alcohol consumption and methods of dealing with anxiety and ways of coping generally.

There are advantages in viewing drinking behaviour within the context of the family for a number of reasons, including the importance of involving the family in any intervention plan (where one exists) for an individual, and, as Steinglass (1976) says:

The more drinking behaviour can be seen as one aspect of family interaction, the greater the likelihood that the alcoholic member will shed his or her label.

Thus, a focus of the work in Mount Isa will include examination of the family - its structure and evolution in Mount Isa including general characteristics and possibly some particular questions such as the impact of shift-work on families.

## Mt Isa - background data

A brief description, including features of Mount Isa which might become relevant in the research project, follows. Mt Isa is located in tropical (semi-desert) north-west Queensland, 1600 kilometres from Brisbane. It 'sits in the middle of a desert in the shadow of the giant mine that is the reason for its existence and proudly claims that it has the largest area of any city in the world' (Courier Mail, 24 September, 1980).

With almost 33,000 people at its peak in 1975, it is now estimated to have a population of 27,000 of mixed ethnic background, about sixty different nationalities, including British, New Zealand, German, Italian, Finnish and other overseas born, white and Aboriginal Australian born. (About a quarter of those employed by Mount Isa Mines are overseas born.) Many are 'immigrants' from elsewhere in Australia, and although it is thought that the population is stabilising, there is still a large proportion of transitory residents. This, in part, contributes to a somewhat unusual age structure.

Men outnumber women and the population is generally 'younger' than the Australia-wide profile with a high proportion (one quarter) under ten and many fewer older people. In 1971, 77 per cent of the population were under thirty-five years and about one in every five women in the fifteen to forty-four year age group had a child in that year (a considerably higher rate than the Australian average). The crude birth rate (and infant mortality), while reducing, is still higher than Queensland or Australia generally.

It does seem that the age profile of Mount Isa is slowly moving toward the Australian profile. Outward migration in the post-retirement age groups and inward migration in the younger working population is probably related to employment, and contributes to the 'youthful' population profiles, together with the higher birth rate and a lower death rate than in Queensland or Australia. Even among the working age groups, many are itinerants. For comparison, the NSW mining town of Broken Hill had a more stable population: 71 per cent of the residents in 1971 had not moved for five years, whereas only 28 per cent had not moved from Mount Isa. If internal migration within the region is counted, then the population remaining in Mount Isa reaches 50 per cent, while in Broken Hill it is almost 90 per cent. One indication of difficulties in the health and welfare area is the high turnover of professional and service staff.

There is a high proportion of single men. Almost 45 per cent of the male population from fifteen years and older were either never married, single, separated or divorced and there were only half as many females in this same category in 1971. Over the past decade, however, the predominance of single males has diminished.

The development of the city of Mount Isa parallels the developments of copper, lead, zinc and silver mining since its beginning in the early 1920s. Prior to this, the Aboriginal population, principally of the Kalkadoon Tribe, were the dominant inhabitants with occasional white prospectors and early cattle men from the 1870s. Mount Isa Mines Holdings Limited now employs approximately 5000 people representing one in five of the population of Mount Isa and half the working population. One of the largest and most mechanised underground mines in the world, it is Australia's major copper producer, the largest single producer of silver and lead, and among the top ten producers of copper and zinc in the world. The company now ranks among the largest in Australia.

All life in Mount Isa is shaped by several distinctive features. Its housing is mixed in quality and construction materials. Many large caravan parks provide temporary and semi-permanent accommodation for the moving population. The rental market is tight and expensive, although purchase prices are still comparatively low. The town centre is dominated by a large modern Town Hall, three large hotels, some smaller shops and two large supermarkets with services interspersed. The town is intersected by the railway line creating a 'mine side' and 'town side' with the mine dominating the landscape. Schools include a primary, four secondary, seven kindergartens, four special schools, one Adult Education Centre and one technical college. Many students travel to the coast for secondary and especially tertiary education.

Mount Isa supports a very active social and recreational life although it is limited in variety. With five large hotels each with extensive bars and lounges, a tavern, some restaurants and six licensed clubs, including the Irish Concordia, Buffalo and RSL, much is alcohol-related. In addition to these clubs there are a number of active service clubs, cultural groups and many sporting associations; one picture theatre, a drive-in and two radio and television stations. The Annual Rodeo and Octoberfest attract many people from surrounding areas. Locals travel to the coast, to outlying springs and the countryside for occasional weekends, but, given the location, alternatives are limited. Holidays are an opportunity to leave Mount Isa for most residents.

The town, in politics, is not predominately Labor and trade union but Liberal-National Country Party, which is in power at local council, state and federal levels.

On first impressions it seems that many aspire to improve their status on coming to Mount Isa. A spirit of free enterprise and a thrust toward upward mobility is evident. Symbols of status in this environment e.g. club membership, social activity and group are important. The average income of the population is significantly higher than Queensland generally: nearly 70 per cent of Mount Isa families have incomes over \$12,000 while only 45 per cent of families in the state are in this group according to the 1976 census.

Although there are five general practitioners, there are no specialist medical personnel except the one physician in charge of the 150 bed hospital. The Mines have a sophisticated Industrial Health Unit and recognise the importance of screening employees to maintain industrial safety and good health. Employees are sent to the coast, when necessary, for specialist treatment of work-related problems.

Welfare facilities include the usual federal and state services (Social Security, Childrens Services, Community Health, Aboriginal Affairs and so on). The local Welfare Council has representatives from all local welfare organisations and employs a Community Development Officer, Family Support Worker and Aboriginal Welfare Liaison Officer.

John C. Hargrave

THE ABORIGINAL HEALTH WORKER PROGRAMME

There is little doubt that Aborigines living a wholly tribal life before the European arrived were not without their problems. They probably had a high infant mortality rate similar to that in Europe in past centuries. They probably had yaws (Cadell 1867 and 1868) and the Northern coastal tribes had malaria. They may even have had smallpox, but of this there is no proof. We do not know much else about specific ailments apart from Pituri addiction and trachoma but it is highly likely that leprosy (Hargrave 1980) and tuberculosis were introduced and it is certain that ill-health dependent on social change was virtually absent (Hargrave 1957 a and b). They were probably spared from syphilis (because they had yaws), whilst gonorrhoea, influenza and measles were all probably introduced and some may well have been instrumental in the decimation of the race. Not so nowadays. In the past quarter of a century the tribal population of the Northern Territory has almost doubled but life expectancy remains low and morbidity high during life-time.

If our broader aims are to prevent ill-health and improve the quality of LIFE in its widest context, there are at least two components that are concerned with health. One is literally a service delivery and the second is a preventive health problem. Service delivery is basically Primary Health Care - treatment of day-to-day accidents, infections, preventive medicine, obstetrics, and the conditions that affect all people with varying frequency depending on where and how they live.

The second component (concerned with the prevention of ill-health directly related to social change) is more complex and much more difficult to remedy. In recent years it has become a veritable epidemic in both rural and urban communities. Early in the 1970s our initial expectations were that the Aboriginal Health Worker would be somewhat of a magic panacea for all ill-health. This idealized conceptual model of the Aboriginal Health Worker has largely failed to emerge. It would still be unrealistic to expect it to emerge without a change in course. The Aboriginal Health Worker movement is not new; what is new is that it has gained momentum over the past decade, and now a change in course is due. At present the Aboriginal Health Worker is concerned primarily with Primary Health Care. That he is not always effective in preventive health is not because he is not concerned with it but because of subtler reasons.

His actual role in Primary Health Care is fairly clearcut, but the level of his expertise varies enormously from place to place. We can very easily train him in clinical skills. He acquires these rapidly and can soon deal with most common problems. More complex clinical emergencies - particularly obstetric complications - can jolt the situation out of hand. Fortunately these are fairly rare but if they are inadequately handled, through inexpertise or remoteness, they can cause loss of credibility in the Health Worker in the eyes of the Community. Back-up services in the form of radios, transport, drugs on site and more highly trained personnel at larger settlements are all part of the expected infra-structure at present available.

At some places Aboriginal Health Workers have a very high level of clinical expertise. This has been largely acquired over a long period of time through the apprenticeship system of teaching by nursing sisters. It has been augmented for more than a decade by a more formalized approach emanating from centralized Training Centres. Female Health Workers, who predominate, have tended to deal more with women and children; men have dealt with men. The women tend to see themselves in the nursing sister image and the men would like to see themselves in the doctor image, but in this they are often frustrated. They are mostly taught by women and their role, as seen by the Community, is often blurred into the hazy picture of an emasculated male doing women's jobs. This is probably one of the most powerful reasons for the patent success of female Health Workers and frequent failure of the males.

Whatever their level of expertise, many Health Workers are very young and generally inexperienced in life. Old people have little faith in them early in their career beyond their ability to dress sores or dispense aspirin. As they grow in age, experience, knowledge and wisdom their reputation is usually greatly enhanced as effective people, dealing with Western type disease and accidents not attributed to sorcery. As with any other discipline, the very intelligent Health Workers are much more likely to be much more effective than the mediocre. How they are chosen is therefore significant. In recent times custom has dictated that they be chosen by Councils. But it is apparent that Councils, as we know them, rarely represent the whole Community. Councils, if politically biased, may expect favoured treatment from their selected candidates. A more effective Health Worker is likely to emerge if he is not necessarily chosen by Councils but wins approval on sheer merit. It has been shown to be so in Arnhem Land. This sort of person is what Elkin would call an 'Aboriginal Man of High Degree'. He is likely to influence public health problems in a way that most other Health Workers cannot. It is important, therefore, that we do not have unreal expectations of other less influential people, or some selected candidates.

Highly skilled Health Workers should be able to run a health centre with less skilled satellite Health Workers in the Homelands within their orbit. There are already many such people in the Northern Territory. What is interesting is that they are not all indeed at the centre of their orbit and that their satellites are not shining in the periphery.

I think there are several reasons for this apparent lack of logical evolution in self-management. The first is that Communities themselves are not aware of the potential political significance of the Health Worker. Other, no less significant, reasons are that: on large settlements Councils are often representative of only a portion of the population; communities may have expectations of Health Workers beyond their capabilities - i.e. they may not be able to deliver the goods; there is an entrenched reluctance to hand over responsibility. It explains, in part, the need for the Homeland movement. It also points the way for future development of the Aboriginal Health Worker. If he has to relate, as the Chinese Barefoot Doctor does, to a small communal group - then this is presumably the clan with which he lives although there will almost certainly be avoidance relationships with this group. The skills he needs under these circumstances are very different from those he needs if he controls a large settlement Health Centre. He needs to deal with things like snake-bite and broken bones, with common ailments, and with a few specific diseases. Above all, he needs to treat and prevent (by immunization) infectious disease.

The Chinese Barefoot Doctor movement owed its success to the fact that it was a political rather than a medical movement. It gained credibility through clinical skills and debunked the notion that only doctors and nurses could deal with problems relating to health. The Aboriginal Health Worker movement is not political and therefore lacks this power base for affecting health. Our energies have therefore been channelled into producing good clinicians in the belief that people of exceptional quality may emerge to influence the broader based public health issues. This does not mean that we should not operate on several different fronts at the one time, but merely that clinical medicine can sometimes open the door to the solution of other problems.

At present training is still largely done on site with short in-service courses at the training centres. Every Health Worker studies basic skills and then goes on to study individual self-contained modules - first aid, maternal and child health, dentistry, middle-ear disease, socially acquired disease, infectious diseases, rehabilitation - the list is endless.

