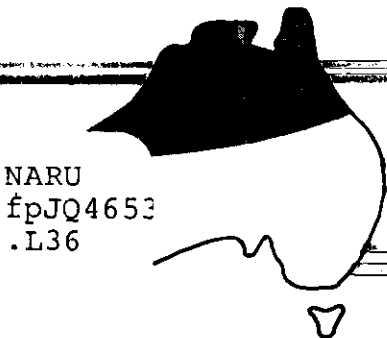
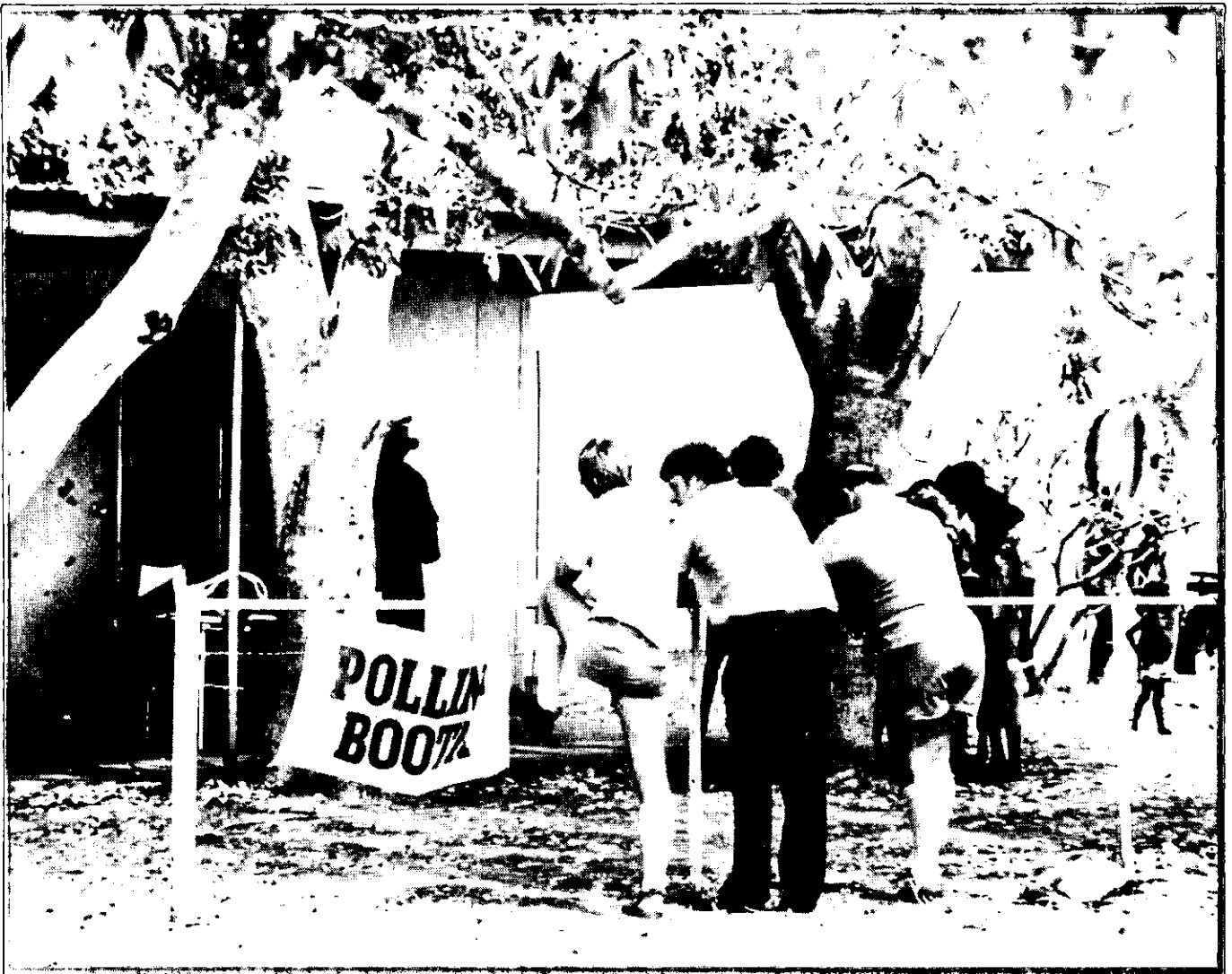


Edited by
Peter Loveday
and Dean Jaensch

A landslide Election, The NT 1983



Australian National University North Australia Research Unit
Monograph
Darwin 1984

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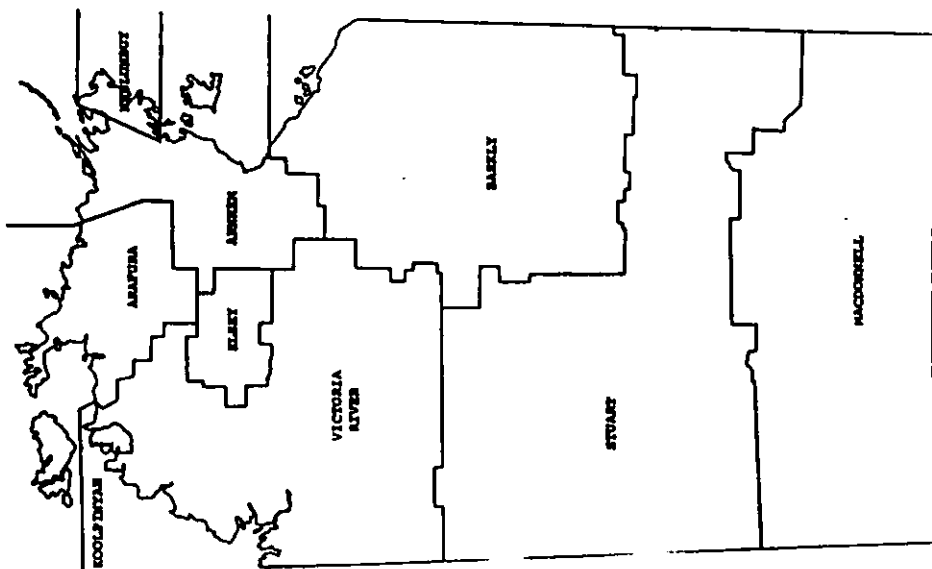
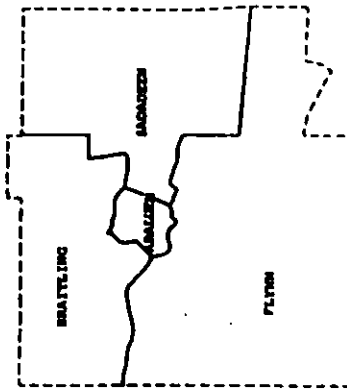
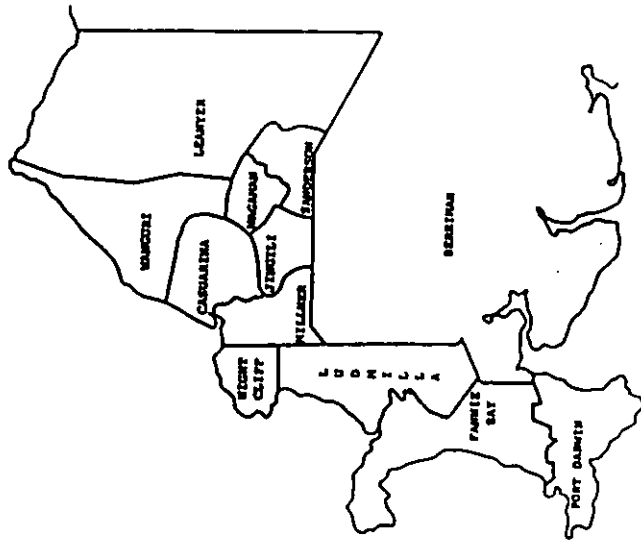
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PREFACE
and
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the last decade, elections have been held in the Northern Territory in 1974, 1977, 1980 and 1983. With the present volume, studies of all four have now been made available, all of them under the aegis of the North Australia Research Unit. Earlier studies are listed in the bibliography. As in 1980, the Department of the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, made a generous donation towards the conduct of the research.

The results were presented at a seminar held in Darwin a few months after the event. Party officials and academic analysts presented papers and the present volume includes important primary documents on party election organisation and campaigning. Special attention was paid to the mobile polling and other special provisions of the NT Electoral Act designed to assist voters with disabilities or disadvantages, provisions now added to the amended Commonwealth Electoral Act.

The cooperation of many people must be acknowledged, above all, the help of Mr Arthur Hangan and his staff in the NT Electoral Office and of Electoral Office staff in the field. Among other assistants we specially mention Deborah Wade-Marshall, Warren Martin, Fiona Davie, Elspeth Young, Raelene Cummings, Trevor Stockley and, for the preparation of the manuscript, Elaine Sommer.

Chapter One

BACKGROUND TO THE ELECTION

Alistair Heatley

The December 1983 election was the fourth since the establishment of the Legislative Assembly (LA) in 1974 and the second since the granting of self-government in 1978. In the Northern Territory Self-Government Act 1978, the maximum inter-election period was extended from three to four years. As the previous election had been held in mid-1980, the term of the third LA would normally have run to mid-1984. However, the election was brought forward by some six months; an analysis of circumstances of and the reasons for that decision forms one part of this chapter. Other prefatory sections will examine the processes of redistribution contingent on expansion of the LA, candidate selection and the major characteristics of the election campaign.

Redistribution

On its establishment in 1974, the Legislative Assembly had 19 members; that number was unchanged in the subsequent elections in 1977 and 1980. In late 1982, however, the government introduced an amendment to the Electoral Act which increased the membership to 25. As justification, both the need to expand the the ministry in order to reduce the 'unreasonable strain' on the existing six ministers and the purported advantages to the Assembly as a whole (a more 'effective and viable back bench and opposition', better representative and feedback functions, and a greater capacity to form and sustain committees) were cited (Parliamentary Record [PR], 9:2866, 2 September 1982). The move was strongly opposed by the ALP Opposition and the media (PR, 10:3029-51, 13 October 1982 and NT News, 4 September 1982) largely on the grounds of its excessive cost, its inutility and its effect on the size of already small electorates. Throughout the distribution process, the ALP continued its attack on the expansion; indeed, as late as August 1983, it sought by legislation to overturn the increase (PR, 14:921-6, 31 August 1982). The bill, which was never fully debated but sure of ultimate defeat, lapsed when the Legislative Assembly was dissolved. It should also be noted that the party positions were buttressed by their perceptions, never of course fully articulated, of the electoral effects of the expansion. The ALP believed that it would be politically handicapped while the CLP discerned advantage, or at least no detriment, from the move. In fact, the CLP, before resolving its stance, had commissioned an opinion poll in Darwin in mid-1982 to test the government's standing, particularly in those areas of the northern suburbs where extra seats would be created. The results, needless to say, supported the expansion option.

Even if there had been no increase, a redistribution would have been necessary. Population increase since the last exercise in 1977 had created large imbalances in existing electorates. For example, in Darwin numbers in seats ranged from about 1800 - 2000 in the inner city to 3200 - 6550 in the northern suburbs.

As soon as the amended legislation was in place, the government moved to establish an Electoral Distribution Committee. As its Chairman, an ex-NT Public Service Commissioner and current Remuneration Tribunal Chairman (Norm Campbell) was appointed. Assisting him were the Chief Electoral Officer (Arthur Hangan) and the Surveyor-General (Peter Wells). In January 1983, the Committee advertised for submissions. By May 1983, after considering the submissions (and later comments on them) and seeking a wide range of relevant viewpoints by interview, a draft proposal was published and displayed in May and June. Objections and suggestions were then received and the final report, only marginally altered, was presented at the end of July (the Report was subsequently published in four volumes). After a short debate and with little party controversy, it was accepted by the Legislative Assembly in late August (PR, 14:687, 869-74, 23 and 30 August 1983).

The initial suggestion stage attracted surprisingly small response with only eight submissions. Of that number, only three - from the CLP organisational and parliamentary wings and from the ALP - were in any way significant. Even then, in contrast to the detailed and specific recommendations from the CLP, the ALP proposal was cursory and highly generalised. That pattern was continued at the second stage (with 11 submissions) although the ALP did furnish a more substantial analysis emphasising the weaknesses and 'partisan advantage' in the CLP submissions. The Australian Democrats were also represented but their scant contribution was to assert the 'undemocratic practice of single-member electorates' and the advocacy of the 'more democratic system [of multi-member divisions]'. Twenty-eight objections were received, most dealing with unwanted separation from existing electorates. In that regard, the most concerted was the opposition by many residents in the Narrows area and the RAAF base to the dismemberment of the old Ludmilla seat. As the Committee noted, 'the objections of the three [party-based] bodies closely followed their original suggestions and comments....'

Although each major party (CLP, ALP) drew up its proposals and framed its comments and objections with an eye to the potential electoral consequences, the constraints of the terms of reference in the Electoral Act ensured some commonality of approach. However, major differences did arise over the numbers of urban seats in Darwin and Alice Springs, the treatment of Nhulunbuy, Katherine and Jabiru, and the location of boundaries of rural electorates particularly in the Arnhem region. For example, in the case of Darwin, the CLP favoured 11 seats while the ALP advocated 12. Both recognised the need for three extra electorates in the northern suburbs (with different boundary recommendations) but, against the ALP's wish to retain the three inner city seats, the CLP opted for two. For Alice Springs, the CLP pressed the need for four urban seats and the ALP three. On the whole the Distribution Committee's report which allotted four seats to the Alice Springs area and 12 to Darwin (albeit one - Berrimah - did include some urban fringe-dwellers and the new satellite town of Palmerston) followed more closely the CLP proposals. On the other hand, the CLP did not achieve its wishes for the separation of the Aboriginal voters in Yirrkala from the largely-European Nhulunbuy electorate, the detachment of Jabiru from an otherwise Aboriginal constituency, or the creation of Katherine as a substantially urban seat.

