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ART FOR MONEY'S SAKE :
THE ART AND CRAFT ENTERPRISES ON BATHURST ISLAND :

by

MARGIE K.C. WEST

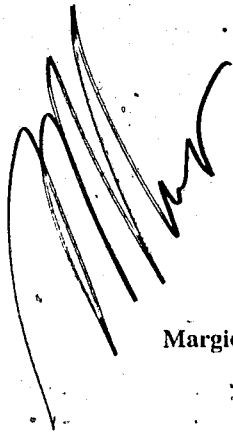


A thesis submitted as partial requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in
the Department of Prehistory and Anthropology, Faculty of Arts, Australian
National University.

DECEMBER 1988

DECLARATION

Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of several large, sweeping, and somewhat stylized loops and strokes.

Margie K.C. West



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the undertaking of this study there were many people who provided invaluable assistance, support and advice. I am especially indebted to the Tiwi people at Nguu, particularly the workers at Tiwi Designs, Tiwi Pottery and the artists of Tiwi Pima who patiently helped me with my questions and kindly allowed me to share their work space on many occasions. I owe special thanks also to the art manager, Steve Andersen who provided invaluable support and assistance on my many trips to Nguu. Assistance was also kindly provided by the Town Clerk, and the design images for this thesis was kindly granted by Tiwi Designs.

I would also like to thank my supervisors Dr. Nicolas Peterson and Dr. Luke Taylor for their help and advice and Chris Haigh who was responsible for the arduous work of typing.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

One of the recurrent themes in Aboriginal policy over the years has been the need to promote Aboriginal self-sufficiency by encouraging avenues of productive activity. Particularly for those groups living in areas that are geographically, socially, economically and politically remote from centres of employment and marketing, the production of art and craft has been seen as one of the few viable enterprises available. One of the main attractions of this activity is that it draws upon traditional practices and skills, which because of their unique quality, have some economic negotiability in the wider Australian community.

Exactly how successful such art and craft enterprise has been in fulfilling the desired policy of economic self-sufficiency will be examined in this thesis with particular reference to the art and craft enterprises on Bathurst Island.

Here, as in other Aboriginal communities throughout the Northern Territory, the people express themselves through their distinctive artistic products; products which captured the interest of a number of early visitors to the Territory. This resulted in some early collections of material culture being acquired for museums and private interests. However, as it was believed in the early part of the 20th that Aborigines were on the decline, there was no government policy directed towards their economic development. It was rather on the missions that commercialized art and craft was fostered to encourage the economic independence of the Aborigines as well as to raise money for the missions (Morphy 1983 : 38).

As early as 1935 the Methodists at Yirrkala and Milingimbi and the Church Missionary Society missionaries at Oenpelli and Groote Eylandt were encouraging their artists to produce bark paintings and other artifacts for sale (Williams 1976, Carroll 1983). This occurred at their other missions in Arnhem Land also - at Elcho and Goulburn Islands and at Roper River and Numbulwah. In Central Australia other missions followed suit, with the Lutherans at Hermannsburg fostering tourist style artifacts and carvings and then watercolour paintings for sale in the 1940's. At Ernabella, just over the NT border in SA, the Presbyterians encouraged artifact carving and introduced wool weaving as a cottage industry in 1948 (Tamura 1985).

The production of art and craft at most of these settlements intensified in the post-war period, particularly in the 1950's and 1960's and its economic potential was documented by many of the people concerned. Williams, for example has commented upon the situation which existed at Yirrkala during this period:

By the mid 1950's the mission had assumed the function of an art dealer as a means of improving the economic base of the Aboriginal community, and the sales of arts had come to be viewed as a major source of income to Aborigines (1976: 275).

The economic importance of art and craft for Milingimbi was also commented upon by Rev. Edgar Wells:

It is very significant that during our time at Milingimbi (1950-1960) on at least one occasion the annual cash income through the sale of bark paintings and artifacts from Milingimbi equalled the combined total sales of similar items from the mission stations under the care of our church (1982: 9).

While the missions were keen to maintain the manufacture of artifacts for sale, there was no real account taken of the operational expenses, such as freight, packing and the time of the mission personnel concerned. In view of this there was criticism concerning the real profitability of the enterprises at that time. For example in 1961, in a letter to the Acting Director of the Welfare Branch, the Branch Investigating Officer commented:

The Methodist Overseas Mission accounting system was such that it is difficult to determine even whether or not the profit margin was enough to cover costs of mailing and packaging and no attempt has been made to put the growing industry on a business-like basis (Jeremy Long, Investigating Officer to Acting Director, Dec. 1961 (DAA file no. 61/2557).

During the 1960's as the government was consolidating its assimilation policy objectives through increased expenditure on employment and development schemes for Aborigines, official interest in the performance of art and craft enterprises at the various missions increased. Discussions were initially generated at the biennial conferences which the NT Administration held with the missions from 1959 onwards. At this time the government was concerned that the industry be set on a much more secure footing to make it economically viable. This sentiment was encapsulated in a letter from the Assistant Director of Welfare to the Employment Administration Officer in 1962 in which he proposed the establishment of an art and craft industry to improve the economy of the missions and government settlements, by firstly undertaking market research, the training of craft workers and the establishment of a central marketing system acceptable to the missions, the Department of Welfare and the artists (DAA file no. 73/5099).

However, despite a decade of discussion and correspondence concerning the marketing of art and craft with NT Administration backing, it was the Commonwealth Government in 1971 which took the initiative of establishing an Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Marketing Company. This was made possible through the establishment of a capital fund for Aboriginal Enterprises (Peterson 1983:60). This Company was to be eventually responsible for the co-ordinated and centrally-controlled marketing of artifacts made in remote communities, through galleries located in capital cities throughout Australia.

The success of the Company's retailing of art and craft has depended upon its association with the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council (AAB) whose brief was essentially the promotion, preservation and development of the arts through funding of artistic projects. As part of their function the AAB began supplying money to communities for the salary of a craft

3
adviser to co-ordinate and manage the sales of artifacts. While there have been several changes in the structure, funding and title of the Government Company, now known as Aboriginal Arts Australia, the Company is still assuming a marketing role for communities. The AAB still maintains subsidies for the craft adviser and the operational costs of many craft producing communities along with other agencies such as the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Aboriginal Development Commission. All of these funding agencies are concerned, amongst other things, for these enterprises to become economically self-sufficient.

The importance of art and craft production to Aboriginal people in the 1980's is shown in the economic profiles on art and craft production in Central Arnhem Land compiled by Altman (1981, 1982) and government reports such as the *Report of the Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs* (Miller 1985). These indicate that art and craft production provides a significant proportion of non-welfare income to communities, particularly at outstations. The continued optimism concerning the economic viability of this form of enterprise is also encapsulated in the 1987 House of Representatives Enquiry into the Aboriginal Homelands Movement, which recommended a survey of the arts and crafts industry, concentrating on maximising returns to artists:

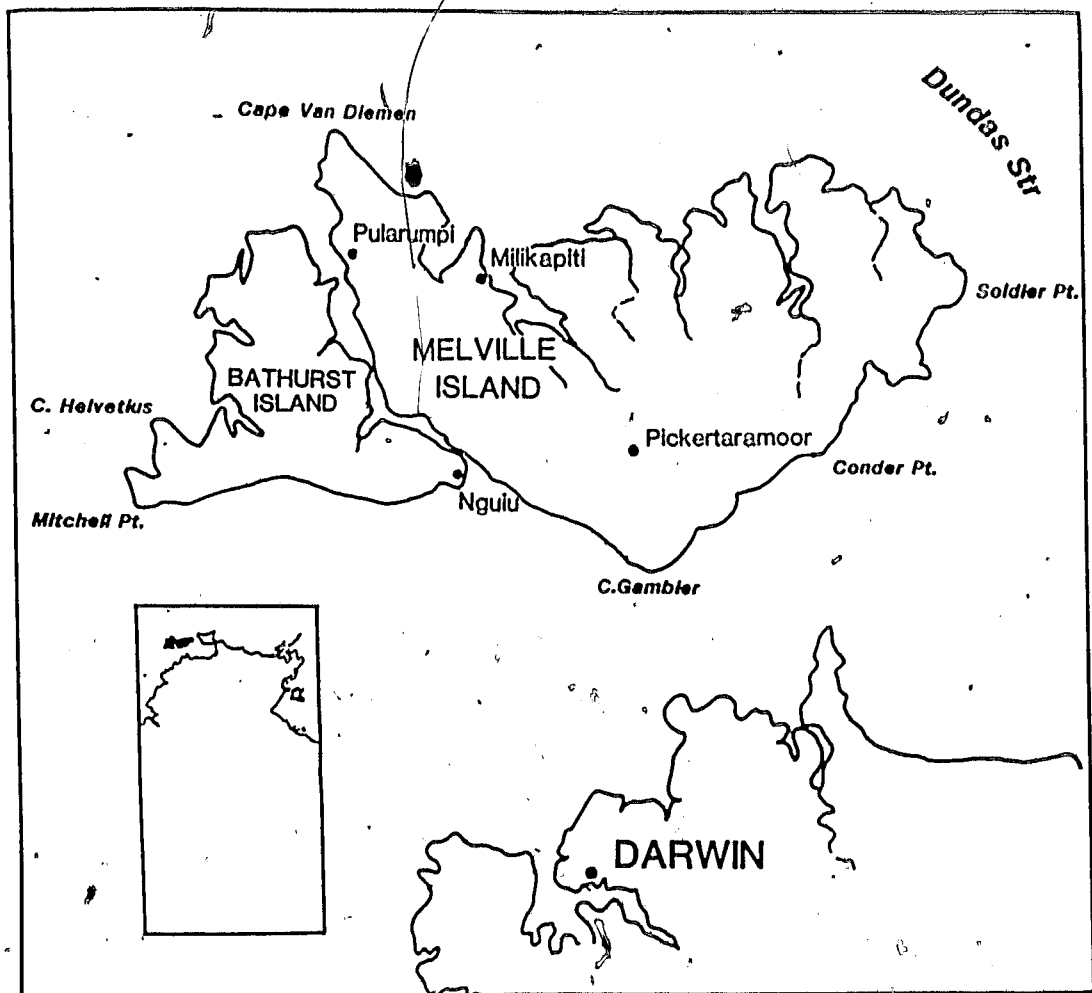
as the means by which the art and craft industry can support the homelands movement (Blanchard 1987:129).

In the Northern Territory Bathurst Island is one of the communities which has established an art and craft industry. In many respects it appears to be well situated for the establishment of a viable industry. It has an active group of artists and crafts people who are advantaged by being close to the marketing centre of Darwin. A fact which considerably reduces transport problems. In addition the Tiwi artistic system is quite unlike that of the groups living in Arnhem Land or Central Australia, in as much as it places few restraints upon the use of designs, and in fact encourages creativity within its own cultural parameters. The increased opportunities for personal expression provided by art and craft enterprises would seem to be well suited to the Tiwi artistic system and the fact that there are three different art and craft outlets on the island, two of them based on introduced techniques, would seem to support this.

However, after nearly 20 years of activity and the recent growth in the market for Aboriginal products, these enterprises have not generated the levels of income that might be expected, nor have they achieved the economic self-sufficiency hoped for by government funding agencies. This thesis will analyse the reasons why these enterprises have not generated higher levels of income yet continue to have the active support and involvement of Aboriginal people on Bathurst Island.

I begin, in Chapter 2, by examining the Tiwi artistic system with particular regard to its significance and its stress on individual creativity. Chapter 3 looks at the historic context of the development of the economy at Bathurst Island mission, now called Nguiu, while Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are profiles on the history, and economic operations of the three enterprises of Tiwi Pima, Tiwi Designs and Tiwi Pottery. Chapter 7, places the enterprises in the context of the contemporary economy of Nguiu and Chapter 8 suggests the reasons as to why the enterprises have not achieved their hoped for economic potential.

The central theme which emerges from this analysis is that the motivations of the Tiwi who are involved in these enterprises are complex and by no means congruent with those of the funding agencies, who see the enterprises only in terms of development policies and the creation of self-supporting economically viable enterprises. These largely unacknowledged cultural factors are compounded by external influences relating to the structure of the market. In combination these factors show the limitations of evaluating the success of the enterprises in terms of the narrow economic parameters laid down by Government policy.



MAP 1: MELVILLE AND BATHURST ISLANDS.

CHAPTER 2

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TIWI ART

Introduction

The Tiwi of Melville and Bathurst Islands have developed a cultural singularity which is evident in all spheres of their lives, but is most obvious in the realm of their art and material culture. This distinctiveness appears to be directly related to their isolation, which occurred around 5,000 years ago, when the rising seas of the last inter-glacial period cut the islands off from the mainland. As a result, the artistic system of the Tiwi is very different from that of the mainland groups, both in appearance as well as in the scope it gives to individual creativity. This chapter looks at the distinctive character of the Tiwi artistic system in terms of the ramifications it has for the establishment of commercialized art and craft production.

Early Ethnographic Records

The first visitors to the shores of the two islands were quick to notice the distinctive range of Tiwi material culture, their practice of decorating stringybark shelters, and erecting carved and decorated burial posts around a person's grave (Ennis 1825, Bremer 1834, Campbell 1834, Gee 1906 and Searcy 1909). As early as 1892 a substantial collection of Tiwi artifacts was put together by D.M. Sayers, a collector who sold them to the South Australian Museum. Some years later the German physical anthropologist Klaatsch, put together a collection which he sold to the Rautentrauchjoist Museum in Germany. These were later described in a publication by the curator Von Graebner (1913). Another ethnographer, Herbert Basedow, visited the islands in 1911 during his brief period as Chief Protector of the Aborigines. This allowed him to observe and later publish an account of Tiwi ethnography and material culture (1913). In 1911-1912 Baldwin Spencer visited the islands on three separate occasions and compiled a more comprehensive account of Tiwi life and the social and ceremonial context of their art and material culture (Spencer 1912, 1914). Spencer was particularly interested in the diversity of decoration and form exhibited by the artifacts made for the two major ceremonies - the burial or *pukumani* ceremony and the initiation or *kulama* ceremony.

His work showed that the Tiwi, like other Aboriginal groups, produced their most elaborate art forms for the performance of their ceremonies. For both major rituals a range of body ornaments are worn such as head circles, armlets, feather topnots and goose-feather ball necklets. Some, however like the wooden neckharness and the hair-string belt are only worn for the *kulama* initiation ceremonies. The most spectacular items are those made for the performance of the burial ceremonies. These are the carved and decorated burial posts (*tudini pukumani*), the

large decorated bark baskets (*wungapunga*) and the finely carved and decorated barbed spears (*ararungkuri*) which are made as gifts for the deceased. These items, along with the elaborate face and body painting produced for burial ceremonies, are the major vehicle for Tiwi creative expression.

Significance of Tiwi Art

Although much work remains to be done on the Tiwi artistic system it is clear from what is already known, that it is radically different from that of the people in Arnhem Land and Central Australia. A central aspect of this difference was commented upon as early as 1914 by Baldwin Spencer, who had earlier elaborated upon the mythological significance of the bark paintings he collected at Oenpelli in Arnhem Land, and who found no such interpretation for the designs painted by the Tiwi upon their bark shelters or their bark baskets. As he says:

The designs as far as can be told have no significance whatsoever, and may be drawn by any man or even boy. Each appearing to follow his own fancy (Spencer 1914:435).

Subsequently, apart from cursory descriptions which appeared in the writings of Conigrave (1931) McCarthy (1938) and Hart (1932), little research on Tiwi art was undertaken until the arrival of Charles Mountford at Snake Bay (Milikapiti) under the auspices of the National Geographic Expedition for six months in 1954.

Mountford's study of the art and mythology of the Tiwi is still the most detailed account to date. For this he examined the paintings that were applied to single sheets of bark, onto the sides of bark baskets, onto the body and onto carved wooden burial posts. While Mountford found, like Spencer, that a body of the paintings had no mythological significance, he did however record mythological accounts for others. This led him to classify the paintings into two types: as either the sacred where they had mythological significance and the profane, where they lacked it.

In relation to the sacred paintings Mountford described 45 bark paintings relating to the totemic and Ancestral Beings of the creation era. The list of important Ancestral Beings, most of whose genealogical relationships to one another could be traced by the Tiwi informants, included Mudungkula, the original creator of the islands and her descendants, her son Purukuparfi, who introduced the *pukamani* burial ceremony, and Pirikinkini, the instigator of the *kulama* ceremony. Mountford's myths appear to parallel those found on the mainland, in as much as they describe the actions of these Beings, and the ways in which they created certain geographical sites, and the plants, animals and natural phenomena of the environment, as well as instigating ritual and other forms of behaviour. At the close of the creation era Mountford was told the following myth concerning the localization of totemic places and creation of various life forms:

Tukimbini, the grandson of Murupiangkala, instructed the people many of who were his wives and relatives, to establish a totemic place at their old camps on Melville and Bathurst Islands and create the Aboriginal food belonging to such places, and then to change themselves into the particular bird, reptile, fish or inanimate object with which that locality is now associated (Mountford 1958:55).

While Mountford described the mythological significance of these paintings of the creation era and some others which related to non-Ancestral mythical spirit beings, he found, like Spencer before him, that the Tiwi also paint designs which have no mythological significance whatsoever. These designs were painted onto bark as well as onto the *pukumani* burial poles. As he says:

A puzzling aspect of the *pukumani* poles is the wide variety of painted designs used, and the almost total absence in those designs of any reference to the myths and totemic localities (1956: 110).

The absence of meaning for the designs painted onto burial poles was also emphasised to the author during the manufacture of poles for a ceremony at Pularumpi in 1979, when a senior painter lost patience with my enquiries about the designs and retorted "Purukuparli says no story!" Some of the individual elements used for decoration could be attributed with a meaning, but these were usually random representations of natural phenomenon eg. rocks, stars, sand and so on and did not relate to myths or totemic places.

In all instances the designs, whether they are attributed with mythological significance or not, are derived from a common set of symbols, characteristic of the Tiwi style of painting. These comprise a relatively standard set of elements such as circles, arcs, lines (meandering straight and zig zagged) and occasional figurative elements, combined with hatching, dotting and parallel-line detailing. These are the building blocks for their designs, and parallel in many ways those used in Central Australia. According to Mountford's description, there appears to be no standardization of designs associated with particular Ancestral Beings or their totemic sites. Each design is different, and the meaning of a design or its individual symbolic elements can only be interpreted by the artist, when in fact they have any meaning at all. A factor which appears to contribute significantly to the diversity of designs used by the Tiwi, and the lack of associations between Ancestors and particular design, lies in the social sphere.

The Tiwi have both matrilineal descent groups or clans called *pukwi* and patrilineal groups called *aminyati* (after Goodale, 1971). The latter are the land owning groups which have a bounded estate and which derive their name from their land. The Tiwi believe that on these estates are various conception sites at which spirit children or *pitapitui* reside. Collectively these sites are

referred to as a person's Dreamings and according to Goodale there are also links between these conception Dreamings and the matrilineal clans (Goodale 1971:139). According to Goodale's informants a person's Dreaming refers to the place associated with particular matrilineal sibs and which is inhabited by the children of the male members of the land owning group. However, when analysing the ethnographic evidence, no clear link emerges between these conception localities, the actual matrilineal clans and their localization, and the mythology concerning their origins. For example, the list of totemic sites which were documented in the paintings collected by Mountford (1958:35-37) he believed tabulated the locality of the matrilineal clans. Goodale found however, that a similar list given to her referred to the conception Dreaming sites but that the list did not necessarily relate to present day matrilineal clans groups (Goodale 1971: 138-142). This lack of direct association between mythology, social groups and the designs documented by Mountford, led Goodale to comment:

Tiwi beliefs of conception Dreamings appear to be almost completely disassociated from mythology and philosophy concerned with the origin of life, activities of Dreamtime ancestors, or continuity of descent through time (1971:143).

Despite the fact that the Tiwi social organization had changed in recent times as the result of contact, she does not believe that the changes could simply be explained as the result of culture loss. The lack of association between the mythologies and reality of Tiwi clan distribution she believed was rather a reflection of the nature of Tiwi society in which there is little recognition of their dependence upon the past as a validation of the future (ibid).

Goodale's findings seem to show that there is no systematic link between a person's Dreaming and her or his clan group. This is quite different from the situation in north-east Arnhem Land, for example, where clan groups, their Ancestral mythologies and religious sites are intimately linked. This has resulted in each group owning a fixed clan design which operates like a badge for that particular group's identity (see Morphy 1977 and 1981).

This lack of congruence between Tiwi social groups, Ancestral Beings and their designs gives rise to a different social use of painting in Tiwi society. Both Goodale (1971), and Grau (1981) in her study of Tiwi dance and song, show that a person's Dreaming affiliation is most important during the performance of the *pukumani* burial ceremony, where it is 'marked' during the performance. However during such occasions people of shared Dreamings do not act as a group, but rather as individual performers. This shows that while a person's Dreaming is theoretically associated with his or her patrilineal estate, there is no emphasis on corporate ownership, nor any standardization of Dreaming designs used to indicate any importance as a marker of group ownership. Instead the designs appear to operate as individual statements. This

is an important aspect of Tiwi art which becomes more apparent in the ritual context which provides the focus for practically all Tiwi artistic endeavour. Here the stress upon individuality is sanctioned, particularly with the emphasis upon innovation and originality. In other words, quite a degree of freedom is allowed within the boundaries of style.

Tiwi Creativity

The highly innovative nature of Tiwi art was first commented upon by Basedow in his description of burial poles:

No two of them are alike either in size, method of carving, or colour ornamentation (Basedow 1913:315).

Spencer reinforced this impression in his analysis of Tiwi decoration on burial poles.

The designs vary very much and anyone who desired to was allowed to assist in the painting. Each man decorating a post, chose his own design (1914: 232).

In relation to the large decorated burial baskets, he also notes:

They exhibited the most striking and original decorative schemes. There is the most extraordinary variety amongst them, and not only this, but the two sides, in very many cases, are quite distinct from one another. In most cases the design is purely conventional zoomorphs, phytomorphs being very rarely met with (1914: 421).

The importance of innovation and creativity was first addressed by Goodale, in particular reference to the carving and decoration of burial poles. She believes that the broad emphasis on originality in Tiwi society was instigated by the culture hero Purukaparli, who is credited with performing the first *pukumani* ceremony.

Purukaparli enjoined the Tiwi to cut poles and to represent the things around them in their singing, dancing, carving and painting. They interpret this statement as a mandate to express their personal thoughts and experiences through original verbal and visual art forms (Goodale and Goss 1971:191).

Following on from Hart and Pilling's thesis of social conflict and individual achievement within Tiwi society, Goodale lists two main paths to prestige in Tiwi life - one through the acquisition of wives, a theme previously documented by Hart & Pilling (1960) and the other through excellence in the arts. When a person is selected by the deceased's patrilineal relatives to carve a pole for the burial, it is an opportunity to achieve prestige. The number and size of poles

commissioned is also a reflection of the status of the deceased. Artistic evaluation is extremely important for the artist while composing his work and for the other Tiwi who judge it. Ultimately, he is 'paid' with goods, in recognition of his relative worth as an artist at the conclusion of the ceremony. Today payments are made in cash. Although the dictum of Purukuparli's 'use your experience' appears to free the artist to follow his artistic impulses, this is pursued within a culturally defined format or style. Pole shapes, for example, usually combine a series of forms such as single, double or multiple pronged apexes, holes carved through the trunk, narrowing or 'waisting' of sections of the pole, or the carving of indented rings around the pole. Such pole shapes can be seen to be relatively consistent from the earliest recorded ones through to the present. However, the combination of shapes has become more complex in recent years and new elements have been introduced, such as the incorporation of naturalistic forms.