The Aboriginal Health Worker movement has sufficient momentum to be almost self-perpetuating. It has regular Territory-wide meetings; many Health Workers have travelled overseas; some now run their own Health Centres, and others work in the Homelands. They are clearly at an exciting stage of their development. They have the potential for great change. They need to cater for the needs of the Homeland movement and the larger Aboriginal towns. Both are remote, and both have different needs. It may well be that there is no magic panacea, and it may well be that Aborigines will continue to be plagued by ill-health, but it may also be that they are becoming increasingly aware of their identity as a means of promoting what they understand as LIFE, which they need to preserve both as a means of survival and of growth.

K.G. Thiele

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S ESSENTIAL SERVICE PROGRAMMES

In 1981/82 the NT Capital New Works Programme for Remote Aboriginal Communities has a budget of \$18.3m submitted by the Department of Community Development.

A statement by the Chief Minister, Mr Paul Everingham, to the Legislative Assembly, April 30 1980, titled 'A Five-Year Plan to Improve Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory', indicated the Government's intention to encourage training for self-sufficiency, i.e.

Self management and self reliance for Aboriginal Communities is meaningless unless Aboriginals themselves are being given skills to bring about this state of affairs and the employment opportunities to enable them to attain a greater degree of independence. The opportunity should be afforded to Aboriginal organizations to undertake as much of the work as they are able and willing to undertake.

In the expenditure of \$18.3m on capital works this financial year, Aboriginal communities are being given opportunity to contract for these projects. In fact they have first option, but frequently prefer not to undertake them because of time factors, lack of skills, insufficient equipment or complexity required in the work on hand. The Commonwealth Department of Housing and Construction has a contract clause requiring outside contractors to consult with the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs and explore with them the opportunity for employment and training of Aborigines in undertaking DOHC contracts.

The NT government Department of Transport and Works is considering the following options for application in their contracts:

- (1) A provisional sum in all major contracts allowing for training by the contractor.
- (2) A clause requesting contractors to submit their proposals for Aboriginal employment - these to be taken into consideration when assessing tenders.
- (3) A clause requiring monthly returns on Aboriginals employed to be completed by contractors.

The Department of Transport and Works are also actively involved and are increasing the training component of their own work force. Especially is this so in the training of Aboriginal power house and heavy earthmoving equipment operators.

One of the most important aspects of the Essential Services Programme has been to draw attention to the need for training by all agencies who service Aboriginal communities. No one agency can service the varied and complex community education requirements of many disparate remote communities within the Northern Territory. Each community requires time to develop as it perceives its needs. This may be quite different to the model most European developers would envisage, but it will be meaningful and relevant if proper cognizance is taken of indigenous leadership and provides that leadership with the educational and technical skills required to achieve its own objectives.

Aboriginal Adult Education must not only be cognitive, it must be affective. Too great an emphasis has been placed in the past on the cognitive domain. Goals, aims and objectives have been set rather than derived and this attitude of mind will only be eradicated by the passing of time.

Educators and trainers of Aboriginal people must continually remind themselves that most communities are in the situation of third world developing countries. They further need to remind themselves that the European frame of reference for development does not necessarily fit the Aboriginal pattern and consequently desist from a Procrustean approach to Education and Training.

The Department of Education have 24 Field Adult Educators based in larger remote communities throughout the NT working closely with 20 Aboriginal Adult Educators. Their Objectives are detailed in annex A below. The section has been operating since late 1974 and over this period has realized that a Community Education approach is the most successful method to use. Course construction, good lecturers, appropriate teaching aids etc., important as they might be, are secondary to the development of attitudes and aspirations from within the community which produce the necessary self-motivation to learn.

Unless a community structure exists with clear lines of authority and leadership structures which have general community acceptance, the imposition of Adult Education on unwilling learners is frequently not only unsuccessful and demoralizing to the lecturer, it is also counter-productive to ongoing programs. The successful Adult Educator must first strive to realize his first objective i.e. 'to build a close relationship with (Aboriginal) men and women, so that he can assist them to absorb the pressures and demands of rapidly changing circumstances'.

The 24 Field staff are assisted with specialist itinerant instructors, 5 in the Technical area, 4 Commerce and 1 Home Skills. Obviously more are needed and a recent review of TAFE activities recommends a modest increase.

Field and itinerant staff are located within the framework of the Department's regional structures and are responsible to the hierarchical system established in the regions to manage all areas of education. Four regional Senior Education Officers located at Gove, Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs provide immediate professional support to field staff.

There are few other full time people employed solely to teach Adults in remote communities, although other employees of Government, private agencies and local Councils may have training as an important aspect of their job. Notwithstanding, there is a great deal of knowledge, expertise and experience available which should be harnessed to provide co-operative co-ordination in Education and training within remote communities. For example Church authorities, the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Housing Managers, Accountants, Community Advisers, Housewives, Aboriginal Teaching Assistants and day-school teachers etc. can be of great benefit through part-time instruction.

Other government and private agencies like NTEC, Community Development, Health, DCC, CCCA, Industries Training Commission, DAA, DEYA, Arnhem Land Progress Association, Institute for Aboriginal Development, Central Australian Congress and so on, all have a special role to play and their services must be utilized for effective training in remote communities. Some mechanism which co-ordinates efforts on a co-operative basis is essential and long overdue having again recently been highlighted in the AAAC report on Job Training for Aboriginals under the chairmanship of Mr Martin Ford of DAA.

There are 20 Aboriginal Adult Education Assistants working with field staff. The upgrading of their qualifications to the status of fully trained TAFE teachers is an essential part of any training program which truly services the communities needs. Courses at Batchelor and interstate are available and these are developing.

Training is only relevant when people are eager to achieve a goal in their lives which has meaning and purpose for them. The concept of Aboriginal involvement in the Essential Services Programme is admirable since in theory it gives opportunity to

Aboriginal people to do just that. No one will deny that things could be done better. With sensitivity and good will, progress can be made in restoring the identity and dignity of communities through training for self-sufficiency.

#### Objectives of Aboriginal Adult Education

- (1) The life and viability of a community are dependent on the continuing education of the men and women who are the decision makers of the community. The first objective of every adult educator is therefore to build a close relationship with these men and women, so that he can assist them to absorb the pressures and demands of rapidly changing circumstances into their inherited organisation and way of living and can provide the educational and training experience which will enable them to make adjustments in attitude and life style.
- (2) Adults will apply themselves to learning something only when it has an attainable functional objective for them, either to improve status and quality of living or to earn money, or to do something. The second objective is to list the opportunities open to his community, from traditional living to the various occupations in industry e.g. vehicle maintenance or mining, and to analyse the personal attributes and skills required to improve the quality of life and do the new jobs. The analysis will include such modification of customs and attitudes as is essential for participation in the cash economy.
- (3) Mastery of the basic skills of simple functional literacy, numeracy and mechanically oriented manual dexterity are necessary before more specialised training can be undertaken. The third objective is to extend competence in these skills as quickly as men and women appreciate the need for them.
- (4) Through discussion and understanding, interest in occupations will grow. The adult educator must respond to this growth. His fourth objective is to arrange relevant instruction, using either local resources or negotiating for an instructor from elsewhere or sending students to centralised courses.
- (5) The Community Adviser has responsibility for advising the Council and other persons in authority on community development. The adult educator has responsibility for educating individual members of the community in knowledge and skills which are relevant to their needs as they themselves see them. In this he cooperates with other experts from the Departments of Health, Employment and Industrial Relations etc. and from private agencies. The fifth objective of an adult educator is therefore to build close working relationships with all extension services and to facilitate a balanced development of his community.
- (6) Each community is unique. The adult educator will therefore apply these general objectives to the community he is serving and work out the particular objectives, including a time scale of achievement, with the learners.

Adrian Harrison

ABORIGINAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE ARMY RESERVE

The first group of Aborigines to join the new North West Mobile Force (Norforce) begin recruit training on Saturday. The recruits will attend a two-week camp at the Army's Yampi training ground north of Derby. According to an Army spokesman, the aims of the course are:

- To train reinforcements for Norforce
- To involve Aboriginal people in the defence of Northern Australia
- And to foster and develop an exchange of traditional skills and ideas between Aborigines and the Army.

Tribal elders are to be flown to Yampi to view, first hand, "the training of their young men". The course is to be run by members of the Special Air Services regiment and Norforce staff, including Aboriginal members of the unit (NTNews 1 October 1981).

NORFORCE is an Australian Army Reserve Unit raised in July 1, 1981 but previously termed the 7th Independent Rifle Company. In October 1981 over thirty Aborigines completed a two week Army Reserve recruit course at Kimbolton in Western Australia.

NORFORCE (NORTHWEST MOBILE FORCE) is the only Army Reserve unit in Australia with an operational role - essentially that of patrol and surveillance of Australia's northern coastline. Land based patrols of six to eight soldiers, on foot or using 4WD, airboats, inflatable craft, dinghies, motorbikes and horses have already commenced in some areas.

In view of the location and type of the terrain traversed by one or other it is obvious that a great deal of Aboriginal land will be patrolled and that the inclusion of Aborigines in the patrol groups is both desirable and necessary.

A significant number of men who had never even heard of Tchaikovsky are presently whistling the 1812 Overture as they attempt the fairly stringent standards established by NORFORCE Commanding Officer Lt. Col. George. That the Army Reserve has now chosen to include Aborigines in its recruiting campaign is the product of considerable discussion and correspondence between Commonwealth and Northern Territory Ministers, the Chief Minister's Aboriginal Liaison Office Director, Northern Territory Division of Technical and Further Education (Adult Education) and the present HQ personnel of NORFORCE.

An express policy on Aboriginal Involvement has been evolved and articulated (publicised in Aboriginal Newsletter No. 81 15 May 1981). The following list of NORFORCE AIMS and OBJECTIVES is consistent with that policy:

The aim of the Course was to:

- recruit reinforcements for NORFORCE;
- involve the Aboriginal people in the defence of Australia; and
- exchange ideas and skills between European and Aboriginal soldiers.

The course objectives were to:

- understand the NORFORCE role and tasks;
- instil a sense of loyalty and obedience toward Military Authority;
- perform basic drill movements with and without arms;
- fire the SLR, perform basic TOET incorporating all aspects of safety, and be able to correctly maintain the weapon;
- qualify in tests of physical training in accordance with Army Office Staff Instruction 21/81;
- maintain an acceptable level of personal hygiene so as not to offend others;
- understand and perform basic first aid skills;
- understand and use a map and 'Silva' compass, and navigate cross country by day and night;
- display a basic understanding of the Army, its organisation and the function of the various branches at unit level;
- be capable of identifying the Army rank structure;
- maintain military equipment and uniform;
- demonstrate a working knowledge of the ANPRC 25 Radio and be capable of sending a simple message in clear;
- demonstrate the potential to be capable of participating in a NORFORCE patrol, given further training and the appropriate leadership, and
- impart to the course Instructors and support staff the inherent skills of the Aboriginal people, including bushcraft, survival techniques and tracking.

Initial enquiries by the Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council in February 1980 sought a pre-induction course for Aborigines seeking ARES entry. That enquiry has now basically lapsed and been transmuted into ensuring that Aboriginal applicants are not disadvantaged through poor academic standards, 'remediable' medical conditions and geographical isolation provided it can be demonstrated that the applicant can contribute a unique expertise to the Unit.

Both the Federal Defence Minister and Education Territory Minister have recognised that an applicant's Aboriginality may be just that 'unique expertise'. At the NORFORCE Tindal camp held recently Course Certificates recognised the traditional skills of those Aborigines participating.

In October 1980 I enlisted in the then 7th IRC hoping that some men from Oenpelli (Arnhem land) would eventually enlist also. It seemed a good idea for them because I felt there was insufficient contact with varied social situations; unemployment was high and interest in TAFE courses of study low; male self-esteem was very poor and the Army Reserve offered the prospect of some revitalising excitement.