Neither party was entirely satisfied with the Committee's decisions. Although the examples used were often dissimilar, there was bipartisan criticism of the report in the areas of 'community interest' and of the failure to utilise the allowable tolerance (20 per cent) and to take future demographic projections into consideration. Particular note was made of the imbalance in electorate size both within urban areas and between rural and urban regions. On the whole, however, it was acknowledged that the Committee had, despite many difficulties, achieved a fair and reasonable result. Bob Collins, the Leader of the ALP Opposition, perhaps summed it up best:

... it is hardly surprising that the [ALP] did not get what it wanted. It is equally reasonable to say that the [CLP] did not get what it wanted, and that probably is not a bad result from the exercise (PR, 14:869, 30 August 1983).

Candidates

Formal candidate selection could not proceed for the most part until the redistribution had been completed but preliminary moves had been taken by both major parties to identify potential aspirants. Certainly by the time of its annual conference, the ALP were organising its ranks and the CLP, in mid-year, had called for expressions of interest for possible candidature. In Nhulunbuy, moreover, the CLP selected its representative in late July. From late August full scale pre-selection procedures were commenced. It was considered necessary to endorse candidates quickly in order to expose them adequately to their

electors by the time of the election, then assumed to be mid-1984. The urgency was evidence of the continuing belief that personal factors were of real importance in Territory elections.

In total, there were 66 candidates. The ALP and the CLP each contested every seat. Departing from its practice in 1974 and 1977, the ALP, after much deliberation, decided to run against the pro-ALP Independent in Nightcliff. For its part, the CLP endorsed 27 candidates; in two large rural seats composed of distinct racial communities (Victoria River and Arnhem) it selected two candidates, each aiming to appeal to a particular voter segment. Nine Independents nominated, a figure lower than in 1974 (29), 1977 (14) and 1980 (13). That decline could be interpreted as indicative of decreasing significance of a once-important factor in Territory politics and the concurrent rise of a two-party system. Finally, there were five Australian Democrats.

The ALP had selected most of its candidates by early October; the final three (for the electorates of Berrimah, Nightcliff and Braitling) were named in November after the calling of the election. All of the sitting ALP members (six) were reendorsed. In the seventh seat won by Labor in 1980 (Victoria River), the incumbent (Jack Doolan) had been removed from the ALP Caucus and styled himself as 'Independent Labor'. Of the new batch, most were professionals by education and occupation. For example, there were three medical doctors, two engineers, two lawyers, two teachers, two social workers, a chemist, an economist and an agronomist. Only one - a union official - could be seen as representing what was, in wider Australian terms, the traditional working class base of the party. However, given the composition of the contemporary urban population in the Territory and the membership of most ALP branches, the professional emphasis was not surprising or, despite some media criticism, very controversial. What perhaps was more noteworthy, considering the recent importance given to them by the ALP, was the small number of women, Aboriginal or other ethnic candidates; only two women (both sitting members) and one Aboriginal were preselected. And, if the original branch decision in the Arnhem electorate to select (albeit narrowly) a non-Aboriginal union member had been adhered to, there would have been no Aboriginal on the ALP team. In the event, by unanimous vote, the ALP Federal Executive, prompted by dissatisfaction in the Territory ALP executive and parliamentary wing, overturned the local determination and installed Wesley Lanhupuy, the Northern Land Council Director, as the party's choice. That intervention did cause at the time some resentment in the Territory trade union movement (see NT News, 22 August, 27-28 September 1983). Still, overall in Labor circles, there was considerable confidence that the quality of the candidates would be a decided electoral asset to the ALP. To the ALP President, 'it was the strongest team...yet fielded' (NT News, 7 October 1983).

Like the ALP, the CLP announced its candidates in two stages, all but two seats in mid-October and the others (Stuart and Macdonnell) in November. Ten of the 11 incumbents were reendorsed, the exception being the Speaker, Les Macfarlane, in Elsey. There, he was opposed by Cabinet member, Roger Steele, who had decided to relinquish his Darwin seat of Ludmilla, presumably because, in his and his parliamentary colleagues' opinions, the redistribution had rendered it a doubtful proposition. The Elsey pre-selection was fiercely contested and occasioned considerable bitterness in both the local branch and in the party organisation which was widely reported in the media, but, in the end, after an appeal by Macfarlane, Steele emerged as victor. In the CLP slate were two women (one a sitting member) and two Aborigines. Reflecting again the nature of the party's Territory composition, many of the new candidates came from private business or administrative backgrounds but there were also representatives from the public service, the police force and education. Certainly, as a team, it was not as professionally-oriented as the ALP's, a factor which led some media commentators to suggest that the ALP was superior in candidate-quality and thus, with proper and adequate exposure, could pose a problem for the CLP on the hustings. Such an interpretation once again seemed rooted in the belief that, with small electorates, a highly mobile population and a fragile pattern of party allegiance, personality factors were significant in the Territory.

Among the Independents, two were sitting MLAs - Dawn Lawrie, the long-serving member for Nightcliff, and Doolan. Of the others, two rate special mention. In Araluen, Goff Letts, the head of the Conservation Commission, an ex-leader of the CLP and seen by many as one of 'the fathers of self-government', decided to stand against the CLP's Jim Robertson, a senior minister. The candidature of Jim Forscutt - a some-time CLP adherent - in Elsey, was in large part a protest about the selection of Steele in preference to Macfarlane by the CLP. Forscutt saw himself as championing local representation and a continuation of the traditional political style fashioned by Macfarlane in Katherine. Macfarlane himself was seen as an active Forscutt supporter. The remaining five (all but one woman new to the Territory electoral scene) claimed that their basic reason for standing was the inappropriateness of the party-system for Territory conditions and the need for a stronger independent voice in the Assembly.

As their one urban nominee (Betty Pearce in Flynn) was found to be ineligible, the Australian Democrats (ADs) ran candidates only in rural electorates. Three were Aboriginal and another was closely associated with an Aboriginal community. The 1983 decision to endorse Aboriginal candidates was a departure from the 1980 experience when the ADs contested only urban seats with non-Aboriginals. However, with the failure of a much-mooted proposal for an Aboriginal Party, the ADs negotiated with some of its sponsors (and other groups) to establish a political linkage for the election. Whether it was to be a permanent association or one designed for expedient electoral purposes was never spelt out clearly.

The Political Context

In the wake of the ALP success in the March 1983 elections, both nationally and in the NT, there was considerable speculation in the media and in party circles about an early Assembly election. Given stated ALP policies on issues like Aboriginal land rights and uranium mining, it was anticipated that there would be significant intergovernmental conflict which could act as a catalyst for a premature poll. For example, immediately after the March result, I wrote:

However disappointed he may be on the outcome of the NT seat, Everingham...must recognise that his options for an early and successful Territory poll later this year are extended...as a weapon against likely federal Labor initiatives he would like a strong expression of popular support...If such an election were held on a sensitive federal/Territory issue like land rights, uranium or the erosion of self-government, Everingham, capitalising also on his residual popularity, would romp in handsomely (NT News, 7 March 1983).

For a while after the election, and particularly in the heady early days of 'consensus', the relationship between Darwin and Canberra seemed to belie early expectations. But the climate deteriorated rapidly thereafter. The decision to change the financial arrangements on which the Alice Springs to Darwin railway was promised during the election campaign and the subsequent wrangling on the future of the project ushered in a continuing period of intergovernmental dispute. Labor's activities in the volatile field of Aboriginal affairs created a fertile area of conflict with the NT Government. Other pressure-points, either traditional or newly-created, concerned the ownership and administration of national parks, uranium, shipping subsidies, the control of the Ashmore-Cartier Islands, budgetary measures (like the increased excise on fuel), the prospect of a resource rental tax, the new criminal code, and funding arrangements for the NT; all served to sour federal/Territory relations. Another development which caused increasing anxiety to the NT Government was its perception that the federal authorities were treating the ALP Opposition as the legitimate articulator of Territory interests. In fact, the Opposition, in an attempt to stress the advantages of having administration of similar political persuasion in Canberra and Darwin, sought to make capital of its special position, whether real or apparent.

The freedom of the Chief Minister to call an early election was constrained by several factors. In the first place, the need to complete the redistribution process and subsequently pre-selection procedures meant that an election could not be brought on before October at the earliest. After mid-December, the onset of the 'wet' season and the exodus of a significant portion of the electorate for the Christmas holidays made an election virtually impracticable, at least until early April. Therefore, flexibility in timing was limited. Secondly, in order to justify an early poll, a suitable issue had to be found or engineered. A third constraint was the need to convince parliamentary colleagues and the party organisation that an election was necessary. Finally, he had to be convinced himself and capable of convincing his party that they would be successful.

By September, with the redistribution completed, speculation about the imminence of an election increased. In public response, Everingham steadfastly maintained his intention to see out his full term. Yet, there is little doubt that Everingham and several of his parliamentary colleagues were keeping the option of an early election fully open if appropriate circumstances offered themselves. Their strategy was also well served by the CLP's decision to commission a Morgan Gallup opinion poll in September/October. It should be remembered that, in 1980, an election was called some two months early partly upon the favourable findings of a similar poll. On the other hand, the organisational wing of the CLP, perhaps taking Everingham's denials at face value, were still planning and preparing for an election in mid-1984.

In November, the issues presented themselves. First, there was the federal ALP's redefinition of its uranium policy in which the NT Government's hopes for the development of new NT mines (Jabiluka and Koongarra) were dashed as part of a deal to allow the Roxby Downs project in South Australia to proceed. Immediately, a meeting of senior CLP officials was called and Everingham strongly pushed for an election on the issue. His, however, was a lone voice and he failed to secure his objective. Once again, in response to speculation from the media and the Opposition, Everingham issued his by-now routine denial of the CLP's intention to go to the polls early. A week later came the federal decision to transfer Ayers Rock/Uluru to traditional Aboriginal ownership, albeit on the basis that the land would continue to be used for national park purposes. To Everingham, the lack of consultation with Territory authorities and the alleged prior information given to the ALP Opposition was interpreted as yet another attack on the reality of self-government. Moreover, the move was seen as threatening the tourism strategy of the NT Government and, by extension, what remained of its economic growth policy after the curtailment caused by the earlier uranium decision. In further meetings with party officials, Everingham, this time supported by like-minded Cabinet colleagues, was able to carry the day although not, it seems, without considerable reluctance on the part of the non-parliamentary contingent. What seemed to be the decisive factor was the knowledge, even if preliminary, of the results of the opinion poll. It indicated an extraordinarily high support level for the Chief Minister (nearly 80 per cent) and an approval rating of 61 per cent for the CLP (the ALP gained a lowly 23 per cent). No significant local issues of potential detriment to the CLP emerged but there was evidence that dissatisfaction with federal ALP policy, especially on the railway and uranium, would prove electorally advantageous. Above all, it suggested that Territory voters continued, as in the past, to be able to distinguish between federal and local elections and vary their ballot preference accordingly. Thus, the poll satisfied the CLP waverers that the March situation, where residents of the northern suburbs in Darwin particularly strongly supported the ALP, was not likely to be repeated.

Campaign Overview

The nature of the 1983 campaign was largely determined by its brevity. Announced on 14 November and scheduled for 3 December, the election had a campaign period of only 20 days. The rolls were closed a day after the announcement, once again resulting in complaints of massive disfranchisement of electors. Official campaign launchings were held by the ALP on 18 November and

the CLP on 21 November. Thus, the time available for campaigning was severely limited and none more so than in those rural areas where mobile polling commenced up to six days before the official election day.

Brevity suited Everingham's campaign purpose and style well as it enabled him to concentrate almost exclusively on his preferred issues - the defence of self-government, criticism of the consequences of certain federal policies in the NT and the need for a strong new mandate to deal effectively with Canberra in the future. At the same time, it reduced the ability of the Opposition and other contestants to focus on areas of government policy and administration, on local issues, on candidate quality, or on platform comparisons where the CLP could have been more effectively attacked. In fact, Everingham's strategy worked better than even he might have anticipated as the ALP decided, whether by design or circumstance, to devote a large part of its campaign to countering the CLP's tactics. Thus, they fought on Everingham's chosen ground, a determination which perplexed many media commentators. Although Bob Collins asserted at an early stage his intention to emphasise the need for 'good government' and the qualities of the alternative ALP government, he spent most of his time criticising the CLP's antagonistic approach to the federal government, defending its treatment of the NT, and arguing that the Territory's interests would be better served with ALP governments in both Darwin and Canberra. Collins also endeavoured too often to adopt the highly emotional and rhetorical style so adroitly utilised by the Chief Minister but one manifestly unfitted to Collins' more avuncular and satirical political character.

At no time did Everingham really lose control over the direction and pace of the campaign. Even Goff Letts' decision to stand as an Independent in protest against what he considered to be Everingham's extravagant and counter-productive confrontation with Canberra did not divert, at least publicly, the Chief Minister's conviction that his orchestration of the campaign was correct. Nor also did the two sorties into the fray by Prime Minister Bob Hawke. In fact, Everingham artfully moderated his style in the final days of the campaign, a move which threw into stark contrast the heightened level of political invective from Collins and Hawke at that time.