The increased accessibility to metal axes, since the early 1900's appears to have greatly enhanced the carver's ability to experiment with more elaborate forms for their poles. Even at the period of British settlement at Fort Dundas, Major Campbell (1834) recorded the frustration they experienced in having metal axes and sickles snatched away by nimble Tiwi who obviously preferred these superior tools to their mussle-shell scrapers and stone axes. Earlier, Captain King, who navigated the Islands in 1818, believed he saw the desire for axes expressed by a number of Tiwi who approached him on the shore, mimicking chopping motions with their hands. From this he conjectured that they had previously obtained metal axes from Portuguese slave-traders who had been known to raid the Islands during the early period of Portuguese occupation of Timor (King, 1827). Earlier contact with metal-using Indonesian sea-farers is also another possibility. However, the impact was not really felt until the early 1900's, by which time both Basédow and Spencer noted poles made with metal tools. Mountford (1958:108) was told by a Tiwi informant that posts were originally hollow logs, which were shaped by charring and scraping the exterior into rudimentary shapes. It appears that with the introduction of metal tools, hardwoods such as ironwood and bloodwood were preferred for their durability. The wood is however extremely difficult to carve, with an average three metre pole taking about a week to complete. The resulting posts can also be extremely heavy, taking 2-3 men to erect them on the burial site.

Mountford recorded that in about 1939 an artist called Kardo Kerinauia had carved a human-headed burial pole (1958:118). He also recorded several older human-headed and conventionalized figure carvings at burial sites near Milikapiti. The artists at this time were also carving small figures which were occasionally placed on the gravesite. He was even given an explanation for these small figures, which were said to be representations of Purukuparli, whose

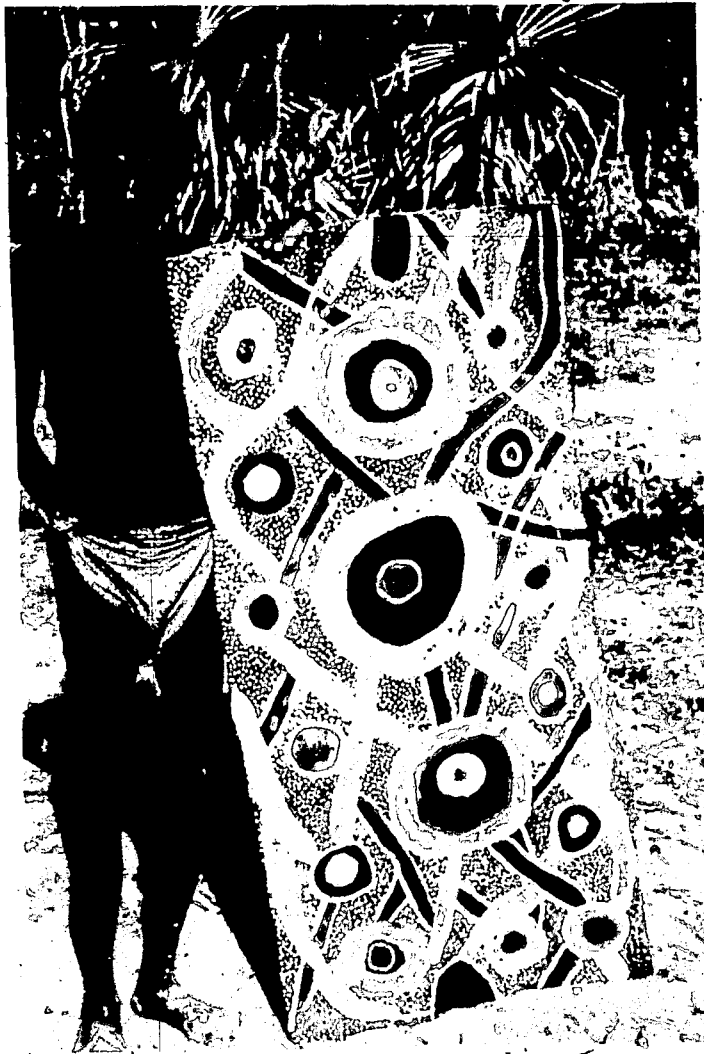


PLATE 1:

ARTIST WITH HIS BARK PAINTING, 1954
(MOUNTFORD PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY
AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL STUDIES)



PLATE 2:

MEN CARVING A BARBED SPEAR, 1954
(MOUNTFORD PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY
AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL STUDIES)

body was lost at sea when he drowned (1958:120).

The manufacture of such small naturalistic carvings, which along with burial poles have become the mainstay of the tourist artefact industry, have an internal ceremonial use, and are not purely a commercial product, as commonly thought.

The burial poles themselves are often said to represent members of the deceased's family, or the deceased, as well as perhaps Purukuparli and other characters involved in the *pukumani* mythology. Some of the more original poles that have been made for actual burial sites over the past decade have included a buffalo-headed pole for a person whose Dreaming it was, a post carved with card suit emblems for a keen card player and a pole terminating with hands holding a football, for a football player who died in an accident. Poles are considered to be representations of people and it is quite common for the various sections of the pole to be given anatomical names and to be distinguished as male or female depending on who they are meant to symbolize. According to one of the author's informants, on Bathurst Island, poles with pronged apexes are meant to symbolize Purukuparli, by representing the pronged club *tauputararinga*, with which he fought Tapara the moon man. However such interpretations are not consistent and each artist will give his own account of the meaning of the poles' individual shapes and designs.

Goodale (1971:309) like Spencer and Mountford, has also commented upon the variety of patterns painted onto the burial posts as well as the decorated barbed spears made for the burial ceremony, each of which was to be an individual creation. This was further emphasized when she asked some of the men to copy poles that they had already made, as a commission for a museum. However they did not follow her direction, as she says:

It was just not in the Tiwi artist to copy; they included elements I wanted, but added variations, since the poles had to be unique (1971:316).

Researchers such as Goodale and Grau have in fact shown that Tiwi ceremonies are a vehicle for individuals to demonstrate their powers as dancers, singers and artists. In this the Tiwi ritual complex is markedly different from that of other Aboriginal groups in Arnhem Land and Central Australia in which the revelation of designs and emblems of a restricted nature are an integral part of the ceremony. Both Morphy (1977) and Munn (1973) describe how in these areas ritual designs are believed to embody ritual power through their association with important Ancestral Beings, who are the focus for the ceremony. Such designs are regarded as secret and sacred and are thus restricted to viewing by initiated men only. The configuration of the designs

is also fixed to an extent by the dictates of convention.

The association of designs with particular Ancestral Beings in these mainland artistic systems gives the art great significance. Morphy's study of Yolngu art in north-eastern Arnhem Land for example explores in depth the ways in which paintings encode information about clan identity and mythologies concerning certain Ancestral Beings and their links to land. Morphy says paintings have the power to communicate and express ideas.

The artistic system itself is powerful because of the ways in which it encodes meaning (1977:334).

If Mountford's analysis of the significance of Tiwi art is correct this shows that there was a dual system operating in the artistic sphere. On the one hand there are designs said to illustrate the Ancestral and totemic beings of Tiwi mythology, such designs relate to a person's Dreaming. On the other hand there are designs which have no mythological significance, and their meanings, if in fact they are given any, are said to be random representation of every day subjects taken from the environment. In both cases there is a degree of creative freedom, particularly with the secular designs painted onto the burial poles.

This situation appears to be similar to sets of dances studied by Grau on Melville Island. Here she found that, apart from kinship dances which everyone would perform, there were dances in which individuals had proprietary rights. These the Tiwi divide into Dreaming dances, which relate to myths, and totemic beings (although not every Dreaming necessarily had an accompanying dance), and ordinary dances which are invented by individuals and relate to their personal experience (Grau 1983:267). Such dances are also handed on patrilineally and include such themes as the battleship dance, jail lock-up dance, buffalo dance, and the bombing of Darwin dance etc.

Stylistically these two types of dance are similar, but for the Tiwi the essential distinction relates to origin or the concept of creation. While the former are described as being the inventions of mythological beings, the latter are invented by ordinary individuals. Also in the *kulama* ritual men are enjoined to invent new songs around certain themes and this is taken as an essential part of the ritual, where singing predominates over dance.

Conclusion

The flexibility of the Tiwi artistic system, which allows for diversity of creation within the boundaries of stylistic convention, can then be seen to be very much a product of their ritual

system, in which there is no direct association with, or ritual enactment of, the doings of the Ancestral Beings during the performance of the major Tiwi ceremonies. Neither are there totemic increase rites which relate to the totemic species or Dreamings of a person's clan group. In these aspects the Tiwi are quite unusual. Socially too, designs do not function as symbols of group identity, but refer mainly to an individual's conception Dreaming.

This is not to overstate the case for Tiwi inventiveness, as other Aboriginal artistic systems do have the capacity for innovation. However the parameters of mainland art systems are much more confined and the secret restricted nature of much ritual painting has been quite problematic for artists in this area wanting to create works for open viewing on the art market. For example the artists at Yirrkala and Papunya, have had to significantly modify their visual systems so as not to violate their religious integrity (see Morphy 1977a and Kimber 1983).

The fact that individual innovation and the cultural sanctioning of 'utilizing your experience' was central to the Tiwi artistic system, predisposed them to accommodate changes quite successfully. Grau (1983) also noted the adaptive nature of Tiwi dance in this respect, so that despite the social changes which have occurred over the past 80 years, people have in fact expanded the contexts in which dance is performed, including the celebration of civic events - opening of a new building, arrival of important visitors, European birthdays and so on. I would argue that the same can be applied to the operation of the art and craft industry, in as much as its establishment has allowed the Tiwi different contexts in which to apply their creativity and has allowed them to translate their ideas successfully into new media. However the contextual differences in producing art for sale also creates a different set of structural factors which have bearing on how people produce, and this will be explored in the following chapters on the three enterprises.

CHAPTER 3

ECONOMIC HISTORY OF BATHURST ISLAND

Introduction

In order to understand the context in which the art and craft enterprises have developed it is important first to trace the external influences upon the island's economy, beginning with the establishment of the mission and proceeding through to the era of self-determination. This chapter looks in particular at the policies which were developed and their implications for the achievement of self sufficiency.

Early Mission Period 1911-1950

Melville and Bathurst Islanders lived in relative isolation until the 1900's. Prior to this the British had established an intended trading post-cum-fort at Fort Dundas on north-west Melville Island in 1824. However, it was a failure as a trading depot and was abandoned in 1829.

During this proto-historic period the Tiwi inhabitants of the islands were repeatedly hostile to outsiders, possibly as the result of prior-contact with slave raiders from Portuguese Timor. The Macassans were reported to only stop there occasionally, due to the treacherous currents and the lack of trepang. So it was not until the buffalo-shooter Joe Cooper established his camp on Melville Island in 1905 that amicable contact was established with the Tiwi.

Cooper's presence attracted visitors such as Basedow and Spencer, and in 1910 he was visited by Father Gsell of the Catholic Church's Mission Order of the Sacred Heart. In 1911 Gsell returned to Bathurst Island, and at a site now called Nguiu, he commenced to build the rudimentary beginnings of what was later to become one of the largest missions in the Northern Territory.

Gsell had chosen Bathurst Island because of its isolation from other European contacts and had managed to secure the island as a Government Reserve before he returned in 1911. The period from 1911-1950 was dominated by Gsell, who maintained interest in the mission and its progress even after his appointment as Bishop of Darwin in 1935. This was the period during which the Government was pursuing a policy of protectionism towards Aborigines, and this was exemplified by the attitudes of the mission. In 1951 the protectionist era formally gave way to the assimilation policy which lasted until 1972. After this the newly-elected Labor government introduced a policy of self-determination, which effectively transferred control of the islands from

the Mission back to the Tiwi. The economic development of Nguu was very much influenced by the policy changes and developments which characterised these three eras.

In the first twenty years of the mission at Bathurst Island Gsell devoted himself to the task of gradually establishing a practising Christian community amongst the Tiwi. He believed that the introduction of farming and pastoral skills would be a civilizing influence upon the Tiwi and that through their practice the Tiwi would become productive Christians. As he stated:

It is not impossible to reform the Aboriginal attitude towards life so that he can become a planter, and indeed a good Christian. The main thing is to face up to the task and stick to it (Gsell 1956:39).

To achieve his goal Gsell concentrated upon the children. Firstly he persuaded some of the young uninitiated boys, through their parents, to attend the school and live in the dormitory at the mission. Later he set upon the task of exchanging young girls from their families for trade goods. These children when they grew up would be free to choose a partner and marry in the church, thereby beginning the nucleus of the Christian community. By 1929 Gsell had 65 girls and about 30 boys who were dependent upon the mission for their food, clothing, accommodation and education. In addition 80 adults had established themselves in beach camps near the mission (Gsell 1956).

The mission needed to increase self-sufficiency to meet the needs of the Tiwi and the European staff which by 1930 numbered eight. Gardens were cultivated, a small stock of cows and goats was established along with a dairy which produced butter and milk. Hens were kept also for meat and eggs. What they could not grow they had to import from the mainland. They also received cash donations from the European Catholic community and a meagre Government subsidy for the rations and clothing distributed to the Tiwi. The major economic undertaking was the milling of cypress pine for the Darwin market, which remained as the mission's major money-spinner for the next 25 years. According to Gsell:

It had been for us a matter of life and death that the mission should make full use of what resources the country could offer both agriculturally and by the organization of some industry related to the natural possibilities of the area (1956:118).

These pre-war years were ones in which the young Tiwi in particular became dependent upon the mission for support. A few of these, brought up and married at the mission, built rudimentary houses and began cultivating their own plot of land. Others were being trained in a few areas beneficial to the up-keep of the mission. Some of the boys were taught to work with

machines and water hydrants while the women were taught cooking, sewing, gardening and baby welfare. All Tiwi on the mission were entitled to the ration distribution fixed by the Government with the rations being exchanged for work done around the mission by adults, on the strict rule that 'hand-outs' were not to be given. Most of the adult Tiwi still relied upon hunting and gathering for sustenance until after the war, often bartering their bush foods for rations at the mission.

The War Years

The war years brought about many changes which affected the Tiwi along with the other Aboriginal groups of Northern Australia, principally through their involvement with the war time economy.

Because of their strategic location just 30kms north of Darwin, Melville and Bathurst Islands became important joint Australian - American defense outposts, with bases being built at Snake Bay (Milikapiti) on Melville Island, and at Bathurst Island Mission. Those Tiwi who did not remain to work at those bases were seconded by the RAAF, RAN or the Army in Darwin to work as kitchen hands, domestics and labourers. This was the first time that people had received cash for work or had such intensive contact with Europeans and a wide range of consumer goods (Tatz 1964).

The result of the war was the concentration of people in settlements where employment opportunities were available, so that when the war finished there was massive Aboriginal unemployment in centres such as Darwin. The population of Bathurst Island had grown during the war years, and those Tiwi who were attracted to the military base at Milikapiti, stayed on when the Government decided to establish a Reserve there.

Milikapiti was ostensibly a trade depot, of the kind also established at other places in the Territory by the government in an attempt to stabilize Aboriginal populations in their own homelands and to alleviate the unemployment problem in centres such as Darwin. This was the beginning of the thrust towards assimilation and the government's concern to foster economic independence through education and training programmes undertaken on government reserves and missions. This, it was thought, would build up a force of trained workers in centralized communities, who could then go out and join the ranks of workers in the general community.

The Assimilation Period 1951-1971

With the government adoption of the policy of assimilation in 1951 came the establishment of the Welfare Branch of the N.T. Administration and the passing of the Ward's Employment

Ordinance 1953. In this a prescribed wage for Aboriginal workers irrespective of training, or aptitude, was set down at about 1/4 of the current award rate. From this period the Government sought co-operation with the missions, as they viewed them as key elements in the integration of Aborigines into the wider Australian community, by being training centres for social change. From 1953 onwards all missions were eligible for a substantial injection of Government funds for capital works, training and education programmes and some social services benefits.

The Bishop of Darwin, Bishop O'Laughlin, who replaced Gsell in 1951, was, however in disagreement with some of the Government's policies. He criticised some of the practices of assimilation as being segregationist, and also disagreed with other issues, such as the establishment of communal dining halls. He systematically refused to accept Government subsidies for capital works on Bathurst Island right through the assimilation period, because he did not want Government control over what the mission did with its money. So throughout the 1950's-1960's all services such as water, electricity sewerage, schooling were the responsibility of the mission. This resulted in very little physical development of the mission during this period (Tatz 1964).

On the other hand the mission was eligible for subsidies for each qualified mission worker and Aboriginal workers trained in Welfare Branch courses in the areas of hygiene, teaching and nursing. Contributions were also made towards those Tiwi employed in long term projects which had no immediate cash return such as the planting of seedlings for the pine plantation and to the maintenance of dependents not capable of work. This was in addition to social service benefits such as child endowment.

Although as an Employer of Wards the mission was constrained by the Wards Employment Ordinance, the mission sought exemption from paying the minimum rate because of their limited resources. In 1951 cash wages were first introduced at Bathurst Island for Tiwi workers at 2/- per week plus food rations and clothing. Canteens were also built to sell tobacco and other items, as part of the Government plan to teach people the value of money and how to handle it. Communal kitchens were built to feed infants, children, hospital patients and pensioners, while the rest of the adults received rations (flour, tea, sugar, tinned meat, fresh vegetables when available), which they cooked at home (Crawford 1978:27).

By the 1950's Bathurst Island was the largest mission in the Northern Territory, supporting 925 Tiwi by 1958. Despite the increased subsidies for employment there were initially very few employment opportunities available and a feature of economy until the late 1960's was the migration of Tiwi men to Darwin for work. Annual Welfare Branch Reports show significant

fluctuations in the composition of the adult male population on Bathurst, reflecting this movement (309 in 1958 to 144 in 1967). Most of the men worked with the RAAF or the Army while others worked as labourers at the Shoal Bay salt plant. Only a few women worked in Darwin as domestics at Bagot or the East Arm Leprosarium.

Even by the late 1950's, when the Government pressure to establish more training facilities on the mission resulted in higher employment, the seasonal migration pattern continued. According to the 1958/59 Welfare Branch Report, of the 196 able-bodied Tiwi from Bathurst Mission, 50 were working for the armed forces in Darwin, while the rest were employed on the mission. In 1961 Tatz (1964:70) mentions that 96 men and 181 women were employed by the mission, the former as drivers, stockmen, saw millers, labourers, hygiene workers, gardeners, carpenters and mechanics while the latter worked as cooks, domestics, laundry and hospital workers. The men were earning an average of 10/- to 15/- a week while the women earned 6/- to 10/-. Only aged pensioners received some cash component out of their pension, all other dependents were paid in kind (food, clothing etc.) In the same year 69 men and 6 women were working in Darwin, 58 of the men for the Armed Forces or as salt workers at Shoal Bay. The men in the armed forces were earning £3.10.0 per week plus food and keep and this was increased to £6.15 in 1962. The attractions of these salaries compared to those offered at the mission is obvious and contributed significantly to the mission economy when the workers returned.

In 1960/61 Tatz (ibid) documents that the total amount paid to Tiwi workers was £2,173.40 plus another £943 paid for bush foods brought in by individual Tiwi. While total earnings were £3,116.40, £8,611 was spent in the mission store. This additional income came from returned workers plus social service benefits. Again in 1961/62 mission wages were £1553 while expenditure in the store was £6,826. Of this amount £1,421 was money spent by workers returned from Darwin.

Bishop O'Laughlin typified the economy of Bathurst Island in the 1960's as a semi-closed economy because people could go outside for work and were not solely dependent upon the mission for employment and supplies (O'Laughlin 1966:174). This migration was possible because of the close proximity of Bathurst Island to Darwin, and appeared to be the direct result of the higher wages and greater range of goods available in Darwin.

Tatz saw the mission economy as being dependent largely upon the store profits and therefore also dependent upon the wages earned by the Tiwi outside of the mission. However this relationship was really marked by a degree of interdependency as the mission still provided employment, rations, education and medical care via government subsidies to the population at

Bathurst Island. Despite attempts to be self-sufficient the lack of water at the mission precluded any large scale agricultural developments, and the mission garden continued to produce inadequately for the needs of the communal kitchens. To supplement the food, produce continued to be bought from a number of the Tiwi who still maintained garden plots (as envisaged by Gsell). A number of Tiwi also owned fish traps and boats and sold their catch regularly to the mission. Other entrepreneurial activities included 2 full-time and 1 part-time bakeries owned by Tiwi to supply the mission and other individuals with bread, cakes and pies. A number of women sewed garments privately upon request and one man set himself up as a barber. Other Tiwi would hunt and gather intermittently and sell their produce to the mission. In this way hunting and gathering skills were still maintained despite the issue of dry rations three times a week.

Self Management 1972 -

The winds of change which resulted in the government policy of self-determination in 1972 were heralded by the National Referendum 1967. In the same year the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (which replaced the Welfare Branch) set up its Employment Section partly to intensify training and employment opportunities and to liaise with the Commonwealth Employment Service, to find placements for people according to training and skills. The mission was encouraged to diversify its training and economic projects under the new regulations of the Ward's Employment Ordinance which also introduced a higher minimum wage scale, and new training schemes. The aim was towards greater independence of the Aboriginal economy.

With the new Training Allowance Scheme (TAS), the mission was encouraged to diversify their training programmes through subsidised employment of specialists to provide on-the-spot training. According to Crawford (1978:28) the mission had 248 people employed by 1970 under this scheme on salaries ranging from \$25 - \$36 for men weekly and \$18 - \$27 for women. This marked the full introduction of the cash economy to Bathurst Island as finances were no longer managed by the mission. The ration system was discontinued to encourage people to buy their goods at the store. This was an important period for the development of enterprise and it was under the auspices of TAS that Tiwi Designs was established along with the Tiwi Clothing Company (later called Bima Wear). It was also at this time that the Pottery Training Unit at Bagot Aboriginal Reserve was set up as a forerunner to Tiwi Pottery.

Change in government policy coincided with the formation of the N.T. Catholic Missions Council which was set up to review mission policy. Bishop O'Loughlin, under pressure from the superintendant of Bathurst Island, and in compliance with the aims of self-determination, agreed to receive government funding for the first time. The period of the 1970's saw the rapid

transformation of Bathurst from a remote community to a small Australian town with the construction of 50 European houses in two years between 1975-76. This was assisted by a grant of \$500,000 provided by the Commonwealth government. To embark on the construction programme, the Nguu Housing Association was founded. After a community meeting a Shire Council was formed in 1974 to take over responsibility of essential services such as electricity, sewerage, garbage, road maintenance, plus the running of the store. Responsibility for the hospital and the school remained with the Church (Crawford, 1978:29).

With the granting of Land Rights and the handing over of the Reserve to Aboriginal control in 1976, the official control of the Catholic Church ended. However the granting of autonomy has not resulted in a decentralization of population, as elsewhere in the Territory. Only recently have four Tiwi outstations been built - but these are predominantly holiday rather than residential camps. As a result Nguu is still the largest settlement on Melville and Bathurst Islands and is an important service centre for the population.

With the emphasis on development since the 1970's there has been a rapid growth of the numbers of Europeans at Nguu, from 27 in 1969 to 99 in 1978. Since then this figure has stabilized so that in 1983 there were 84 Europeans at Bathurst, mainly working in managerial jobs, in the infrastructure organizations which developed at Nguu (Stanley, 1983a). The Mission still has a presence at Nguu and is responsible for the running of the two schools - Xavier Boy's and St Therese Girl's Schools and the running of the Health Centre. Here they employ lay-missionary staff along with Tiwi and non-denominational teachers. The Nguu Ullintjinni Association is a Tiwi owned organization which is responsible for running the bakery, the store, the service station and the restaurant. The Nguu Housing Association as mentioned previously is responsible for building and maintaining houses, and the Nguu Sports, Social and Recreational Club runs the pub. General community services and administration are the responsibility of the Nguu Council which is a community elected council incorporated under the federal Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act, 1976. Land related matters and the administration of royalty money is the responsibility of the Tiwi Land Council which was established in 1978. Details on how the contemporary economy of Nguu functions will be further examined in Chapter 6.