They did not enlist! I had!

Some Aborigines and part Aborigines had already enlisted however - enough to sustain my overall interest in their involvement whilst developing a keen interest myself.

Mine was a shared concern. NORFORCE CO Lt. Col. George allowed in August 1981 that he was proposing to offer a wholly Aboriginal course.

The 'Green Machine' then began to roll.

W.O.1 R. Davies, the Regimental Sergeant Major of NORFORCE, devised the course. W.O. Davies' researchers produced a very comprehensive list of instructional staff hints and a clear acknowledgement that some modifications to a more usual recruit course would have to be made, namely

- the deletion of non-essential drill and ceremonial aspects;
- an allowance for the exchange of ideas between Aboriginal recruits and European staff;
- reference to local (field) conditions;
- an easier pace of instruction and revision of essential matter;
- concentration on the basic weapon (SLR);
- the syllabus also provided for most instruction to be concluded in the mornings, afternoons being given over to exchange of ideas sessions and the practice of Aboriginal skills (making artefacts....).

As an adult educator in the TAFE division of the Northern Territory Department of Education I was keen to establish what weighting would be given the Aboriginal Reservists' culture. What social and personal development would be possible? What reciprocal cultural awareness would there be? Would the transfer of knowledge and skills really work in reverse? How could military skills be allied with practical relevant tasks? And so on. Living and working in an Aboriginal community requires that you invest your own personality and the strength of your relationship with the community. I did not relish the notion of being associated with a failure should expectations prove too high.

In a letter to W.O.1 R. Davies prior to the course I wrote:

The actual composition of the recruit course is significant  
 - I am unable to predict how much of the instructional component of the course Aboriginals will be able to cope with, and unable to predict what understanding the army personnel themselves may have of the teaching tasks they confront.

Common problems are well defined and are a major obstacle to any trainer or 'initiator of programmes' if not provided for:

- high unemployment (wrong in this instance)
- level of work skills is usually low
- low educational attainment
- low motivation
- significant discrimination (sometimes on both sides!)
- a plethora of social factors which inhibit achievement.

There is for example in Western Australia a preparedness to leave community or traditional land - in the Northern Territory few Aboriginals would seek to do so. Pastoral

work may have allowed the development of a work ethic; the skills themselves are not generally adaptable to other areas though the NORFORCE notion of horse transport may be relevant.

I think it would be very unfortunate if the Aboriginal participants perceived ARES as 'government'... there is too much of a dependence on welfare and counselling agencies already. Self-development and divination of an (emerging) esprit in NORFORCE will assist these new recruits to acquire not only the required skills but an ATTITUDE consistent with the military goals of the course.

Most of my anxiety was unnecessary. The recruits were drawn from three Kimberley areas (Kalumburu 2, Mowanjum 7, Oombulgurri 11) and from five Northern Territory areas (Darwin 1, Ngulu-Bathurst Island 7, Croker Island 1, Groote Eylandt 5, Melville Island 2). Despite this variety of backgrounds the recruits related very evenly with each other.

The course can be regarded as a success. Thirty-five out of thirty-six qualified. Further training in the normal ARES stream will be offered in February 1982. NORFORCE personnel now have some residual skills relevant to Aboriginal recruit instruction. The impetus must be maintained.

I feel that in common with sport, dominance by a group (virtually an oligarchy) can be avoided. The tribally significant members of the course will still exert a deal of influence over the rest of their fellows. During this particular recruit course elected leaders were issued with an elasticised wrist 'sweat band'. Attached to the band was a crown insignia. The authority the group leaders exerted (a quasi-NCO function) confirmed and amplified the instructional staff's authority. None of the group leaders sought to exert any authority which was outside the normal expectations of the Unit. It seems then that whilst tribalism and the traditional authority structure was identified and used successfully, army discipline and procedures enabled the hoi-polloi to function without being compromised by obligation or custom.

My experience in Aboriginal communities is consistent with this. Sports games which demand a high level of umpiring or refereeing, especially basketball and Aussie Rules, are played very successfully by everyone. Rules are vigorously and fairly applied. What is important is that there is a complete fabric of laws, penalties and procedures which must be followed if the game is to be played well.

I firmly believe this example is analogous to the recruits' ready acceptance of Army procedures and discipline - a much more earnest acceptance than I would expect of non-Aboriginal recruits. There was an almost immediate esprit amongst the Kimbolton recruits. This was recognised and encouraged by using training and testing procedures with a heavy competitive element, by the development of team games in addition to the more usual PT and by active participation of staff in all such activities.

All groups coped with new and unusual experiences with aplomb. Most of the dire warnings I offered the RSM as personal opinion prior to the course were unnecessary.

It requires some sort of mental calisthenic to juxtapose the recollection of a very creditable passing out parade (reviewed by John Edwards the Regional Administrator for the Kimberleys) and the equally tightly choreographed traditional dancing the night before.

Australia's elite SAS regiment was involved as a component of the instructional staff. For the fellows to have earned their grudging admiration by the end of the course was a signal achievement when it is remembered that SAS accept fewer than ten per cent of applicants into their regiment from other corps in the Regular Army.

Night stalking and navigation gave an excellent opportunity for the Kimbolton recruits to demonstrate their excellent stalking, stealth and camouflage/concealment abilities, at one stage managing to approach within two metres of staff poised on a moonlit quartz outcrop!

Any difficulties encountered were of a minor administrative nature. The Army displayed a very considerable concern for the recruits at all times. Two recruits were repatriated by Caribou transport to Bathurst Island to attend a relative's funeral; two medical evacuations to Derby; the provision of a medical officer for the duration of the camp and luxuries like cold soft drinks and a weekly beer issue are only some of the minutiae for which the RSM had to provide.

That the recruits are truly Aboriginal and not town sourced and much influenced by white contact was borne out a number of times. I was particularly amused one night, about 0300, when awoken by loud cries. Half the camp seemed to be pattering around. They would belt across one side then rush back to the other. In the light of a 'torch, battery, mapping for the use-of' the story was gradually elicited. One of the group leaders had been awoken by a spirit grabbing his leg and he had tap danced along the sleeping members of his tent. They in turn jumped up and added to the confusion. Several fellows were hurt as they stumbled over guywires and pegs and everybody looked a little shamefaced, laughing uncertainly until everything quietened down. There was much banter later on but one of the older recruits did confide later that he thought the spirit had been that of the Tiwi man who had died and whose funeral two others had flown to attend.

There are many aspects of the course performance which provide insights into the tribalism and consequence of these men. What precisely their motivation to enlist in the Army Reserve is deserves a much longer consideration. Everybody wore their uniform well. Each treated weaponry with the respect the Army applauds. Innate skills like bushcraft raised self-esteem and confirmed the relevance of their contribution. Sympathetic and considered instruction bridged academic limitations. This was an excellent opportunity to show flair and intelligence unhampered by uncertain linguistic or academic abilities.

Recruits were not intimidated by the formidable barracks-parade ground-military complex of, say, Larrakeyah. They could 'see the bush' as one recruit from Nguui described it when I asked him why he liked doing the course at Kimbolton.

The modest tax-free wages don't appear to be an incentive. Only four recruits were unemployed and the Groote Eylandt contingent were all employed by Gemco at very high rates of pay.

An adult educator at Santa Teresa, Brother Cletus Reid, has written what he describes as a 'transactional analysis' of level and type of jobs Aborigines have. The main thrust of what he writes is familiar to most observers of the employment of Aborigines - almost all have unskilled jobs and virtually none have skilled or managerial positions.

I believe that it should be possible to train selected Aborigines for management without requiring some sort of progression from postboy to prime minister.

Maybe the Army Reserve offers a subliminal appeal in this area: the opportunity to contribute innate skills and learnt skills to a situation which clearly recognises performance and responsibility. By the time a further camp at Tindal is held in March next year the first wholly Aboriginal NCO's will have progressed through the training system.

In a social climate which is loathe to recognise Aboriginal achievement and extraordinarily adept at discerning failure this very considerable and somewhat courageous Army Reserve/NORFORCE initiative may well effect a minor social change for the better in the Northern Territory whilst refining a body of men with pertinent skills and a unique contribution to make to Australia's defence profile in the North.

I have an interesting letter to quote in conclusion.

As requested by you, I trained 13 natives in musketry, hand grenade and military scoutcraft for eight days at Liveringa Station and submit the following report -

(a) They were station natives, with two exceptions, unable to understand ordinary English. Instruction was difficult and had to be given in pidgeon English.

(b) They were shy at first; some were frightened. This wore off as they began to understand the purpose of the training. At all times, from start to finish of the course, they were eager to learn. They were triers all the time.

(c) Half-way through the course they knew they were being trained to fight the Japs. They stated they would be quite willing to fight alongside the white men.

(d) Nearly all the natives had fired sporting rifles. They soon mastered care and cleaning of arms and before and after every parade, cleaned their rifles thoroughly.

(e) For mobility as a party some squad drill was necessary. They quickly learned to fall in correctly and to move off in formation and in step. Given uniforms, they would have looked a smart, virile squad, but uniforms were not available.

(f) They progressed well with loading and aiming instruction. I had to use live cartridges for loading practice, having no dummies. I took reasonable precautions against accidents but found the natives themselves were most careful.

(g) In a trench under fire with the white squads, machine guns and rifles were fired at the parapet, with grenade explosions just beyond. The natives showed no trace of fear. It was thought by some white station men that they would panic but they were as cool as the whites.

(h) In the grenade throwing competition at the end of the course, their accuracy was uncanny. They scored more hits than both white squads combined.

(i) They took readily to extended order work and soon learned the signals. I exploited their own natural gifts of bushcraft by pointing out sheep or kangaroos representing Japanese and giving them simple tactical schemes. Their methods of stalking were a revelation in silent, unseen movements.

(j) They took an intelligent interest in the tactical schemes in which they were allotted roles with the whites. In ambush, they camouflaged themselves most effectively. At night one white patrol leader said he used a native as his eyes and ears - that the native, long before he heard or saw the 'enemy', touched him and pointed them out.

(k) Right through the course the natives' discipline was excellent.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

I recommend as follows:

(a) That the natural ability of the natives of the North West should be exploited and adapted for defence purposes.

(b) That (say) 250 Kimberley natives should be organised and trained as a Native Auxiliary Corps (volunteers) on the same lines as the V.D.C. with a view to allotting parties of them to each commando in the field. Without natives, the commandos will be ineffective.

(c) That the officer and N.C.O.'s appointed to command and train the natives should be carefully selected. It is not enough to say that a man is suitable for this work because he has been among natives all his life. He must be understanding and have sympathy as well as firmness. He must also have confidence in the natives and believe that they are capable of the work they will be expected to do. Most white men have no confidence in the natives and no belief in their capacity, yet strangely enough the natives perform most of the station work. On police patrols, it is the native tracker who makes the final reconnaissance and capture.

(d) That this be treated as urgent. If you endorse my recommendations and the army adopts yours, then time is the essence of the contract. There need be no great expense in money, material or white man-power. The decision should be made quickly and the officer selected to organise should be given authority and facilities to go ahead and work out his own problems on the spot. Every detail cannot be worked out in advance.

That was written in July 1942 by an Australian Army regular to a Major Mitchell in Broome. There is a margin note on the document itself. It reads 'things haven't changed in 40 years'. In a sense they haven't. The Aborigines are still waiting for their abilities to be recognised, their potential to be realised and to become part of Australian society.

Whoever would have supposed that the Army would engage an opponent as formidable as that!