The campaign, because of its length, Everingham's own personality, and his knowledge of his popularity in the urban and non-Aboriginal electorate, was now on 'presidential' lines. Everingham, Collins and Hawke were given as much exposure as possible and other party candidates individually received little coverage. Of the party leaders, Everingham was favoured in that, with a suburban Darwin seat, he could and did spend most of his time close to media attention; he rarely left the major urban centres. On the other hand, Hawke only visited Darwin for two short periods between an overseas visit and Collins was forced, because he was contesting a large rural seat (Arafura), considered by some to be shaping as a difficult proposition for Labor, to devote time to remote local campaigning. Letts, alone of the non-major party aspirants, obtained significant media exposure.

Campaign strategies and styles outlined above were essentially urban and non-Aboriginal-oriented. In the rural areas, most of them isolated from the media and party 'heavies', candidate canvassing was the major campaign instrument. Unlike 1980, when he toured the 'bush' areas extensively (albeit ultimately with little electoral impact), Everingham in 1983 stayed away. Party hopes in such seats were based on factors like the prior voting behaviour of their populations, the inter-election effects of government policy (either Territory or federal) and the influence of attractive candidates.

Although the CLP did utilise non-Territory expertise at the organisational level (notably the employment of David Barnett and Bob Baudino as consultants), the party saw little need or sense in importing interstate politicians to promote its cause. Andrew Peacock did attend the official campaign opening but his was a fleeting visit. On the other hand, the ALP made greater use of federal Ministers. Besides his personal intervention, Prime Minister Hawke was

extensively featured in ALP advertising. Environment Minister Barry Cohen and Aboriginal Affairs Minister Clyde Holding were other contributors. The benefit to the local ALP of their involvement was, however, doubtful as their major pre-occupation seemed to be uninhibited denunciation of the CLP and Everingham. Certainly, the CLP camp perceived that they were an unalloyed electoral asset, as indeed were those sections of the Labor movement antagonistic to uranium mining. Even the long-gestated decision to proclaim Kakadu Stage II as a national park and a hastily-assembled tourism development package for the region during the campaign proved of little value to the ALP, enmeshed as they were with the issue of uranium development. They were also widely interpreted as expedient measures undertaken with scant consultation with both the NT Government and local Aborigines. By way of contrast, the announcement of the Sheraton Hotel project in Darwin was nicely timed and a generous gift to the CLP campaign. Whether orchestrated or not, it did not smack of the gimmickry or contrivance of the Labor measures.

All parties (and prospective Independents) were caught unprepared by the early poll, a factor compounded by the short campaign period. In terms of policy platforms, the CLP as the government party were better placed. Apart from some new proposals (particularly on housing finance), it was content to stand largely on its record of performance in office. Given the reasons for the calling of the elections and the salience of the inter-governmental issues, there was, moreover, little need for the development and dissemination of major new policy statements. For its part, the ALP, as part of its pre-election planning and in line with traditional opposition strategies, had undertaken a program of policy redefinition. Although it had issued a few policy papers, the bulk had been scheduled for later publication. During the campaign, therefore, the ALP had both to complete its policy-making process and to issue all remaining sections. In fact, 19 papers were put out in two weeks, a woefully inadequate period in which to make any electoral impact. Greater equality existed in the preparation of advertising as both major parties were forced to arrange their election material in a matter of a few days. However, as in the past, the ALP, compared to the CLP, had inferior financial resources to implement its propaganda campaign. Money was readily and sufficiently available to the CLP, whereas the ALP again suffered its conventional relative disadvantage. Indeed, the extent to which finance became available, from local and interstate sources, even surprised the CLP campaign managers. In organisational terms, the CLP apparatus, both at the central and branch levels, operated more smoothly and efficiently and in a more integrated manner than did its ALP counterparts. An additional significant benefit enjoyed by the CLP was its command of government resources, the alleged use of which for campaign purposes was criticised by the ALP and in the media. On the whole, therefore, despite its initial unpreparedness, the CLP ran by far the more effective campaign.

Throughout the campaign, a spirit of high confidence permeated CLP ranks and expectations of the number of seats to be won ranged from at least 16 to a maximum of 20. Although Labor supporters contended that the margin between the parties would be far closer, the ALP campaign was conducted in an atmosphere of grim resignation, especially in the urban areas. An ALP poll, taken in late 1983, had indicated the parlous position of the ALP. With obvious knowledge of its findings, Richard Farmer in The Bulletin (29 November) was able to predict that the 'Labor Party is facing a crushing defeat' and 'will be lucky to win seven [seats]'. Collins himself also publicly admitted early in the campaign the difficulties the ALP was facing and, in private, his later fear that his party would be trounced.

A final note should be made on the role of the local media in the campaign. As has become familiar, the ALP saw the Murdoch press in the Territory, The NT News and The Centralian Advocate, as unfair and discriminatory, not only in editorial opinions but in overall coverage. Indeed, Bob Hawke accused The NT News at one stage of being 'the Everingham rag' (NT News, 18 November 1983) and there were several complaints about lack of balance in commentary and the failure to treat ALP-oriented material adequately. On the other hand, the CLP

perceived considerable bias in the lesser print media (particularly The Darwin Star and The Advertiser in Darwin) and, more importantly in the ABC electronic media. Whether a balance of bias was achieved is a matter for interpretation but, whatever stance is taken, it is difficult to credit the media with much influence on either the conduct of the campaign or its eventual outcome.

Chapter Two

URANIUM AND THE RAILWAY: BACKGROUND TO TWO ELECTION ISSUES

Owen Stanley

This paper does two things. Firstly, it attempts to assess the significance to the economy of the NT of some issues raised in the election campaign in 1983, and secondly it provides a chronology of announcements and actions relating to those issues and the election.

The NT economy has an unusual and fragile structure. It is unusual, by comparison with the states of Australia, because of its great dependence on public sector employment and because much employment in other sectors of the NT economy results from government initiatives. It is fragile because of the dependence of the NT government on finance from the Federal government. These two features make the NT economy more akin to a company town in which major decisions are made in distant cities than to the economy of the states. These features result in a biased employment structure which is illustrated in the following table.

Table 2.1

The Composition of the NT and Australian Workforces by Sector, 1981

Industry	% of NT Workforce	% of Australian Workforce
Public sector (Federal employment, 9.8% in NT)	33.2	(Federal employ- ment 7.3% 24.3
Retail and Wholesale Trade	11.9	17.4
Construction	9.2	6.3
Manufacturing	4.6	17.7
Mining	4.6	1.4
Agriculture	4.0	6.0
Transport and Storage	4.8	5.2
Recreation, personal and other ser- vices (including direct employment in tourism)	5.9	5.2
Other	21.8	16.5
	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Total Persons	55,886	6,292,631

Source: Census Statistics, 1981

Some obvious comments can be made about these figures:

1. Public sector employment dominates. Although most of the public servants are Territory government employees, the level of that employment is very largely determined by policies made in Canberra.
2. The second largest employer is the retail and wholesale trade and it will be seen shortly that employment in these areas is sensitive to development projects and to employment in other sectors of the economy. That is, employment in retailing and wholesaling is highly derivative.

3. The third largest employer is the building construction industry. Employment in this area usually fluctuates a lot, depending on the rate of population growth and the undertaking of particular projects. The NT population has been growing about 4 per cent per annum and there have been major construction projects in Darwin and elsewhere. If, for some reason, population growth slowed or the projects were lost the demand for this type of labour would decline rapidly.
4. Each of the categories of manufacturing, mining, agriculture and recreation employ relatively few people directly although a substantial development in any of these areas can stimulate substantial employment in other sectors of the economy such as construction and the retail and wholesale trade.

To summarise, it can be seen that the level of employment is closely tied to direct employment in the public sector, to continuing growth of population and to the undertaking of particular development projects (these are not necessarily independent events, of course).

The NT and north Australia generally are handicapped in terms of potential for economic development. The wet-season dry-season pattern of rainfall, generally poor and fragile soils, high transport costs to markets, and small local population and market are major handicaps. Numerous agricultural projects have been attempted with no success - including the Daly River Agricultural Area (1912), the Humpty Doo rice project, the Tipperary grain sorghum project, and in Western Australia the Ord River project and Fitzroy River project. The current developments on the Douglas-Daly may prove successful but few people would expect the grain sorghum produced in that area to become the basis of a more diversified NT economy. Manufacturing activities in the NT are for the local market and most rely on the remoteness of the Territory to survive. The two industries which have substantial growth potential are tourism and mining. This is so because although transport costs remain a handicap, these industries need resources that are unique - in the case of tourism: scenic places, good fishing, hunting, walking areas, remoteness, Aboriginal culture, artefacts and paintings; in the case of mining: winnable minerals. The NT has all of these resources in substantial quantities.

Thus the NT government and many commentators have rightly looked to developments in tourism and mining to reduce dependence on the public sector for employment though the possibilities for improvement can be grossly exaggerated.

It is impossible to be precise as to the effects of large mining and tourist developments on employment in the NT. However, some information is available. Mining usually employs few people in the operating stage but employs many people in the construction stage. A study for the NT construction industry generally [TJ Mules 1984] shows that the linkages between the construction industry and manufacturers in the NT are fairly weak and that most of the indirect employment from a project takes place because of personal expenditure by employees. Thus the construction of a mine would result in an increase in employment in the construction sector (at the mine) and some increase in employment elsewhere in the NT of which approximately 60 per cent would take place in retailing and wholesaling and approximately 40 per cent would take place in other industries such as transport and manufacturing. In a study of the tourist industry in Central Australia [M Pearse 1984] it was found that the employment multiplier was 0.0585, so that an increase in expenditure by tourists and tourism support (construction accommodation and roads, maintenance of parks, promotion) of \$1.7 million is required to employ an extra 100 workers throughout the NT. Again, most of the indirect employment will take place in the retail and wholesale trade.

Thus both mining and tourist developments will lead to an increase in employment in those areas directly, and indirectly in construction, retailing and wholesaling. Manufacturing will benefit relatively little from these developments. The reasons for this are clear. The NT economy is an open economy.

There are no barriers to imports from other parts of Australia other than transport costs and most manufacturing and importing from overseas is cheaper elsewhere in Australia. The services of retail and wholesale trading, however, cannot be imported. Further, in the NT these are labour intensive activities by Australian standards, probably because much trade takes place in small communities and through small shops so that economies of scale enjoyed by the retail and wholesale trade elsewhere cannot be gained in the NT.

In this context it is important to mention another development which many people expect would broaden the NT employment base. This is the building of the Darwin-Alice Springs railway link. This project would certainly stimulate regional and total employment in the NT in the construction stage and, once completed, it would lower transport costs for bulk freight and so aid the export and import of some items into the Territory. There are two problems that may arise, however, once the railway is operating. The first is that the railway may narrow the employment base in the NT economy and may even reduce total NT employment. The railway is likely to stimulate industries which use little labour, such as mining and agriculture and is likely to depress labour-intensive activities such as road transport, vehicular servicing, refreshments and accommodation along the Stuart Highway, and to some extent, local manufacturing. Further, if the studies of the proposal are correct, Darwin port and storage facilities would benefit very little from the 'mining boom'.

The other problem is much more controversial and so some time will be spent on it here. It concerns the economic and financial viability of the railway project. There have been many studies of the economics of railway systems around the world and some generalisations have emerged from them, including the following: it is very difficult to make profits from railway services; passenger services, especially country services, generally make losses; the system needs to carry a large volume of bulk longhaul freight to cover losses in other services; and it is especially difficult to cover costs where the service parallels a well established road system. There exist two competing versions of the viability of the Darwin-Alice Springs railway link: the NT government's submission to the 'Independent Economic Inquiry into Transport Services to the Northern Territory', and the Inquiry report itself, known as the 'Hill Report'. In brief, the NT submission concludes that the internal rate of return for the project would be between 7.51 per cent and 13.77 per cent, depending upon assumptions made about future developments, and so 'under any reasonable set of assumptions the Alice Springs-Darwin rail link is an attractive national investment on the grounds of reduced transport costs alone' (Vol. I, pxii). Social considerations reinforce its worthiness, according to the submission. The NT government also represented its findings in terms of net present values, and, using a discount rate of 7 per cent, found that the project would yield a positive net present value of \$342 million for its 'core' (most preferred) scenario.

The Hill Report came to the opposite conclusions about the project's economic viability. In particular, it found the following. Firstly, while the capital costs for the project were \$516 million, the present value of benefits would be only \$142 million, leaving a net present value loss of \$374 million (using Illustrative Projection I figures and a real discount rate of 7 per cent). This loss, the Report concludes, is not offset by social benefits excluded from the calculation. To highlight this result, the Report points out that while the railway will replace 130 heavy trucks and 20 buses, the railway requires an investment of \$5 million for every heavy truck and bus replaced. There are many differences between the studies in terms of the assumptions used and methodology, but the differences in their conclusions come essentially from their assumptions about the tonnages expected to be carried by the railway: the NT government's submission expects a tonnage of 1.25 million tonnes in 1993 with a growth rate of 5 per cent per annum; the Hill Report prefers the figure of 0.849 million tonnes in 1993 with a growth rate of 3.5 per cent initially (called Illustrative Projection I) but also uses the more optimistic figures of 0.949 million tonnes in 1993 with a growth rate of 3.8 per cent initially (called Illustrative Projection II). The net present value of the loss, using

Illustrative Projection II's figures, is \$355 million, at a discount rate of 7 per cent, and the other conclusions of the Report are not dramatically changed by using Illustrative Projection II. All figures used in the studies are in 1983 values. This writer broadly agrees with the Hill Report's evaluations, although they are somewhat too pessimistic because of an error of principle, as will be seen. Firstly, although it is agreed that the future of mining in the NT is very promising, it is somewhat less promising than the NT government's submission suggests. In particular, some of the proposed mining projects which are planned and included in the submission's projections will not go ahead, and others require the establishment of road or rail links to gain access to the railway. For instance, the submission includes freight from the Jabiluka, Koongarra and Gove mines. Development of the first two mines has been suspended and may never take place, and the Gove mines can be included only if a road is built through Arnhem Land. It is unlikely that such a road will be built. These dubious projects alone account for 105,000 tonnes of the 1.5 million tonnes of freight anticipated by the submission to be carried by road and rail along the central transport corridor from Darwin to Adelaide. Although the submission considers the possibility of these mines not contributing freight, it is dismissed as the 'worst case scenario' which, with an assumed freight growth rate of 3 per cent per annum, generates an internal rate of return of 7.51 per cent for the project. If the cost of capital is 7 per cent, the project is of doubtful benefit to the community. There are, however, other mining plans about which there are doubts and there must be severe doubts about the assumed success of grain and horticultural cropping.