Conclusion

The initial hope of the mission of establishing a self-sufficient native peasantry was doomed to failure both on economic and cultural grounds. The result was that the Tiwi became dependant upon the mission for goods and services, so that the reverse of what the mission intended actually occurred. With few development opportunities available on the island, the mission ultimately became dependent upon government subsidies and policy directives. Because the cash

economy was slow to develop, the Tiwi took the initiative to seek jobs on the mainland, showing an obvious motivation to work for better money than was offered locally, and when more and better paid jobs became available upon the island people remained home to work. The intensification of programmes to establish more jobs for Aborigines was one of the thrusts of the assimilationist policy and it was in this context that the development of the craft enterprises of Tiwi Designs and Tiwi Pottery were encouraged.³

The following chapters look at the workings of these enterprises in relation to the policy objectives of their founders to assess how realistic such policies are in terms of accommodating Aboriginal values and goals.

CHAPTER 4

TRADITIONAL ART AND CRAFT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF TIWI PIMA

Introduction

It is evident from the order in which the craft industries were established on Bathurst Island that the development ideology behind their government and mission support was without any substantive consideration of the Tiwi perspective. While Tiwi Designs was established in 1969 and Tiwi Pottery in 1973, following the government-funded pottery training scheme founded in 1968, it was not until 1977 that an enterprise based upon indigenous skills was officially recognized by funding agencies.

This does not mean, however, that people were not producing traditional items for sale during the period before the establishment of Tiwi Pima, but that its belated official recognition is an indication of the extent to which only introduced skills were seen as really important. In this chapter I will outline the history of art and craft production and then consider the operations of Tiwi Pima from its foundation through to 1987.

Early Development of Art and Craft Enterprises

Production of artifacts for sale to Europeans began on an intermittent basis at the turn of the century and then declined almost completely until the 1950s. The first documented transaction appears in Baldwin Spencer's notes, taken during his visits to Melville Island in 1911. Here he exchanged goods bought with his own salary for items made by Tiwi artisans. Unfortunately there is no breakdown of the exchange value of the items, just an itemized list of the store goods exchanged, these being: seven hundred weight of flour, 60 yards of red cloth and handkerchiefs, 60lbs of tobacco, 12 tins of treacle, a gross of pipes, 4 dozen knives, 2 dozen hatchets, 20 lbs beads and 28 lbs of sweets (Mulvaney and Calaby 1985:292). These he exchanged for a range of 750 items of material culture items now housed at the National Museum of Victoria. Three other collections were put together for museums at this time by Basedow, Sayers and Klaatch. This was partly the result of the recent discovery of the Tiwi by the outside world.

With the establishment of the Catholic Church at Bathurst Island by Father Gsell, ceremonial activity was actively discouraged and subsequently the burial and initiation ceremonies, which were the focus for artistic activity, were held in secret away from the mission.

Father Gsell himself had a low opinion of the Aboriginal people's artistic capabilities generally (Gsell 1956:34) which ensured that there was no official interest in an art and craft industry

during his association with the mission. This contrasted markedly with the attitudes of many of the other missionaries in the Northern Territory who were actively promoting the manufacture of a wide variety of arts and crafts from the 1930's onwards.

While there may have been limited private sales to the army and airforce personnel stationed on Melville and Bathurst Islands during the war it wasn't until Charles Mountford's arrival in 1954 that there was any substantial demand. During his visit he collected approximately 131 bark paintings (including sheets sewn into baskets), 25 burial poles, carved figures and an array of ceremonial ornaments and weapons (Mountford 1958).

It was here at the Government settlement established after the war at Snake Bay - later known as Milikapiti, that art and craft production was encouraged as part of the government's developmental policy. In 1960 the Superintendant began the cash purchasing of artifacts with money provided from the Aboriginal Benefits Trust Fund. These items were sold along with other items such as crocodile and buffalo skins at the newly established government trade store. The Annual Welfare Branch Reports document that there were only a few people producing in the 1960's and both demand and production was erratic. However Helen Groger-Wurm's visit to Milikapiti in 1965, during which time she purchased 355 artifacts made by 26 men and 19 women, indicated that there were many more potential artisans who could produce if the demand was there. (Records, N.T. Museum of Arts and Sciences).

Sales at Milikapiti remained on an ad hoc basis up to 1970 and after this began to gradually decline as introduced art and craft production developed at Bathurst Island.

During the 1960's when the government was assisting art and craft production in a limited way at Milikapiti, the Catholic Mission still did not have a definite policy on this area of Aboriginal enterprise. According to Father John Fallon (pers. comm.) individual missionaries could, however, involve themselves in this area if they so wished. For example in the early 1960's Father Cosgrove was impressed with the beauty of Tiwi art and encouraged the manufacture of items such as ceremonial ornaments, burial poles and small naturalistic carvings. Such items were either sold direct to visitors to the island or through Catholic Mission headquarters in Darwin. These were sold on a non-profit basis with the returns going straight to the artist. The arrangement was informal and apparently no records of transactions were kept. According to Father Fallon there were only about 10 men and 5 women making items for sale on an occasional basis.

The artists of both Bathurst and Melville Islands also had their work purchased each year by Dr Scougall, an orthopaedic specialist who dealt in Aboriginal art as a sideline. His secretary Dorothy Bennett branched out on her own in 1962 with the establishment of her own Art Trust, and continued to acquire items from the Tiwi, as the 1963 Annual Welfare Branch Report states:

Artifact production: The revival of this form of art work commenced late in 1962-63. A range of 60 different types of weapons was completed for an art trust, some of these objects showing great artistic skill, carvings of human, traditional and animal forms were also executed, as were mats and baskets (1963:130).

Unfortunately there are no records of sales, but according to Mrs Bennett prices paid were high and exhibitions down south helped stimulate interest in Aboriginal art.

According to the 1964 Welfare Branch Annual Report artifact production at Bathurst Island was steady with the emphasis on carved figures plus ceremonial ornaments such as belts, pandanus work and palm-leaf baskets, which were produced by only a handful of men and women.

By 1969 several of the older Tiwi men were instructing the school boys at Xavier Boy's School, in the art of carving. However in his letter of April 7th 1968 to the District Welfare Officer in Darwin, Father Fallon stated that very few of the older men and women continued with the carving of spears, figurines and posts, except occasionally when orders came in. He estimated that there were only four regular carvers on the island and they were the teachers at the school (DAA file no. 70/185). The erratic nature of art and craft production persisted, despite the lack of a structured marketing strategy up until the mid 1970's when the two other enterprises, Tiwi Designs and Tiwi Pottery, were well established and managed by their own craft advisers. Although the mission assisted these two enterprises with finance it viewed the manufacture of traditional art and craft as a self-regulatory enterprise which needed no capital injection, save the occasional assistance with sales down south. The official recognition of the traditional artists only came as the result of federal government assistance.

Tiwi Pima

The artisans at Nguu continued to produce artifacts for sale, despite the ad hoc nature of purchasing by visiting dealers and collectors. In 1975 the adviser to Tiwi Designs began to acquire some of their work just to give producers an income. He then approached the Nguu Council for a \$2,000 loan, which formed the initial float for the purchasing of traditional art and craft. Soon after in 1976 a committee called the Tiwi Pima Art Committee (TPAC) was formed by interested Tiwi and Europeans to oversee the purchase of art and craft from the artisans, who from this time formed an association called Tiwi Pima. The stated aims of the TPAC were the

buying of art pieces at good prices from the artists, the establishment of a market for their work, and the encouragement of more Tiwi to engage in full-time art and craft activity (Parker 1980:15-17).

Part of the strategy of stimulating the traditional arts and crafts involved the setting up of a retail outlet combined with a museum centre. As early as 1972 plans for the establishment of a Keeping Place or Museum were discussed by the Tiwi with members from the Aboriginal Arts Board who were then interested in a Commonwealth Government strategy for setting up community cultural centres in Aboriginal communities. Such an establishment it was envisaged, would house resource material - films, photographs, anthropological data and books, along with an artifact collection of contemporary pieces. This would assist in the preservation of important cultural material and through display, promote quality in the traditional items being produced. In June 1980, the Tiwi Ngaripulawamigi Aboriginal Corporation was established under the Aboriginal Councils and Association Act, 1976, specifically for the administration of the proposed Keeping Place and for Tiwi Pima. The Chairman of this body, a senior Tiwi man is responsible for the overall direction of the museum project in conjunction with the craft manager and other Tiwi who are part of the committee. The Chairman is also an adviser to the assistant who works for Tiwi Pima.

Staff

In 1976 Savio Timepatua and Barnabus Tipiloura were employed with National Employment and Training Scheme money to assist with the purchasing of art and craft. Savio, however resigned soon after, leaving Barnabus who was trained by the adviser to Tiwi Designs to do the necessary administration work. It was not until 1977 that a full-time European adviser to Tiwi Pima Art was employed after a 6 month trial period with a grant from the Aboriginal Arts Board. The craft adviser's duties were: the commissioning, purchasing and selling of artifacts, the development of markets beyond those offered by the government funded marketing company, book-keeping for all three enterprises, duties associated with the Museum or Keeping Place, documentation of artifacts and raising the quality of production. The adviser maintained responsibility for the marketing of traditional art and craft until late 1981. In 1982, due to financial constraints, the three separate positions of advisers with specialist craft skills were replaced by an overall manager who was responsible for the three craft outlets. The first manager remained for 2 years and the following manager was still in the position in 1988.

Although a grant is provided for the craft manager's wages and expenses by the Aboriginal Arts Board, the craft manager is only responsible to them in terms of the requirements for acquitting the grant. The money is administered by the local Nguiu Council. The administration of the

three craft outlets, Tiwi Pima, Tiwi Designs and Tiwi Pottery, is the responsibility of the craft manager whose duties are the same as those of the previous advisers. After a periodic lapse in the traineeship in 1980, a Tiwi assistant to Tiwi Pima was appointed in 1982. His job concerns, taking the artists out bush to collect materials for art and craft, and the labelling of items and packaging of sales. He also liaises between the artists and the manager in organizing sales. The wages for the Tiwi assistant for Tiwi Pima are paid in part from money provided by National Employment and Training Scheme and a shortfall grant by the Aboriginal Arts Board. Until 1987 the assistant was located in the Tiwi Pima shed, a cramped un-airconditioned corrugated-iron building which is some 5 minutes walk from Tiwi Designs where the manager has his office. Since then the majority of stock has been re-located to the finished Keeping Place, while the packing and ordering is done from the Tiwi Designs shed.

Items Made

The engagement in art and craft activity is usually a social one, with the men and women going out in their separate groups to gather material and often to work in small groups in a shady area at a person's home or in the open park areas at Nguu.

For the carving of burial poles and smaller figure or bird statuettes, ironwood or bloodwood are most commonly used. In earlier times, fallen, weathered logs were utilized. Today, because of the depletion of suitable timber in the Nguu region, it is often necessary to travel bush in a 4 x 4 vehicle to collect suitable timber. Trees are felled and the shape roughed out with a chainsaw and completed with an axe, chisel and wood rasp. A bush search is also necessary to locate suitable stringy-bark trees (*Eucalyptus tetradonta*) for the making of the bark paintings, bark baskets and bark armlets. Collection of the bark is seasonally restricted to the wet and early dry seasons, when the flowing sap allows the bark to be easily prised from the tree trunk. Materials for the weaving of pandanus mats, armbands and head circlets and the making of the palm-leaf baskets, are located locally and do not entail much travel.

Looking at a detailed account of the items carved for the years 1983-86 it can be seen that although the total number of burial poles carved fluctuated dramatically (from 68 in 1983 to 353 in 1984, 48 in 1985 and 66 in 1986) the men consistently made the majority of poles, in particular the large poles of between 1-3 metres (see Figure 1). The dominance of male carvers can also be seen in the numbers of figurative carvings produced for sale. These are sometimes male or female figures but more commonly depict birds, owls, jabirus and pelicans. Turtles, snakes and crocodiles are also carved occasionally. The output of such figurative carving was high for the years 84-86, with the men producing 58%, 84% and 70% of the 274, 188 and 407 carvings respectively. Interestingly, the years 85-86 saw a gradual increase in the numbers of



PLATE 3: CARVING A BURIAL POST.

PLATE 4: CARVINGS INSIDE THE TIWI PIMA SHED.

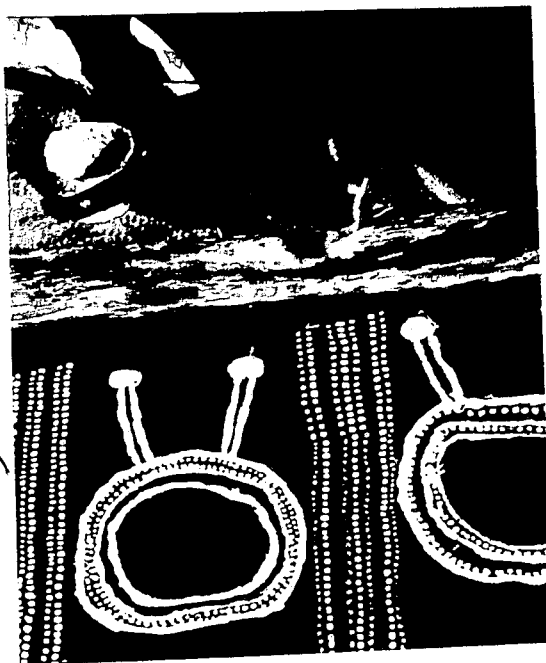


PLATE 5: WOMAN PAINTING A BARK



PLATE 6: WEAVING AN ARMLET FOR SALE

bark paintings produced by the women. Their contribution outstripped that of the men's by 78% over this period. On the material culture side the most significant numbers of items produced were spears and clubs by the men, and baskets, mats and armlets, by the women. Unfortunately details on the types of artifacts made by the men have not been recorded. Verbal information from informants indicates that the most common spear made has been the double-barbed ceremonial spear *arawuningkiri*. This is usually made with a short shaft to aid portability. Clubs tended to cover the range of types traditionally used by the men, from short round throwing sticks *kawitunga* to the forked and spatulate variety, *mitirurika* and *jeruwala* respectively.

The women commonly make ceremonial ornaments, in particular the finely woven arm and head bands *pamatini* and armbands *jariringa*. The large initiation bark armlets *tukuti* are also made occasionally along with the cockatoo-feather top knots *paurati*, the goose-feather ball *tokwai-inga*, and belts *maringkwani*, usually made today from colourful European wool or, pandanus rather than from human hair. The women also exclusively make the decorated bark basket *jimwalini* and small palmleaf water carrying basket *tulin*. Pandanus coil-baskets are only occasionally made, as are mats. It is interesting to note that during this period only several introduced craft items were produced. Apart from the pandanus mats, these included several didgeridus, clap sticks and a spear-thrower, made by a visitor from Arnhem Land. Most artisans tended to produce one or two types of artifact exclusively i.e. all bird carvings or bark paintings. Only a few tended to manufacture a wide range of different items. For example, only two women made a range of ceremonial ornaments above and beyond the normal armlets.

In terms of innovations, these tended to be restricted to the carving and decoration of burial poles and figures. In terms of the latter, of particular interest is the development of double-faced carvings or tiered figurative carvings, in which upwards of three or four faces could be carved, one on top of the other. Figures surmounted by birds was also another common theme. On the whole bird carvings predominated over figure carvings, and constituted 73%; 85% and 85% of the figurative carvings produced in 1989, 85 and 86 respectively.

One artist who produces on a minor basis and has a highly individual style of carving and decoration is Bede Tungatalum, one of the founders of Tiwi Designs. In fact a number of the Tiwi Designs and Tiwi Pottery artists produce for Tiwi Pima on an occasional basis, resulting in a cross-fertilization of design ideas between the different media used by the artists.

Burial poles occasionally include figurative elements. Of note were two exceptional poles carved as abstracted skeletons, by a senior man from Milikapiti. Most of the large poles between 2-3 metres tended however to utilize the conventional format of shapes while medium-size burial

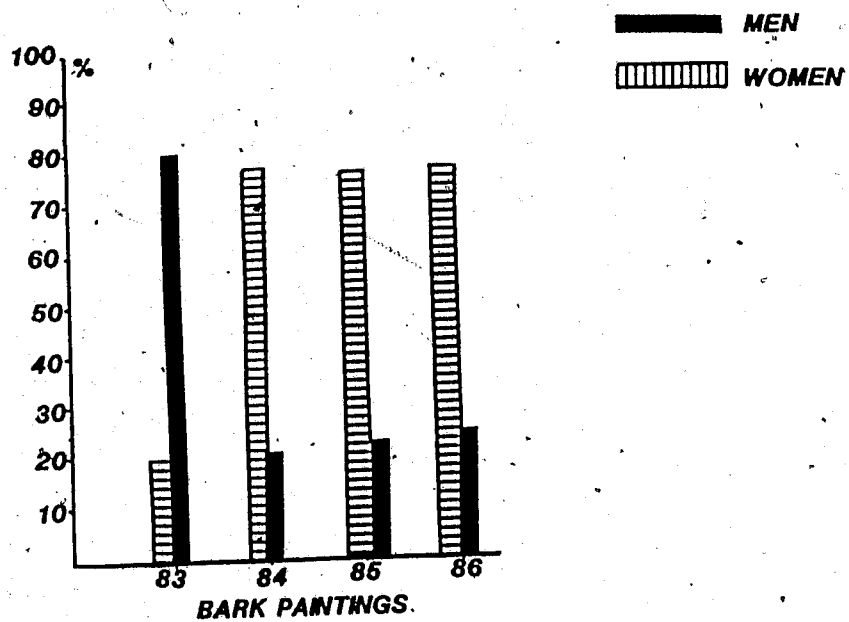
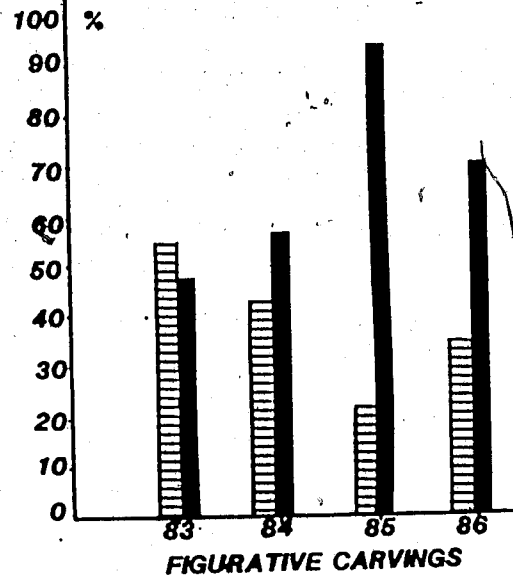
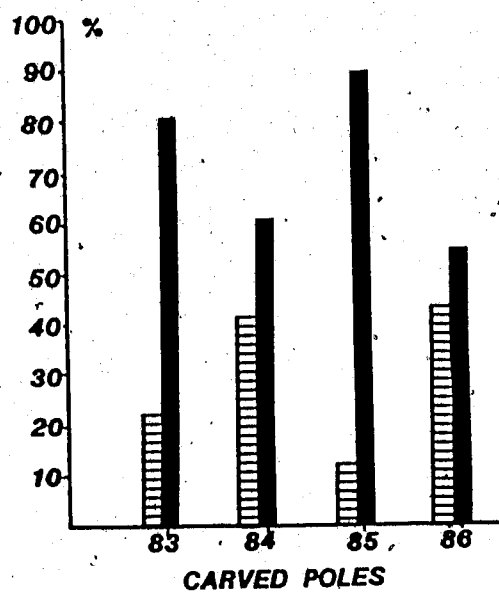


FIGURE 1: PERCENTAGE OF MAJOR ARTEFACT TYPES MADE BY MEN AND WOMEN.

poles around 1 metre continued to be popular. The production of minjaturized poles around 15cm were discouraged by the craft adviser because of their unsaleability.

Bark paintings, which were only occasionally produced in the previous decade, have enjoyed a period of revival during the past few years. These were produced predominantly by women and invariably they had no mythological connotations. If any meaning was ascribed to them, it was usually the depiction of environmental themes, - rocks, turtle eggs, stars or ceremonial objects such as burial poles, armlets and so on. In this respect they conformed to the non-mythological range of paintings earlier described by Mountford. The increased participation of women overall in all areas - carving, painting and the manufacture of material culture items, - appears to have stemmed from a concerted effort by the Manager appointed in 1982 to reconstruct the women's involvement in art and craft production and to encourage the manufacture of their crafts. His wife's involvement in this area has also been credited with stimulating an increased participation by the women over this period (Reid pers. comm.).

Apart from Yirrkala, the concentration of women's efforts in the area of carving and painting is unprecedented in analogous craft communities in the Top End, where women tend to restrict their activities to crafts such as basket and mat weaving. This phenomenon can be attributed to the basically open nature of the artistic system which operates in the ceremonial context. The unrestricted participation of women with men in the ceremonial sphere, and the precedent for individual creation in this context, allowed a relatively easy transition to the production of items for secular, commercial purposes. As documented by Mountford (1958) women could be called upon traditionally to carve a burial pole when a suitable male relative was unavailable for the task. The founding of an art and craft industry encouraged and opened up opportunities for women's greater involvement in this area. However in terms of carving they tend to produce the smaller figurative carvings rather than the large burial poles which were traditionally the preserve of the men.

The Producers

With the establishment of Tiwi Pima a concerted effort was made by the craft adviser to encourage high quality work produced on a relatively regular basis. Because of the disruption of ceremonial activity by the mission, technological skills were concentrated amongst the older people at Nguiu. With encouragement from the craft adviser and the continuation of a teaching programme of art and craft at Xavier Boy's School, the production of art and craft slowly increased.

While Fallon had reported only 4 regular male carvers at Bathurst Island in 1970, there were in fact more experienced craftspeople on the settlement, but it was a matter of concern that these were all old men. However by 1978 a number of pensioner and middle-aged women had begun to carve and produce woven mats, baskets and ornaments. Gradually more of the younger people gradually began to try their hand at carving.

Tiwi Pima records show that by 1983 there were 33 men and 39 women producing art and craft. Of these 8 men and 6 women produced more than 16 pieces annually, and these have been termed major producers. Minor producers, who contributed between 3-15 pieces yearly, numbered 17 men and 8 women. Occasional producers of one or two items during the year were mostly women, who numbered 25 as opposed to 8 men. Altman (1983:9) uses similar terms for artists of Maningrida, however his definition was based on the income earned from sales. Here I have preferred to look at the number of items made as an indicator of productivity, as one person could produce regularly and be paid less than someone who made one expensive item per year.

In 1984 there was dramatic increase in craft producers to 66 men and 76 women, mainly as the result of renewed efforts by the new craft manager to stimulate traditional art. Of these 9 men and 7 women were major producers. Minor producers also increased to 21 men and 35 women, with 36 men and 33 women only producing occasionally. Although some of the artists and craftworkers from the previous year did produce, there were 53 male and 52 women who on the 1984 books who had not sold anything in the previous year.