Charlie McRoberts

REPORT FROM AN ADULT EDUCATOR IN SITU

The Community

Pularumpi is a community of over 400 persons most of them Tiwis. In the period January to November 1980, the population grew from 250 to 427 and since then has remained fairly stable for the last 12 months at around the latter figure. There have been few births, but fewer deaths, 3 nuclear families have moved in during the last dry season, and several whites. The permanent white population is still low, at present 25, but the floating white population is now 18, all contracted labourers. There is a mixed race population of 64, and a Tiwi population which varied between 300 and 350 throughout this year.

The primary school and pre-school have an enrolment of 65, with a teaching staff of 7. There are, at present, 14 secondary students at Nguiu, in Darwin or elsewhere. Children too young for school presently number between 60 and 70.

This leaves an adult population, with a call on the services of Tertiary and Further Education (TAFE), of at least 240, if we include only permanent residents. To meet the needs of these people, there is a permanent adult education (AE) staff of two, presently supplemented by four part-time instructors (PTI), two for the women's group, and one teacher of engineering and one of mathematics, for more formal courses.

TAFE has always seen the role of AE as that of education for adults and the facilitation of that role. This must depend on the AE's staff having the trust of the community, being identified clearly in the community's mind as educators of adults, and being completely au fait with the changing situation in any particular community. This requires long-range planning and a long-term commitment. Yet a professional sanity must also be maintained if the adult educators are to be successful within their clearly defined role in the education of adults only.

The community expects the AE to help in a multitude of ways. In many respects, the AE is seen as points-man for each section of the community in its dealings with other sections. Thus, workers will come to the AE staff with queries and grievances about pay and conditions which require answers from the employer concerned. The adult education staff are also faced with a similar situation in the community's external dealings, such as social security matters, which are of great concern to any society with comparable literacy skills; the same applies in all dealings with outside agencies which produce paper work, such as Darwin Hospital, Absec from Commonwealth Education, the Police Department and so on. Very few of these bodies rely on anything other than the written word to communicate with the population they seek to serve, relying instead, and forcing the community to rely on, the presence on-site of an adult educator who can translate their written injunctions into forms, words, structures and meanings intelligible to the community. When they do visit to explain these injunctions, they usually seem to maintain eye-contact with the white and perhaps the mixed race people, but rarely with the people they are 'speaking to': whilst this is a common failing, the word to be emphasised here is the latter, not the former. Any exceptions to this rule - and there are some (for example, Ian Pitman of the Liquor Commission, the local area officer of DCD and the Chief Minister) - develop an empathy with their audience that helps their cause immensely.

We have now passed to the other side of the coin, that the adult education staff are also points-men for outside agencies in their dealings with the members of the community. Thus, the Army in its present program to establish Norforce is using the services of the adult educators. The Electoral Office uses the adult educators in voter education (political education must remain the province of the political parties; this is normal); the Health Department used adult educators to facilitate the introduction on September 1 of new hospital charges. Darwin Community College, Department of Employment and Youth

Affairs and Community College of Central Australia use adult educators to disseminate information on their courses. The list of organisations that use adult education is a comprehensive listing of NT organisations. Companies and firms also use adult educators to ascertain the mood, desires and intentions of the community. Thus Tiwi Tours maintains a lively correspondence with me; Bridge Autos, Air North, Price Waterhouse, Rose and Sciacca and others also have contacted me as circumstances demanded. A construction company, Robinson and Bryd, engaged in sub-contract work from Council, has contacted me on numerous occasions for help in explaining the requirements of FFRCI.

All this is logical, and professional. Adult education has no axes to grind with anybody; we have a clearly defined role, to educate adults in the community, which is widely recognised. We are on-site, trained educators and, as such, with no interest in the acquisition of temporal, temporary power, pose no threat to other organisations or to the community, at the same time as we are conversant with both the local community and the larger community and therefore able to interpret one for the other. The word 'facilitator' has been over-used in this context, and the word 'conduit' now has sanitary overtones, but they aptly describe this single section of the role of the educator, a role visible to both communities and the value of which is recognised by both communities.

Nonetheless, expectations of community education and the education of adults do vary between communities, depending on the capabilities of the community and of the adult educator placed in that community. This emphasises the individuality of each adult educator, and must result, as it does, in two things: firstly, adult education in each community develops an individual character of its own, reflecting the local situation of both the community and the adult educator. Secondly, the adult educator is isolated from his professional companions, not only spatially, but also professionally because of the large variations in adult education. This breeds in the adult educator feelings of loneliness, of professional uncertainty, and makes the adult educator, a highly visible figure in the community, vulnerable to concerted action by any group that outnumbers the local adult education staff. This vulnerability cannot be assuaged by any examination of the past history of TAFE, with its sorry recital of accusations against it by other sections and organisations, usually based on a thorough lack of understanding of the nature of non-formal education and adult education. One wearies of visitors asking 'Where is your classroom?', and their failing to understand that the adult educator's class is wherever the adults are, that each instance of human contact is a class. It should also be readily discernible that such non-formal education requires that the adult educator be a thorough professional, able to establish instantly the methodology and behaviourist principles appropriate to these situations, which can develop anywhere, anytime, and can easily fill an entire day. This lack of understanding of the principles of non-formal education and of adult education is further displayed by an emphasis that 'channels' must be followed in the procurement of teaching materials. Adult education programs do not have a captive audience, as do school-based programs; adult education programs must therefore instantaneously be able to satisfy any expressed need for local adults, before the adults' interest is reclaimed by other concerns such as family, work, local politics, food, shelter or ceremonial concerns. Any dilatoriness by support staff jeopardises all efforts by adults to improve themselves, and cannot therefore be excused. NT TAFE has always understood this and tried to enable field staff to bypass normal procurement procedures, and this is to be applauded as the professional concern it is.

This should not lead us to any conclusion that there are then no expressed and continuing needs in adult education, or that communities have no clear perception of what they can obtain from adult education. There are definite perceptions and definite expressed needs. These include student driver education, literacy and numeracy, bookkeeping and technical skills for local enterprise.

Student driver education (SDE) can occupy all of an adult educator's working hours, if one lets this situation develop. The needs here are visible and deeply rooted in the long distances of the environment and the perception in the communities that the vehicle is a necessity. These needs include not only the A class licences which are the preoccupation of urban student driver training, but also C class licences, to drive trucks, graders, loaders and other plant. Councils need these trained operators. Local people need work. The two needs are happily married in this program. At the explicit request of the community and Tiwi Tours, I have recently trained a D class driver to

operate the Council bus for local use and for the tourist industry. We need more bus drivers but at present we are stymied by a lack of suitable local manpower. To this end, Council has chosen three more young men who now have their A class licences, thanks to a week-long intensive session conducted on-site by TAFE's SDE division. The next step is for them to be trained for C class and, eventually, D class. This is a long-term program, requiring the continuous on-site presence of an adult educator. Road safety education, a highly important concern on communities, also calls for student driver education courses.

The need for literacy and numeracy classes for adults reflects the growing awareness of the disability caused by illiteracy. Expressed need for this also reflects communities' concern over the products of the present formal system. Pularumpi Council has several times expressed concern over this problem, to which there are no easy answers. Certainly, a single adult educator cannot hope to solve this problem in the community, exacerbated as it is by physical disabilities such as the 70 per cent incidence of hearing problems amongst Tiwi children. All education programs must take account of such learning disabilities.

At the moment, adult education here at Pularumpi has only one formalised literacy/numeracy program with a group of six old men for three to four hours per week, conducted by the adult education assistant who is using texts of the Summer Institute of Linguistics to teach literacy, using Tiwi as the medium of learning. Other but informal lessons are conducted as situations develop, using social security forms, taxation forms, census forms, hospital bills, court and police forms and so on. Such education has the benefits of immediacy, total relevance to the needs of the individual concerned and the lack of daunting institutionalisation: the drawbacks are that it is ad hoc, only intermittent, takes a long time and places great stress on the educator.

We also have other classes in English for special purposes (ESP), allied for the demand for locally-applicable technical skills. Two female PTIs instruct the three female health workers for six hours each week. One of the health workers is undertaking a correspondence course this year in Year 12 English and, we hope, will undertake Year 12 maths and biology next year, which will enable her to enter nursing training at Casuarina Hospital. All three health workers have, thanks to this program and the active participation in it of the Health Department and its local staff, now been promoted as far as they can go. One of the health workers and her sister are also undergoing SDE training for their A class licences, involving 5 hours driving per week in the Education vehicle.

Other ESP courses include the upgrading of the adult education assistant's English to a level acceptable for the final year of training at Batchelor, necessary for him to become a fully-qualified teacher acceptable to the NTTF as a permanent employee; and the apprentice's program, which involves the adult educator and two PTIs in daily instruction in English and maths to a group of two apprentices (electrical trades and mechanics), one trainee plant operator (power-house), 4 others whom we hope to educate to a standard where they can pass the entrance examination and undertake correspondence courses in their apprenticed trades (plumbing, carpentry and joinery, bricklaying), and 4 others who require remedial work in English and maths to help them in their employment with the local essential services group. All of these are locally employed and only two might eventually leave the Tiwi islands. The range of capabilities in this group and the wide variation in present levels of competency mean that a large amount of time must be spent by the educators in preparation just for this lesson. It should also be noted that this single class requires us to co-operate with the local Council, Housing Association and Essential Services group and the Industrial Training Commission (ITC), Transport and Works (T&W) and Aboriginal Development Commission (ADC), by co-ordinating the training activities of these different groups. The ITC and T&W are directly involved in this training and have provided invaluable assistance. The Darwin Community College is also extremely co-operative as is the NT Secondary Correspondence School led by Margaret Rudwick at Dripstone High School. Local circumstances only have prevented us from availing ourselves further of the assistance offered us by these two organisations.

As far as bookkeeping and office skills are concerned, adult education has always been heavily involved in the training of local office staff, by both the local adult education staff and the peripatetic commercial educator. At Pularumpi four women are now highly-skilled and competent in this area, one woman has fair competency and another woman

and one man need much more instruction. Of these, only four are at present employed (by Council, farm, housing and essential services), the rest forming a reserve pool of trained labour used in cases of sickness or leave amongst the permanent staff. One of these staff is undertaking a correspondence course in accounting from TAFE in Western Australia and has almost reached the limits of this adult educator's ability to tutor her; it is therefore more to be lamented that, for reasons of economy, TAFE was not able for most of this year to fill the position of peripatetic adult educator, vacated in April: the position has been advertised nationally and should be filled soon. Then this program can continue, enabling the community to maintain local supervision of finances. This will further the cause of self-management. In this respect, it should be noted that in 1978/79, before this program started, the local organisations concerned paid out approximately \$62,500 to accountants and auditors in Darwin; in this last financial year, the figure was approximately \$16,500, which indicates that a considerable amount of money was retained in the community which hitherto was spent on services from Darwin. In 1978/79, two people were employed locally on bookwork, now four are, and two others have part-time employment of a somewhat regular nature.

This program of training in bookkeeping, was run on an informal basis, using the books of Council and other organisations as the main teaching aid. The methodology was cognitive, based on problem solving, expanding from there to empirical explanation of the reasons that necessitated such strict financial control. These include not only final responsibility, but also the need to establish the financial responsibility of the community with outsiders. The program has now been extended, and, as the staff attain sufficient competence, they can participate in a program of visits to Darwin so they can view the end product of their labours, gain greater understanding of the need for control, and attach faces and names to the people involved in the whole accountability process.

In addition to bookkeeping, office staff are taught how to record minutes of meetings and the auditors no longer shudder when they have to search the Council minutes for records of approved expenditure. The same applies to filing and general office procedure. The Council manager, on a purely informal basis virtually in secret so as not to diminish his station in the community, has, from time to time, approached adult educators for assistance with problems in areas of his responsibility, these problems usually being associated with paperwork and being caused by gaps in his literacy skills.