The submission assumes that the total volume of freight travelling along the central corridor between 1982 and 1993, when the construction of the railway would be completed, would increase by 16 per cent per annum and grow continuously at 5 per cent per annum until the year 2033. The railway is expected to capture 82 per cent of this freight. These assumptions are most optimistic. They ignore the fact that prices and outputs of commodities, which compose most of the freight, are subject to large cobweb cycles (booms and busts) and that while production may increase rapidly over a short period of time, this is often followed by a long period of constant or declining output.

Further, the submission's assumed growth rates imply that freight along the corridor will increase 4.41 times from 1982 until the railway is completed, by 7.18 times over 20 years from 1982, and by 31.05 times between 1982 and 2033. The submission expects that half of total freight will be mining inputs and outputs so that unless agricultural and other freight grow more rapidly than mining freight (which is most unlikely), the submission's assumptions require that mining related freight grow at least by these remarkable multiples. Further, since mining inputs and outputs occur in fixed proportions, the assumptions require that the annual volume of minerals produced in the NT grow at such a rate that output in 20 years from 1982 be 7.18 times what it was in 1982, and output in 50 years from 1982 be 31.05 times what it was in 1982. It must be admitted that projected benefits over the first 20 years of a project are the important ones to judge since they will dominate the evaluation of the project. Nevertheless, bearing in mind that minerals are exhaustible resources, there must be severe doubts that mineral reserves exist in the NT in sufficient volume and quality to allow the cumulative totals of annual production implied by the submission's assumptions. In particular, to meet the submission's assumption in relation to freight in 1993, the mining industry will have had to extract a cumulative total of minerals (giving rise to corridor freight) equal to 21 times the volume of freight creating mining production in 1982; to meet the submissions expectations for the twentieth year after 1982 the total amount of mining giving rise to freight would have to be 268 times the level of freight creating mineral production in 1982; and to meet the submission's expectations for the year 2033 the total volume of minerals extracted that gave rise to freight along the corridor would have to be 2,574 times that in 1982.

The Hill Report's method of drawing attention to the extreme nature of the submission's freight growth assumptions is to point out that they imply that in

the tenth year of operations the railway would carry an extra 100,000 tonnes of freight. Annual additions of freight would, of course, continue to grow exponentially from then on. This is rightly presented as a mind-boggling thought. With these points in mind, the Hill Report's assumed growth rates also may be too high, and the Report acknowledges this. It assumes an annual growth rate of total freight along the corridor of 11.8 per cent between 1982 and 1992, a rate of 3.5 per cent between 1993 and 2002, a rate of 2.5 per cent between 2003 and 2012 and a rate of 2.1 per cent between 2013 and 2033. These assumptions imply that freight will grow by 3.05 times between 1982 and 1992, by 4.3 times over 20 years from 1982 and by 8.35 times between 1982 and 2033. By earlier argument, these assumptions mean that at least these output multiples must also apply to the output of minerals in the NT. The 1980 study of the economics of the rail link conducted jointly by the Federal and NT governments assumed that freight would grow by 11.6 per cent per annum from 1982 to 1990 and then grow at 1.1 per cent until 2003. These assumptions are probably too conservative.

The second reason for preferring the Hill Report's evaluation of the railway project relates to the percentage of freight along the corridor assumed to be captured by the railway. The submission assumes that the railway will capture 82 per cent of the freight. This would be a remarkable success in the light of the greater flexibility in timing and other services that can be offered by road transport, and considering the likely attempts by road transport organisations to compete with the railway by price cutting, improved equipment and services. The more conservative figures of 76 per cent or 78 per cent suggested by the Hill Report seem more realistic.

Finally, the Hill Report's evaluation may be too pessimistic for the following reasons. For the purpose of calculating the benefits of the railway, the NT government's submission estimates the average distance of rail haul to be 1,273 kilometres, while the Hill Report's estimate is only 972 kilometres, some 24 per cent less. The reason for the difference is a dispute over principle. The submission includes transport on the Darwin-Alice Springs rail link and on part of the already existing rail system. The Hill Report's reply is that since the building of the rail link does not lower the costs of moving goods between Alice Springs and Adelaide, only savings made on the Darwin-Alice Springs route should be included.

The NT government submission's approach is basically correct. Ignoring social audit considerations for the moment, the benefits to the community of the railway project are the reduction in transport costs generated in the economy. There are five ways in which these savings may arise.

- (i) Some freight is currently transported by road to Alice Springs, and then by rail south, but if the rail link was established the freight would be carried all the way by train. For this freight, the Hill Report is correct, although the tonnages involved would not be very large.
- (ii) Some traffic currently travels by road all the way along the corridor to Adelaide because there are no appropriate loading facilities at Alice Springs. If the rail link is built, this traffic would be carried along the corridor by rail. In this case the dominant factor is the position where the loading facilities are built. If they are built at Alice Springs then all of the travel cost savings along the Alice Springs-Adelaide section are associated with the loading facilities. If the facilities are situated closer to the production point, the benefits will be greater because they include gains on the whole journey from the loading point to Adelaide. These benefits are associated with both the relevant part of the Darwin-Alice Springs rail link and the loading facility since both are necessary to gain the benefits. If the loading facilities are considered to be an integral part of the rail system then the

submission's position is correct in relation to this traffic, and the Hill Report's position is wrong. Most rail traffic would fall into this category.

- (iii) Some freight which would be trucked to Darwin and then by ship to its destination would be redirected south by rail. In this case the social benefit can be calculated only by comparing the costs of reaching the destination by truck and ship, with that by rail. The submission does this and estimates that 96,000 tonnes of freight would be captured in this way.
- (iv) The railway may stimulate some extra production. In this case, the profits from the extra production (assuming no market failure) must be considered a benefit of the project. It is likely, however, that this benefit will be of minor importance.
- (v) There is freight which is currently carried by truck and which would continue to be carried by truck if the rail link is developed. If this freight does not experience cost reductions as a result of the construction of the railway then it is excluded from the calculation of the benefits of the railway. If road freight charges are lowered because of competition then these transport cost savings must be included as benefits.

Thus, it can be seen that the Hill Report's position on this matter is wrong and the submission's position is likely to be more correct because it uses a greater average travel distance. Despite this, the Hill Report's fundamental claims are likely to be unaffected since its measure of net benefits would have to be increased by over 3.6 times before the project would yield a positive net present value.

While the comments immediately above mean that the project is not quite as nonviable from the economic viewpoint as the Hill Report believes, these comments have no effect on the validity of the Hill Report's statements about the financial problems associated with the project because these relate only to anticipated revenue and costs and the Hill Report's projections, it has been argued, are basically correct. It says, firstly, that the project would require the substantial accumulated cash outflows from governments of \$762 million by the time the railway is operational and over \$1,000 million by the year 2000 (using 1983 values); further, 'using conventional accounting standards...it is unlikely that the railway would cover its fully apportioned operational costs' (Hill Report, pl7). The present value of expected losses on freight operations is \$333 million and on passenger operations is \$41 million. These two suggestions have serious implications for the NT government's budget and possibly for employment in the NT. In particular, the Federal government may require the NT government to contribute substantially to this cash outflow and may require the NT government to cover the losses made by the railway. If this happens then part of the NT government's budget would be used to sustain a low-labour intensive project while funds would probably come from the more labour intensive activities of employing public servants or subsidising employment in the NT economy.

Thus, while the railway project would create substantial employment in the short-term (the nine years required for its construction), it is a mixed blessing because it is likely to reduce employment overall in the Territory in the long-term and may create substantial problems for the NT government's budget.

Another problem with the structure of the NT economy and one which is closely related to the employment problem, is the dependence of the NT government on funds from the Federal government. In the 1983-84 Budget, for instance, the NT government expects to receive 86.2 per cent of its revenue from the Federal government. The equivalent figure for the states collectively was 53 per cent in 1980-81 (Year Book Australia, 1983). The major sources of revenue raised by the NT government from within the NT are shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

Sources of NT Government Revenue Expected to be
Raised in 1983-84

	% of NT Govt Raised Revenue
Taxation (indirect) (Payroll tax is the largest item equal to 19.9 per cent of total)	31.3
Water and Sewerage Undertakings	6.1
Land Sales, Leases, Rents	3.7
Mining Royalties	2.7
Other (Motor Vehicle, health charges etc.)	27.5
Recovery of Debt Charges and Trust Fund Payments	26.9
	100.0
Total Absolute Value	\$136.6 million

Source: NT Government Budget Paper No. 2, 1983-84, p2.

As can be seen, the NT government's local revenue comes mainly from payroll taxes and other indirect taxes, charges for vehicle registration, health services, interest on cash balances etc., with only a small amount coming from mining royalties.

This last item, royalties, is capable of considerable growth although it is most unlikely to dramatically reduce the nature of the NT government's dependence on the Federal government. At self-government the powers to impose royalties on mining on all land in the NT including Aboriginal land, excepting in relation to uranium and other prescribed minerals, were transferred from the Federal to the NT government. Royalties previously payable to the Federal government by miners became payable to the NT government. In the case of uranium, the Federal government paid a royalty to the NT government at the rate of 1.25 per cent on the value of production. Mining royalties in the NT overall were very low and in 1982 the NT government sought to dramatically increase the rate. The original plan was to impose a royalty of 35 per cent of profits before tax and payments to Aborigines are deducted, and to allocate leases on highly prospective areas by auction. This latter proposal was not included in the bill. It was estimated that this system would have raised \$19 million in 1980. Although the bill was passed it was subject to many amendments, including a reduction of the royalty rate to 18 per cent, a broadening of the deductions allowable and the exemption of all existing mines. This latter concession meant that the benefits to the NT government will be slow coming.

In relation to the uranium industry in particular, the NT government is still in the position where it receives a royalty of only 1.25 per cent. Consequently, the total expected for this year is only \$3.5 million. While the uranium industry is looked to by some people as a way of increasing the size of local tax collections and so gaining more independence for the NT, for as long as the Federal government reimburses the NT government at this low rate, this desired increase in royalties can only be achieved by an increase in output.

In 1979-80, the total value of mineral production in the NT was \$369 million with the main minerals being manganese, bauxite, gold and copper (stated in descending order). To date only the Nabarlek and Ranger mines have been operating but these have already completely changed the mining figures. In 1981-82, the value of U₃O₈ produced was \$325 million, almost as much as total mineral production in 1979-80 and total value of mineral production had almost doubled to \$626 million.

Much greater increases in uranium production would take place if the other uranium mines were developed. Table 2.3 shows the reserves of U_3O_8 for the four mines in the Uranium Province.

Table 2.3

Reserves of U_3O_8 in the Uranium Province

Mine	Reserves of U_3O_8 , tonnes
Nabarlek	0 (originally 12,000)
Ranger	99,618 (originally 100,400)
Jabiluka	207,400
Koongarra	13,000

Source: NT Department of Mines and Energy,
Annual Report 1982-83, 18, 19.

Although Nabarlek is fully mined, it is still processing and selling U_3O_8 . Ranger has just commenced production. In addition, uranium was found in the Ngalia Basin in the early 1970s with estimated reserves of 17,000 t of U_3O_8 . Some deposits have also been found in the Amadeus Basin.

Despite the great increases in the value of output possible, the current low royalty rate means that the mining industry's contribution to the NT government's budget would remain small. However, the Federal government is of a mind to substantially increase royalties and if this is done on uranium mining to the benefit of the NT government then the industry could contribute substantially to the NT government budget.

Aborigines are a group of Territorians who have been especially affected by mining generally, and the uranium issue in particular. There are two main reasons for this: Firstly their homes are in the areas where mining takes place and so they must bear the environmental impact of mining and, secondly, they receive royalties and other compensation from mining. Briefly, the Northern Territory Land Rights Act states that if mining takes place on Aboriginal land, Aborigines must receive a minimum royalty at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the value of output and that this royalty be distributed as follows: 40 per cent is paid to the NT land councils, 30 per cent is paid to local community affected by the mining, and 30 per cent is used for the benefit of Aborigines generally in the NT. Miners must gain permission from local Aborigines for mining to take place and any compensation negotiated in excess of the $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent royalty (such as up-front payments, additional royalties or annual rents) are to be distributed as agreed to or as determined by the local land council, if no agreement exists. Nabarlek and Ranger have both been important sources of income for Aborigines in the Uranium Province and, indirectly, to Aborigines elsewhere in the NT.