In 1985 the craft production level dropped again; with 9 major, 18 minor and 9 occasional male producers selling their work and 7 major, 20 minor and 18 occasional female producers. New people, who had not produced in the previous 2 years included 14 men and 19 women. According to the Tiwi Pima Craft Manager's Report, the drop in productivity in 1984/85 was the result of his rejection of much of the new carvers work as they were making artifacts out of wet green wood that was cracking. Cash flow problems also prevented a lot of purchases. For the first six months in 1986 the trend was again toward increased production, with a total of 65 men and 61 women producing art and craft. Of these 10 men and 13 women were major producers, 29 men and 24 women were minor producers and 26 men and 24 women were occasional producers. New artisans were added to the list of workers this year, numbering 15 men and 30 women.

Fluctuations in productivity levels during this four year period are quite marked, particularly amongst the numbers of male occasional producers, and in all categories of female producers.

Numbers of regular major male producers remained relatively constant over the period, despite the death of one and sickness of another. In all, 10 men during this period could be considered as belonging to this category. The number of women producers tended to fluctuate more over the years. In all, 13 women could be considered major producers with more women producing occasionally than the men.

The number of artists who contributed during this four year period totalled 125 men and 122 women. Although some of these were from Pularumpi and Milikapiti, their contribution mostly occurred when they were visiting Nguu, as, despite previous attempts to include artists from Melville Island, the constraints of time and money tended to preclude those artists from regular services by Tiwi Pina.

Ages of Artists

A profile on the producer's ages, shows that the regular male producers are mostly pensioners in their 60's, although there were several younger ones in their 50's producing regularly. The minor male producers were much younger with the majority (76%) being between 20-40, with a mean age of 35. There were also some older people producing on a minor basis, 12% of whom were pensioners.

The minor female producers, like the men, also tended to be young - between the age of 20-40 (74%), with the rest being in the 50-60 age bracket. The occasional female producers again were spread between a wide age bracket, with the majority again being young - between the ages of 20-40(75%), with a mean age of 26. 17% were pensioners. Most of the major female producers were pensioners, mainly in their 60's.

Income to Producers

Income earned by these producers over this four year period was extremely low, with the majority of producers earning an annual income of less than \$500. The highest wage earned annually during this period was \$5,800 in 1985 by one of the male carvers. An award of \$7,000 over a 2-year period was also made by a patron of the arts, which allowed the work of one senior carver to be put aside for a private collection and exhibition. Totals of incomes earned by all artists over this 4 year period can be seen, in Figure 2.

The distribution of mean annual wages from 1983-1986 for the three different categories of producers is shown for both men and women in Figures 3, 4 and 5. The profile provided by the tables clearly shows that the major male and female producers were earning up to 5 times more than those in the minor category.

Even so, the highest mean annual wage earned by a major male producer was \$2,600 in 1984 and as low as \$800 in 1986. Women consistently earned less than their male counterparts partly because more of them proportionately made items on an occasional basis, and also because they very rarely made large burial poles or equivalent carvings which returned a high price. The highest amount earned by a woman over this 4 year period was \$1,400 with the majority earning \$100 or less. The average amount earned by women producers was 50% less than income earned by men. Productivity was not necessarily an indication of income because of the variability of prices paid for different items. For example, one carver was paid \$1,900 for 1 pole and 1 carving of exceptional quality one year, while a woman produced 8 medium size poles, 7 bark paintings and 3 figure carvings which she sold for a total of \$655. Prices for individual items are difficult to determine because of variations in size and quality. However, over this period the average price to artists for a large burial pole was \$300, while a bird or figure carving could be anywhere between \$25 and \$60 depending on size. Bark baskets averaged \$20, palm leaf baskets \$5, bark armlets \$3-\$5, woven armlets \$1, while a good quality barbed spear could earn between \$30-\$100.

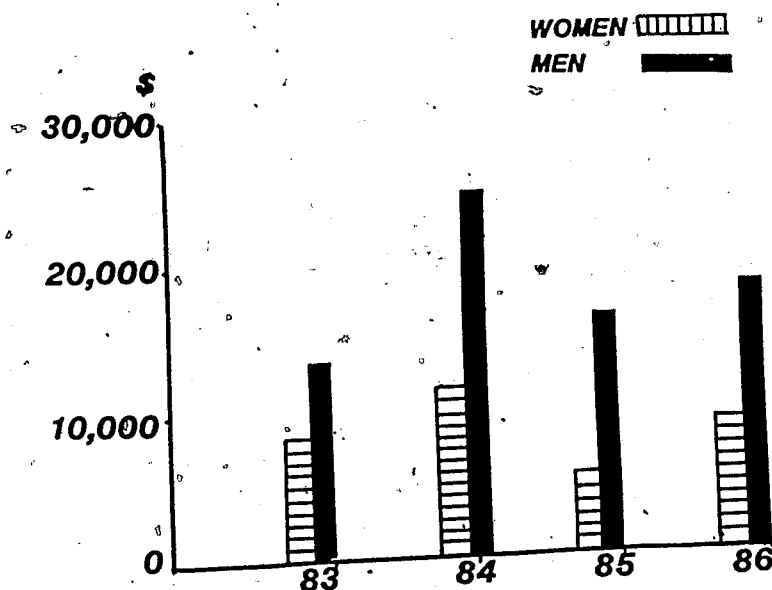


FIGURE 2: TOTAL ANNUAL INCOME TO ARTISTS.

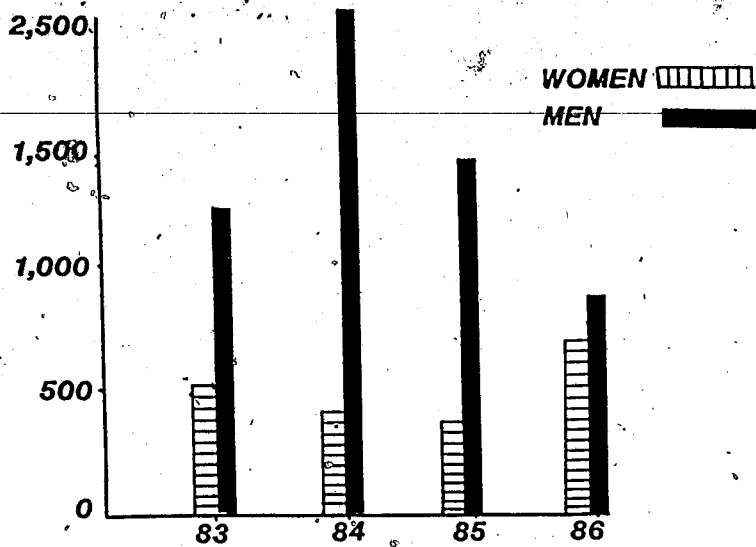


FIGURE 3: AVERAGE INCOME FOR MAJOR PRODUCERS.

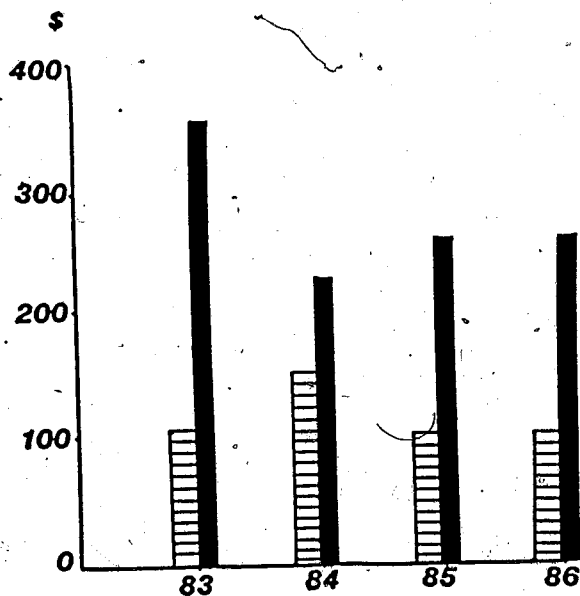


FIGURE 4: AVERAGE INCOME FOR MINOR PRODUCERS.

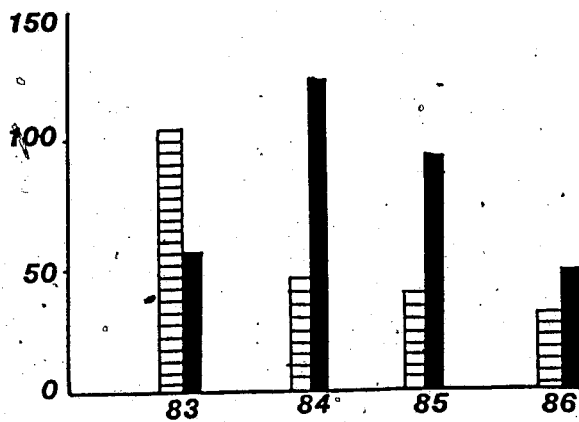


FIGURE 5: AVERAGE INCOME FOR OCCASIONAL PRODUCERS.

The low prices, particularly for the items produced by the women, such as bark paintings, bark baskets, armlets etc., account for the low income earned by the artists. It is interesting to compare these prices to the price list circulated in 1969 by the Department of Welfare. From this it can be seen that in the past 17 years or so there has been no real increase in prices paid to artists. Amongst the regular producers there appeared however to be a general acceptance of prices paid, as internal judgements by other Tiwi as to who was a more talented artisan and therefore who deserved higher payment, tended to be accepted by the artists themselves.

A clue to how Tiwi Pima workers existed on such low incomes is provided by social security records held by the Nguiu Council. These show that 68% of producers were also drawing some type of benefit, including most of the major producers, many of whom were pensioners. Of the rest, some were young people who depended upon their family for support, or full-time workers who only produced occasionally in their spare time, such as the workers at Tiwi Pottery and Tiwi Designs. Of the producers, only 3 of the men in the major category appear to be totally dependent upon their art and craft production for their income. This shows that most people produce for 'top up' money in addition to other income, with only a few of the major producers earning enough to subsist on.

While people spoken to on the island admitted that they produced for money, the low economic returns indicate that cultural factors are also important. This was apparent from discussions particularly with the older artists who said that they derived satisfaction from producing art and craft and saw it as an important way of expressing their Tiwi identity. They also saw it as an important way of reinforcing tradition and passing it on to the younger generation. The continued valuation of artistic prowess as a means of gaining prestige was also apparent from the appraisal of other artist's work on view in the Tiwi Pima shed. These attitudes show that despite the commercialisation of art, the Tiwi still place a high value on the creative process, a fact previously documented by Goodale, and Goss (1971).

Sales

Unfortunately there are no sales figures for the early part of Tiwi Pima's operations, although the Craft Adviser's Report for the Aboriginal Arts Board in 1976 mentions that purchasing funds were nil and that outstanding debts of \$1,000 prevented further purchases. With the appointment of a full-time craft adviser and the granting of an operational subsidy by the Aboriginal Arts Board the situation improved. Arrangements were established with the government Aboriginal art and craft marketing company to buy on a regular basis so as to improve the situation. However buying was usually erratic as the Company's field buyer often

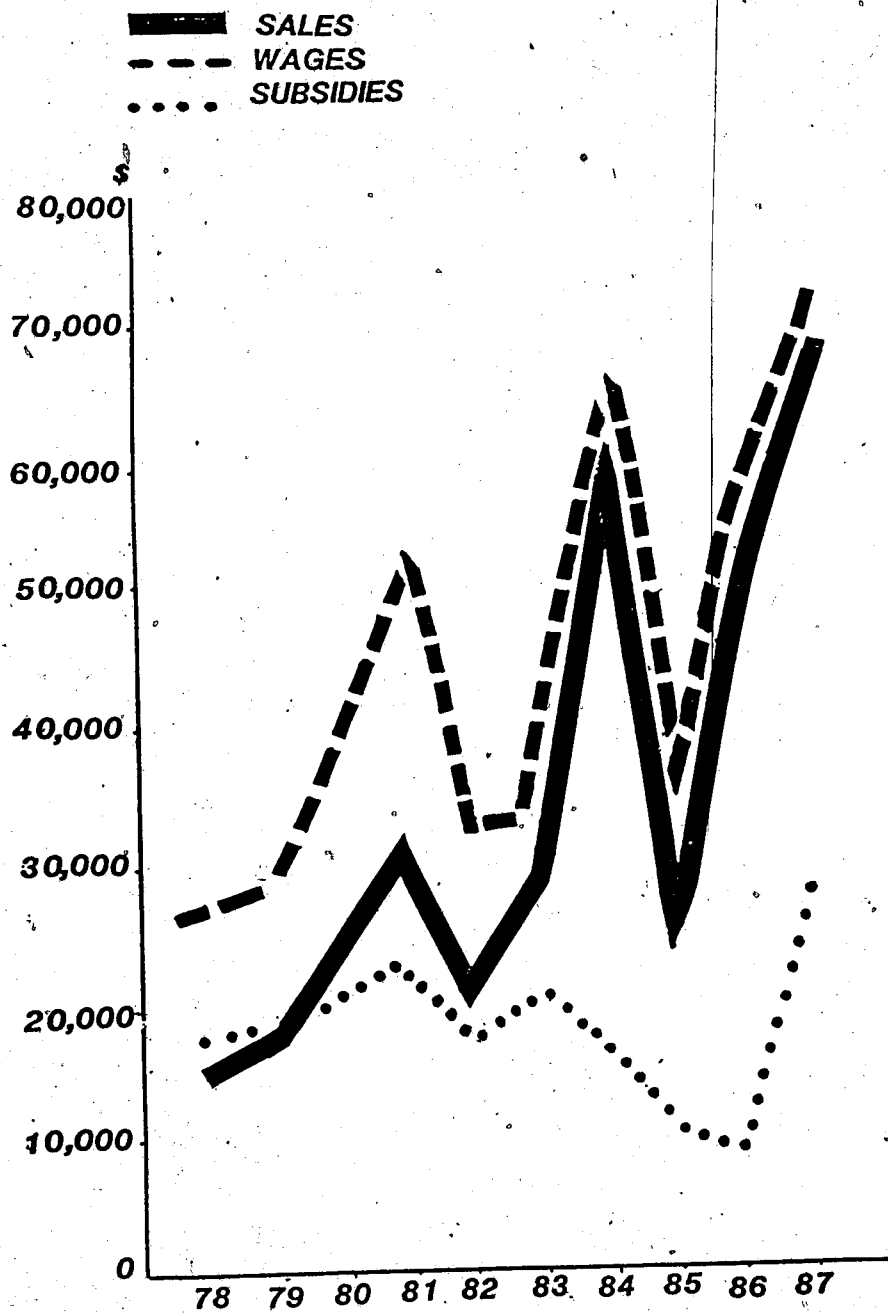


FIGURE 6: TIWI PIMA: SALES, SUBSIDIES AND WAGES.

did not have sufficient purchase money either. The resulting cash flow problems seem to have continually beset Tiwi Pima.

Sales figures for the financial years 1978-1987 (Figure 6) show the erratic nature of Tiwi Pima's operations, with sales rising steadily in 78-80 then falling in 1981, doubling in 1984 only to fall again in 1985 then to recover the following year. Part of the problems are recorded in the Tiwi Pima Craft Adviser's Reports to the Aboriginal Arts Board for these years, particularly the fall-off years when cash flow problems meant that the adviser literally had to close the door to artists from time to time. This aggravated erratic production patterns and increased the fluctuations in artifact output. Also some craftspeople were discouraged because they did not prepare their materials correctly, resulting in warping and splitting and thus unsaleable items. Loss of stock through climatic fluctuations, particularly during the humid wet season when barks warped, grew mould and carvings split was a continual problem for Tiwi Pima which still does not have an air-conditioned shed for storage.

Table 1 gives a general breakdown in percentage of sales made to the different market outlets, which have been defined as those being marketed through the galleries owned by the government arts and craft company - Aboriginal Arts Australia; local sales retailed on the island; and miscellaneous sales marketed off the island to other private galleries, museums and art galleries, organizations and individual collectors.

	1983	1985	1986	1987
Gov. Co.	20%	39%	31%	10%
Local	45%	30%	34%	45%
Other	35%	31%	35%	45%

TABLE 1. BREAKDOWN OF TIWI PIMA SALES

This Table shows that up until 1987 Tiwi Pima marketed its products in a fairly equal way among the three broad market categories. The greatest fluctuation appear in the recent purchasing by the Government Company, which markets the majority of Tiwi Pima products via its regional galleries in Darwin and Alice Springs. The dramatic drop in 1987 is the direct result of the Darwin regional gallery being downgraded and moved from a central location to one which has reduced visitor access. This has resulted in a reduced purchasing of Tiwi items as well as an apparent reduced turnover of items.

Local sales are another important component of Tiwi Pima sales, particularly since the establishment of Tiwi Tours, a privately owned tourist operation which has been bringing day trippers to Melville and Bathurst Islands since 1981. This operates during the dry season only, resulting in stimulated sales during this period. With the cessation of tours during the wet season there is a drop off in sales. The local sales are constituted mainly by the smaller items, such as ceremonial ornaments, miniature bark baskets and small carvings, which are relatively easy to wrap and carry. Of local sales, Tiwi Tours purchases have accounted for 8% in 1982, 19% in 1985, 29% in 1986 and 30% in 1987, showing their impact on the local economy. The rest of the items are marketed to a variety of organizations, individuals and galleries in Australia. Tiwi Pima occasionally exhibits items in special exhibitions, however these are organized on about an average of every two years.

In comparison to overall sales, Pascoe's report (1981 exhibit V-2) estimates that Tiwi Pima contributed 2% of the Government Company's total national sales, making it one of the lowest contributors compared to other Aboriginal art outlets such as Maningrida which provided 9%, Oenpelli which provided 6%, Mimi Arts and Crafts which contributed 4% and Yirrkala 11%. Figures provided by Cooke (1983:46) show that in 1983 Tiwi Pima's contribution had risen to 4% of total sales in comparison to those made by other art and craft centres in the NT. Proportionally, however this was still one of the lowest figures provided by an art and craft outlet in the Territory except for Tiwi Pottery.

Income and Expenditure

A profile on income from grants and expenditure on operating the business shows that Tiwi Pima has been reliant upon subsidy ever since its inception. (See Figure 6 and Appendix Table 2). Most of the subsidy is provided by the Aboriginal Arts Board to cover some of the operational expenses such as the purchase of items. Since 1977 the Aboriginal Arts Board provided the salary for a full-time craft adviser, until the manager took over responsibility for Tiwi Pima along with Tiwi Designs and Tiwi Pottery. National Employment and Training Scheme allowances are also provided for the wage of the Tiwi assistant to Tiwi Pima. An analysis of sales, subsidy and wages to staff plus incomes to artists through the purchase of artifacts is set up in Figure 6. Only 20% of the manager's salary has been included in this calculation to reflect the amount of time spent on Tiwi Pima operations after 1982. This profile shows that income to staff and producers has constantly outstripped sales, although in 1983-84 the gap between income and sales significantly narrowed. This situation of non-profitability is also shown in the operational costs of Tiwi Pima in which expenditure on artists' wages, freight,

packaging and other expenses has consistently outstripped sales income, resulting in consistent net losses.

Because of this, outside subsidy has been constantly needed to help Tiwi Pima with its operations. Subsidy levels were highest when Tiwi Pima was being established, accounting for 130% of income compared to sales. This gradually declined to around 70% by 1981 and dropped to 57% in 1982, when the full salary for the Tiwi Pima adviser was subsumed by the overall manager. After this time grant monies continued to decline steadily only rising slightly when special grants were made available by the Tiwi land Council in 1983 and 1987, and by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in 1981 for the purchase of special collections. As Figure 6 shows, subsidy levels appear to have a direct relation to sales and productivity, so when there is an injection of money the sales rise accordingly.

Conclusion

As one of the last enterprises to be formally acknowledged through subsidization, Tiwi Pima has had a shorter time to establish its viability than the other enterprises at Nguiu. The dramatic rise in the numbers of producers since this time shows that there is a great appeal for this type of traditional activity amongst a large segment of the population, most of whom produce to top up their other incomes.

However, a profile of Tiwi Pima's performance over the past years shows that the enterprise is not yet self-supporting. Its sales and the number of people producing fluctuate significantly each year, resulting in erratic production and sales levels. To a degree this ties into the fact that many people only produce on an ad hoc basis when they need money.

Liquidity also affects purchases, so that when there is a cash flow, purchasing and productivity levels rise accordingly. This shows that there are structural factors constraining a more even production rate and that there is a continued need for subsidy to allow for the purchase of items particularly during the wet season when visitor numbers to the island drop off and items are slow moving. It is also possible that given cash flow, payment of higher prices to major artists could stabilize the production levels to a degree, by discouraging and cutting down the number of producers. However, the advisers have preferred to pursue their original brief of encouraging as many producers as possible. This has resulted in the present situation of a lot of people producing erratically and a continued need for subsidy.

CHAPTER 5

TIWI DESIGNS

Introduction

Tiwi Designs, the silk-screen printery, was the first of the craft enterprises on Bathurst Island to be officially encouraged by the church. This was at the height of the assimilation era, when the government was intensifying training programmes to inculcate Aboriginal people with vocational skills in an attempt to equip them for the general work force. This new technique was radically different from the traditional ways in which the Tiwi produced their art and craft, and as a result it required a degree of training and capital input. This Chapter looks at the history and performance of the Tiwi Designs enterprise to assess how successfully the Tiwi have accepted this new technique.

History of Tiwi Designs

Tiwi Designs grew out of the instruction in western art techniques at the school in 1968. The art teacher, Madeline Clear, was keen to develop the talents of several of the pupils after being encouraged by Bishop O'Laughlin, who had brought illustrations of Eskimo woodblock prints to the island in the belief that the Tiwi could do similar designs. According to Clear (pers. comm.) she thought that woodblock printing was suitable for the Tiwi as it closely conformed to the traditional practice of woodcarving. She also wanted to introduce the students to a means of expression which would liberate them from what she considered to be hackneyed versions of traditional culture for the tourist market (Clear, Tiwi Designs Craft Adviser's Report 1970:2). There is no doubt that the art teacher was unaware of the role of creativity in the traditional artistic system, reflecting the low regard many of the previous missionaries had of Tiwi art. This was compounded by the continued neglect of the traditional artifacts which were being sporadically produced for sale. However, as became evident, a number of Tiwi have found the introduction of new techniques stimulating.

In 1969, two young men, Bede Tungatalum (18) and Eddie Puruntatameri (22) (who was shortly replaced by Giovanni Tipungwuti) were the first students to attend a training workshop, set up in a room underneath the Old Presbytery. Under the teacher's guidance the students soon began to transfer their designs from paper to silk-screen on fabric. These items were for sale locally. A year later, Tiwi Designs items were displayed at the Expo 70 Exhibition and a set of 6 linen place mats were awarded the Industrial Design Council of Australia's Good Design Award.

In the following year the two students formed Tiwi Designs as a legal partnership, under the direction of the teacher, who began to work full-time as Tiwi Designs adviser. The objectives of Tiwi Designs at this time were: to continue production of screen-printed articles for sale, to provide the artists with facilities and materials so that they could continue to develop as artists, and to train the Aborigines involved, so that they could manage the industry themselves.

The dual function of Tiwi Designs as a training workshop and craft enterprise caused some initial conflict, particularly for the first two craft advisers, who believed that its most important function was as a training workshop. Clear, in fact, believed that given the high cost of production, Tiwi Designs did not have an economic future, but that its principal function was in developing the talents of the artists involved. However the involvement of a government subsidy through the Aboriginal Arts Board and the increasing stress on becoming economically viable, together with the gradual growth of popularity of the Tiwi Design products, necessitated the development of the enterprise side of the partnership.

Late in 1976 Tiwi Designs moved into spacious new premises provided by the Mission. This enabled the setting up of more tables for screening and the acquisition of up-to-date equipment for the drying and heat-sealing of screened items. Larger screens were produced with photographic stencils for the screening of lengths of fabric, and better liaison with the mission-run sewing enterprise Bima Wear resulted in increased production of clothing with Tiwi Designs prints. An increase in staff was also made possible by the expansion into larger premises.