Some of the special features of the work of the adult educator may be illustrated by four new programs which I will shortly have to introduce. The first is to train a museum curator. Council, as part of its local pride and to encourage the tourist program, has recently spent \$9,000 on refurbishing the old council office as a museum. Pieces have to be collected and stored and displayed for this. A curator therefore must be trained. NT Museums and Art Galleries, especially in the person of Margaret West, has offered their full assistance with this and other matters such as the design of suitable display cases. Such assistance is invaluable but, once again, adult education is on-site and at Council's request will conduct this training program. It will include lessons in bookkeeping, as there will be an artifact shop attached to the museum.

A second job is to train a butcher for the local livestock industry recently established to help maintain protein levels in the community, provide some employment, and bring in profits. The adult educator's role here will mostly be one of co-ordination as we do not have the requisite skills, but that is fully within our charter and is a practical approach to this problem in this and similarly technical training.

A third task will be to train local personnel to take over the positions of Town Clerk and Farm Manager, at present filled by outsiders. This is at the request of Council and, for the latter position, it is necessitated by ADC grants regulations. This must be seen as a long-term project and will involve adult education in training people in all the related skills, except those purely technical ones, training which will be conducted by the whites holding those jobs.

A fourth task arises from the Environmental Health Worker Project of the Health Department which will involve adult education as the sole trainer of three local hygiene workers to keep the parks, gardens, ablution blocks and public areas clean, to operate fogging machines and other parasite-control methods and to institute preventative

community health measures. The hiatus in the implementation of this project is caused only by the Health Department's not arranging prior funding accreditation and a syllabus of training.

As well, in the new year, we will endeavour once again to interest Commonwealth Education, DEYA and other similar bodies in funding a vocational training group for young people. Also, Norforce should be instituted by then; and we anticipate a request for help from them; if the request is forthcoming and community interest makes this project viable, then we will, of course, add this to our list of programs, and willingly co-operate in any way we can.

Several problems remain and they may be enumerated to show the context in which the adult educator's work must be carried out and the pressures it can give rise to. At the level of the community itself, two groups create 'problems'. The first is the group of young women. They are a highly-motivated group, yet one with no outlet for their energies. To gainfully use the energy of this group is a problem in all societies, but it is one which can be tackled on a local level. The women want a basketball court; the Department of Community Development provided money for materials 18 months ago but the men have only recently ordered the material (the money was paid to Housing, which has only one female employee), and refuse to give any time to help the women in the construction of this. The women wanted to use a recent Land Council grant to the community to buy a women's vehicle; it will probably be used to buy a truck for Council, or a gravel-washing plant for Housing. The airline agency is held by a policeman's wife - and that is another avenue of employment closed to local women. These are problems of women in all communities. What then can be done to help? I have no answers. All I know is that there is a problem, and that the women are concerned - which is to the good.

The second is that the white population is increasing and that seems inevitably to cause factionalism, dissension and community disharmony. Council is quite capable of handling this - it is, after all, their problem; and so the adult educator interferes only when our programs are jeopardised. However, we can and do act as a conduit for complaints, formalising requests only at the express request of individuals or groups in the community, but not interfering in any other way with the transmission of them.

Problems arising from the community are compounded by those that may be described as professional. First, we are too few for the job. I am one, and my assistant is another. But we have at least 240 adults who, at various times and in various degrees, require assistance from us. We are outnumbered, and there are only 24 adult educators on establishment to cater to the adult education needs of 60 Aboriginal communities, Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Jabiru, and all other communities in the NT.

Second, improved back-up services are needed. These must be maintained and, if possible, expanded, not with desk jobs, but by an increase in peripatetic educators. I do not hold a Driving Instructor's Certificate - I have twice been enrolled on courses but have been compelled to surrender my place to urban secondary teachers needed for the urban Student Driver Education program. Consequently I have neither the expertise, methodology or piece of paper requisite for SDE. This necessitates the presence of a peripatetic SDE instructor. The recent week-long SDE visit here was invaluable to both me and the student drivers. But it cannot be repeated for over 15 months; the SDE instructor concerned has a posting next year at Batchelor College and the only other SDE person is completely tied up with urban SDE; communities cannot expect him to visit for the protracted periods necessary for this program. I also need the professional assistance of a commercial adult educator, of trained staff to help me in training tradesmen to teach apprentices and of a professional who can help the women's group. TAFE has such personnel, thoroughly professional, and doing a magnificent job, but there are not enough of them and they have too small a travel vote. However, this is a political problem and whilst I can feel the lack of services, as an educator, I must not interfere in policy and planning.

Third, a confused chain of command in the Department of Education suggests that there is a lack of trust in the adult educators which must reduce operational efficiency. It is made worse by the lack of a career structure for both adult educators and their assistants. The importance of this is that if there is high turnover experience and knowledge of Aboriginal learning patterns is lost. This brings me to another point.

Only a few people in Australia have carried out research on Aboriginal learning patterns and Stephen Harris of the Department of Education is one of them. He is held in reverential awe by all teachers in the NT and is overloaded with requests for help. The problem, exacerbated by the lack of a career structure and command structure for Aboriginal education in the NT, is also made worse by the isolation and individuality of the communities and by the lack of any objectives, expressed by the communities themselves, for their own local education.

Fifth, adult educators also have a charter to help the white members of the community and some have strongly-expressed needs to upgrade their education. In the last twelve months, the whites here have obtained my help on numerous occasions. In that same period, insofar as purely formal education is concerned, three whites have brought their anguish to me; these *cris de coeur* are genuine, and help should be given. But usually, adult educators just cannot help. Time is one problem. Another is that to do so compromises our commitment to Aboriginal Adult Education. I try to help, but it usually means night work or weekend work, and the consequent lack of rest compromises the other programs I am involved in.

Professional isolation, a sixth point, has been mentioned before. In many cases, it is further exacerbated by hostility from one's professional colleagues who simply do not understand for what one is employed. With present population levels and the huge demands on government finances, there is no solution to this problem. Humanity and professionalism remain then as the only props of the isolated adult educators, in their slow progress towards the new American invention called 'burn-out'.

Finally, there is the increased demand for the adult educator's services by outside organisations (see Appendix B). Some of these result simply from our being on-site, but most are completely our concern, that is, our organisations have programs that require Aboriginal adult education. That is our concern, it is our job and we must, and will, undertake these problems. It does help, however, if there are firm guidelines, full information on technical matters and an in-service session at least at the commencement of any program, where adult education staff can learn the intricacies of the program and can make professional suggestions on the methodology and material of the program. Co-operation is a two-way street, with normal channelling, lights to pierce the gloom, smoothed surfaces, sign-posted directions and some open vistas, danger at every crossing and all sorts of distraction on the footpaths. It can be a track through the jungle or a measured government program. But it is two-way and safety in navigating it therefore demands that each group keep to its own lane, agree on the rules and co-operate to prevent accidents.

#### Appendix A

Tasks performed by the Adult Educator for the week 21 to 25 September 1981. This was a fairly relaxed week; unlike last week with its preparation for the school fete, and instructions to the women's group on chutney-making and cake-making.

#### FORMAL PROGRAM

Hours	Tiwi literacy - by Adult Education Assistant (AEA), plus 1.5 hours preparation.
6.5	Health workers - by part-time instructor (PTI), plus 7-8 hours preparation
5.5	Apprentices - 4 by PTI, 1.5 by Adult Educator (AE), plus 7-8 hours preparation
5	Student Driver Education (SDE) by AE
5.5	Women's group - by PTI

- 5 Remedial classes for AEA - 4 by AE, 1 by PTI
- 2 Lesson preparation
- 1 Adult Education staff meeting - AE, AEA, PTI's

NON FORMAL PROGRAMS

- 3.5 Bookkeeping and office procedure - AE
- 3.5 Council meeting and procedure - AE and AEA together
- .25 Electoral education - AE
- 11.5 Social security - 7.5 by AEA, 4 by AE.

OTHER

- 2.5 Marriage counselling - AE
- 2 Job counselling - AE
- 1 Legal aid counselling - AE and AEA together
- 2 Paperwork - AE and AEA joint
- 5 Private study - AE
- 4 Preparing this report - AE; next week it is the monthly report
- 5.5 Visitors (Department of Community Development, Department of Employment and Youth Affairs, Telecom) - AE and AEA
- 3 Smoothing ruffled feathers, so the community can work smoothly - AE and AEA
- 6 Information dissemination and gathering - 4.5 by AE, 1.5 by AEA; I call it gossip - it loosens people's tongues more than some officious term. Includes contact with school principal and staff.

Appendix B

Adult Education Courses at Pularumpi

25 September 1981

CONTINUOUS

- mostly work skills
- apprentices, and remedial education leading to apprenticeships
- health worker education
- SDE, including road safety and vehicle maintenance
- bookkeeping and office skills
- training of all local staff, upon request; either remedial or technical
- resource person
- literacy and numeracy remedial teaching

CONTINUAL

- usually life skills
- electoral education
- meeting procedure
- council management
- social security matters

SPORADIC

- mostly life skills
- training of polling officials
- legal advice and assistance
- employment advice and assistance
- bank tellers and agent

PROPOSED

- museum curator
- butcher
- abattoir manager
- council accountant/Town clerk
- vocational training for both males and females
- Norforce

Ian I. Yule

SELF-SERVICE DELIVERY OF EDUCATION TO CULTURALLY REMOTE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES: THE YIPIRINYA EXPERIENCE

All Aboriginal communities in Australia are culturally distant from the dominant, non-Aboriginal society. Geographic remoteness provides a buffer between culturally contrasting societies. Cultural remoteness coupled with geographic proximity, however, highlights cultural differences to the point where cross-cultural misunderstanding becomes part of the very fabric of society. Such is the situation in Alice Springs today.

Tradition-oriented Aboriginal people have been living in fringe camps around Alice Springs for many years. In 1914, they numbered about 140 (Heppel & Wigley 1981, 7). According to the recent census, about 900 such people live in the fringe camps, now called town camps, today. Formerly thought to be transients, it is now conceded, even by government departments, that they are permanent inhabitants.

They now live in many communities on thirteen special purpose leases obtained for them by Tangentyere Council during the last four years. The lease area amounts to 3 per cent of the area making up the Municipality of Alice Springs. With this security of tenure and some funding from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Tangentyere has been providing permanent housing and essential services in the Aboriginal town camps.

These people came from untenable situations in former welfare ration stations or missions where they had been ostracised from their traditional land for generations. Others have quit repressive pastoral properties where they lived in intolerable conditions. For one reason or another, none of these people can reclaim or resettle on their traditional land. They have therefore opted to live on the outskirts of Alice Springs for subsistence, as the least forbidding prospect. Many people living in the Aboriginal town camps, however, are living on or close to their traditional land, which happens to be around Alice Springs (Mbantua). More research is needed into this subject, but the initial evidence suggests that these town camp communities should be regarded as part of the outstation movement.

All the Aboriginal town camp people have, however, retained a traditional focus for their identity. Criteria for determining this traditional orientation have been established by Berndt (1977, 2-5), namely belonging both to a tribe or larger language community and to a moiety and/or skin group in a local descent group with links to a specific land area. The cultural remoteness of these people from the non-Aboriginal suburbanites of Alice Springs was exemplified recently by the NT Minister for Lands and Housing, Mr Jim Robertson, who is also the Member for Gillen. Speaking of the Aboriginal town camp people in the Centralian Advocate (26 June 1981), he complained that they were 'ring-barking Alice Springs', impeding development with their 'so-called sacred sites'. Geographically, all the Aboriginal town camp communities are within eight kilometres of Alice Springs; culturally, they are worlds from it.