Since European colonisation of the north, Aborigines have been through three 'stages of production'. In the first, which we will call the 'traditional stage', Aborigines used traditional production techniques, had very limited markets, and had little or no access to European goods. In the second, which we will call the 'intermediate stage', Aborigines participated in European production and consumption, but received wages (usually substantially in kind) which were well below European wages. Finally, from the mid-1970s Aborigines moved into the 'integrated' stage, when wage rates became the same as those for Europeans. Aborigines did not all move from one stage to the next simultaneously, and indeed at the present Aboriginal people exist in all three stages.

In the first stage, production by Aborigines was possible almost everywhere throughout the Territory. In the second it became concentrated on missions, settlements, stations and farms. The low labour costs allowed substantial production to take place, e.g. in 1970 40 per cent (by volume) of all fruit and vegetables and 30 per cent of fish produced in the NT was produced on missions and settlements, although this production was not included in Primary Industry statistics. Because of the unique low-cost feature of these communities, Aboriginal production could exist where no European production could. In the third stage, which dominates the situation at present, wage rates and capital costs in Aboriginal communities are broadly the same as that of the European community. This means that Aboriginal communities no longer have a comparative advantage in labour intensive production and so one cannot expect an industry to be a success in an area owned by Aborigines if the industry is not successful in European hands. Similarly, an activity which is undertaken successfully by Europeans in remote Australia, is also a good prospect for Aboriginal communities.

Thus it appears that the European industries that have greatest prospects for development on Aboriginal land are also mining and tourism. The cattle activities, clothes making, artefact making and pottery may continue to exist but probably will not yield great returns in the long run. The funds for development and independence for Aborigines will come from the same sources as for the NT as a whole: mining and tourism.

Already the royalties from the operating uranium mines have allowed some Aborigines to achieve a substantial degree of independence from the government. The Gagudju Association, for instance, has engaged in much social welfare spending and investments for its people. In the area of social welfare, it has constructed a number of houses, runs two schools, runs a health service, provides an outstation delivery system, purchased a number of vehicles, provides a bus for and runs a women's club at Jabiru. The costs of such activities would normally be borne by government. In addition, because of its association with ANPWS (tourism) the Gagudju Association can provide employment for all who wish it, and as a consequence, no member of the Association has been on unemployment benefits. The government's costs have been reduced thereby. The Association's investment policies have involved the buying and rebuilding of the Coinda Motel (rebuilding has cost \$2.5 million), the establishment of an earth moving and garbage disposal business, the purchase of the east Jabiru service station and the purchase of the business of the Border Store. Only about \$2,000 per member per year has been distributed to members. The Australian community generally has had good value for the royalties which have been paid to the Association and to the extent that royalty money has replaced government support, it can be argued that these royalties have cost the Federal government nothing.

Some members of the Gagudju Association and Aborigines generally were expecting substantial payments from the Jabiluka and Koongarra mines. Contracts had been signed which involved Aborigines receiving about \$137 million over 30 years from Jabiluka, and 25 per cent equity in the \$1,000 million Koongarra project. These funds would have been very useful in allowing many more Aborigines to become independent of government support. Decisions by the Federal government put an end to these plans.

Thus when the announcement was made by the Federal government that the Jabiluka and Koongarra mines would not be developed there was strong reaction by the NT government, Europeans generally, and many Aborigines. We will now trace the chronology of the uranium issue in the NT election.

At the thirtyfifth National Conference of the ALP held in 1982, the ALP determined its platform for the forthcoming election. At that conference it was declared that:

...A Labor government will -

- (a) declare a moratorium on uranium mining and treatment in Australia

- (b) repudiate any commitment of a non-Labor Government to the mining, processing or export of Australia's uranium; and
- (c) not permit the mining, processing or export of uranium pursuant to agreements entered into contrary to ALP policy. (Item 54)

Later in the report it says that the ALP government would not be under any obligation to compensate miners for their loss as a result of the policy. Further:

as an ALP government we give total commitment to preventing any new mines from being developed during our period of office. (Item 63(d))

The realities of government office, however, resulted in the declared ALP government policy being somewhat different from the policy stated in the platform. On 31 October 1983 the Federal Cabinet decided to recommend to Caucus that approval be given for the development of the Roxby Downs uranium mine, in South Australia, but that approval for new contracts for the NT mines in addition to those about to be signed for Ranger and Nabarlek or the issuing of any new uranium licences be deferred pending an enquiry (expected to last six months) into the safety and environmental aspects of the industry. The 13 Cabinet ministers were committed to vote for the policy in Caucus, but junior ministers not in Cabinet were not so committed.

Reaction developed immediately. The left wing decided on a counter-resolution to be presented at Caucus calling on the ALP to reaffirm 'its total unequivocal commitment to phase out Australia's involvement in the uranium industry'. Indeed six backbench members of the Labor Unity faction decided to vote with the left wing at the Caucus meeting. Despite this, Cabinet's recommendations were passed by Caucus on 7 November and they became government policy. Discontent also existed with those who wanted the development of the NT mines to continue. The Chief Minister, Mr Everingham, said that 2,000 jobs could be lost as a result of the decision, and the Miscellaneous Workers Union, which represents most of the workers in the industry, spoke strongly against the decision to inhibit the NT mines. Tony Grey, chairman of Pancontinental Mining Limited (which owns 65 per cent of Jabiluka), said that uranium prices were now increasing and this decision would prevent Australia taking advantage of an improved market.

Mr Hawke declared that as a substitute for uranium mining, the Federal government would sponsor a tourist development at Kakadu which would involve the Federal government spending \$36 million over six years. He said that the total of private and public investment in the project over the period would be \$117 million and it would create 1,300 permanent jobs after six years. This plan did not appease the opponents to the ban on uranium mining. Mr Yunupingu, chairman of the Northern Land Council, said that Aborigines opposed the incorporation of Jabiluka into Kakadu National Park because of the loss in royalties which Aborigines would incur and they would expect compensation.

Then, on 11 November 1983, the Federal government decided to give Aborigines the ownership of Uluru National Park, which includes Ayers Rock. Mr Everingham described this decision as 'a shattering blow' coming, as it did, just after the uranium announcement. Although the granting of ownership was going to be followed by a lease-back agreement similar to that for Kakadu, Mr Everingham persisted with the view that the granting of land ownership could jeopardise the future of the \$150 million tourist development being undertaken at Ayers Rock.

On 14 November 1983, the French owned company, Total Mining Australia Pty Ltd announced its desire to build a uranium mine at Ben Lomond, near Townsville. The mine was to cost \$100 million to build and expected to yield \$480 million worth of uranium. Such a project could not go ahead without the Federal government's permission to export uranium. This announcement put more pressure on the Federal government.

Then, on 14 November, Mr Everingham declared an election for the NT for 3 December. This was six months early. He said that the dominant issues were going to be the Federal government's decisions on uranium and Ayers Rock. The CLP appealed to the electorate to 'send a protest message to Canberra against the Federal Labor Party's approach to decisions affecting the Territory'. Mr Collins, the Labor leader in the NT, said that the Labor party theme would be 'a Labor NT government can work constructively with an ALP government in Canberra'.

The Federal politicians lined up to support their respective sides in the NT. At the time of the announcement of the election Federal Cabinet was about to declare Stage II Kakadu as part of the National Park. This would make invalid all mining leases on the land, including leases at Jabiluka and Koongarra. It had also planned to commence discussions with the NT government to reverse the previous Federal government's decision to excise the Koongarra uranium area from Kakadu Stage I. Both of these actions were postponed temporarily for fear of aiding the CLP campaign. However, Kakadu Stage II was declared later on 18 November. Meanwhile, Mr Hawke, Mr Peacock, Mr Howard and Mr Anthony hastily rearranged their commitments so they could join the campaign in the NT.

On 15 November, Mr Hawke accused Mr Everingham of engineering a telex from Citicorp, a merchant bank involved in the financing of the Yulara tourist development, to the effect that the financing of the development could be jeopardised because of the granting of ownership of Ayers Rock to Aborigines. Mr Hawke established that according to Citicorp, the funds for the Yulara development were available, regardless of the transfer of ownership of Ayers Rock. This incident was followed by claims by the Federal government, Aboriginal organisations and the NT opposition that Mr Everingham was attempting to stir up racial tension over the Ayers Rock issue.

The chairman of the NLC telexed the Federal government claiming compensation for loss of income by Aborigines. Although legal advice indicated that the government was not legally liable, it is ALP policy to pay compensation to the Aborigines adversely affected by the policy and the government said it would consider these claims. At meetings of the traditional owners of Kakadu they expressed the views that they 'want the mines, not a park' and they didn't want more tourist access to the area (Sydney Morning Herald 23 November 1983). Mr Yunupingu continued to press the government to exclude the uranium mines from the extensions to the Park.

Meanwhile, Mr Collins was most concerned that more concrete proposals be made by the Federal government on the tourist development at Kakadu and on 23 November he announced that he supported the continued development of the Jabiluka mine and expressed confidence that it would proceed at some time in the future. After the election, on 22 January, Mr Collins resigned from the ALP's Federal Executive, reportedly, over the uranium issue.

By the end of November the media had decided that 'the Labor Party is facing a crushing defeat in the Northern Territory' and many considered that Bob Collins had been given an 'impossible brief' (Bulletin 29 November 1983 p22). The CLP campaign continued with the theme 'send a message to Canberra' while the ALP continued with the theme that an ALP government in the NT could deal better with the Federal government. Despite the popularity of Mr Hawke in the NT his visit to Darwin from 17 November to 19 November did little to help the ALP's prospects since the central issues of uranium mining and Ayers Rock continued to dominate. Added to these came the issue of the NT railway on which the Federal government was portrayed as having reneged.

The predictions of the journalists and many others were correct and the CLP won 19 seats to the ALP's six seats in the NT Legislative Assembly. Mr Everingham declared 'We have won a victory for Australia. We have brought a halt to an arrogant government's headlong rush', and said he will try to gain compromises from the Federal government on the Ayers Rock and Railway decisions.

Chapter Three

THE 1983 ELECTION RESULTS

Dean Jaensch

To most commentators on any Australian election, the immediate question is who won the government? In the 1983 election, this was clear early in the count - the CLP had retained the Treasury benches with an increased majority.

For the political analyst, however, an election has a number of 'results' depending on its special features and there are more of these in the Territory than in other elections, even though the electorate is miniscule compared with national or state electorates. In 1983 a total enrolment of 62,178 were eligible to elect 25 members of the Legislative Assembly, a mean enrolment of only 2,487 per electorate. A shift of only 25 voters would produce a swing of 1 per cent and in such small electorates local issues, personalities and micro-politics could be significant. The population of the Territory contains almost one quarter Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people (although the proportion of the enrolment was probably slightly lower) and in the party contests the Aboriginal voters might be more significant in 1983 than in previous elections. The widely dispersed urban centres in the Territory had provided differing patterns of party support in the past and might show increasing regional divergence again in 1983.

On the other hand, by calling a snap poll the Chief Minister, Paul Everingham gave the major parties, CLP and Labor, the chance to set the themes and hustle the campaign along to the disadvantage of the minor parties and independents. The CLP set a theme for the campaign from the beginning, and this was maintained almost to election day, despite all efforts by the Labor Party - the media and public discussion seemed to focus on NT versus Canberra, or, perhaps more accurately, NT versus the Hawke Labor Government in Canberra. The 1983 campaign reinforced the two party polarisation of the electorate.

The election was held on new boundaries. A redistribution was necessary following the enlargement of the Assembly from 19 to 25 members, and every electorate was changed. In Darwin, nine seats became 12. Alice Springs was divided into four electorates, and the rural areas increased from eight to nine. The greatest changes occurred in the two main urban centres of Darwin and Alice Springs.

The 1980-83 Assembly had consisted of 11 CLP members, seven Labor, and one Independent member. The final result of the 1983 election was 19 CLP and six Labor.

Table 3.1

1983 Election Result

	Enrolment	62,178				
	Voted	50,716		(81.6% enrolment)		
	Informal	1,532		(3.0% voted)		
	Formal	49,184		(97.0% voted)		
Party	Candi- dates	Formal Votes N	%	(change 1980-83)	Seats Won 1983	(1980)
CLP	27	28,637	58.2	(+8.2)	19	(11)
Labor	25	17,505	35.6	(-3.8)	6	(7)
AD	5	887	1.8	(-0.8)	-	(-)
Ind./I.Lab	9	2,155	4.4	(-3.7)	-	(1)

This was a major change. The CLP increased its majority from three to thirteen, and the Labor party was reduced to less than one quarter of the enlarged house. Four sitting members had been defeated (three Labor and the Independent member for Nightcliff), and there were 11 new members in the house of 25.

At the electorate level, the overall result was a gain to the CLP at the expense of all other parties and candidates. But this is a generalisation which over-simplifies a variety of different and sometimes divergent shifts of electoral opinion at regional, electorate and polling place levels. One result of the redistribution is that only very limited comparisons of the 1983 results with past patterns can be made at the electorate level.

Enrolment and Turnout

The official electoral rolls for the 25 electoral districts showed 62,178 adults eligible to vote. As in previous NT elections, some people doubted whether the rolls were 'accurate' a word which can be used to set an unattainable standard of perfection for any Australian electoral office. Maintaining accurate rolls is a difficult task anywhere in Australia: despite requirements for notification of changes of address, compulsory enrolment and the methods for checking and updating the rolls which all electoral offices use, their rolls all include inaccuracies at any given time. The NT electoral roll is not different from the others except that the task of maintaining and updating it is more difficult. The mobility of the population - in and out of the Territory, and between settlements within the borders - is significantly higher than in the states. The system of household checks to update the rolls is all but impossible outside the major towns, and is inappropriate for the Aborigines for whom somewhat different methods are used. The rolls are therefore not as accurate a list of those available and obliged to vote as they are in other Australian elections and consequently figures for turnout are likely to be less accurate, probably by overestimating the proportion of non-voters.