In 1980 the Department of Aboriginal Affairs advised Tiwi Designs to change from a partnership of two individuals to an association because of the problems associated with funding individuals. As a result Tiwi Designs became a legally incorporated body under the Commonwealth Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976. The stated aims of the Tiwi Designs Corporation are:

- to promote, preserve and enrich Tiwi culture,
- to promote employment for the Tiwi Community in the crafts, printing textiles and related industries.

These stated objectives carry on the initial functions of Tiwi Designs as a training workshop and an enterprise. However, under the government's policy it was nonetheless encouraged to become economically self-sufficient. This was also the goal of the subsidizing organizations.

Initially this change in structure from a partnership to an association governed by a committee of its members, was a cause of concern the original partners, who felt they were losing some of

their prestige as the originators of Tiwi Designs. However, despite the legal change, Tiwi Designs in 1987 functioned very much as before, as a cooperative effort amongst the eight Tiwi workers. This is largely because three of them are consanguinal kin and because the senior partners who are now assuming more ceremonial responsibility within the community, are still considered by the younger workers as the overseers of the operation, working in conjunction with the European craft adviser.

The Craft Adviser

Because Tiwi Designs was based upon an introduced technique requiring high standards of technical proficiency, and structured as a workshop production enterprise, it was very different from Tiwi Pima. This meant that the craft adviser was a central factor in the operations of the enterprise, particularly in relation to setting standards and influencing attitudes. The problems this raised in a self supporting industry will be examined here.

The European founder of Tiwi Designs was clearly an advocate of change in regard to training the artists in a technique which would, from her point of view, give them an alternative valid means of expression to their customary carving and painting. After being paid by the mission, she was successful in obtaining a subsidy from the Aboriginal Arts Board in 1972, and as a result became the first full-time independent craft adviser. She saw her job as involving instruction in the technical aspects of silk-screening, the administrative aspects of running a business such as the processing of orders, and book-keeping. Theoretically the artistic aspects of the enterprise were left in the hands of the artists, although advice was given as to the suitability of designs for printing.

The first adviser was replaced by another female in 1974. The new adviser believed that her role was administrative so that the artists were left free to devote time to their art. According to the 1975 Tiwi Designs Craft Adviser's Report, pressure increased for Tiwi Designs to become self-sufficient at this time by a drop in subsidy to 60% of the award wages paid to workers. As a result, the enterprise side of Tiwi Designs was developed over the next few years with a greater emphasis on the adviser's management skills. This included administration of the workshop, book-keeping, development of markets and production quality control. The latter was seen as particularly important because of criticisms by customers of badly cut and printed items. Input into design was also seen as necessary and the artists were encouraged to utilize more traditional abstract style patterns to keep a Tiwi feel to their work. There was a sentiment frequently quoted by successive advisers, that the Tiwi Designs product must have a handmade look and not become too mechanized in production, a sentiment also held by the printers themselves (Tiwi Designs Craft Adviser's Reports 1974-76).

Subsequent craft advisers from 1975 onwards were male, and despite the recommendation from the previous adviser that a person with business management skills be employed in this job, most advisers who followed until 1983, were people with a silk-screen/art background rather than business skills. These advisers remained with Tiwi Designs for an average of two years.

In 1978 the adviser attempted to transfer some of the administrative matters onto the Tiwi Designs staff in an attempt to introduce a greater degree of self-reliance and responsibility amongst the workers. The senior partners were encouraged to undertake a book-keeping course so they could assist with some of the financial aspects of Tiwi Designs. They began to organize the wages each day, and were encouraged to undertake more supervision of the younger workers. Quality control was a constant problem. There were several difficulties. For example, there was no customer feed back, aside from retail outlets cancelling orders. There was also the lack of proper training for apprentices and an erratic method in handling orders and carelessness in printing and the handling of equipment. Because of these technical problems the marketing of Tiwi Designs products was deliberately restricted by the adviser to the local market, as the quality was not good enough for general export south. One technique which improved quality was to get each artist to go through his work daily to identify mistakes and screen over them. Previously the craft adviser had done this. This resulted in the men learning to correct their mistakes immediately and to screen more carefully to avoid them. The artists were also encouraged to sell items at Tiwi Designs to visitors in order to get an idea of customer preferences and criticisms.

Despite these steps, the adviser in 1979 was frustrated by the lack of initiative exhibited by the workers, which he believed resulted from the fact that they had been under constant supervision since leaving school. This was also compounded by cultural factors which were not entirely compatible with an industrial mode of productivity. To allow the artists to work at their own rate, and to obtain an idea of the value of their labour, a piece-rate system of payment was introduced in July 1980. Under this system, instead of being paid a weekly wage, each person was paid a fixed rate for each item printed e.g. \$2 a metre for fabric lengths, \$3 per T-shirt etc. This system was also favoured by the artists as being more compatible with their life styles, but it also resulted initially in the slower processing of orders.

Since 1982, as a cost saving measure, the system of employing three craft advisers for Tiwi Designs, Tiwi Pottery and Tiwi Pima was abolished in preference for an overall manager with business management skills. This stressed the administration aspects of the enterprises, such as book-keeping, processing orders, liaising with retail outlets, promoting the product through exhibitions as well as supervising of the workers and quality control. The co-ordination of these

aspects for the three enterprises proved to be tremendously demanding and the first manager saw the necessity for continued artistic input into the two introduced craft industries, through short term visits from technical experts. So, for example, in 1984 a graduate in textile design from RMIT, spent several weeks assisting the artists develop a multi-colour stencil print. Since 1985 a printer and former adviser to Tiwi Designs has been encouraged by the manager to return and work with the artists, to take over much of the manager's load. This was because Tiwi Designs was taking up so much of the manager's time that the other enterprises were suffering from neglect. This situation has continued because of the increasing demand for their products, especially through specific orders. The manager spends an estimated 70% of his time at Tiwi Designs, 20% of it with Tiwi Pima and only 10% with the pottery.

During this period a considerable effort was made to expand the sales in the southern states and to emphasize the fashion aspect of Tiwi Designs. According to the present manager, who previously worked as adviser to Tiwi Pottery, the attempts to involve the workers in aspects of self-management have not been successful as yet. Basic problems with numeracy and literacy have limited the effectiveness of book-keeping and managerial courses and there is a general lack of interest in these areas. The workers see themselves principally as silk-screeners and are happy to leave the administrative aspects to the manager, so that in effect the successful operation of Tiwi Designs is dependant upon his position. This has left the initial aim of the printery becoming a self-managed enterprise as yet unfulfilled. The general lack of interest in the management side can be related to social factors and to the general dislike for hierarchical power structures outside of the ritual context. European administrators not only take on the tasks the people are not yet well equipped to do, but also resolve the difficulties that Tiwi have with being directive in interpersonal relations.

Tiwi Male Staff

Over the years the number of staff at Tiwi Designs has fluctuated, but with a general increase as production has grown, from 2 in 1969 to 8 in 1987. Because of its role as a training workshop, practically all of the workers joined as young school-leavers, between the ages of 16 and 17. Of the existing staff in 1986, there were Bede and Giovanni who founded the printery in 1969. Danny Munkara joined in 1974 (as did Vivian Kerinaia, who worked at the printery until he was killed in a car crash in 1984). Angelo Munkara joined in 1976 and his brother Michael started in 1980. The most recent employees, Alan and Osmond, joined in 1983. A number of other young trainees have joined Tiwi Designs although they have dropped out after one or two years of training only to be replaced by others. Today the Tiwi staff of Tiwi Designs are all relatively young, with ages ranging from 18 to 35.

The work undertaken by the male staff entails designing, preparation of new screens and the pulling of designs onto Tiwi Designs products, general cleaning of equipment and some input into administration matters such as distribution of orders. Interests and expertise vary and individuals tend to work in areas they prefer, so some for example, are adept at designing whereas the others are more interested in screening. Some of the younger ones prefer to do small jobs such as t-shirts or greeting cards rather than all-over designs. The senior partners are expected to provide some direction for the trainees and assist with some of the administrative matters. However as previously mentioned these duties are mostly left to the manager.

Tiwi Female Staff

When Tiwi Designs branched out into screening onto fabric products such as tablecloths and place-mats, women were employed to do the hand-sewing and hand-fraying of edges. By 1973 there were eight women employed part-time, so that they could be paid piece-rates and still be eligible for unemployment benefits. The number of females employed by Tiwi Designs has fluctuated over the years, but they generally outnumbered males until 1977, when a shift to sewn garments made by the seamstresses at Bima Wear reduced the importance of the other lines, such as table mats, tablecloths and wall-hangings, which needed sewing at Tiwi Designs.

Since that time there have been an average of three women working for the printery. However, because of tensions which often arose between the men and women in the workshop, and because of the menial, unsatisfying nature of the work, there has been a high turnover of staff. At present the women prefer to do their sewing for piece-rates at home.

The women employed belong to the 18-35 age group, with some of them being the wives of the male workers. On occasion, the women were encouraged by a couple of the advisers to contribute to the design aspect of Tiwi Designs. One in particular, Francene Tungatalum, Bede's wife, was interested in this area and produced a number of designs which were bought by Tiwi Designs and put onto screens.

The preference expressed by the younger men and women, particularly the single ones, to work in separate groups is reflected in the setting up of a silk-screen workshop for the women at Bima Wear. The manageress of this enterprise has encouraged the girls to do designs for Bima Wear garments, t-shirts, towels and so on, in competition with Tiwi Designs. This was on a small scale in the early 1980's and supplemented the sewing of Catholic School uniforms for export and clothing for the Island, which was the mainstay of the enterprise. However, when in 1983 Tiwi Designs stopped having their screened fabric sewn into Bima Wear garments, the latter's silk-screen area was expanded and in 1984 employed seven young girls. In 1988 with a change of

managers and the residency of a Sydney silk-screen printer,^{*} Bima Wear has produced a new series of designs and is endeavouring to consolidate the design aspect of the enterprise.^o

Items Made

When Tiwi Designs was inaugurated the artists began carving woodblock designs which were printed in ochre-based pigments onto ricepaper, as fine art prints. Within a year they were also taught the technique of silk-screening onto fabric and began to produce place-mats, tablecloths, wall-hangings and dress lengths along with the limited edition prints. The emphasis was on handicraft items.

This range of items remained relatively constant until the move in 1976 into new and larger premises. The additional space allowed larger screens to be prepared and as a result the screening of long lengths of fabric with all-over designs was emphasized. Arrangements were made with Bima Wear to sew the screened fabric into garments such as men's shirts, women's caftans and skirts, which Tiwi Designs then bought from Bima Wear and sold. During this period Tiwi Designs began to branch out into the fashion and furnishings area, while still maintaining the manufacture of smaller gift items such as place-mats and wall-hangings. Tiwi Designs expanded its production of screened t-shirts in the late 70's in response to their local popularity. It was also believed by the Marketing Manager of the Government Aboriginal Art and Craft Company that Tiwi Designs could capture the entire Aboriginal market in the Northern Territory, where motif t-shirts were extremely popular. Ironically it was the fashionability of Chinese cotton t-shirts amongst non-Aborigines which encouraged development in this sector.

In 1982 the move towards the mainstream fashion market was initiated by the severing of ties with Bima Wear, and the development of southern markets by the new manager. The

(*Bima Wear has not been included in this thesis because of the difficulty of distinguishing the silk-screen aspect from the sewing function of the enterprise in past records, sales etc. and also because its silk-screening function was only relatively recently developed, late in 1983 with the training of 2 silk-screens printers. Prior to this it was solely a sewing enterprise).

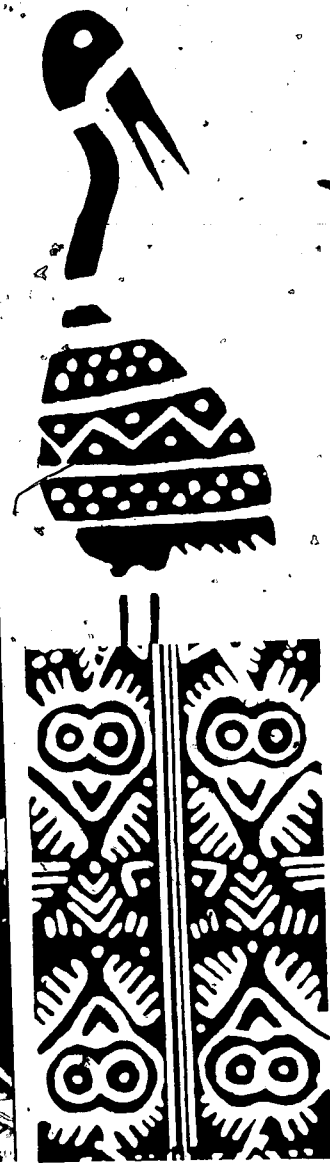


PLATE 7,8: SILK-SCREENING IN THE TIWI DESIGNS SHED, 1986.



installation of a thirteen metre printing table facilitated the printing of forty metre rolls of material which now are the major source of income for Tiwi Designs. These rolls are marketed via outlets such as the Government Company's Darwin Gallery, and Cooe Emporium in Sydney, or in prescribed lengths to customers. Hemmed sarong lengths are still available, but are mostly sold locally. With specific orders from fashion designers and particularly from Cooe, the designs are now printed onto a wide range of fabrics, including silk, velvet, corduroy, cotton and synthetic mixes.

Cotton t-shirts with Tiwi Design prints are also extremely popular and comprise a significant proportion of contemporary sales along with the fabric lengths. So although the other handicraft items such as place-mats, tablecloths and wall hangings are still produced, the emphasis today is upon the popular fashion items and the appeal is national rather than local. The increased demand for Tiwi Designs products down south, has resulted in more orders with specifications for designs, colours and fabrics. Consequently Tiwi Designs is being more strongly influenced by European tastes and fashions.

Partly as an alternative to the repetitive nature of the silk-screen work and the dictates of specific orders, several of the artists recently began combining silk-screen elements with abstract hand painted designs. The resulting works on fabric are then stretch framed and sold as fine art pieces.

Designs

The first designs produced by Tiwi Designs in 1969-70 were figurative motifs, mainly animals, birds and figures, subjects which are influenced by the natural environment and daily Tiwi life. The Western art training they had received plus their introduction to Eskimo woodblock motifs may have provided some stimulus for the artists. However, as the bark paintings collected by Spencer and Mountford show, figurative elements were also occasionally depicted by Tiwi artists in the past. A catalogue list from 1970 itemises 50 original designs produced by the first artists at Tiwi Designs. Of these, 29 were of birds, a trend of subject selection also reflected in the carving area, thus showing continuing concerns with mythological subjects, and every-day themes from the environment.

With encouragement from following craft advisers, more traditional abstract designs were produced by the artists. While these often incorporated the basic elements of Tiwi traditional art, lines, dots circles etc., the designs were often more complex and individualistic. Some craft advisers encouraged the artists to look through Mountford's book to gain design ideas but only a few have been adapted to silk-screen. Several of the artists interviewed admitted that they

regularly visited the Tiwi Pima craft shop to look at new carvings and bark paintings, but would not use another individual's designs because each person is directly identified with their own designs and is seen as owning them. None of the artists use designs relating to their particular Dreaming but rather invent them, much in the same way as designs, songs and dances are invented in the normal ritual context. Sometimes the designs are created with a particular theme in mind while others are just made up and named later. The catalogue for Tiwi Designs 1980-1986 which attributes mythological interpretations to the main designs reflects the continued use of abstract designs to signify every day elements of the environment, or mythological figures. Aspects of this were shown in Mountford's analysis of the artistic system done 30 years previously.

Innovation is encouraged by the craft advisers and is now rewarded by a bonus payment. Some individuals are more prolific than others, with Tungatalum contributing about 50% of all designs. In 1982-86 there were some 30 new designs produced, bringing up the number of designs at the artist's disposal to just over 150. These include many of the early figurative motifs as well as the all-over designs which are the most popular and commonly used. Other designs not listed, but utilized on t-shirts for local consumption are motifs for local football teams and designs pirated from Reggae record covers (The staff of Tiwi Designs have formed their own reggae-style band called the Tiwi Wailers).

When a new design is invented and drawn up, it must gain the approval of the other artists before it is accepted, in a similar way to the aesthetic critique which precedes payment for burial poles in a ritual context. Criteria for criticism are difficult to define, but according to the staff, they must look 'Tiwi'. In this respect there is general consensus that the abstract designs are the best. Tungatalum considers his designs to be more traditional than those done by the other artists. This increasing emphasis on 'traditionality' is also connected to the increased ceremonial involvement of the older staff. The cross fertilization of ideas is maintained by most of the printers through carving and decorating figurative and abstract poles for sale in Tiwi Pima.

These designs form the basis for another type of creativity which hinges upon the selection and combination of designs. For example, items such as tablecloths and wall-hangings still tend to be screened with figurative motifs, while fabric lengths and t-shirts are predominantly screened with all-over abstract designs. Combination of designs, particularly on the former items, is virtually unlimited with border prints combined with figurative motifs screened over the rest of the item. Sometimes figures will be screened over the all-over abstract prints, or two abstract prints will be combined to give a collage effect. So although the process of silk-screening is a

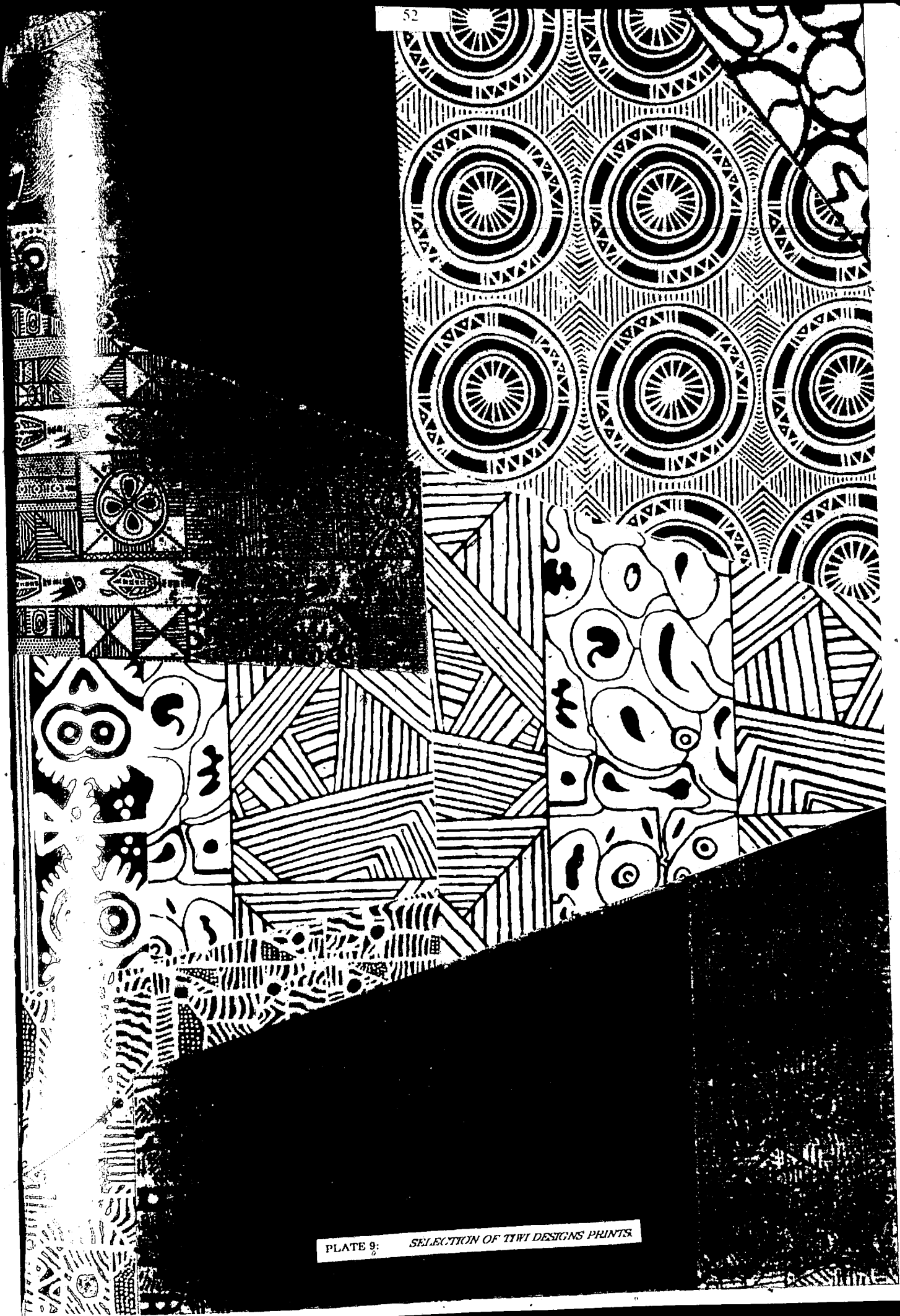


PLATE 9: SELECTION OF TIWI DESIGNS PRINTS

repetitive one, there is a lot of freedom allowed in the actual combination of a finite number of designs.

Experimentation in technique is often the result of outside influences. For example the layered collage look and splatter paint effects, were influenced by visiting European silk-screeners. Recently, with assistance from the current silk-screen specialist, Tiwi Designs has started to produce its first multi-colour separation print. So far, only one new design has been prepared in this way. Colours also varied over the years, changing from predominately ochre tones in the early days to more primary colours in recent times. To achieve a multi-colour rainbow effect different coloured dyes are placed directly into the screen and mixed by pulling the screen. Experimentation with fluorescent paints was also carried out in 1984 when those colours were popular.

Sales

Figure 7 presents the sales chart for Tiwi Designs from 1976 to 1987, showing the recent growth in production. The years 1978 and 1979 are inflated by increased orders as a result of several fashion shows staged in Darwin. By 1980 sales had dropped back and remained relatively stable until 1983/84 when they doubled. The manager's marketing strategy to target the fashion market down south by selling through well known outlets and having fabric incorporated into well-known designers clothes is reflected in the doubling of orders in 1983/84. The further doubling of sales again in 85/86 resulted from the addition of screening tables and the installation of a large heat sealing oven which made production much more time efficient. Because of increase orders and sales, two new apprentices were taken on in late 1986 to assist with the work.

It is clear from the early Craft Advisers' Reports that the majority of Tiwi Designs items were sold locally through the Tiwi Designs workshop or through the Nguin Store in the early years. In 1977 for example these sales accounted for 77% of all sales, with the rest being predominantly marketed through government's Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Company gallery in Darwin. A breakdown of more recent sales figures is shown in table 2.