Education services have not been provided successfully to children in certain of these Aboriginal town camps around Alice Springs. The current Education Act 1979 provides that

6.(1) The Minister may take all measures which, in his opinion, are necessary or desirable -

(a) to assist parents of children in the Territory in fulfilling their responsibility to educate their children according to the individual needs and abilities of those children.

Before 1978, the Department of Education had a similar responsibility under the Federal Minister for Education. This took the form of providing a bus service to bring the town camp children into government primary schools in the town, particularly Traeger Park School.

It is unclear how such a centralised, monolingual, monocultural English medium school staffed and controlled by non-Aboriginal teachers and administrators could be expected to meet the needs of culturally-remote, tradition-oriented Aboriginal children from the town camps. It is equally unclear who had made the decision that this was the most appropriate way of responding to the individual needs and abilities of those children but it is highly unlikely that the parents made it.

For the children who attended these Departmental schools, it was generally speaking an unhappy experience, characterised by

- academic failure probably because of a lack of English literacy skills and a curriculum irrelevant to their lives;
- poor social interaction with other children from the town;
- poor relations with the non-Aboriginal teaching staff, probably for the reasons given above because of cross-cultural misunderstandings;
- intermittent attendance, which aggravated the above difficulties until the child finally left school altogether.

By 1978, most Aboriginal children from Anthepe, Nyewente, Yarrenyty-Arltere and Ilperle Tyathe had dropped out of school. The Director of Education conceded in a letter to the Director of the Institute for Aboriginal Development (1 May 1979) concerning this question 'that departmental activities had not so far met with unqualified success'. The Department of Education had failed to provide an educational service appropriate for these children in these culturally remote communities.

The fact that the children were receiving no formal education was, however, of grave concern to the parents. They vented their concern at Tangentyere meetings during 1978. They argued that if the Department of Education was unable to provide an appropriate education for their children, then the parents must do so on a self-help basis. They hoped the Department would support an initiative which they planned to fund through an innovations grant from the Schools Commission. In the event, the Department not only refused to support their initiative, but also blocked a grant which the Schools Commission was prepared to offer them (W.I. Streat to H. McCann 23 February 1979; Streat to E. Rubuntja and McCann 11 December 1979; S. Thompson to J. Eedle 11 December 1979). However, in June 1978 the parents set themselves up as the Yipirinya School Council with Eli Rubuntja as President. Classes began with volunteer staff at Anthepe, Ilperle Tyathe and Nyewente. A viable self-service delivery of education to culturally remote communities around Alice Springs had begun.

The system as it now operates under the Yipirinya School Council features Aboriginal control, emphasis on community development, a decentralised structure, the Aboriginalisation of teaching staff and a strong bicultural curriculum.

Aboriginal control refers to self-determination, the *raison d'être* of the Yipirinya Council. The parents exercise control over the school through an executive committee elected annually. At its weekly meetings, the Committee makes decisions affecting every facet of the life of the school. All committee members are signatories of the Council's bank accounts which require three signatures for withdrawals. The Council employs its own non-Aboriginal staff and Aboriginal teachers. The Council knows what kind of education it wants for Yipirinya children and ensures that this curriculum is delivered.

The concern for Aboriginal control is in line with National Aboriginal Education Committee (NAEC) policy of which the sixth aim is that Aboriginal people should be

given responsibility for the implementation of policies, funding, and administration of programs in Aboriginal education (NAEC 1978, 4).

It is also part of the federal government's policy of self-management which

has as its objectives that Aboriginals should be in the same position as any other Australians to take decisions about their future and accept responsibility for those decisions... (Chaney, 1979).

The Council exercises self-determination in the education of Yipirinya children.

The second feature of self-service delivery of education by the Yipirinya Council is the emphasis the Council places on community development. Since its inception, the Council has sought

to act to improve the living conditions and meet the needs of Aboriginal children and their families in any way which will assist them to benefit from educational programmes (Yipirinya Constitution, 1978).

The Council believes that the positive education of children takes place in context, the context of a healthy, strong, self-determining community. That is why the Council gives primacy to community development, because it is a prerequisite for educating children.

The third feature, a decentralised structure, stems from the second. Communities in seven town camps now have a Yipirinya class: Anthepe, Ilyperenye, Inarlinge, Nyewente, Yarrenyty-Arltere, Ilperle Tyathe, and Ewyenper-Atwatye. There is a high correlation between the effectiveness of tuition in each multigrade class in each camp and the degree of social cohesion in the community. The local camp environment is highly conducive to learning in that it is non-threatening to the children. Furthermore, as the camp communities are based on the traditional extended family, this means that the multigrade class has a traditional composition based on relationship rather than an alien one based on sex or ability. So the more able help the less able and no doubt gain from the experience. But more importantly, the Aboriginal identity of the children is reinforced by the decentralised structure.

The Aboriginalisation of the teaching staff is the fourth feature of the Yipirinya self-service delivery of education. One reason for relying on Aboriginal teachers to deliver the service is a concern for the 'hidden curriculum' which teachers transmit to their students. 'Hidden curriculum' has been defined as

The tacit teaching to students of norms, values and dispositions that goes on simply by their living in and coping with the institutional expectations and routines of schools day in and day out for a number of years (Apple 1979).

As the 'institutional expectations and routines' of Yipirinya School are determined by Aboriginal teachers from and in the local community itself, the 'norms, values and dispositions' transmitted would be traditional Aboriginal ones. Therefore, instead of the 'hidden curriculum' having a 'negative effect on Aboriginal self-concept' (Harris, nd. 1), it would rather help to reinforce the Aboriginal identity of Yipirinya children.

Aboriginal teachers bring a variety of other skills and abilities to the learning situation. These include the ability to relate to the children correctly, to communicate with them in their own first language, to behave appropriately in the local

socio-political environment of the community, to pass on their knowledge of Aboriginal history, lifestyle, bush skills and crafts, to use appropriate methods of teaching and evaluating pupil progress. The Council sets a premium on these qualities.

It should be noted in passing that this policy of Aboriginalising the teaching staff is in line with NAEC policy, the seventh aim of which is that

In order to ensure the effectiveness of education services for Aboriginal people, Aborigines should play the major part in the delivery of those services (NAEC 1978, 4).

The fifth and final feature of the Yipirinya self-service model is a bicultural curriculum, which, because of the Council's holistic outlook, comprises the total curriculum for Yipirinya children. The 'three r's' are taught within the structure of the Department of Education's 'core curriculum'. The uniqueness of the Yipirinya programme lies in the way the various 'subjects' are integrated into either the Aboriginal cultural programme or the non-Aboriginal one. On the one hand the integration promotes community development by giving community members an important role to play in educating the children. On the other hand, it facilitates the development of a positive primary Aboriginal identity for the children, which is a prerequisite for the acquisition of an additive biculturalism which will enable them to operate without disadvantage in either culture.

Skills and values taught in the traditional programme include the following:

traditional values: e.g.

- relationships based on the kinship system;
- a knowledge of the land based on the creation myths, e.g. the five legends concerning Alice Springs; the significance of camp names; ceremonies appropriate to different places;
- oral language: conversation, story-telling, speech-making, and etiquette;

bushcraft: e.g.

- knowledge of the land: tracking, hunting, food-gathering, medicine-gathering, finding water;
- skills: making fire, shelters, and cooking;
- crafts: making spears, utensils, matting, string.

contemporary Aboriginal values: e.g.

- land rights and Aboriginal self-determination;
- communal life-style, based on reciprocal sharing;
- skills necessary for additive biculturalism (Yule 1981, 19-20).

The content for the acquisition of additive biculturalism is based on a variety of experiences of non-Aboriginal society. These include

- service institutions: e.g. post office, police station, fire station, courthouse;
- factories and shops;
- town council chambers and politicians' offices;
- cultural events: Annual Show, concerts.

Direct experience of non-Aboriginal society is part of the content only. Perhaps the more important part is the interpretation of these experiences by the Aboriginal teachers. For what is important cognitively is how a knowledge of these features can be used to the advantage of Yipirinya children and Yipirinya communities; and affectively, how these features can be interpreted to fit into an Aboriginal world view.

These experiences also provide meaningful situations for the use of colloquial oral English, and for teaching change in money (Yule 1981, 23).

The integration of the language programmes into the bicultural programme has already been referred to. The Yipirinya Council is mounting a bilingual programme which fits the Departmental definition:

the use of two languages, one of which is English, as mediums of instruction for the same pupil population in a well organised program which encompasses part or all of the curriculum and includes the study of the history and culture associated with the mother tongue (McGill 1980, 1).

The bilingual programme being developed by the Council is a concurrent model similar to the Rock Point model used with Navajo Indian children. It is concurrent in that the vernacular and English are used as mediums of instruction throughout the programme. The domains of language, however, are separated to avoid confusion of language cues.

In the NT Department of Education Core Curriculum statements, a host of main ideas have been isolated into areas defined as Science, Health and the Arts. With its holistic approach, the Council would be anxious to teach most of these ideas to Yipirinya children, but as part of its bicultural programme and then in 'two ways'. This much at least appears to be approved in federal government policy (Chaney, 1979).

There can be no doubt that the self-service Yipirinya approach to the delivery of educational services to culturally remote Aboriginal communities provides a blueprint for such communities throughout Australia. There is some doubt about whether the kind of Aboriginal autonomy on which it is based can be achieved within the structure of the Department of Education.

Warren Snowdon

WE'VE GOT THE CULTURE, YOU'VE GOT TO CHANGE

The colonisers and the colonised

It is central to this paper that the relationship between Aboriginal Australians and non-Aborigines is essentially that between a colonised people and their colonisers. In practice this entails that most non-Aborigines, in dealing with Aborigines, ignore their values and their culture (either deliberately or unwittingly), are unwilling to acknowledge their own role as unifiers or colonisers and refuse to recognise the ability or right of Aborigines to make decisions about their future and about aspects of the dominant culture they want to incorporate into their own culture. It is implicit that, in the colonial situation, cultural remoteness is to be distinguished from and is at least as important as geographical remoteness.

A primary purpose of the coloniser is the economic exploitation of the colonised (Carnoy 1974, 61). In the Australian context this has meant primarily, and continues to mean, the appropriation of Aboriginal land for the purposes of the coloniser, including resource development and the exploitation of Aboriginal labour.

A second point to be recognised is that the relationship between the colonised and the coloniser is one in which the colonised do not have the freedom to choose between being colonised or not. Their inability to free themselves from the colonisers means that, as a people, they are progressively alienated from their traditional values and practices by the dominant group, the colonisers, in order that the colonisers' basic wants and needs can be met.

Thus Aboriginal Australians are forced to abide by the laws, rules and regulations that non-Aborigines enact. Decisions of what is culturally appropriate or acceptable are made by the colonisers, non-Aboriginal Australians. This is particularly so in relation to land which is even more important in Aboriginal society than in White Australian society. Land for Aborigines is sacred, inalienable; people have an 'incontrovertible' right to possess it, they are spiritually linked with it, or a specific site in it, by birth and ritual cycles maintaining the link. It is a living thing, held in care by Aborigines, which dies if it is neglected - and ravaged by white men's 'senseless' practices of stocking and cropping (Berndt and Berndt 1964, 138; Latz and Griffin 1978, 80).

In appropriating the land from Aborigines, 'White' Australians, consciously or unconsciously, have alienated and continue to alienate Aborigines from important aspects of their culture. As well, the continuous encroachments into the traditional environment of Aborigines had, and have, devastating effects on their traditional economic practices. Since white occupation there have been dramatic changes to the ecosystems of Australia: cattle and sheep grazing in particular have caused a rapid depletion in traditional Aboriginal food sources.