The overall turnout in the 25 electorates was 50,716 - 82 per cent of the enrolment. Not surprisingly, the highest turnout was in the urban areas, at a level slightly lower than elections elsewhere, with 91.4 per cent in Casuarina the highest. The rural electorates were much lower - 64 per cent turned out in Macdonnell and Stuart.

The overall figure for informal voting - 3 per cent over the Territory - is equivalent to levels elsewhere in Australia. But this average masks some wide variations. In the urban electorates informal votes averaged 2.2 per cent of the total vote, while in rural electorates the average informal vote was 4.8 per cent - in both regions, a level of informal voting almost the same as in 1980. But it was not a simple urban-rural difference, nor was the level of informal voting necessarily a product of a more complex ballot paper. In the rural electorate of Elsey, with three candidates, the informal vote was 2.3 per cent, while in the urban electorate of Port Darwin, with a simple two person ballot paper, the informal vote was 3.6 per cent. In Arnhem, where four candidates, including two CLP and three Aboriginal candidates, produced a complex party contest and ballot paper, the informal vote was 9.5 per cent. In Victoria River, with an even more complex ballot paper of five candidates and four parties, the informal vote was 7.2 per cent.

Party Support in the Regions

Several markedly different regions can be identified in the Northern Territory. The two main centres, Darwin and Alice Springs can be considered as an urban region, distinct from the rural areas. However the two centres are also distinct from each other (see Jaensch and Loveday, 1983, 13-17). Besides the usual differences between urban and rural, the rural Territory electorates include a large part of the Aboriginal population. At the 1981 census, over 75 per cent of the total Aboriginal population of 29,082 lived outside Darwin and

Alice Springs and in some electorates Aborigines were the major part of the voting population.

Darwin

The city included nine electorates at the 1977 redistribution, and 12 electorates following the 1983 increase of the membership and subsequent redistribution. Winning in Darwin was therefore a solid start in seeking the 13 seats necessary to form a government.

In the 1980 election, the nine seats had divided five CLP, three Labor and one (Nightcliff) held by Independent Dawn Lawrie. The redistribution transformed the area, with few electorates retaining any resemblance to the 1977 boundaries. The northern suburban area was changed most, with five electorates becoming eight.

Table 3.2

Election Results, Darwin, 1980, 1983

		1980	1983	Change
Formal Votes	CLP	10,974	15,964	+ 4,990
	Labor	7,697	9,326	+ 1,629
	Other	1,986	957	- 1,029
	<u>Total</u>	<u>20,657</u>	<u>26,247</u>	<u>+ 5,590</u>
% Formal Votes	CLP	53.1	60.8	+ 7.7
	Labor	37.3	35.5	- 1.8
	Other	9.5	3.6	- 5.9
Seats	CLP	5	11	
	Labor	3	1	
	Ind.	1	-	

The increase in the total electorate, over 21 per cent in three years, in a regional boundary that was extended in 1983 only to a minor extent, emphasises the rapidly changing nature of the urban population in the Territory (see Jaensch and Loveday, 1983). In fact, the enrolment in the Darwin urban region increased from 20,722 in 1974 to 30,921 in 1983, an increase of almost 50 per cent.

Comparisons of party support in 1983 with previous elections are complicated by a number of factors. The relatively minor changes in the Darwin boundary and the rapid increase in population have already been noted. The Labor party has not contested all seats in all four elections: in 1980, Labor did not nominate in Nightcliff, and hence an overall Labor vote for the Darwin region underestimates Labor support. Even allowing for this, the support won by Labor in Darwin over four elections, 1974-83, has been remarkably stable: 31.6 per cent in 1974, 36.6 per cent (1977), 37.3 per cent (1980) and 35.5 per cent in 1983.

This apparent stability masked significant shifts at the electorate rather than regional level. Where Labor won three of the nine seats in Darwin in 1980 it managed to hold only one, Millner, and that narrowly, in 1983. In only three electorates - Millner (52.5 per cent), Sanderson (45.2) and Ludmilla (41.8) - was Labor's first preference support above 40 per cent (see Appendix for detailed results).

There was a shift to the CLP across the Darwin region. If Nightcliff is excluded for 1980, then the shift of opinion in the seats contested by parties in both 1980 and 1983 was +7.3 per cent for CLP and -4.2 per cent for Labor. In the states and the national electoral arena, 7.4 per cent would be considered as a major swing. In the more volatile electorate in the Territory, volatile in demographic as well as party political terms, it was a significant shift of opinion, but by no means the largest in the Territory context. Comparing the 1983 national (March) with the 1983 NT (December) elections, produces a shift (excluding the Nightcliff poll from both) of +14.7 per cent for the CLP and -9.7 per cent for Labor. This adds some further evidence to previous survey findings (see Jaensch and Loveday, 1983) which suggest that Territorians, more than other Australians, distinguish between national and state or Territory parties, elections, issues and personalities.

After 1983, the urban area of Darwin, with almost half of the seats in the Assembly, appears to be a CLP stronghold. But because the populations in the electorates are so small two contradictory tendencies might operate to make prediction difficult. In an arena of only 2,500 voters, the size of the average electorate, personality and local issues can loom large, to the detriment of an unskilful incumbent. On the other hand, the small population also provides a considerable advantage to a competent incumbent - servicing a closely-settled electorate of such small population is relatively simple.

Alice Springs

From the first Assembly elections in 1974, Alice Springs has been a solid CLP region. Until 1983, the Alice Springs urban area was divided among three electorates - Alice Springs and Gillen, wholly urban, and part of the urban-rural Stuart. In the 1983 redistribution, the area encompassed by the Alice Springs local government boundary was divided into four urban electorates, none containing a rural segment.

Labor has never even come close to winning a seat in this central urban region, and its electoral support has been consistently the lowest of the three main regions - 25.7 per cent (1974), 37.7 per cent (1977), 26.4 per cent (1980), 24.5 per cent (1983).

Table 3.3

Election Results, Alice Springs,* 1980, 1983

		1980	1983	Change
Formal Votes	CLP	3,450	5,125	+ 1,675
	Labor	1,514	1,822	+ 308
	Other	778	480	- 298
	<u>Total</u>	<u>5,742</u>	<u>7,427</u>	<u>+ 1,685</u>
% Formal Votes	CLP	60.1	69.0	+ 8.9
	Labor	26.4	24.5	- 1.9
	Other	13.5	6.5	- 7.0
Seats	CLP	3	4	
	Labor	-	-	

*Using Braitling polling place in 1980.

The Labor party was better organised in 1983 than at previous elections. It had selected probably its best team of candidates, and it campaigned hard. The party was confident of doing better than in 1980, even of winning one or even two of the new seats, with Flynn considered the most likely - there was no incumbent CLP and the electorate included approximately 20 per cent Aborigines. But Labor was demolished in all four electorates: 29.5 per cent in Sadadeen, 29.2 per cent in Flynn, 22.2 per cent in Braitling and a mere 17.9 per cent in Araluen.

The last electorate saw an interesting non-Labor contest when Goff Letts nominated as an Independent. Letts had been majority Leader for the CLP in the Assembly 1974 to 1977 when he was defeated in his electorate of Victoria River. He resigned from his public service position in 1983 to contest Araluen with a campaign critical of the CLP government. He managed to achieve only 20.4 per cent.

Rural Electorates

The 16 electorates in Darwin and Alice Springs can sensibly be described as an urban region. The nine other electorates are often considered as rural/out-back/bush electorates, and are often discussed as a region. But it must be emphasised that there are many differences between these rural electorates.

On the basis of the 1981 Census, five electorates contained more than 50 per cent Aboriginal population - Stuart (81 per cent), Arnhem (73), Macdonnell (66), Victoria River (56), Arafura (56). Only one of the five, Arafura, contains any urban settlement which justifies the use of that term as in Darwin or Alice Springs. The Ranger uranium mining town of Jabiru was originally included in Arafura by the Redistribution Commission, and retained there after CLP objections.

The electorates of Elsey and Barkly, with Aboriginal populations in 1981 of 25 per cent and 23 per cent respectively, also contained proportionally large towns. In Barkly, the town of Tennant Creek and the mining centre at Warrego, provided 1,192 of the 1,492 votes cast at polling places. In Elsey, the town of Katherine provided 1,433 of the 1,687 votes at polling places.

The electorate of Nhulunbuy is unique. The bulk of its enrolment of 2,488 was in the mining town of Nhulunbuy, on the Gove Peninsula. The land surrounding the town is that of the Yirrkala Aboriginal people. The last of the rural electorates, Koolpinyah, can perhaps be described as Darwin-rural, consisting of the semi-rural areas in and around Howard Springs and Humpty Doo.

While these nine electorates are outside Darwin and Alice Springs, they do not constitute a homogeneous region. Further, the party contests were very different, and so these electorates invite separate discussion after a general summary (see Table 3.4, next page).

All three regions showed similar increases in enrolment between 1980 and 1983, 12 per cent in Alice Springs and Darwin, 11 per cent in the rural electorates. But the rural area showed a much lower increase in turnout. Where the total formal votes increased by 27 per cent in Darwin and 29 per cent in Alice Springs, the rural formal vote increased by only 4 per cent.

At the first sight, overall support for the two major parties showed only a minor shift from 1980 to 1983, while the intervention of the Australian Democrats appeared to balance the fall in other support. But the actual changes and shifts were more complex than that.

Table 3.4

<u>Election Results, Rural Electorates, 1980, 1983</u>				
		1980	1983	Change
Formal Votes	CLP	6,553	7,548	+ 995
	Labor	6,915	6,357	- 558
	AD	-	887	+ 887
	Other	1,509	718	- 791
	<u>Total</u>	<u>14,977</u>	<u>15,510</u>	<u>+ 533</u>
% Formal Votes	CLP	46.2	48.7	+ 2.5
	Labor	43.8	41.0	- 2.8
	AD	-	5.7	+ 5.7
	Other	10.1	4.6	- 5.5
Seats	CLP	4	4	
	Labor	4	5	

Two-Party Contests: Barkly, Nhulunbuy, Stuart

The electorates of Barkly and Nhulunbuy underwent minor modifications in the 1983 redistribution. Both were contested by a sitting member: Tuxworth (CLP) in Barkly and Leo (Labor) in Nhulunbuy. Both were complicated by a third party candidate in 1980: Progress Party in Barkly, Independent in Nhulunbuy. However, since preferences were distributed to a two-party, Labor-CLP contest in Nhulunbuy, and the Progress Party was strongly supportive of the CLP in Barkly, comparisons are possible. Using the final result in Nhulunbuy and allocating 90 per cent of PP preferences to the CLP in Barkly, the comparisons suggest that little change occurred in 1983.

Table 3.5

Results in Barkly and Nhulunbuy
(% of two-party formal votes)

	Barkly		Nhulunbuy	
	1980	1983	1980	1983
CLP	64.9	60.3	45.6	48.8
Labor	35.1	39.7	54.4	51.2

The old electorate of Stuart was divided into two parts by the 1983 redistribution, and the rural section became the major part of the new, completely-rural Stuart. In 1980 and 1983, this area was the scene for a two-party CLP-Labor contest in an electoral population, on the basis of the 1981 census, which was over 80 per cent Aboriginal. On the basis of formal votes cast at polling places in Stuart (and in rural Stuart in 1980), then this electorate also showed little change. Labor's share of the two-party vote was 61.6 per cent in 1980, and 67.6 per cent in 1983.

Straightforward Multi-Party Contests: Arafura, Elsey, Koolpinyah, Macdonnell

As noted above, these electorates were very different from each other in social terms. Koolpinyah is a Darwin rural electorate, overwhelmingly

non-Aboriginal; Macdonnell and Arafura contain a majority of Aborigines; Elsey's enrolment is mainly in Katherine. They were similar in 1983 only in the intervention of one (and in Koolpinyah, two) minor party candidate in each. Preferences were distributed only in Elsey where the independent candidate gave his second preference to the CLP.

Table 3.6

Results in Arafura, Elsey, Koolpinyah, Macdonnell

(% of formal votes)

	Arafura	Elsey	Koolpinyah	Macdonnell
CLP	31.8	49.7	62.5	38.0
Labor	50.8	27.5	23.4	53.5
AD	17.4	-	6.2	8.4
Ind.	-	22.8	7.8	-

(Elsey after distributing prefs: CLP = 65.8; Labor = 34.2)

Sitting members were returned to the Assembly in all four electorates, although three had changed electorates after the redistribution.

The intervention by the Australian Democrats merits some comment at this stage. Following some public talk, which led to nothing, about the formation of an Aboriginal party, the Democrats approached aspiring candidates, five of whom they endorsed, all in rural areas. Three were Aboriginal (in Arnhem, Macdonnell and Victoria River), and one (in Arafura) was spoken of as an 'honorary Aboriginal'. The result in Macdonnell suggests that in an electorate containing (at the 1981 Census) over two thirds Aborigines, party appears to be more important than Aboriginality: Aboriginal AD candidate Hampton received only 8.4 per cent of the votes. But it must be added that his Labor opponent was the incumbent, Neil Bell, who has strong links with the Aboriginal communities.