	84/85	85/86	86/87
Company	28%	21%	10%
Other	35%	48%	57%
Local	37%	31%	33%

TABLE 2: TIWI DESIGNS: SALES BREAKDOWN

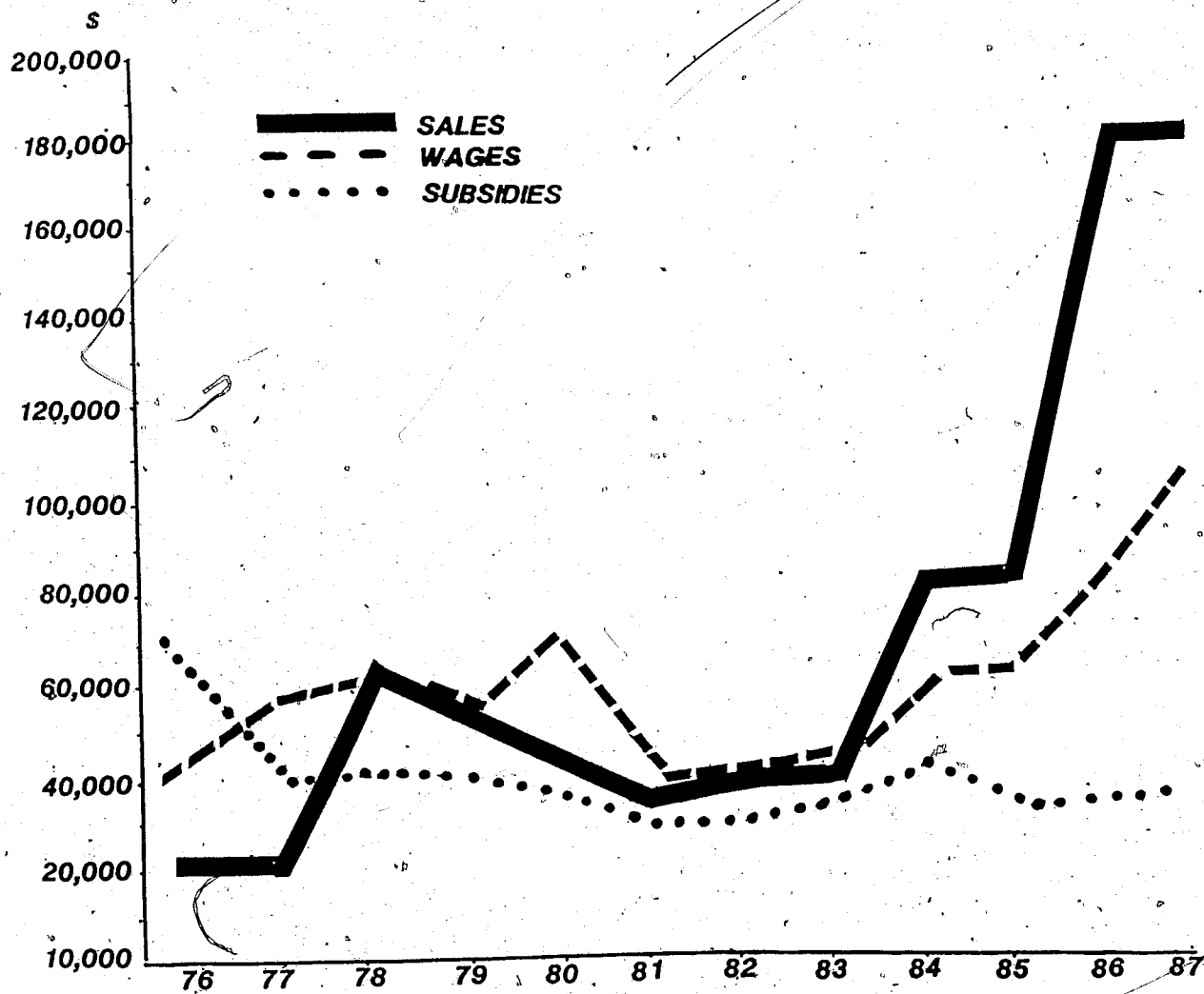


FIGURE 7: TIWI DESIGNS: SALES, SUBSIDIES AND WAGES.

This indicates that in comparison to the early days, when in fact Tiwi Designs were consciously not marketed interstate because of quality problems, there is now a trend to increasing interstate sales. The fortuitous rise in popularity of the so-called Australian and 'ethnic' look in fashion, which favoured visually striking Aboriginal produced designs, directly benefited Tiwi Designs sales.

Local sales have remained relatively constant. According to internal records, Tiwi Tours provided 33% of all cash sales between 1985-87. On the other hand sales to the Government Company have been reducing over this period. According to Pascoe's report in 1979/80 Tiwi Designs sold 21% of its total annual sales to the Company, which accounted for only 4% of total N.T. community sales marketed by them, particularly via their Darwin Gallery (Pascoe 1981: exhib V-2, 111-1). Company sales accounted for 28% and 21%, of total Tiwi Designs sales in 1985 and in 1986 and halved to 10% in 1987 as the direct result of the closing down of the central gallery in Darwin. This loss from the Company has however been compensated for by expansion in sales to other galleries and outlets interstate, which in 1987 accounted for over half of all sales.

Despite its growth in recent years the real potential for Tiwi Designs to expand has been constrained in part by the work pace, the numbers of workers and the physical space available in the workshop. At present there are maximum number of workers who could work successfully in the area provided. Initially to cope with the increased demand for their product the manager with Tiwi Designs staff approval allowed a commercial printery the right to reproduce a fixed meterage of fabric with Tiwi Designs print for a royalty payment of \$2.50 a metre. However this practice has not been maximized as an easy money spinner, mainly because the printers want to keep exclusive control of the product as a hand made item.

Income to Producers

All the Tiwi Design workers began on some sort of government backed traineeship, which provided a weekly wage for a number of years until the conclusion of the training period (which is discretionary). After this time period wages were met through other subsidies, mainly provided by the Aboriginal Arts Board, Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Aboriginal Development Commission. As of 1974 award wages were paid to workers, firstly in full then in part, as subsidy was reduced and workers wages had to be met from sales income. This was true especially after 1977 when a policy was adopted to pay more wages from sales to improve economic viability. Income from sales prior to that were used for purchasing equipment, materials and repaying the loan of \$1,000 from Catholic Mission and paying for sewing work.

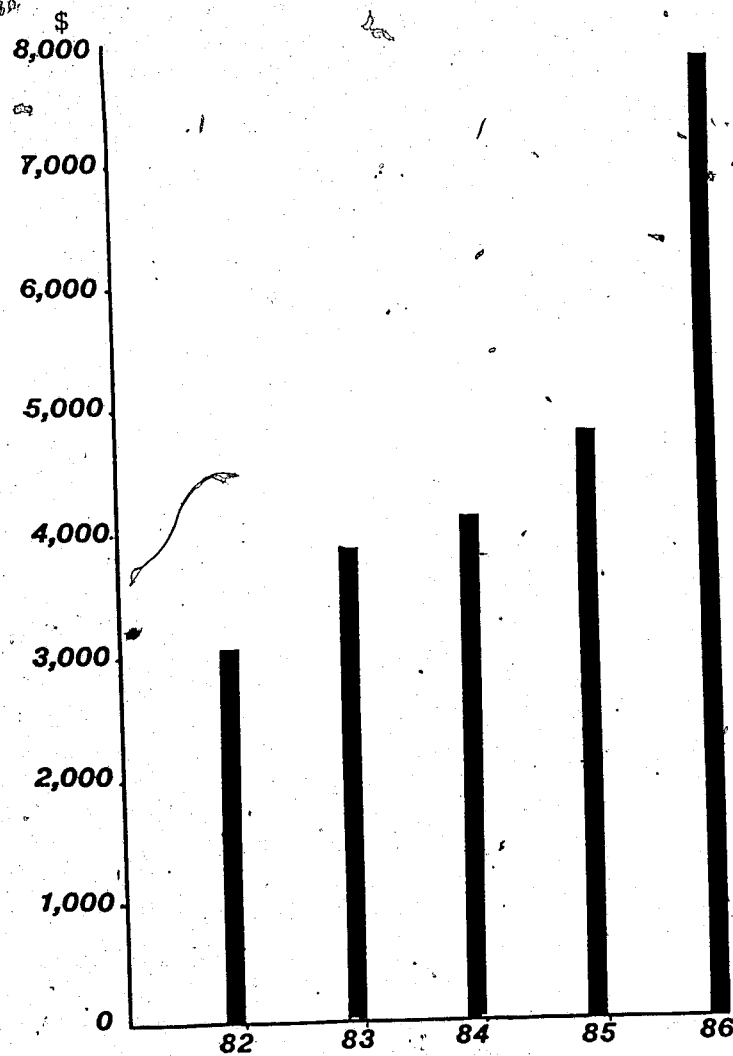


FIGURE 8: TIWI DESIGNS: ANNUAL AVERAGE WAGES.

Data on wages is not available until 1976 when a total of \$30,000 was paid out to the workers. Between 1977 and 1980 wages remained relatively stable, with the annual individual wage averaging \$4,660. The temporary addition of three extra workers who were not budgeted for in the traineeships accounted for an increase in the wage bill in 1980. When piece-rates were introduced in mid 1980, productivity fell off and the average annual wage declined to \$3,200. This gradually picked up, and by 1986 wages had risen to an individual annual average of \$7,950 as the result of increased sales. Figure 8 compares individual average wages for the years 1982-1986. Productivity rates of course vary, resulting in often dramatic differences between workers. For example in 1986 the lowest wage was \$3,531 and the highest was \$8,000. A profile of previous years wages, however, only showed a maximum of \$1,000 difference between individuals wages. Generally speaking there was a degree of parity amongst the wages earned, and dramatic differences were usually the result of sustained absenteeism because of sickness, or travel to the mainland for exhibitions, special training schemes and so on. The trainees on National Employment and Training Scheme allowances in the 1980's earned considerably less than the other printers. Their wages averaged \$1,300 during the first years of their apprenticeship when they were 16-17. At the end of their traineeships they were paid piece-rates and their income rose to levels similar to the other workers.

Figure 7 and Appendix Table 10 contrast income from sales and subsidies against overall expenditure on the enterprise's wages, including the adviser's salary and the manager's salary after 1982 (calculated at 70% of his wage as proportion of time spent at T.D.). This shows that despite the low wages, expenditure was more than the income from sales right through from 1976 to 1983, and that it was not until 1986 that income from sales was significantly higher.

Subsidies

Tiwi Designs was begun with a \$1,000 loan for equipment and a building, both provided by the Catholic Church, as well as the salary for the lay-missionary teacher. Since 1972 the Aboriginal Arts Board has subsidized the enterprise, firstly with the salary for a specialist adviser, and from 1982, with the salary for a general manager responsible for the three enterprises. Operational costs are also included in the Aboriginal Arts Board grant each year. The salary for the adviser increased from \$3,500 in 1972 to \$15,800 in 1980. From 1982 on the salary has been fixed in accordance with that of a clerk class 4 of the Commonwealth Public Service, bringing the subsidy up to \$26,000 in 1986. Since 1973 the Department of Aboriginal Affairs has also assisted with grants-in-aid to assist with operational costs, and in the initial stages of its involvement the Department of Aboriginal Affairs provided traineeship allowances to the staff apprentices. These were later replaced by government allowances such as the National Employment and Training

Scheme, which have been provided for all the Tiwi Designs workers at the commencement of their work at Tiwi Designs.

Since 1981 the Aboriginal Development Commission (ADC) has taken over from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in supplying money for operational expenses. The level of subsidy began to be reduced in recent years in keeping with the government's policy of assisting enterprises to become self-sufficient and self-managing. Tiwi Designs profitability since 1985 onwards has made a reduction in subsidy possible. A profile of the percentage of operating costs of Tiwi Designs as opposed to sales income, taken from financial statements shows that it is only in recent years that operational expenses have been less than income derived from sales, for example 104% in 1982, 84% in 1984, 74% in 1985 and 54% in 1986. On the whole Tiwi Designs has operated fairly consistently at a nett loss, with profits only being realized in 1985 and 1986. However, these figures of operational costs taken from the financial statements prepared by Tiwi Designs accountants do not take into account the Aboriginal Arts Board advisers grant, (calculated at 70% of the salary in proportion to the time spent on Tiwi Designs work) This additional income considerably reduces this recent profit. This shows that after 20 years of operations Tiwi Designs has just begun to break even.

Conclusion

In comparison to the other enterprises at Nguiu, Tiwi Designs has come the closest to achieving the government's goal of economic self-sufficiency. However the future profitability is in some respects uncertain as it depends upon the continued popularity of the Tiwi Designs product and the maintenance or expansion of current sales levels to keep it viable. As this profile shows there is a potential for expansion and profitability by the franchising of designs to commercial printeries. However, this is not an option favoured by the staff. The attitudes of the workers are therefore not aligned with overall concerns with maximizing the profitability and output of Tiwi Designs. Increased productivity in the past has been met by the strategy of putting on more workers, to allow printers to maintain their preferred work pace. So increased productivity needs to be set against increased wages, a factor which has necessitated the continued subsidy of operation costs.

CHAPTER 6

TIWI POTTERY

Introduction

Nowhere in the history of art and craft enterprise in the Northern Territory has there been a project similar to that of the pottery training programme which resulted in the founding of Tiwi Pottery. This was a thoroughly researched and financially backed programme to train and assist Aboriginal people to set up their own economically viable enterprises, utilizing an introduced technique. Although similar to Tiwi Designs in some respects the pottery project was based upon a more sophisticated mid-range technology, necessitating a longer training period and was planned from the start as a means of achieving economic independence. Once again there was no attempt to assess Aboriginal attitudes to such a project or in fact the long term suitability of such a marketing venture, factors which have implications for the consistently poor economic performance of this enterprise since its inception.

The Pottery Project

The idea of introducing Aboriginal people to clay modelling and pottery was initially developed by a number of NT school teachers, who attempted to set up pottery training at school. This occurred first at Hermannsburg in the 1950's without success. Again years later, a geologist with the Department of Mines, Dr Hoesfeld, who had been approached by a school teacher on the subject, wrote to Sir Paul Hasluck, the Minister for Territories on 3rd September 1962 suggesting the introduction of pottery to Aboriginal communities in the light of 'the difficult problem of their absorption into the Australian community' (DAA file no 62/3114). He went on to recommend the establishment of potteries at a number of Aboriginal communities as this, he believed would give talented Aborigines financial independence, which would in turn result in more stable communities. This suggestion was forwarded to the Welfare Branch and in the following year the Director of Mines recommended to the NT Administrator that suitable clay deposits at Gurin Point be placed under reserve for mining for this purpose (D.A.A. file no. 62/3114).

The Employment Training Section of the NT Administration, which was established to set up intensive training programmes for Aboriginal communities, had been working with a number of universities on Aboriginal development projects in order to determine the training needs necessary for the establishment of enterprises such as fishing and grazing. The pottery proposal was referred to Prof. Haynes, Director of Unisearch of the University of NSW in 1966, who was

engaged to undertake a survey on Aboriginal work patterns and manual skills with a view to recommending areas where people might have a particular aptitude.

The first stage of this research project in 1966 looked at Aboriginal manual skills in the relation to the making of traditional artifacts. In the resulting report, mostly based upon films of manufacturing techniques, Haynes stated that the study showed that Aboriginal artisans had high level skills in areas such as manual dexterity, eye-hand co-ordination and space form judgement, plus a deep understanding of natural materials. These skills, he concluded, would be well suited to the production of pottery (Haynes 1968:2). Significantly neither in this report nor later reports did he report on work patterns. Although it seems the Welfare Branch had almost committed itself to going ahead with a pottery project before Haynes report, his study rationalized the introduction of pottery making. Two of the grounds were particularly suspect, for he argued that there was no evidence to totally deny that Aboriginal people had previously made pottery, and second that they bore a striking resemblance to the Vedda of Ceylon who did make pots (Haynes 1968:3). It was also generally believed amongst certain government and church circles that making pottery was a 'civilizing' occupation and therefore suited to the aims of assimilation (Anderson, pers. comm.).

The next step of the survey involved the testing of clay samples from various areas in the NT. This was undertaken by Ivan McMeekin and Keith Lodge from the University of NSW, Department of Industrial Arts, who developed reliable and stable clay bodies from the Territory deposits.

Following on from Dr. Hoesfeld's suggestion, clay modelling was introduced into the curricula of some Aboriginal schools and to assist with this a small clay processing plant was established at Bagot Reserve in Darwin. It was decided between the Department of Welfare and Unisearch that they would combine this clay unit with a pottery training unit, where a selected number of Aboriginal men could be trained under the guidance of a trained potter. It was envisaged that they would train for five years and then return to their respective communities to establish potteries, coming back occasionally to Bagot for updating of technique.

Financially this was made possible by the government's newly established Training Allowance Scheme which paid wages to the potters, while Unisearch provided the instructor. The Ceramics Research and Training Unit was subsequently established in the old kitchen building at Bagot in 1968. The aims of the unit were: to train Aborigines as artisan potters for the establishment of a pottery cottage industry, to improve the clay production capacity of the Bagot clay processing unit, and to train Aboriginal teachers to teach ceramics in post-primary school

(Haynes 1968:4). The administrative aspects of the enterprise such as selling, pricing and keeping records of pottery sales were also considered to be part of the training.

In July 1968, the unit had 6 trainees - 2 from Port Keats, 2 from Milingimbi and 2 from Bathurst Island. They were trained in clay preparation, wheel throwing and firing of stoneware pots by the English potter Michael Cardew, who was then a member of the Department of Industrial Arts, University of NSW. He was considered to be a good choice as he had previously worked on introducing industrial ceramics to the people of Nigeria and Ghana.

Founding of Tiwi Pottery

Due to the high turn over of trainees, by 1972 only two of the original students, both from Bathurst, remained, but it was considered that they had learnt sufficient to return to their communities to establish potteries. Despite this, the next step of the project was initiated with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs commissioning another Unisearch employee to locate and analyse suitable clay deposits at all 3 of potential pottery producing communities from which the original trainees came. This survey located suitable clay deposits at all three places. As a result, the establishment of potteries initially at two locations, Bathurst Island and Milingimbi, was recommended (McMeekin 1972:66).

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs decided to establish the Bathurst Island pottery as its first pilot project, both because of its copious clay deposits and because one of the most highly trained potters, Eddie Puruntatameri, was keen to return home to Nguiu. The presence of the craft adviser at Tiwi Designs was seen as another valuable factor, as she could help with the administrative aspects of the pottery (Letter from J. Fraser to T. Milliken 16.2.1972, D.A.A. item 75/1616).

As early as 1971 Eddie Puruntatameri had applied to the Australia Council for assistance in setting up a pottery at Bathurst Island. However as this pre-empted the clay survey, the Director of the Welfare Branch advised him to defer his application. Conflict subsequently arose between the Welfare Branch and the Arts Council because the latter went ahead and funded McMeekin to draw up plans for the Bathurst Island pottery. While the two agencies battled about their various responsibilities to the project, it was finally the Catholic Mission which provided the funding to establish the pottery (for which it latter sought reimbursement from the Arts Council). This consisted of an open plan corrugated iron building with a fire-burning kiln and basic equipment. After Cyclone Tracy, the equipment from Bagot clay processing unit - such as the crusher, were transferred to Bathurst Island. The potteries planned for the other communities did not eventuate, despite the fact that one was built at Port Keats and another begun at

Ramingining. In 1973 the two trained potters established Tiwi Pottery as a legal partnership and with the joining of an additional 2 new potters some years later, it became an independent association which it still was in 1988.

Staff

Eddie Puruntatameri was the first potter to be trained at the Bagot pottery unit, joining in 1968 when he was 18. After a brief stint at Bathurst Island where he worked at Tiwi Designs, he travelled to the University of NSW with McMeekin to look at tests of the Bathurst Island clays and learn about their preparation. He also spent 6 months with the potter Les Blakeborough in Mittagong, before returning to the Bagot training unit. In 1972 he returned to Nguiu to establish the Bathurst Island pottery, together with John Bosco Tipiloura, who had joined the Bagot training unit 3 years previously at the age of 20. These two formed a partnership when the pottery went into production in 1973. In 1976 they were joined by John Patrick Kelantumama, who began as a trainee at the age of 24. The last to join was Jock Pautjimi who started as a young school leaver in 1978. He was further encouraged to train at St. Georges TAFE Kogarah in 1983. However he only stayed 4 months before returning to Nguiu. In 1984 he enrolled in the pottery classes held at the Fine Art Department of the Darwin Institute of Technology and returned in 1985 to take up potting.

Since 1978 Tiwi Pottery has employed a trainee potter, working on jobs such as the mixing of the clay and general tidying of the workshop. However there has been a high turnover in trainees over the years, and the four men previously mentioned constituted the core of Tiwi Pottery until Eddie left for personal reasons to establish his own pottery at Pularumpi on Melville island in 1986.

Craft Advisers

The training has been provided by a series of potters, most of whom had trained with Cardew and therefore provided continuity in terms of the technique being taught. After Cardew, there were two potters who trained Eddie and John Bosco at Bagot. One of these, Ivan McMeekin, who had been closely involved with the pottery since its beginning, maintained contact with the potters after their move to Nguiu, with intermittent visits throughout the years. Most recently, in 1985, he instructed Jock in clay slip preparation in Sydney. Initially the Catholic Missions financed the adviser, while the Aboriginal Arts Board provided operational expenses until 1976 when it also funded a full-time adviser. Subsequent advisers to Tiwi Pottery have remained on an average of 2 years and all have been male. When the adviser left in 1981 the potters, because of some personal friction between one of the potters and the adviser, decided not to reappoint another adviser. This was also considered as a valuable cost saving measure by the Aboriginal

Arts Board, and when the manager to Tiwi Designs and Tiwi Pima was appointed in 1982, he also took over responsibility for Tiwi Pottery. The manager appointed in 1984 who was still in this position in 1988, is a potter and former adviser to Tiwi Pottery, which allows him to provide technical guidance to the potters when necessary. However because of his commitments to Tiwi Designs he estimates that perhaps less than 10% of his time is spent at the pottery.

Comments drawn from the craft advisers reports over the years document their attitudes to the job and the problems with the pottery as they have perceived them. One of the recurring themes in the reports is the difficulties periodically experienced with technical problems. This was the direct result of the initial short training period at Bagot and the apprentice status of the potters who subsequently joined after the pottery was built at Nguiu. Because of this the continued presence of a pottery adviser was necessary. Glaze preparation, for example, which needs precise measuring, was regarded as the craft adviser's duty until 1979, because the major appeal and saleability of the pot depends upon the glaze. Clay preparation was given to the apprentices to do, and if this was not properly mixed the resulting firings would be disastrous. One of the pottery advisers believed the separation of duties which left the potters the tasks only of throwing and firing and not of clay preparation and glazing, resulted in them becoming slightly bored with their job. With the teaching of glaze preparation the potters became more technically independent and, as mentioned before, in 1981 when the pottery adviser resigned, they decided to work without an adviser. After this period however, there were technical problems which resulted in a lot of poor and medium range quality pots being made, problems which often had to do with the lack of skills in numeracy for example with accurate glaze and clay preparation.

The craft advisers over the years have been responsible for the administrative aspects of Tiwi Pottery as well as the technical ones. Despite attempts to give these duties over to the potters, all of whom have done book-keeping administration courses to this end, the potters, like the printers, have preferred to leave these tasks to the adviser. This continual endeavour by the advisers to make the enterprise entirely self-managing has not been reciprocated by the potters.

Items Made

All the items made at Tiwi Pottery are functional, stoneware pottery items, tailored for the European market. These consist of coffee mugs, plates, bowls, vases, wine cups, bottles and occasionally lidded jars, casserole pots and tea pots. Between 1983 and 1986 a total of 1192 items were made (an average of 293 items per year). Of these 31% were bottles, 21% were bowls, 12% were vases, 6% teapots and 4% cups and saucers. These items are made from a stoneware clay body made from two locally gathered clays - *tudiangini*, a white crumbly clay, and *paripoli*, a sticky grey clay, which are mixed together with granite from the Rum Jungle area.



PLATES 10,11: SELECTION OF TIWI POTTERY ITEMS



close to Darwin. The granite is finely crushed to provide both the fusibility and strength of the clay.

The potted items are glazed with a variety of different formulas which provide glassy celadon greens, white and dark brown glazes through to matt slips of orange and black. These glazes are made from locally-found coral, sand, bottle glass, wood, ash, clay and ironstone pebbles. Some introduced glazes such as impure feldspar are also used. Recent experiments with new glazes introduced by McMeekin in 1985 have created more diversity in the pot's external appearance.