In addition to the destructive land management practices used by non-Aboriginal Australians which made it impossible for many Aboriginal people to carry out their traditional economic practices, many Aboriginal people have been prevented from travelling over their traditional country and thus from maintaining their knowledge of the land and its resources. This process of alienation was exacerbated by the movement of large numbers of Aboriginal people onto government settlements and missions, where attempts were made to assimilate them into white society by 'education and example' (Latz and Griffin 1978, 79).

Rowley, writing on the role of missions in the early nineteenth century, talks of their role in 'civilising' Aborigines. He notes that the reserves onto which the indigenous population were herded were small areas of land away from the good economic

land required by the colonists. The size of the reserves, which were to be too small to allow for the traditional 'uncivilised' pursuits of the Aborigines, were calculated to encourage an emphasis on agriculture (Rowley 1970, 98).

The missionaries themselves, while mostly people of good will, had as their main purpose the salvation of souls (Rowley 1970, 96, 97). The role of the missionaries was reinforced by the administrative policies of successive colonial governments. The property rights of Aborigines were abrogated with the introduction of the rule of non-Aboriginal law. There were no attempts by the colonisers to recognise or to come to terms with traditional Aboriginal social and economic relations. There was little change to this situation until the early 1970s.

A key aspect of the approach adopted by the missions and government as they fought to control the minds of Aboriginal children and re-socialise them towards the norms of the majority culture was to disrupt the traditional socialisation patterns of Aboriginal culture (Rowley 1970, 102).

This approach is still widespread, as non-Aborigines in positions of authority strive to impose their will upon Aboriginal people. Of course over recent years the role of the missions has changed markedly (see Uniting Church, 1974 and Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, 1978). However, generally speaking, the administrative policies applied to Aborigines throughout Australia are still, to a large extent, assimilationist. It is worth recalling here the objectives of the assimilation policies that were made redundant with the introduction of the policy of self-determination in 1972.

The policy of assimilation seeks that all persons of Aboriginal descent will choose to attain a similar manner and standard of living to that of other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community, enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities and influenced by the same hopes and loyalties as other Australians. Any special measures taken are regarded as temporary measures not based on race, but intended to meet their need for special care and assistance and to make the transition from one stage to another in such a way as will be favourable to their social, economic, and political advancement (Parliament of New South Wales 1981, 5).

#### Contemporary Colonial Practice

The present Commonwealth government (the body with the primary responsibility for 'administering' Aboriginal affairs in Australia) has a policy of self-management with regard to Aborigines. The objective of this policy is:

... that Aborigines should be in the same position as any other Australians to take decisions about their future and accept responsibility for those decisions (Department of Aboriginal Affairs 1979, 7).

Just what freedom non-Aboriginal Australians have to make decisions about their futures is of course a questionable point. However, what is clear is that governments and government officials take the view at all levels that, because they perceive Aboriginal people as being part of the society they govern, then they have the right and obligation to make decisions about them and for them. For example the Lord Mayor of Darwin feels able to say that he will force Aboriginal people from many different areas who are camping in and around Darwin to camp at Kulaluk, on Larrakia land (Bunji October 1981, 1).

The Commonwealth government's Law Reform Commission feels competent to make judgments about what Aboriginal law should be tolerated within the framework of the non-Aboriginal legal code. On the question of whether or not some Aboriginal people should be allowed to carry out traditional punishments such as spearing, the Commissioner said that:

On balance, however, they (the Commissioners) take the view that spearing and other forms of wounding should be prohibited (Law Reform Commission 1980, 56).

These examples demonstrate that non-Aborigines believe they have the right to determine how Aboriginal people should relate to non-Aboriginal Australia. Aborigines are given very little discretion about what should be done. It is assumed that they should accept the same value systems as the wider Australian community. A decision of the Law Reform Commission to prohibit Aboriginal people from continuing to administer their own law is potentially socially destructive and goes against what many Aboriginal people themselves say they want. For example in their submission to the Law Reform Commission the tribal elders of Roper River said in relation to alcohol:

This is a matter for white person's law. If a person brings alcohol into Roper River without a permit then this matter can be properly handled by white person's law. However, if a person breaks traditional law by say, drinking alcohol and walking into a sacred ceremony whilst under the influence of alcohol, he should be first punished by the elders. The European legal system should recognise the right of the elders to punish such persons, even by physical punishment, including spearing in the leg, if necessary. We believe that there should be a Registry set up under European Law recognising the rights of tribal elders to traditionally punish persons who offend our Sacred Law. If necessary our tribal elders can then refer the offender to the police to be dealt with under European Law if such action is appropriate (Resolutions passed by Tribal Elders of Roper River, undated [1980]).

These Aboriginal people are stating quite clearly that they feel that they should be the ones to decide what offences should come under the jurisdiction of Aboriginal law.

#### Authority and Schools

However, it is in the area of education that I believe the impact of the colonisers in Australia, on Aboriginal culture, has been and is perhaps most pervasive and destructive. Schools are the institutions in contemporary western society for preserving and handing on culture to future generations. Schools reflect the paramount values of the society they serve (Shipman 1975, 16). Schools assign roles which the students are expected to learn (Illich 1973, 10, 11). At the same time they claim a monopoly over education, Illich argues:

School appropriates the money, men, and good will available for education and in addition discourages other institutions from assuming education tasks (Illich 1973, 15).

Aboriginal people throughout Australia are increasingly voicing their awareness of and their dissatisfaction with departmentally administered schools in Australia (see Snowdon 1981a).

An Aboriginal man talking of the need for Aboriginal people to control the education of their children has said:

We've got to lay the foundation for our children, when we go there will be no-one who knows the law and ceremonies. We have got to have our own schools. When they go to the Government school they don't learn our way. We have to prepare things for our children ([My emphasis] Pers. Comm.)

Apart from those few schools in Australia which are controlled by Aborigines, what is taught in school, how it is taught and the way these schooling processes are organised is determined by the dominant cultural group.

It is true that Aborigines, like other people, need to acquire certain skills and knowledge. Some of their needs derive from their involvement with the wider Australian society, with the dominant culture. However, to insist that they acquire these skills and knowledge in schools designed to meet the needs of the dominant culture intensifies the pressure on them to become wholly assimilated into it; to become part of its economic system and to accept its priorities and values. Since most Aborigines wish to preserve for themselves and their children the essentials of their culture and the values it embodies they distrust and fear the effects of schooling on their children: the confusion and conflict which it generates in them; between them and their elders; between them and children drawn from the wider society. The school program initiated by Yipirinya council has been designed to avoid this confusion and conflict. The idea behind it has been described thus:

The parents perceived both Government and non-Government schools in Alice Springs as alien institutions: monolingual and monocultural, in which foreign teachers offered their children foreign content in a foreign manner (Rabuntja and Yule 1981, 1).

But the school also sought governmental recognition and acceptance and until recently, the Northern Territory Department of Education has consistently refused to recognise its program. The primary concern of the Aboriginal people involved in the Yipirinya School Council is that they should control what was taught, who teaches it, and how it is taught to their children. The Department of Education has in the past not been prepared to allow them to do this.

(Yipirinya school was in the news after this paper was written [editor]. Education authorities were still considering an application by the Yipirinya School at Alice Springs for registration as a non-government school, a department spokesman said recently. Representatives of Yipirinya, an Aboriginal community school controlled by an autonomous Aboriginal Council, have complained a decision has still not been made on the application submitted on June 22 last year ...

Yipirinya was established in 1978 by Aborigines living in town camps around Alice Springs who were concerned their children were dropping out of conventional schools. They decided to set up their own school in the town camps to ensure their children received a more appropriate kind of education.

The school now runs classes in eight town camps with Aboriginal teachers delivering a bilingual bicultural curriculum using Aboriginal teaching styles. The town has been unable to obtain government funding within the government schools system and applied for non-government school registration in June last year. Education inspectors checked out various aspects of the Yipirinya program in November and their report, along with

recommendations from departmental officials, was submitted to Mr Robertson by December 4.

A spokesman for Mr Robertson said yesterday registration of a school was a very long process requiring careful study of many large documents, and consideration of departmental advice on curriculum requirements...NT News 2 March 1982).

Young argues that:

...education is not a product like cars and bread but a selection and organisation from the available knowledge at a particular time which involves conscious or unconscious choices (Young 1971, 24).

He asserts that it is those in positions of power who define what knowledge is, who will have access to that knowledge and what the relationship will be between the various areas of knowledge and those who have access to them and make them available.

This attitude has been reflected elsewhere in the Northern Territory government's general policies on Aboriginal education. In the introduction of the Primary Core Curricula for Northern Territory Schools, the Secretary of that Department wrote:

The core curriculum in the Northern Territory consists of those skills and understandings which all students are expected to master and those educational experiences which they should have during their school years (NT Department of Education 1981c) [My emphasis].

No reasons are offered why students should master particular skills and understandings that, at least in the first instance, have been chosen because of their relevance to the dominant cultural group. This core curriculum is, for Aboriginal people, an imposed curriculum which may or may not reflect Aboriginal perceptions of what is necessary. Rather, it represents the Department's view of what society as a whole requires.

The core curriculum is the basis of the recommended curriculum for each subject. It consists of those skills and understandings deemed essential for students to master and those essential educational experiences they must have had before they leave school (NT Department of Education, 1981a 39) [My emphasis].

As far as I am aware there was no consultation with or involvement by Aboriginal people in formulating the Green Paper.

The Department noted in the Green Paper that prescribed curricula based on the core would be developed, but acknowledged that programs were to be devised for Aboriginal students and that at times these may be different in some respects from the core defined for Northern Territory students as a whole. Nevertheless, despite some concessions designed to take some account of cultural differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians it was clearly stated in the document that:

The end point of each course will be the same.

One of the areas in which a core statement was formulated was that of 'Social and Cultural Education', an area in which Aboriginal people would have wished to have some input. To formulate the core statement, one subject area committee and seven sub-committees were established, comprising in total about thirty-three people. Not one of these was Aboriginal.

It seems clear that the policies the Department has been implementing and the lack of consultation between the Department and the Aboriginal population of the Northern Territory (about 25 per cent of the total), indicate that the Department has as its objective a conformist largely mono-cultural education on all people within the Northern Territory regardless of their cultural heritage.

A system of bilingual education has been developed for a limited number of Aboriginal schools in the Northern Territory. The program is not merely a literacy program designed to provide students with the opportunity to become literate first in their own vernacular and later in English.

It is an academic program in which the two languages in both the oral and written forms are used as mediums of instruction where appropriate (NT Department of Education 1980, 1).

The aims set out for the Bilingual Education Program are interesting:

- To develop competency in reading and writing in English and in number to the level required on leaving school to function without disadvantage in the wider Australian community.
- To foster greater proficiency in school work through the use of the Aboriginal language where appropriate by developing initial literacy in the vernacular.
- To develop sufficient skills in Oral English before attempting to teach specific subject matter in that language.
- To present subject matter in the language most appropriate for the instructional purpose.
- To develop competency in reading and writing in the Aboriginal language.
- To develop closer communication, involvement and mutual understanding between school and both the immediate and wider communities.
- To develop a better understanding of both cultures - that of Aboriginal people themselves (and not only a particular community) and of the dominant non-Aboriginal society (NT Department of Education 1981b, 8).

An earlier document included an additional aim:

- To develop a more healthy self-concept in each child through the systematic use of the Aboriginal language as well as English as a medium of instruction, and the incorporation of studies of other aspects of Aboriginal culture (NT Department of Education 1980, 3).

It is not clear why this particular objective was dropped nor is there in either document any rationale for the selection of these particular aims. The evaluation procedures which the Department has laid down for bilingual programs are designed to ensure conformity to the aims.