Complicated Contests: Arnhem, Victoria River

Both electorates involved a complicated ballot paper, and a complex party decision for the voters - a majority of whom were Aboriginal. In the first place, the CLP nominated two candidates in each electorate with the aim of maximising support by appealing to different interests with different candidates. In Victoria River the sitting Labor member, Doolan, had not sought endorsement, but nominated as an Independent (Labor) candidate. In Arnhem, three of the five candidates were Aboriginal (Labor, CLP and AD), and the AD nominated an Aboriginal candidate in Victoria River.

Given these factors, it is not surprising that preferences were necessary to decide both seats. And the patterns of candidate support and preference distribution provide evidence against the assertion which is still used to describe rural politics - that Aborigines provide a bloc vote for the Labor party (see table 3.7, next page). An Aboriginal bloc vote for Labor cannot be identified in the overall figures of voting. In fact, in Victoria River (where 56 per cent of the population in 1981 was Aboriginal) the combined support of the two CLP candidates was a clear majority. The Labor candidate won only a quarter of the formal votes, the Aboriginal AD candidate less than one tenth of the total votes and the sitting member received only 6 per cent in his attempt to win as an independent. The Aboriginal support he had once enjoyed had vanished. In Arnhem, where in 1981 nearly three quarters of the population was Aboriginal, the CLP and the Labor Party received almost equal support.

Table 3.7

Results in Arnhem, Victoria River
(% of formal votes)

	Arnhem	Victoria River
CLP	30.9	26.3
CLP	*14.3	20.2
Labor	*43.9	26.3
AD	*10.9	*9.6
Ind. (Labor)	-	**5.9

*Aboriginal candidate

**Sitting member

When preference distributions are analysed, the complexity of the choices available are emphasised. In Victoria River, the how-to-vote cards of both AD and Ind. (Labor) candidates asked voters to give second preferences to one of the CLP candidates. The actual distribution of preferences suggests that the voters made a different, broader set of choices.

Table 3.8

Preference Distribution in Victoria River

	Ind. (Labor)	*AD	CLP	Labor	CLP
First preference	95	155	326	425	615
Ind. (Labor) distributed	-	22	14	33	26
subtotal		177	340	458	641
*AD distributed		-	63	72	42
subtotal			403	530	683
CLP distributed			-	33	370
total				563	1,053

*Aboriginal candidate

Analysis is complicated by the flow-on of preferences. For example, the 177 Australian Democrat 'votes' distributed contained 22 'votes' which originated with the Ind. (Labor) candidate. But even allowing for this, it is clear that the second and third stage 'votes' were far from a bloc. In fact, of the 177 'votes' for the Aboriginal AD candidate, a majority were transferred to the CLP.

Preference distribution in Arnhem was even more complex, and even further from any description of bloc Labor support. First preference votes were

Amos	(CLP)	445
*Daniels	(CLP)	206
*Lanhupuy	(Labor)	638
*Rogers	(AD)	157

*Aboriginal candidate

The how-to-vote card of the Aboriginal Australian Democrat candidate suggested:

second preference - *Daniels (CLP)
 third preference - *Lanhupuy (Labor)
 fourth preference - Amos (CLP)

The suggested preference distribution favoured the CLP as first alternative choice, but placed Aboriginal candidates before the non-Aboriginal CLP.

The actual distribution of the 157 AD votes was:

*Daniels	(CLP)	69
*Lanhupuy	(Labor)	67
Amos	(CLP)	21

More than half of the AD first preference supporters rejected the how-to-vote card order of preferences but, on the other hand, nearly 90 per cent gave preferences to one or other of the remaining Aboriginal candidates.

The apparently low effect of party is demonstrated further by the distribution of the 275 'votes' for Daniels (CLP).

	second	third	fourth
*Daniel's how-to-vote card:	Amos (CLP)	*Rogers (AD)	*Lanhupuy (Labor)
Actual distribution (275)		(excluded)	
(including 69 from Rogers)	134	-	141

This provides further evidence that approximately half of the Aboriginal voters for one CLP Aboriginal candidate chose an Aboriginal Labor candidate as an alternative in preference to a non-Aboriginal CLP candidate.

Prospects

Following the 1983 election, the CLP has now convincingly won a clear majority of seats in the Legislative Assembly at all four elections. Over the period of 10 years, the Labor Party improved its representation from no seats in 1974, to six and seven out of 19 in 1977 and 1980, but lost representation to hold only six out of 25 in 1983.

The 1983 election was fought in a political climate which was far from favourable to Labor. Policy decisions by the Hawke Labor Government on the Darwin-Alice Springs railway, Uluru and uranium mining did not help the NT Labor party when the snap poll was called.

But the patterns of electoral support over 10 years suggest that even without the negative impact of these policy decisions, Labor would have faced an uphill battle to hope to win sufficient seats to form a government. In 1977, Labor contested 17 of the 19 seats and won 38 per cent of the total formal votes (42 per cent in the seats it contested). In 1980, Labor contested 18 seats and won 39 per cent of the votes (42 per cent in seats contested). In 1983, Labor contested all 25 seats for an overall support of 36 per cent.

Chapter Four

CAMPAIGN ORGANISATION: THE CLP

Graeme Lewis

I think it is appropriate this morning for me to lead in to my discussion on the branch organisations and the campaign organisations of the CLP by responding to some of the comments that were made earlier by Dr Heatley. The first issue that he raised which was an important one for us in our own party organisation was the question of the expansion of the House from 19 to 25 members. Dr Heatley has referred to the question of partisanship in that particular exercise and the possibility that the redistribution might have favoured the CLP. I would seriously question that statement given that a number of extra seats were obviously going to emerge in the northern suburbs and I think it is a fair statement that in the northern suburbs in more recent years the CLP has polled rather badly. Take the March 5 election last year when we only picked up about 43 per cent of the vote in the northern suburbs. I don't believe that Dr Heatley could really justify his statement that that redistribution by virtue of the way it treated the northern suburbs favoured the CLP. The tolerance, Dr Heatley said, was applied in an interesting fashion and one of the problems that we struck immediately was the fact that because the tolerance was not utilised by the redistribution commission - in fact most seats were within 50 electors of the mean - already seats like Leanyer and Berrimah are out of kilter. Leanyer was out of kilter even at the time of the election. The tolerance as applied by the redistribution commission has created some problems and I believe will continue to do so.

Dr Heatley then went on to express his view that he perceived a private opinion within the CLP that there was always going to be an election in 1983. He said all we were doing was looking for an appropriate issue on which to run before Christmas. I would strongly deny that also. Our organisation was always gearing up for a May/June 1984 election which was the more logical time for it to occur - the fact that major election issues arose when they did, and in the way they did, precipitated the election and I can assure you that anybody who would say that we were looking for an election and wanting to run it in 19 days is not really thinking through the facts.

The short campaign certainly would have caused the CLP as much problem as it caused the ALP. The issues which arose early in November and which were considered by the Chief Minister in determining whether there should or should not be an election, namely the change in the uranium mining situation, the announcement regarding Kakadu, and finally the announcement regarding Ayers Rock and the failure of the federal government to consult with the Northern Territory government in these matters was what really precipitated the Chief Minister's decision to call that early election. Dr Heatley indicated that perhaps some of the Chief Minister's decisions to call the early election revolved around the receipt of certain opinion polls and of course I think I can say with total confidence that opinion polls are not something on which real decision making can be based. As it turns out - it's reassuring now, but it wasn't then - the results of the election did support the results of all of the opinion polls, even including that rather strange poll that was done by NTD8. Rex Clarke took great pride in telling us all how accurate that poll was, and Don Dale was very excited about it too. The surveys, while they may have been useful in that decision-making process, were certainly not the basis on which the decision was made.

You will recall that the CLP's preselection processes were completed by 15 October and our candidates were announced on that day. Dr Heatley or perhaps it was Dr Jaensch mentioned that some of the preselection announcements were not made until later and that is correct. The point that I come to is that once again had we been planning a 1983 election we would have been looking for our preselection processes to be completed much quicker than they were, because some of those candidates had a very difficult job getting out into some of the large electorates - and I don't say that this is a peculiar problem for the CLP, as it

was obviously a problem for everybody, getting out into those huge electorates with their new boundaries. We were certainly not looking for that early election, given all of those problems. However, as I said the issues presented themselves and they were issues that we believed got to the heart of the Territorian voters and that was the major factor that caused us to take the path we did.

The CLP's basic planning for the logistics of running that election revolved around our branch structure. I don't know how well understood the branch structure in the CLP is, but basically we have 13 branches spread across the Territory in almost all of the major population centres. Our logistic strategy, was much the same this time as it had been in 1980. In Darwin we had to contest 12 seats, and a major concern was as to our position in the northern suburbs given the voting patterns in the March election. We divided responsibility for the 12 seats amongst the three branches, the Darwin Branch, North Darwin Branch and the Sanderson Branch. The Sanderson Branch at that stage was only about nine or ten months old, a very new branch, a very active branch, and it certainly rose to the challenge of that December election in a grand style. It assumed responsibility for the Leanyer, Wagaman, Wanguri and Sanderson electorates and out there they divided themselves very deliberately into separate action groups. The Darwin branch assumed responsibility for Berrimah, Fannie Bay, Port Darwin and Ludmilla, and North Darwin of course Nightcliff, Millner, Casuarina and Jingili. The strategy in the Darwin area was very much that we had to get our candidates out on the ground. As has been indicated earlier, elections in the Northern Territory do become very personal with such small electorates. We placed very heavy emphasis right throughout on our candidates and our more well known personalities getting right out there into the electorate and meeting the people. I think that same strategy applied in Alice Springs, although I was not in Alice Springs during the election campaign, but once again the candidates there were encouraged to get out on the ground and meet the people. I think some of the reports that came in from our candidates during those three hectic weeks indicated that they were spending 10 and 12 hours a day out in the street.

The rural electorates, of course, provided us with the problems that we always strike as the CLP in NT elections. The size of two of those electorates caused us to examine the strategy of running two candidates. That occurred in Victoria River and Arnhem as has already been pointed out this morning, and one of the problems we faced in both of those electorates was the simple question of community of interest. In Victoria River there is a significant number of electors who are involved in the pastoral industry. Their community of interest is completely different from another significant factor in the Victoria River electorate, namely the Aboriginal settlements. Our strategy was clearly that our major thrust must be on the Aboriginal settlements, and we must find a candidate who knew as many people as possible in that area. The other candidate was asked to concentrate on the pastoral industry area, and we believe that strategy worked very successfully. In fact of course we were successful in regaining the seat of Victoria River. In Arnhem I suggest also that there was reason to believe that a candidate who may have been well known in the western and southern areas of the Arnhem electorate may not have been able satisfactorily to become known and accepted on Groote Eylandt, and hence the strategy in that electorate. Such strategies, of course, don't always work and may never be repeated, but on this occasion we believe that strategy was sound, and as I said, we were successful in Victoria River.

Victoria River became the responsibility of a branch centered around Batchelor and the logistics of Victoria River, which is still a huge electorate geographically, did give us some problems. Koolpinyah was a much smaller electorate than the previous one of Tiwi, and of course it became the responsibility of our Palmerston branch, which once again assisted the member to get out on the ground and meet the people, and that again was the strategy used there. Nhulunbuy was the responsibility of the Gove Peninsula branch and was run in a different manner from, I think, any of the other electorates. The Nhulunbuy

election was run on a very personalised basis by a candidate who was well known in that electorate; we were unsuccessful and we really were very disappointed that we did not win that election. That town is really separate from the rest of the Northern Territory in many ways as well as logistically, and Danny Leo was able to hold that seat if but by a very few votes. The Elsey electorate was organised by the Katherine and Mataranka branches, and again logistics were difficult because of the size. The Barkly electorate was run by the Tennant Creek branch and the travel that had to be organised for the candidate and his supporters did give us a lot of difficulty. In Alice Springs one branch organised six electorates, two of them rural electorates. It was said earlier that a spanner fell in the works when Dr Letts announced that he was going to stand as an Independent. I believe that the announcement caused considerable concern in our Alice Springs organisation because the man was very well known and highly respected. Why Dr Letts polled so badly I think can only be attributed to the fact that the Alice Springs people supported the Everingham team; Dr Letts criticised Everingham publicly and I believe that the Alice Springs people reacted against that criticism in support of the Chief Minister. As it turned out, Dr Letts did not poll at all well, and we won all of the four seats. In the Macdonnell and Stuart electorates we had a lot of difficulty because two relatively new and unknown candidates, had a big job to do, again in a very vast area. I was interested to see Dr Jaensch's figures that indicated that we did pick up slightly in the numbers of votes in those two electorates.

The basis of our media campaign in Darwin was the television campaign on commercial television. We used as our consultants and advisers a national firm of advertising agents and they commenced their activities by presenting us with an advertising promotion, if you would like to call it that, the day after the announcement was made that the election was on. As was indicated earlier, the Labor Party completed their production efforts in two days and that's about the time it took us. We certainly were able to do most of our actual production work for the television campaign here in Darwin using the local facilities with the interstate advisers supervising that activity. Our media campaign also utilised commercial radio in Alice Springs, Katherine, Darwin and Mt Isa and of course we utilised the press wherever there were newspapers. We got into trouble in Nhulunbuy and in Jabiru where the press is, shall I say, not quite as sophisticated as in the major centres and we found difficulty in getting our messages through in those areas without the advantages of television and radio. The part of our campaign that drew the most comment was our preparation of printed material and I've been told from time to time that we did tend to fill people's letter boxes to too great an extent. But given our theory that our candidates had to be identified and identifiable out there in the street we were determined to put as much paper around the place as was possible and again we think that was successful.