The distinctive elements in Tiwi Pottery are the designs which are derived from the traditional Tiwi iconography of lines, circles, dots, hatching. These are often combined with figurative designs of birds, the most popular decorative motif, and other animals such as turtles, butterflies and snakes. Such naturalistic designs are similar to those done in the early days of Tiwi Designs, and it is no accident that Eddie Puruntatameri was also one of the founders of this enterprise before becoming a potter. All the potters also carve and decorate figurative statuettes and poles for Tiwi Pima on occasions, ensuring a cross-fertilization of artistic ideas and a re-inforcement of the themes which form the basis for traditional expression.

The potters stack their pots on a board for firing, each board taking around 10 or 11 items and valued at a set rate. When enough items are assembled they are fired in a wood-burning kiln at around 1280°C for 30 hours. The pottery averages 6 to 8 firings a year. The kiln is usually fired with local stringy bark wood as it burns at a slow even temperature. Since the establishment of a treated timber enterprise on the island the potters have been able to obtain ready made off cuts for their firings (Anderson 1987a).

Materials are collected periodically when they are running low. In this respect the potters are lucky, for unlike Tiwi Designs practically all their materials are found locally and cost nothing except the petrol of the car (jointly shared by the enterprises). About once a year an excursion to Rum Jungle is undertaken to collect the feldspar granite.

The work style of the potters is relaxed and fitted into a normal work day schedule, from 8.30 to 4.30. With the piece-rates system each potter works at his own pace, producing according to his inclination and needs. Unlike Tiwi Designs, with its roomy convivial atmosphere which attracts quite a lot of visitors, Tiwi Pottery is relatively quiet, often with just two potters working. As a result, social interaction usually takes place outside the pottery in the green park area between it and Tiwi Designs, or the potters visit their relatives in the township. As a result the pottery is unoccupied for periods of time throughout the day.

Sales

As a small cottage industry with a maximum of four potters producing, the output of items has been small and as a result sales have been modest in relation to the other enterprises. Sales in 1977-78 were around \$30,000 but technical problems were still resulting in erratic firings.

In 1980 with the arrival of a new adviser a concerted effort was made to upgrade the economic performance of Tiwi Pottery by improving quality, increasing the costs of the pots by 50%, dropping the potters' board fee with their consent, from \$35-\$25 and eliminating the firing commission of \$100 to each potter per firing. The result was an improvement in quality but no increase in productivity. The pottery ran into increasing debt and when the adviser left the pottery was closed down for four months. When the manager's position embracing all 3 enterprises was established in 1982 the pottery was re-opened. Unfortunately, recurring technical problems resulted in poor firings and reduced numbers of good quality pots for sale. According to an earlier Tiwi Pottery Craft Adviser's Report each firing in 1978-79 produced an average of \$1,500 worth of pots. Of these about 16% were of exhibition quality, 5% were failures and the rest of average quality. Although this proportionalizing of results was not carried on by following advisers, reports from 1982-85 record a lot of medium to poor range pots and extremely few exhibition pots. One problem which resulted in a number of disastrous firings was a trainee, a close relation of one of the other potters, who due to lack of training, often mixed the clay incorrectly, resulting in exploding pots. Because of his relationship with the potter, there were social pressures not to replace him, although this did eventually occur.

A profile of pottery sales presentation in Figure 9, shows that they have continued to decline since 1982 and in 1986 were below the figure earned six years previously. Between 1983 and 1986 sales stabilized at the figure of \$25,000 then in 1987 there was a dramatic fall in production with sales declining to \$9,096. According to the adviser this fall off was related to the attraction of the wood carvers working outside the pottery and the potters spending more time carving than previously.

Throughout its history Tiwi Pottery has relied upon the local market for the majority of its sales. Table 3 indicates that retail sales on the island are the main source of revenue. As for Tiwi Designs and Tiwi Pima, Tiwi Tours has provided a reasonable share of the local sales, accounting for 24%, 38%, 35% and 69% respectively of the local sales between 1982 and 1986. As the table shows, the local retail sales average around 69% of total sales. The remainder are sold through the Government's Company gallery in Darwin, or go to private galleries and exhibitions. The

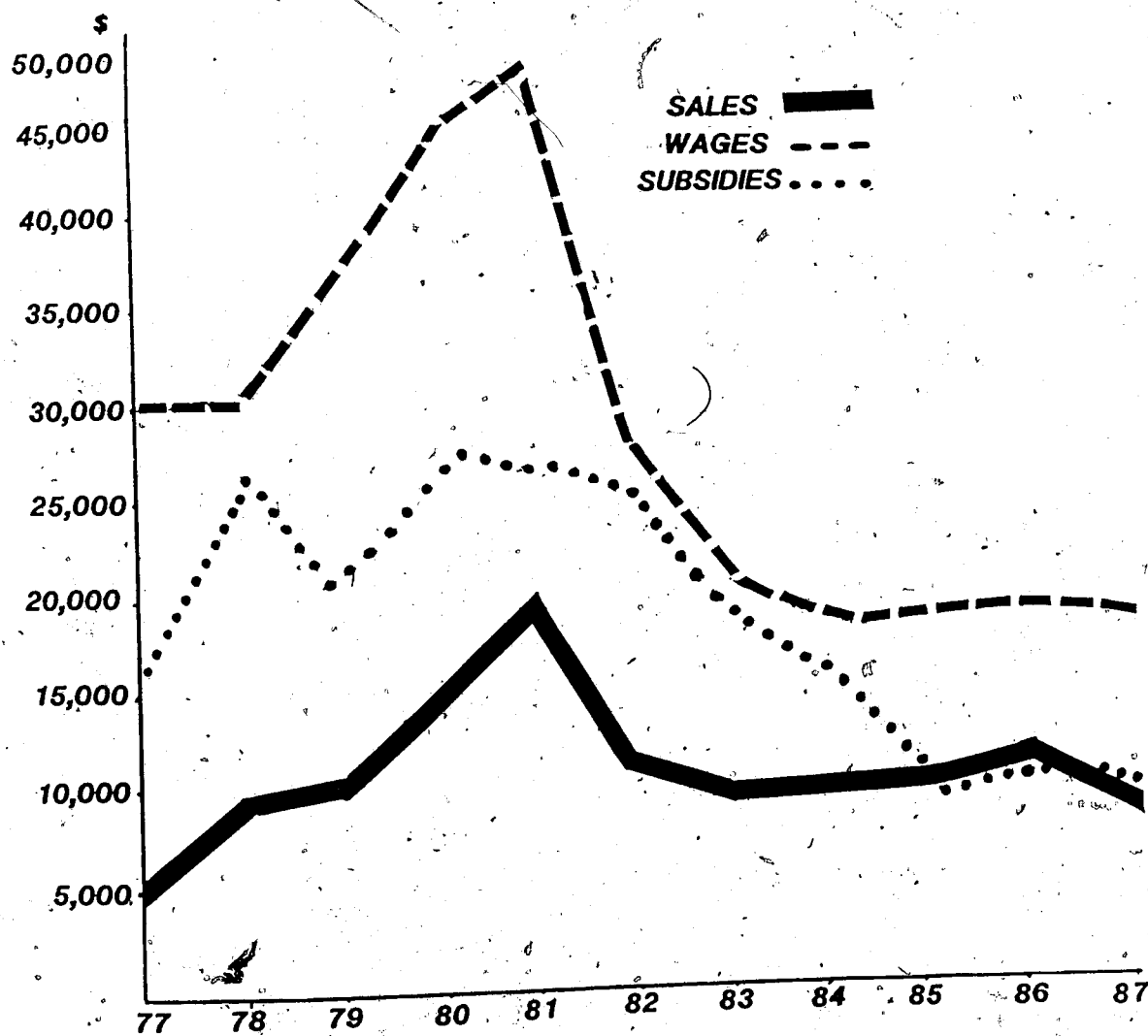


FIGURE 9 : TIWI POTTERY SALES, SUBSIDIES AND WAGES

potters usually have one interstate exhibition a year, depending upon the availability of exhibition quality pots, but as the production of these has become increasingly erratic the dependance upon this end of the market has declined.

	1982/83	83/84	84/85	85/86
AAC Company	19%	28%	26%	20%
Local	60%	65%	57%	72%
Other	21%	7%	17%	8%

TABLE 3 : TIWI POTTERY: SALES BREAKDOWN

A breakdown of sales figures for 86/87 is not available. However according to the manager the situation is similar to that of the other enterprises in as much as the closure of the Government Company's Darwin Gallery has affected the level of Company sales. This has resulted in a greater dependance upon local sales. Based on previous sale figures this indicates that the potters will now be relying almost totally on the local market to take an average of 85% of their work. In comparison to other art and craft outlets in the NT, Tiwi Pottery accounted for only 2% of all Government Company sales in 1979/80 (Pascoe 1981 exhibit 111-1) and only 2% of all sales from NT craft outlets in 1982/83 (Cooke 1983:46). Given the fact that this is the output of 3-4 workers, such sales figures are, however admirable.

Income to Potters

When the founding potters began the training course at Bagot they received \$25 per week each plus \$7 rent subsidy from the Department of Welfare's Vocational Training Programme. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs continued to pay their salary until 1976, after which the Aboriginal Arts Board subsidized their wages. The trainees who were taken on after this period were put on National Employment and Training Scheme subsidies of \$50 on top of a \$30 weekly wage. The rest was made up by income from sales. On top of this wage the potters were paid a bonus for each firing as an incentive payment. Initially this was around 15% of the value of

the pots produced and in 1976 this was changed to a flat rate of \$100 to each potter. This commission was discontinued in 1985 because of the pottery's financial difficulties.

In 1979 the piece-rate system of payment was introduced to the pottery just prior to it also being introduced to Tiwi Designs. This was done as a means of adapting the cottage industry to the worker's life styles. It was also seen by the adviser as means of inculcating a sense of the value of their work. As a result, instead of a weekly wage the potters were paid for each full board of pots at the rate of \$35 per board. After an initial fall off in productivity in 1979, when the potters were adjusting to the new system, of payment, wages rose steadily, with an increase in the individuals average annual wage, from \$4,000 in 1979 to \$6,000 in 1981. A sudden decline in 1982 was the result of the closure of the pottery for four months. During this period the potters drew unemployment benefits. When the pottery re-opened in March 1982 the average annual wage went down to around \$4,000 again and stabilized at this figure until 1987 when again there was a decline in the wages, due to reduced productivity. In this year the potters only earned just over an average of \$3,000 each, making their income lower than that of the workers for Tiwi Designs. However their incomes, according to the craft adviser, were supplemented by the carvings that they produced for Tiwi Pima. The decline in wages was a direct result of periodic technical problems resulting in fewer saleable pots. Reduced productivity was also due to the presence of only 3 full-time potters after 1984, when Jock left for Darwin for training and worked intermittently at the pottery after his return in late 1985. When Eddie left in 1986, sometimes only 2 men worked in the pottery.

Figure 9 and Appendix Table 11 compare the income from sales and grants as opposed to expenditure on wages. This shows that throughout its history Tiwi Pottery wages have consistently outstripped income from sales. In 1982 this was by as much as 300%, gradually decreasing to an average of 150% of the sales income between 1983-1986. The performance of Tiwi Pottery here has been economically much worse in this respect than that of the other enterprises.

Subsidies

Tiwi Pottery has been a well subsidized operation from its beginning, being a project directly sponsored by the Welfare Department of the N.T. Administration, and later the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Unisearch. The Catholic Church assisted with the money for the pottery building while Department of Aboriginal Affairs continued to contribute to the potters' salaries until the Aboriginal Arts Board took over subsidy and operation expenses and the funding of the specialist adviser after 1976. This subsidy is continued today, although with the appointment of a general manager and abolition of specialist advisers, the income from the Aboriginal Arts

Board has been reduced since 1982 to cover operational expenses. Apart from the years 1985-86, the percentage of money from grants to cover operational expenses has been consistently greater than income from sales over the years, which has resulted in a situation of continued non-profitability of the pottery.

Conclusion

Perhaps this example best illustrates the problems that have arisen between government initiatives and Aboriginal involvement in enterprise development. Despite the planning and implementation of this pottery project, only one pottery ever eventuated. The fact that it was the Tiwi who persevered with it could have implications for their adaptability and receptiveness to new techniques - as the others failed mainly due to the high turnover of the pottery apprentices.

As is apparent from the performance of the pottery over the years, there have been technical problems which have arisen, partly because of inadequate skills. This has been most significant in the area of glaze preparation where the lack of numeracy has created problems. Incorrect clay preparation has also been a problem, particularly since the potters have been self-managing. The initial survey did not take these factors into consideration, and underestimated the technical input necessary for the practice of a mid-range technology with reasonable quality standards. Another factor constraining profitability has been the small scale of the enterprise. As a cottage industry which entails a time consuming technical process - for example there may be only one firing per month producing saleable products - the pottery has a very slow rate of production. This is particularly true when there are sometimes only 2 or 3 potters working.

The pottery produced is an every day stoneware product which off the island has to compete with a craft market flooded with similar items produced by non-Aboriginal potters. It would appear that part of the problem with Tiwi Pottery is that its product is not unique enough to corner the market in the same way that for example the items from Tiwi Designs and Tiwi Pima have done. This has been a factor that has reduced its market impact. In other words there is a limited market demand.

Despite these factors which have contributed to the low economic performance of Tiwi Pottery there is no doubt that the potters identify very strongly with their chosen profession, underlining that economic considerations are only part of their motivation. This is illustrated by the fact that even when they had to accept a cut in their piece-rate payment and the loss of their commission for firing, they continued potting. Even after the pottery's closure for four months they preferred to return to work rather than to continue drawing unemployment benefits that

provided a higher income, and have continued to work despite the extremely low financial returns in the past five years. The men often identify themselves proudly in conversation and at exhibitions as potters and derive a lot of satisfaction from their work. Their valuation of artistic activity generally is also reflected in their participation in carving for Tiwi Pima, an occupation shared by the members of Tiwi Designs. The increased involvement in carving in 1987 was the direct result of the sociability of the occasion, with groups of carvers outside the pottery area providing a social diversion from the isolation of the pottery work place.

CHAPTER 7**CRAFT ENTERPRISES AND THE NGUIU ECONOMY**Introduction

The economic significance of the three enterprises as development projects is clarified by placing them within the context of the general Nguu economy. In doing so, this Chapter continues on from the profile of the Bathurst Island economy given in Chapter 3, by providing information on the contemporary Nguu economy with particular reference to the financial year 1985/86. This data is provided largely by the annual reports compiled by the individual institutions and by additional information provided by the administrators of these institutions.

Tiwi Population and Employment

In 1986 The Nguu population numbered 1008 Tiwi and 103 Europeans. This is almost identical with the Tiwi population in 1981 of 1004 (Stanley 1983a). A breakdown of the population taken from the 1986 Census is given in Table 4.

Ages	Males	Females	Totals
0-4	79	55	134
5-14	132	139	271
15-19	54	60	114
20-39	159	166	325
40-59	46	67	113
60+	17	34	51
	487	521	1008

TABLE 4: NGUIU: TIWI POPULATION 1986

During 1986 there were employment opportunities offered by the various support organizations and enterprises at Nguu. This included the Catholic Mission, who run the Xavier Boy's and St. Therese Girl's Schools, Adult Education and the Health Centre. Other organizations include the Nguu Council, The Housing Association, The Ullintjinni Association which runs the store, the bakery, the restaurant and the service station, the Nguu Sports, Social and Recreational

Club which runs the pub, as well Bima Wear, Tiwi Designs, Tiwi Pima and Tiwi Pottery. A break down of employment for men and women is shown in Table 5.

Organization	Male full-time/part-time		Female full-time/part-time		Total	Average Ann. Wages
School	5	2	29		36	\$14,500
Hospital		1	10		11	?
Housing	8	6	1		15	\$12,000
Ullintjinni	7		6		13	\$12,000
Nguiu Council	33		6		39	\$ 8,400
Nguiu Club	5	2			7	\$14,700
<u>Craft Enterprises</u>						
Bima Wear			22		22	\$ 5,500
Tiwi Designs	7				7	\$ 7,900
Tiwi Pima	1	65		61	127	\$ 364
Tiwi Pottery	4				4	\$ 4,000
	<u>70</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>281</u>	

TABLE 5: TIWI EMPLOYMENT FIGURES FOR 1986

In all 281 Tiwi were employed during this period. Of these most were employed in semi-skilled or unskilled professions, such as construction workers, truck drivers, rubbish collectors, while about 30% were qualified clerical assistants, shop workers, seamstresses, nurse's aids and teaching assistants. Most of these workers were under the age of 30. Of the 55 Europeans employed, 23 were in management or administrative positions, while the rest were employed in the school and the health centre.

In terms of full-time employment the majority of jobs were offered by the Nguiu Council and the Schools, followed by Bima Wear which employed 15 seamstresses, 5 silk-screen printers and 2 office workers. In terms of part-time employment Tiwi Pima offered 45% of all employed Tiwi some form of income.

Income to Employees

The average wages to employees shown in Table 5 were calculated by dividing the total annual wages for each organization by the number of workers. While this does not take into account income variations between workers employed by the same institution nor variations in hours worked, as for example with the piece-rates system, it does indicate the variation in wage levels between the differing organizations. Generally speaking the highest wages were those paid to workers at the school. The Ullintjinni Association and the Nguu Club salaries were based on award rates of a 40 hour week (according to the various managers). Full-time workers for the Nguu Council were paid on the basis of a 30 hour a week, so that more Tiwi could be employed than recommended in the guidelines by the Department of Community Development which funds the council. Workers in the office sometimes worked over the 30 hours and in such cases overtime was paid at \$7 an hour. According to the administrator, award wages were not paid by the Council because they could not afford to employ more Tiwi if they had to pay higher wages. Overall, however, workers in these organizations received the highest wages.

By contrast with these government funded jobs the art and craft workers received the lowest rates of pay. This was because they worked on the piece-rate system which meant that they were paid a fixed amount decided by the craft adviser for the item/items that they produced rather than a fixed hourly or weekly wages. All up wages earned by craft workers at Tiwi Designs, Tiwi Pima, and Tiwi Pottery were 8% of total wages earned. This indicates that when given the opportunities to earn according to need, craft workers tended to work less time than those on fixed rates and as a consequence earned less. The Tiwi Pima workers had the lowest income, as discussed in Chapter 4 and while there were variations between what men and women in the various producer categories earned collectively, the annual average income was very low, indicating that except in a few cases, it was just to supplement their social security payments.

Social Security Payments

Social Security payments were an important source of income for 68% of the Tiwi population over 15. A general breakdown of beneficiaries is shown in Table 6.

Type of Benefit	No. of Recipients
Unemployment/sickness	114
Aged, invalid, widows	123
Family allowance	170
TOTAL	407

TABLE 6: RECIPIENTS OF SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENTS 1986

In order to gain an idea of the total income to Tiwi, total wages have been added to the estimated income from social security payments of \$3.8 million. This total of \$5,120,290 is then divided among the Tiwi over 15 who receive benefits or working income giving an adult income of \$326 per fortnight or \$8,491 per annum. (This does not include the health workers whose salaries are unknown).

Tiwi Expenditure

The way in which the Tiwi expend their income is outlined in Table 7. This information is based on the financial statements of the various organizations at Nguiu. The expenditure of money by Europeans on the island has not been taken into account because, being so close to Darwin, the majority of them import the bulk of their consumables such as food, drink and clothing (see also Stanley 1983a:41).

A			B	
% of total income expended at each organization			% of total Tiwi personal income expended at local organizations	
	\$		%	
Rent (Housing)	3.4	(\$120,000)	2.3	
Rates (Council)	2.0	(\$ 74,970)	1.5	
Restaurant	19.0	(\$701,818)	14.0	
Bakery	20.0	(\$ 63,758)	1.3	
Store	41.6	(\$1,522,094)	30.0	
Club	25.0	(\$922,218)	18.0	
Bima Wear *	2.6	(\$94,000)	2.0	
Service Station	4.4	(\$161,432)	3.2	
	100%	(\$3,660,290)	72.3%	

TABLE 7: BREAKDOWN OF TIWI EXPENDITURE AT VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

(* Tiwi expenditure on Bima Wear clothing calculated as 50% of total sales).

Table 7 shows the ways in which the Tiwi spend their money on the island. In the financial year 1985/86 the total income to the various organizations such as the Council Store and Club was \$3,660,290. Column A shows the percentages of this total amount spent at the various organizations. Table B shows the proportion of Tiwi incomes from wages and social security benefits (\$5,120,290) expended at each of the organizations. Because personal income was higher than expenditure at the various organizations on the island in 1986, there was a surplus of income not spent locally. This amounted to 27% of the Tiwi total personal income. As savings on the island are predominantly undertaken by Europeans and not the Tiwi, a factor also noted by Stanley (1983a), it appears that the majority of this surplus was spent on airfares and in other commercial centres such as Darwin. Unfortunately no information was available on expenditure on air travel. However, with three services a day from Darwin, the Tiwi are highly mobile and spend substantial amounts on fares. Also videos, washing machines, fridges, motor bikes, cassette tape players, and other goods are all items imported onto the island by individual Tiwi and would account for expenditure off the island.

This profile shows that despite the relatively low income earned by the Tiwi in 1986, it has to be seen in the context of the local cost of living and the material aspirations of the islanders. For example rent and rates are extremely low for the north of Australia and negate the need for people to buy their houses. Health and other services are provided free and only a few individuals own cars or motor boats. Because of this the overall costs of living are lower than in mainstream Australia, reflecting the differing material needs of the Tiwi in comparison to those of non-Aborigines. An additional factor reducing costs by a small amount is the supplementing of bought food (on which 45% of income is spent) with bush foods, particularly on week ends and during the extended school breaks.

Subsidies:

As with other communities Nguu is dependent for supplementary income on grants, a large proportion of which are used to pay Tiwi wages and to cover other operational costs. Table 8 compares the level of subsidy to the craft enterprises with subsidy to the other organization in the community. Column A shows the percentage of each organization's income, which is provided by subsidy. Column B shows proportionally how the total subsidies to Nguu are divided among the various organizations.

Organizations	A % of Organizations Income (Source)	B % of Total Subsidies	C % Export Income (Goods)
Bakery	22% (NEATS)	4%	
Nguu Council	42% (DCD, NEATS, Other)	25%	
School	100% (Dept. of Education)	40% (estimate)	
Health	100% (Dept. of Education)	17%	
Housing	100%	12% (ADC)	
<u>Craft Enterprises</u>			
Bima Wear	17% (AAB)	1.7%	37%
Tiwi Pima	17% (AAB)	.6%	13%
Tiwi Designs	58% (AAB)	2.6%	47%
Tiwi Pottery	27% (AAB, NEAT)	.7%	
		100%	100%

TABLE 8: INCOME FROM SUBSIDIES AND EXPORT

In total \$1,798,500 in grants were paid into the various organizations in 1985/86. These were predominantly government grants from the Aboriginal Development Commission (ADC) which mainly funds housing, the N.T. Government Department of Community Development (DCD) which assists the Council, The N.T. Departments of Health and Education which fund the Catholic Mission's schools and health centre, the Commonwealth Aboriginal Arts Board (AAB) and the Commonwealth Employment Service which supplies National Employment and Training Scheme money (NEAT) for employment training for Aboriginal people. Another source of income is provided by the Tiwi Land Council (TLC) which is paid royalty money from mining by the Aboriginals Benefit Trust Account. According to Altman (1988b) the Tiwi Land Council up until 1986 was the only Land Council with surpluses of money available for investment in community projects. In 1986 the Tiwi Land Council had \$274,977 available for distribution among the various incorporated communities or groups on the two islands. In the past it has also granted money to the craft organizations for various projects. Another source of income is the Nguu Club which distributes its profits for community projects and has also made small grants to the craft enterprises. In 1986 it granted money to the Nguu Council and to Bima Wear and Tiwi Pottery. A profile on the subsidies shows that most are absorbed by the infrastructure organizations such as the Catholic Mission (School and Health Centre), the Council and the Housing Association as they generate most of the employment and pay most of the wages. In contrast the Ullintjinni Association has virtually no subsidization as it provides essential services such as food, in which it has a monopoly and runs at a good profit, the same applies to the Nguu Club. In contrast the craft enterprises account for a small proportion of overall subsidies, which is related to their small staff and low incomes. On the other hand they are the major producers of export items on the island.