Satisfactory achievement of the aims within policy as outlined above will then entitle a school which has been operating a bilingual programme to be called a Bilingual School and retain an appropriate staffing and resources entitlement. Should a school not be able to show

satisfactory achievement of the aims or is [unable to] demonstrate that sufficient progress has been made towards achievement of the aims by the end of 1982 school year, the programme may be discontinued in that school (NT Department of Education 1980, 15).

This appraisal procedure compels adherence to the departmental perceptions of what is appropriate and satisfactory in a bilingual program and leaves little room for Aboriginal assessment of results, innovation and new initiatives or diversion from the aims that the Department has set.

When a group of Aboriginal teachers got together (as members of a Standing Committee on Aboriginal Education of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation [NTTF]), to discuss the Department's Green Paper, they found the aims for bilingual education for the Territory unacceptable. They emphasised that the bilingual program should reinforce Aboriginal values and identity. Their aims were as follows:

- To develop a healthier self-concept in each child through the systematic use of the Aboriginal language initially and the incorporation of studies of other aspects of Aboriginal culture.
- To develop competency in speaking.
- Reading and writing in the Aboriginal language to reinforce Aboriginal identity and culture.
- To develop sufficient skills in oral English before attempting to teach specific subject matter in that language.
- To develop competency in reading and writing in English and in number to the level required on leaving school to function without disadvantage in the wider Australian community (NTTF Minutes of Meeting, Aboriginal Education Standing Committee, Batchelor College, 4 April 1981).

There is a conflict between the aims as listed by the Education Department and those listed by the Aboriginal teachers. The Aboriginal teachers concerned would not purport to represent the views of Aboriginal people throughout the Territory, but their views and attitudes are certainly far more indicative of what Aboriginal people want than those put forward by the Department of Education. If a community were to adopt these aims it is to be expected that the Education Department would withhold or withdraw funding for the bilingual program because it has different aims and a quite different value orientation.

The Northern Territory Department of Education has a number of basic principles which it says are used as a guide in planning and implementing educational services for Aborigines. They are as follows:

- Aboriginal children should have full equality of educational opportunity with all other Australian children, bearing in mind relevance to context.
- The education of Aboriginal children must take cognisance of the Aboriginal and European cultures and languages and must be developed in such a way as to help Aborigines achieve an understanding of Aboriginal and European beliefs and ways.
- The Aboriginal culture must be recognised and respected by all teachers and instructors and this recognition and respect must be reflected in school programs.

- Curriculum content, methods of instruction and school organisation should be so planned and organised as to ensure to the fullest extent the transfer of school learnings to community living and to give due respect to what is learned in a community as being part of the school program.
- Education must be a basic concern of staff of all organisations located in Aboriginal communities. Whatever their specific field, their primary function must be seen as educational and directed to the continuing development of the Aboriginal people to operate effectively within the local and wider community.
- There should be recognition that the education of Aborigines in the Northern Territory is a specialist field of education and that all who work in this field need special training if educational planning and action are to be fully effective.
- There must be full involvement of the Aboriginal community in the planning and implementation of the educational program (NT Department of Education 1981b, 7).

The National Aboriginal Education Committee, on the other hand, has enumerated a different list of aims and objectives for Aboriginal education. The NAEC is an all-Aboriginal Committee with nineteen members, who come from all States as well as the Torres Strait Islands. The function of the NAEC is to advise the Commonwealth Minister for Education and his Department 'on educational needs of Aboriginal people and the most appropriate ways of meeting them' (National Aboriginal Education Committee 1980, 1).

The aims and objectives listed by the NAEC show its concern at the hegemonic nature of education in Australia. Like the revised aims on bilingual education in the Northern Territory put forward by Aboriginal teachers, the eight aims of the NAEC are that Aboriginal education policy should reinforce and re-assert Aboriginal identity and culture and that Aboriginal people should be given responsibility for the education of their children (National Aboriginal Education Committee 1980, 4, 5). There is certainly no question of subservience to the views of the dominant cultural group.

What is obvious is the marked contrast between the NAEC aims and the principles of Aboriginal education of the Northern Territory Department of Education. Whenever Aboriginal people are given the opportunity to say what they see as important in terms of content, processes and context of schooling, they demonstrate a vastly different orientation from that held by the various authorities who at present control institutionalised education in this country. Throughout the history of Aboriginal education in Australia, schools, curricula and total school systems have been established on non-Aboriginal definitions of the educational needs of Aboriginal children. Aboriginal people in various areas of Australia are now demonstrating that they are aware of the relationship between the institutionalised education process they have experienced and the cultural hegemony of non-Aboriginal Australia. As one Aboriginal person has stated:

...Aboriginal children cannot identify with the education they are being given. The school curriculum generally tends to denigrate Aboriginal people. They are made to feel that they are Jackys or like monkeys on a stick. For 200 years there has been a concerted effort to destroy Aboriginal people and their culture (Parliament of New South Wales 1981, 211).

## Hidden Curriculum

The culture of Aboriginal Australians is also being devalued by the 'hidden curriculum' of schools, that is:

The tacit teaching to students of norms, values and dispositions that goes on simply by their living in and coping with the institutional expectations and routines of schools day in and day out for a number of years.

The school as an institution is completely alien to Aborigines and it entails three separate characteristics: that it is an institution, that the educator has a distinct role in a classroom and that the forms of knowledge are incorporated into school programs and the methods for evaluation of these programs.

Whether or not Aborigines are consulted about the formal curriculum of the school, the children will be largely unaware of the hidden curriculum. Their response to the school's activities will depend upon how far they recognise, accept or share the objectives and values implicit in the curricula and upon how far those objectives and values are compatible with those of the educational experience they derive from non-school sources - particularly from the activities they share with their immediate and extended family relatives. To the extent incompatibility between these sets of values exists it can be expected to create conflict and uncertainty in the minds of those students who are subject to it.

The teachers, those people who are responsible for carrying out the socialisation procedures within the school, have themselves undergone institutionalised socialisation and learning experiences similar to the ones to which they seek to expose their students. Their experiences at teacher college or university will have provided them with the capacity and techniques successfully to deliver the socialisation and learning package provided by the school (see Persaud 1976, 90-117). In effect it is the function of teachers to perpetuate the system they have been inducted into (Bourdieu 1974, 38, 39).

Teachers carry with them into the classroom behaviour and attitudes they have developed as a result of their experiences with other major socialising agents such as the family or their peer groups (Levitas 1978, 14-20).

The degree to which a teacher may change and compromise is of course limited, as the teacher is restricted by other teachers, policy planners, and the administrators to whom the teacher is accountable as well as the limitations of his/her own training, and his/her own awareness of and sensitivity towards the culture from which his pupils come. Such a person is also restricted by other pressures such as public opinion, which may be manifest through the media or parents' organisation or through the attitude of professional educational bodies. But, as Levitas points out:

...another powerful pressure comes from the teacher himself who has internalised the norm in such a way as to make it his own ideal...(Levitas 1978, 9).

Thus, the work of non-Aboriginal teachers who teach Aboriginal children whether in urban situations or in remote communities is central to the reorientation of the children away from their own culture to the values of the majority culture and in particular those values which the school as an institution and through its curriculum seeks to foster.

Most teachers of course are passive agents and are not conscious of the role they play in causing children to question their own culture. Most non-Aboriginal teachers are themselves unaware of the values that form the basis of Aboriginal cultural tradition (See Brandl 1981).

This is not the place to examine in detail every aspect of the hidden curriculum, but it is important that recognition be given to the fact that it exists and is an extremely potent tool in re-socialising Aboriginal people towards the norms of the majority culture in Australian society.

The following are some aspects of schools that are important when considering the hidden curriculum.

- (1) The use of language in the school: is it the child's first language or is it a second language?
- (2) The organisation of the school: does it take account of traditional social relations of the culture of the children in the school?
- (3) Does the school curriculum acknowledge the roles of individuals and groups within the culture of the children in the school?
- (4) What messages do the buildings that form the school and the spatial relationships of classrooms in the school convey? (see Meighan 1981 and Snowdon 1981b).
- (5) What effect, if any, does the way the teacher interacts with the children in the class have on the way the children perceive authority?

#### Aboriginal Reaction

There is growing concern amongst Aboriginal people throughout Australia about the institutionalised education provided for their children. This includes not only all those who live in remote rural areas but also those who live in towns and cities. The cultural discontinuities that the schooling process engineers attract much of the dissatisfaction they express. An Aboriginal man at Noonkanbah explained why the people of that community wanted to start their own school:

We had the kids in a government school at Fitzroy Crossing. But they just read comics all the time and after school some of the kids would go down to the hotel and steal things and get drunk and start fights. That's what was wrong. We got away from that place (from meeting at Noonkanbah, 1 October 1980).

The people at Noonkanbah eventually began their own school. One of the things that they were able to do then was to formally teach their children their own Aboriginal language. The old man explained:

...alright, well we're starting to teach our language Walmajarri now. Before it was very hard for us to teach our children Walmajarri, because they were in Fitzroy Crossing School. They couldn't pick up our language because they kept talking English all the time. It was hard, very hard to teach the kids then... .

He also talked about the role that the old people from the community should play in the school.

...the old people should talk about everything such as stories...now the old people are around our school in the morning and in the afternoon, every morning and every afternoon. We get a big mob of old people there to tell the stories. We should be alright.

The key element in the wish by Aboriginal people to continue with traditional education is their desire to ensure cultural continuity; to exercise more social control over their children.

Some Aboriginal people are also beginning to question the orientation of the school processes, especially the emphasis on training and employment.

An old Aboriginal father and elder from Belyuen in the Northern Territory expressed his concern about this when he talked about students leaving their community, Belyuen, to go to school to train and then returning to the community after they had finished at school.

That worries me really, what they are going to do in the end...like what jobs they are going to have (Pers. Comm).

Of course this is a question which is asked by people in the wider Australian community as well. However, we need to consider that the values and aspirations of Aboriginal Australians may not require that everyone has a job. In addition we need to ask the question whether the formal education process fostered by the State actually does what it set out to do; as Friere points out:

Merely teaching men to read and write does not work miracles; if there are not enough jobs for men able to work teaching men to read and write will not create them (Friere 1972, 25).

Nevertheless, our economic system relies upon people being schooled so that they can take up jobs as they become available. It does not seem to be important that trained individuals are unable to find jobs but rather that there are trained people to fill them. Thus the Northern Territory government feels able to say that:

Although conventional employment opportunities are quite limited in isolated centres, some Territory and Commonwealth funding is available for local employment creating schemes and Aboriginal communities are encouraged to tender for and carry out a range of local projects. Post-primary and secondary education must therefore prepare students for local employment while also providing pre-vocational training for employment at main centres (Northern Territory Government 1981, 5).

I am not suggesting that Aboriginal education processes ignored the skills and knowledge to gain a livelihood. But clearly it was a different style of livelihood and the skills and knowledge were vastly different from the curriculum content of contemporary schools. That traditional knowledge and those traditional skills are still of vital importance to Aboriginal Australians. They are essential components of Aboriginal reality and thus integral to the maintenance by Aboriginal people of some degree of cultural independence

In asserting their right to pick and choose, Aboriginal people are not rejecting any association with the majority culture. They are simply asking to be allowed to integrate with their own culture those things that they feel are appropriate from the majority culture at their convenience and in their judgment.

The control of the education process is vital to the success of this selective integration. At the moment there is no doubt that, except in those cases where Aborigines control the schooling of their children, the institutionalised education process is designed to meet the perceived objectives of the majority culture. This is obvious through the nature of the structures of institutionalised education processes in Australia, especially their relationship to government and the economic objectives of the majority culture; it is manifest in both the formal and hidden curricula of school programs.

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