Change in the Economy 1981-86

A profile of the Nguu economy in 1986 is aided by contrast to the detailed profile prepared by Stanley for 1981, this indicates some significant changes which have occurred. Overall there was an increase in employment from 33% of the adults over 15 in 1981 to 46% in 1986. However in real terms the nature of employment changed with less people working full-time and more working part-time. For example of those 46% of employed adults in 1986, only 51% were employed full-time as opposed to 95% of all the workers in 1981. So in fact there was a decline in full-time work by 7% in 6 years.

This relates both to lack of employment growth on the island for full-time employment and to the increase in social security payments. According to Stanley's figures (1983a:14-22) there were actually more Tiwi employed in the various infrastructure organizations, such as the Council,

Ullintjinni Association and the Health centre in 1981. After this period employment in these organizations declined slightly. In the intervening period the fishing venture, and the poultry and garden enterprises folded due to lack of interest and unprofitability, resulting in the loss of 9 jobs. Turnover in many of the jobs was also high. In the case of the women most of the turnover was related to childbirth, with single women replacing those who had children. In other areas such as teaching, a high proportion were replaced (or not, according to availability) when trainees went to do courses at Batchelor. While the pattern from 1981-86 shows a reversal of growth in full-time jobs available in 1986, the main growth area was in part-time work, particularly for workers producing art and craft for occasional sale to Tiwi Pima. While Stanley records 25 craft workers in 1981, Tiwi Pima sales records list 72 producers in 1983. This significant increase in craft workers is no doubt the result of Stanley's under-estimation of the number of producers, however Tiwi Pima Craft Advisers' reports do indicate an increase in workers particularly after the appointment of the new manager in 1982.

The fact that 68% of these occasional producers were also drawing social security payments also reflects the dramatic increase in the numbers of recipients of these benefits after 1981. Before this they were not equitably distributed. For example, in 1981 Stanley records that there were 50 Tiwi drawing unemployment benefits (1983a:3). This increased to 114 in 1986. More generally while there were only 30% of the adult population receiving social security in 1981 this had risen to 68% by 1986. The importance of these benefits to the Tiwi cannot be underestimated as they provided nearly half of the total income to adults. This increased social security income balanced out the effects of high unemployment resulting in an actual increase in adult income from \$3,837 in 1981 to \$8,491 in 1986 despite the decline in full-time jobs.

The increased social security distribution does not appear to have affected the production of art and craft in any significant way. This situation contrasts to that at Maningrida in 1983 when the introduction of unemployment benefits resulted in an initial drop in art and craft production. Here Altman documents that craft income fell from 26% of cash income in 1979/80 to 10% in 1983 (Altman and Taylor 1987:22). If Stanley's figures are correct, then what has happened at Nguiu is a rise (to what degree is uncertain) in the number of people producing art and craft as a supplement to their social security benefits. The production, as shown in Chapter 4 is erratic but nonetheless allows a high proportion of Tiwi the option of raising casual income in an area where there are limited employment opportunities. Tiwi indicated that in fact they prefer this situation where they can make a living and adjust their income with production of art and craft while choosing the nature and pace of their work.

The art and craft industries at Nguu are small income generators and employers of full-time workers, and only account for a small percentage of the subsidies paid out to other organizations. Nonetheless, like these other organizations they are reliant upon outside sources of financial support for their operations. The situation at Nguu reflects the situation of many other Aboriginal communities in remote Australia, where development and job opportunities are also limited. Despite this reality there is constant talk by funding agencies and policy planners about the ways in which such communities can become more self-sufficient and not so reliant upon government grants. Stanley argues that if the art and craft enterprises are to prosper they must look to new markets by differentiating their products (1983a:48). For example by developing new products so that they gain a competitive edge over other Aboriginal communities not engaged in similar production. On the other hand it has been argued that in order to increase income to people in the art and craft industry greater returns will occur with marketing direct at the community level and thereby eliminating the middle man and increasing profits to the producers (Altman 1988a:54).

In relation to the differentiation of products and the opening up of new markets it is doubtful whether this will result in the increased desirability or profitability of Tiwi products. In fact the art and craft enterprises at Nguu offer the ideal test case for this argument, because of their product differentiation and the conscious marketing of these items to very different levels of the market. This includes the tourist market through to the craft and fashion market and the fine art market. These markets each have their own requirements. For example, those items made with introduced media need to attain certain standards of technical proficiency in order to compete successfully with similar products made by non-Aborigines. Part of their market success is also related to their uniqueness as an Aboriginal product. Perhaps on this scale the pottery is the least 'Aboriginal' in character and the craft which competes most strongly with non-Aboriginal items on open market. On the other hand the products which are unequivocally unique and therefore have a market monopoly are those derived from traditional practices, and these are aimed at a wide range of the market, from the fine art collectors and through to the tourist one. The conscious decision by the manager in 1982 to direct the Tiwi Designs product towards the high fashion market, rather than the craft one, has paid off as it fortuitously coincided with the rise in popularity of the so called ethnic and Aboriginal fashion look. The product and market diversification is already there. However no one enterprise has been entirely successful. I would argue that the constraints on profitability are located in more subtle way in the methods of operation and aspirations of the workers and not, as Stanley argues, in economic directives.

As mentioned previously, Tiwi people identify with their crafts, which are still valued as a means of showing some form of artistic prowess in their own social circles. However value is also placed upon social activities, spending time with relatives and pursuing other activities such as playing cards, hunting and gathering and attending ceremonies. Time spent at work on the piece-rate system allows workers to pursue these social and other cultural activities while making enough money to get by. It is for them partly a matter of identity and maintaining a level of living, rather than achieving large profits and making the enterprise financially successful. Differing concepts of the value of work and money between European and Aboriginal societies strikes at the core of any policies aimed at making any enterprise self-sufficient in European terms.

On a more optimistic note however, there is potential increased profitability and returns to artists being offered by the developing tourist industry at Nguiu. This relates to the second proposal mentioned by Altman. At present there are two tourist developments at Bathurst Island, the Barra Base fishing venture at Port Hurd and Tiwi Tours. Of these Tiwi Tours has already had quite an impact upon increasing direct sales on the island as mentioned in previous chapters. Local sales of the three enterprises increased from \$5,594 in 1982 to \$35,500 in 1986. This has been as a result of the steady growth in visitor numbers to the island, from 454 in 1981 to approximately 2,000 in 1986 (Altman 1988b:268). Tiwi Tours, unlike the Barra Base venture, is marketed principally as a chance for visitors to experience an Aboriginal community and visit its art and craft centres with a view to purchasing items. As an optional half to full day tour so close to Darwin its appeal to visitors is obvious, and its potential for growth is there given the Tiwi Land Council's positive attitude to tourist development and their realization that revenue from tourism may be a way of achieving some independent funding for the islands.

Conclusion

While increased marketing as a result of tourism is an important consideration economically, it is doubtful if it will achieve the goal of economic self-sufficiency. The problems of remote communities with differing aspirations achieving such self-sufficiency, has recently been addressed by Altman (1987) in a profile of communities in the East Kimberleys. Altman identifies the basic problem as an inconsistency between the government's policy of self-sufficiency and statistical equality, which does not allow for the fact firstly, that in remote areas there are limited viable economic opportunities which would allow for economic development in mainstream terms. Secondly, the heterogeneity of Aboriginal society is such that the goal of statistical equality is not applicable across the board (1987:26). He, therefore argues rather for policies directed to the achievable ends of reduced dependence rather than total economic self-sufficiency.

Ultimately, it seems that if Government policies in Aboriginal affairs are not to be assimilationist then they must allow individual Aboriginal communities and groups to decide on their own trade-off between cultural and economic priorities, rather than including them in a broad policy agenda that attempts to make the trade-off for them (1987:18).

The previous profile on the art and craft enterprises at Nguiu shows that the Tiwi have made their cultural priorities quite obvious in the ways in which they approach their enterprise and that this case study emphasizes the importance for funding bodies to acknowledge Aboriginal economic self-determination.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

In the Northern Territory, since the 1950's, Aboriginal art and craft production has been seen as one of the most promising areas for the development of self-sustaining economic enterprise. In this thesis I have examined the economic aspects of the three craft enterprises on Bathurst Island in order to establish their contribution to self development. I began by examining the traditional artistic system of the Tiwi to highlight the unusually open nature of their art and the unique emphasis placed upon originality and creativity when compared with other Aboriginal artistic systems. This openness and emphasis upon individual creativity appears to have pre-disposed the Tiwi to successfully assimilate new techniques for art and craft production without devaluing the integrity of their art.

In Chapter 2 I traced the economic development of Bathurst Island from the founding of the Catholic mission in 1911. The arrival of the church resulted in significant changes to the Tiwi lifestyle. This included the disruption of their subsistence economy, as they began to be dependent on the mission and the government for goods. The mission's attempts to maintain Tiwi self-sufficiency by transforming them from hunters and gatherers to agriculturalists cultivating the land never eventuated for a variety of reasons. To support themselves the mission turned to government funding to assist in the provision of community services, training programmes and job allowances to provide economic opportunities for the Tiwi. Despite the lack of economic opportunities and dependency upon outside assistance, the government has been committed to lessening this dependency by encouraging a degree of economic self-sufficiency and in this context saw art and craft as a potential enterprise that should be encouraged.

In contrast to most other missions in the Northern Territory, the Catholic mission at Bathurst did not encourage the production of traditional art and craft until well after World War 2, because of their general opposition to traditional practices. For this reason the first two craft enterprises established on the mission were firmly anchored in the assimilation ideology in which the only training of value was thought to be in relation to the acquisition of European skills marketable in the wider Australian economy.

Despite the neglect of traditional art and craft, a core of artists persisted in producing traditional items in a limited way until they were officially recognized as an enterprise called Tiwi Pima. Like the other two enterprises, Tiwi Pottery and Tiwi Designs, Tiwi Pima also received subsidies

from the Aboriginal Arts Board for operational expenses and a craft adviser's salary. These subsidies were expected to launch them onto the path of economic viability. However, as profiles of these three enterprises in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 show, all of them have fallen short of the expectations of their funding agencies. While there is no doubt that the Tiwi are involved in these enterprises to make money, their needs and motivations are not totally congruent with those of the government agencies involved. This is clear from the differing ways in which people approach their work in these areas of art and craft production.

Most of the Tiwi involved in art and craft production work for Tiwi Pima. However, of these, only 10% of individuals could be considered as regular producers and of these a lesser number are reliant upon their production for their livelihood. Those who earn enough to subsist on, are 3 of the male producers who make the high priced 'fine art' items such as burial poles. These artists' motivations start to approach that upon which government development is predicated for success. The rest of the 200 or so adults involved in this area produce items for 'top up' money to supplement their social security income. Most of these people only produce on an occasional basis and the general returns, particularly for women are very low. Despite these low returns, people continue to produce artifacts even when there was little encouragement to do so. Today, despite the continued low economic rewards, more and more Tiwi are producing, including young adults from 18 years upwards, a fact that has widened the range of producers and played a part in the gradual increase in sales in recent years.

While poor returns have not stopped people from producing art and craft, it has affected the pattern of their participation. This is apparent from the analysis of fluctuations in the sales of Tiwi Pima and their relationship to artist's payments and subsidy levels. For example in 1981 and 1987 the rise in sales was directly related to the injection of funds from subsidies for the purchase of items from artists, while in other years the declines were often related to cash flow problems and the inability of the craft adviser to purchase items, or sometimes his rejection of poor quality items which deterred some potential artists from further production. This indicates that while artists' productivity is often erratic because they produce when they need the money, they are also affected by external constraints and that given a smooth cash flow production rates could well stabilize. Thus while the Tiwi are clearly motivated in varying degrees by the desire to earn money from their art and craft, the fact that they have also persisted in the light of continued low returns suggests that they see art and craft as an important activity in its own right.

The mixture of motivations is again apparent among the people working at Tiwi Designs. While the printers are dependent on Tiwi Designs for their livelihood, their economic incentives are

not high. As full-time workers on a piece-rates system all workers have annual salary fluctuations which indicate their work-for-need attitudes. Again their wages are low in comparison to other workers in other non-craft fields. The low wage relates to the fact that expansion in demand has been met not by working for longer hours or more intensively, but by the employment of extra workers to share the workload. This has been a conscious choice by the printers.

The potential for Tiwi Designs to capitalize upon their current popularity is also presented by the option to franchise the use of their designs to mechanized printers in southern states and be paid royalties. However this has not been favoured by the Tiwi Design workers, who want to keep the designs exclusively as their own property, executed by themselves and therefore maintained as a hand-made and labour-intensive product. Such factors have prevented Tiwi Designs becoming a greater money spinner in recent years. This emphasizes the workers' strong feeling of identification with their product.

This strong identification with both the product and the role of being an artist is most evident among the potters at Tiwi Pottery, who, like the printers at Tiwi Designs have all been with their enterprise for at least 10 years. Of the three enterprises Tiwi Pottery has been the least viable financially and has consistently generated very low wages for the potters, in fact the lowest of any full-time employment on the island. Despite this the potters have persevered in their chosen occupations. This is even after accepting the loss of their commission and going on unemployment benefits (when the pottery was temporarily shut down) which provided them with a higher level of income than their previous wages. It seems then that they value their identity beyond any simple economic motivation.

Thus the motivations of the workers in these three enterprises are complex. While it is obvious that people are involved with them to make money, it is clearly not their only motivation. The fact that just over half of the Tiwi workforce are involved in some sort of art and craft production suggests a strong preference for this type of activity. Part of this preference is related to the fact that it is a self-planned self-motivated activity which allows people to gear their productivity to their economic needs. Presently these are low in comparison to the rest of white Australia and people generally tend to tolerate a relatively lower standard of living. With the piece-rates system of payment productivity fluctuates and income levels vary, factors which underscore the relatively low valuation the Tiwi place upon accrual of income.

Secondly, the fact that there are more Tiwi working in art and craft production than in more European-style jobs, highlights the cultural importance of being an artist and pursuing an activity

that has some grounding in the traditional value system. As shown in Chapter 2, the emphasis upon individual creativity set few limitations upon the incorporation of new themes and did not create barriers for the application of ceremonial designs applied to secular products. This allowed the Tiwi to embrace new techniques to which they applied a similar set of themes or designs rooted in the iconography of their artistic system. Through these new outlets the Tiwi have effectively expanded the contexts in which they can produce artworks, in the same way that Grau has argued that dance has expanded its repertoire by being extended into numerous secular occasions.

While the cultural importance of being an artist is maintained through people's involvement in art and craft production, on a more general level it also maintains the basis for cultural reproduction as more of the younger Tiwi are learning skills and producing for the enterprises, particularly Tiwi Pima. The continued importance that the Tiwi place upon being an artist is perhaps best exemplified in the way in which the workers at Tiwi Pima, Tiwi Designs and Tiwi Pottery identify with their products. It is no accident that when delegations of Tiwi visit interstate or overseas they wear Tiwi Designs clothing as a badge of their Tiwiness to the outside world, thus confirming its importance as both an internal as well as external symbol of identity.

The hope of the external funding agencies that these enterprises will not only become economically self-sufficient but also self-managing has not eventuated. Most of the potters and the workers at Tiwi Designs have undertaken management and book-keeping courses and have demonstrated that they can undertake many of the administrative tasks when pressed. However the artists have uniformly preferred not to involve themselves in this area. They emphasize their role as artists and prefer the European adviser to take on the administrative tasks. This clearly frees them from difficult situations such as the dismissal of relatives, or the assumption of authority over their peers, behaviour which is socially unacceptable and would lead to conflict. The craft advisers play an important role in this respect as they can take actions which the Tiwi do not see as either relevant or socially acceptable. Thus the artists perpetuate their dependence on advisers, adding to the costs of running the enterprises. Further the advisers have an important role in the interface between Tiwi society and the European market place, of which the artists have limited experience. Even the potters, who decided at one stage not to engage an adviser, have nonetheless left the administrative matters to the manager and are therefore unlikely to be self-managing in the near future.

While this lack of congruence between the assumed and actual motivation of the people has prevented the enterprises becoming self-sufficient, there are also structural factors which play a role. For example Tiwi Pima has suffered from its late start and its long history of neglect

so that the items produced on the island have not impinged themselves upon the consciousness of the buying public to the extent, for example, that bark paintings from Arnhem Land have. There has been only limited promotion of the artworks through exhibitions and to date there has only been one exhibition on the work of an individual artist. Traditional items are usually large, heavy and expensive to freight and due to the lack of promotion, these fine art pieces are only sold to a limited market. The tourist end of the market is guaranteed by sales to visitors on the island and to the Government Company and other galleries in the Territory which take the bulk of the Tiwi Pima work. The manager's neglect of Tiwi Pima due to commitments to Tiwi Designs has been partly responsible for the lack of marketing strategies interstate in recent years.

On the other hand Tiwi Designs is the most popular and successful of the enterprises. As an introduced skill with certain requirements of technical proficiency it took many years for Tiwi Designs products to achieve the standard demanded by the external craft market, which is very competitive in terms of printed fabrics. The conscious decision of the manager in 1982 to concentrate on the fashion rather than the craft aspect of the market was fortuitous as it intersected with the rise in popularity of the 'Australiana' or 'ethnic' look, in which Tiwi Designs found a natural niche.

This rise in market demand through specific marketing targets has been an important catalyst in generating orders, particularly from interstate and in dramatically increasing Tiwi Design's sales in the past few years.

The least successful items are those made by Tiwi Pottery. Part of the difficulty experienced by this enterprise is related to the fact that as a mid-level technology in which technical proficiency and numeracy are critical, a long term dependency was established between the potters and their advisers. With the termination of this input technical difficulties have remained and influenced quality. Production is limited by the labour-intensive nature of potting and the fact that there are only a few potters working. Also, apart from their designs, these items are no different from other stoneware pottery produced throughout Australia and in this respect there is a high degree of competition from other non-Aboriginal pots. These factors have limited the marketability of the items which are sold predominantly locally to tourists on the island or via the Government's Company gallery in Darwin.

In summing up it is important to state that with the promotion of an arts and crafts industry by various external agencies there has at no stage been any survey or discussion which took into account the Tiwi perspective. While the response to the enterprises at Bathurst Island shows

that the Tiwi have been positively motivated to embrace new techniques along with their own methods of producing artifacts, it is apparent that their motivations do not neatly fit into the narrow economic parameters set down by the funding agencies.

As an example of the push to improve economic performance Stanley's proposals are one of the most recent manifestations of this policy syndrome in which the economist's point of view is again put forward. The ways in which the Tiwi conduct their businesses indicates that there are cultural factors which constrain the profitability of these enterprises and that to begin new enterprises would not be improving, but rather compounding the situation that already exists. As this thesis has attempted to show, the differentiation of products to corner different segments of the market would be of doubtful benefit. In fact this profile shows that the Tiwi are in fact a good test case for the differentiation of products as they have a variety of items aimed at a broad spectrum of the market, from the tourist end through to craft and fashion and fine art.

In this thesis it has been argued that attempts to establish economically viable enterprise in remote areas have failed to take account of the cultural factors which motivate Aboriginal people in their work as well as failing to currently gauge the external market forces which are out of the Tiwi's control.

In terms of the overall economy, it is important to stress that artifacts are the major export industry from the islands yet in relation to other enterprises the art and craft organization require the least subsidization. This is an extremely important factor which highlights the overall productive nature of art and craft activity. Rather than looking for economic self-sufficiency funding agencies should be sensitive to the important needs art and craft fulfil for the Tiwi in terms of providing employment in a culturally satisfying way. Increased tourism at Bathurst Island has seen the benefits of direct marketing in recent years and while this has improved local sales, it remains to be seen whether or not it could carry the industry. Given the circumstances it would be best, as argued by Altman (1987), to look for the reduced dependency of such Aboriginal enterprise, rather than self-sufficiency.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1
ENTERPRISE SALES, SUBSIDIES AND WAGES

TABLE 9: TIWI PMA: SALES, SUBSIDIES AND WAGES 1978-1987

FINANCIAL YEAR	77/78	78/79	79/80	80/81	81/82	82/83	83/84	84/85	85/86	86/87
SALES	43,789	16,237	18,000	33,113	22,839	31,890	61,857	24,774	55,257	67,751
WAGES	24,300	27,300	34,000	52,800	33,742	32,401	62,837	29,555	57,752	70,631
SUBSIDIES	14,600	15,400	19,570	22,632	16,146	18,159	15,847	10,758	8,200	27,033

These figures have been compiled from the Auditor's Financial Statements, Aboriginal Arts Board Annual Reports and Craft Advisor's Reports.

Subsidies = Sum total of grants supplied by AAB, NEATS, DEET, DAA and TLC

Wages = Sum total of adviser's and trainees' salaries, plus income paid to artists (cost of sales), and after 1982, 20% of the overall manager's salary is included as a proportion of time spent at T.P.

APPENDIX I

TABLE 10: TIWI DESIGNS: SALES, WAGES AND SUBSIDIES 1976 - 1987

FINANCIAL YEAR	75/76	76/77	77/78	78/79	79/80	81/82	82/83	83/84	84/85	85/86	86/87	87/88
SALES	21,076	22,199	65,030	53,620	42,401	36,245	40,617	40,498	83,146	84,614	180,433	181,489
WAGES	40,353	56,368	54,954	52,973	73,622	43,905	38,824	45,591	59,832	6 OF 20	80,860	104,281
SUBSIDIES	69,824	38,851	41,100	40,000	36,844	33,398	38,251	45,192	37,389	49,423	39,029	39,029

These figures have been compiled from the Auditor's Annual Financial Statements, Aboriginal Arts Board's Annual Reports, Craft Advisers Reports and ADE Records.

Subsidies = Sum total of grants supplied by AAB, ADC, DAA, DEET, DIER and NEAT

Wages = Payment to workers included in Annual Financial Statement plus Adviser's salary audited by the Nguu Council. After 1982 this salary is calculated at 70% of the manager's salary as the proportion of time spent at T.D.

APPENDIX 1

TABLE 11: TIWI POTTERY: SALES, WAGES AND SUBSIDIES 1977-1987

FINANCIAL YEAR	76/77	77/78	78/79	79/80	80/81	81/82	82/83	83/84	84/85	85/86	86/87
SALES	6,420	10,517	11,007	17,919	20,174	12,758	10,677	11,726	11,496	13,138	9,096
WAGES	30,815	32,482	36,306	44,425	47,720	26,946	21,182	18,434	18,781	19,505	18,694
SUBSIDIES	16,595	26,746	22,538	27,120	26,700	24,940	18,750	15,284	10,900	10,200	10,760

These figures have been compiled from the Auditor's Annual Financial Statements, Aboriginal Arts Board's Annual Reports, and the Craft Adviser's Annual Reports.

Subsidies = Sum total of grants supplied by AAB, NEATS and DIER

Wages = Sum total of wages paid to potters plus advisers salary.

After 1982 the adviser's salary is calculated at 10% as the proportion of time spent at T.P by the Manager

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