I would like to have talked a little bit about the mobile polls because that was an important part of our organisational activity. The mobile polls drew some criticism given the short campaign and I think that is something that deserves attention.

One of the major issues that made our activities during the election much easier was of course the support that came not only from our party members but from the community generally and as Dr Heatley said earlier, that is a factor when you are backing a winner. We were never short of on the ground support, on the ground assistance. The aspect that surprised us throughout the campaign was the failure of the ALP to develop some of the local issues. Dr Heatley referred to such things as ADMA, TIO and Primary Industries problems, and we waited with bated breath for the Labor Party to develop those issues. When they didn't, there was no need for us to raise them, but it really was a rather unique campaign because that short timing of 19 days just did not allow the development of a lot of those issues to take place. Need it be said in conclusion only that we were very pleased with the results.

Chapter Five

THE 1983 NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTION FROM THE 'TERRITORY ALP PERSPECTIVE

Rolf Gerritsen

One of the problems psephologists have is that their analyses are confined by and large to the election campaign period and the polling results. Their explanations for electoral victories and defeats utilise a focus compressed in time. This often leads to interpretations that are not situated in social structural change and economic movements. However, Jaensch, in this volume, provides a social change/social values context that is valuable in understanding the CLP's comprehensive victory in 1983. But there was a purely political context that had a crucial bearing on the electoral outcomes in 1983 and which Jaensch and Heatley either overlook or understate. That context can be summed up in two of the basic truisms of electoral politics

- : that a party divided cannot expect electoral success
- : that oppositions do not win elections, governments lose them.

The ALP Divided

The Territory Labor Party has never had the entrenched factions common to the Victorian and NSW Branches. Under the former leader, Isaacs, the Territory ALP had a history of voting with the 'left' at National Executive and National Conference. Within Territory politics there have been no permanent, rigid divisions; disputation has been based upon shifting, impermanent personal preferences not organised groupings. But in 1983 the Territory ALP became bitterly, disastrously divided. The division sprang from a Special Rules Conference at Darwin in late 1982. This was to formalise a new set of rules and procedures for the party. On the last afternoon of the conference, during general business, one of the Miscellaneous Workers' Union delegates, seizing upon the departure of a number of Branch delegates, forced through changes advantageous to union representation within the party. This, together with changes forbidding ALP membership to employers whose employees were not trade union members, was seen as a union bloc takeover of the party. Conflict solidified between two organised camps, one the affiliated trade unions (except the Waterside Workers) and a small minority of Branch members in three of the fourteen Branches; the other comprised the Caucus and the great majority of Branch members in all Branches except the Groote Eylandt and Buffalo Creek Branches. This conflict was all the more bitter for being based upon personalities and not the 'traditional' left-right ideological split endemic to Labor elsewhere. The disputation developed during two events, the Territory ALP Conference at Tennant Creek in July 1983, and the pre-selection for the Arnhem seat later that year. The plotting and argumentation associated with both events vitiated the Labor party's campaign and ensured defeat at the Territory elections.

At Tennant Creek the schism took the form of a challenge to the Labor Leader, Collins's, position on the National Executive. This was mounted by the party Secretary, Elliott, a Transport Workers' Union official and a powerful figure in the Trades and Labour Council. Collins won the subsequent election. He obtained the votes of all the Branch delegates (even including one of the two from the Buffalo Creek Branch) except the Groote Eylandt delegate. He also obtained the Waterside Workers' votes to win comfortably by 28 votes to 22 votes. But the result secured Collins the passionate enmity of a grouping I call the 'Buffalo Creek Mob' (I use this term because this grouping played a role analogous to that played by the 'Old Guard' - the 'Breakfast Creek Gang' - in Queensland in the 1970s. Like their Queensland counterparts the 'Buffalo Creek Mob' were hostile to women, Aborigines, 'middle class' members of the ALP etc. The represent a latter day version of the pre war, AWU-dominated ALP).

This tension remained inactive until the preselection process for the Territory Assembly seats began. The Buffalo Creek Mob ran a slate of candidates for the Darwin seats and Arnhem which Collins had vacated to contest the riskier Arafura seat to allow an Aboriginal candidate, Lanhupuy, the chance to enter the Assembly.

In Darwin the Buffalo Creek Mob secured victory only in Leanyer, for John Waters, a local solicitor and three times previously a House of Representatives candidate. But open dissension broke out over the preselection for Arnhem. Handmer, a Buffalo Creek Mob supporter, won the preselection panel vote by eight votes to Lanhupuy's seven votes. This short-lived victory was seen by the Collins supporters as potentially disastrous for the Territory ALP as it meant that for the first time Labor was going in to a Territory election without an Aboriginal candidate.

This preselection occurred in the midst of discussions with a group of prominent Aboriginals attempting to establish an Aboriginal Party. Negotiations broke down with this group because of their failure to join the ALP before trying to secure preselection. But they were potentially a serious threat in an electorate where 25 per cent of the population was Aboriginal (how serious is revealed by Loveday and Sanders in this volume). The Buffalo Creek Mob argued that white Labor candidates would win Aboriginal-dominated seats because Aborigines would not vote for another Aboriginal unless he was from their area or linguistic group. Aborigines, it was argued, would rather vote for a white ALP candidate than an Aboriginal 'stranger'.

This intransigent, incorrect attitude alarmed the ALP National Executive, which feared that the alienation of the Aboriginal vote would spill over into Federal seats such as Grey, Kennedy, Herbert, Leichhardt and Kalgoorlie. Accordingly, the National Executive unanimously (a unique occurrence) overturned the Arnhem preselection and declared Lanhupuy the candidate.

This did not solve the problem. The Buffalo Creek Mob spent the remainder of the year until the election was called seeking, mostly unsuccessfully, to obtain various branches' condemnations of the National Executive and Collins.

So the Territory ALP entered the elections riven by internal disputation; morale could go no lower.

A Winning Government

The 1983 federal election victory by Labor was a shock to the CLP. Not the national victory, which was anticipated, but the Labor victory in the Territory House of Representatives seat. During the campaign the CLP had attempted to use Everingham as a counter to Hawke's undoubted popularity. This failed, illustrating the truism, nowhere more true than in the Territory, that a significant proportion of the electorate distinguish between state and federal elections. The CLP resolved to apply that truism to its Territory-level strategy with conspicuous success.

The CLP strategy was based upon two elements: Everingham's popularity and the easily aroused feeling that the Territory was being neglected by 'Canberra'.

Everingham had come within a handful of votes of losing his seat in the 1977 elections. He worked assiduously and successfully to enhance his popularity from then on. By the time of the 1980 elections public opinion polls showed him with a voter approval rating of over 60 per cent. Both CLP and ALP polls held just before the 1983 election showed that Everingham had built up that approval rating to a position in excess of 80 per cent, a phenomenal result even for a state premier. The Labor polls showed that over 60 per cent of intending ALP voters approved of the way Everingham was handling his job. Everingham was clearly an electoral trump card, and one the CLP was sure to play.

Probably because of the failure to translate Everingham's popularity into federal votes, the CLP began the period following the election of the Hawke government somewhat uncertainly. Everingham was initially cooperative with Canberra; he played a not insignificant role in the National Economic Summit. But relations between Everingham and the federal government cooled rapidly thereafter for three reasons: Everingham's involvement in the 'Combe Affair'; his habit of making claims about the course and subjects of conversations with federal ministers that were contrary to the latter's recollections; and the Alice Springs-Darwin railway. At about the time of this 'cooling off' period between Everingham and the Hawke government the CLP did an opinion poll in Darwin's northern suburbs that indicated that, subject to certain contingencies, they could expect a 60 per cent vote there in a Territory election. The strategy was to be the traditional tactic of any state government faced with a different party in federal government, to go on the offensive against 'Canberra'.

The suspicion of 'Canberra' is an ingrained (and not altogether unreasonable) feature of Territory politics, the product of a long history of legal, administrative and fiscal dependence. The strategy of using the popular Everingham to 'defend the Territory against Canberra' was obvious and successful. This strategy was working well six months before the eventual election.

The first political coup for the Territory CLP strategy came late in May with the federal decision on re-ordered financing of the Alice Springs to Darwin railway. Instead of the Commonwealth financing the entire project the Hawke government decided to split the funding, with the Territory having to make a 40 per cent contribution. This would have involved an increase in Territory taxation, which the CLP disliked, having governed for some time with the lowest state taxes in Australia (cf Gerritsen 1984). So instead of hoisting the federal government on its own petard and agreeing to its terms, thereby gaining a railway, the CLP government chose the politically more attractive option of berating Canberra for its 'broken promises' and refusing unconditionally to contribute to the railway's construction.

This shrewd politicking set the tenor for the rest of 1983. Everingham and the CLP were seen as fighting for the Territory, the ALP presented as apologists for 'Canberra'. Assisted by sympathetic treatment from the Territory's major newspaper a veritable roll call of affronts to the Territory followed. The Australian National Line subsidy for the Townsville Trader shipping service was presented as endangered. The Territory's hopes for a uranium industry were dashed. Territory claims to sovereignty over Kakadu were ignored.

Nowhere was this CLP strategy of vilifying Canberra as often as possible more successful than in the period around the 1983 Federal budget. In the months before the budget dire predictions from CLP Ministers about its impending cataclysmic effects on the Territory gained prominent press coverage. The NTEC electricity subsidy was to be slashed; the brucellosis and tuberculosis eradication campaign (BTEC) was to be scrapped; the Federal government was expected to slash Territory funding in a major attack on the 1978 Memorandum of Understanding, and so on.

Meanwhile, the Labor Leader, Collins, used all his influence on the ALP National Executive and at various Labor Leaders' meetings to protect Territory funding. He succeeded comprehensively; Territory funding increased in the 1983 federal budget by 17 per cent, the most generous funding provision ever. The BTEC program went ahead, the NTEC subsidy increased to record levels. But the Territory ALP attracted little credit for this achievement. The budget analysis in the press concentrated upon the increase in the fuel oil levy, thereby creating the impression that the Territory again had been victimised. The federal budget which could have been a major electoral plus for the Territory ALP instead merely confirmed the efficacy of the CLP strategy.

In the week immediately prior to the election the Territory ALP received further damaging blows. The uranium decision of the federal government was

interpreted in the Territory as destroying the only hope for immediate economic development. It gave rise to the popular graffito 'SA got the mine, we got the shaft', which brilliantly summed up the attitude of the electorate. The trigger for the election - the decision to hand Uluru national park back to the traditional owners - encapsulated the mood the CLP had created. The intensity of the feeling was revealed when the fact that the Chief Minister had called the election on an inspired telex (which falsely suggested that investment in the Yulara project was threatened) passed virtually unnoticed during the campaign. Even the resignation of the previous CLP Leader, Letts, to stand against the CLP as a protest did not provide more than a minor hiccup to the CLP campaign.

Events within the campaign period proper also evolved to the benefit of the CLP. The Central Land Council lawyer who intimated that public access to Uluru could be blocked by the Aboriginal traditional owners in future did not assist the Labor campaign. Neither did the mid-campaign visit from the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Holding, which resurrected the Aboriginal land rights issue that underpinned much of the appeal of the Ayers Rock issue for the CLP. On the last weekend of the campaign, just when the ALP campaign looked as though it was beginning to have an impact, the Victorian Branch of the ALP held a special conference which resurrected the uranium issue again to the advantage of the CLP.

In politics it is often said that luck begets luck. The CLP had developed a soundly-conceived strategy to shape the 'agenda' for the election; Labor proved unable to divert this strategy. And the CLP had a number of lucky breaks that confirmed their propaganda. The short campaign period prevented other local issues coming into contention. There was one issue - 'Canberra' - and, as in 1974, the CLP used it to return themselves decisively to power.

Organising the Territory ALP

The ALP began its electoral organisation in May 1983. The Campaign Committee was formed with the Party President, Bree, as ex-officio chairman. Three members were nominated by Caucus, they being Terry Smith, the MLA for Millner, and two persons from Collins's staff, his senior private secretary and his press secretary. The Territory executive of the ALP, the Administrative Committee, appointed a further three persons, the secretary, Elliott, the assistant secretary, Keogh, and the treasurer of the Party, Young. The Campaign Committee was charged with the job of developing a campaign strategy. During the election campaign it was to organise the essential rituals of electioneering - the radio, television and newspaper advertisements, the pamphlets to be letterboxed; the how-to-vote cards, the posters etc. The Campaign Committee was also supposed to vet all media announcements from candidates, who were to be discouraged from making announcements following on happenings during the 1980 election (when a Labor candidate publicly opposed ALP policy). In short, the Campaign Committee was supposedly responsible for all electoral matters.

The reality was different. Ultimately the Campaign Committee was an administrative failure. This is so for a number of particular organisational reasons and one social-structural reason. The Campaign Committee was responsible to the Administrative Committee, which only met monthly. Because of the endemic intra-party tensions the Campaign Committee could not react speedily, but had to wait for Administrative Committee ratification of its actions. Three of the seven members of the Campaign Committee were themselves candidates and could make no further contribution to the Committee once the early election was called. With the exception of Terry Smith, MLA, the Campaign Committee consisted of employees who found it difficult to spare the time for the numerous meetings such a Committee requires. For example the ALP Secretary, Elliott, was also Secretary of the Transport Workers Union and the Trades and Labour Council. He attended about one meeting in every four. More meetings of the Campaign Committee were cancelled than held. Consequently the Campaign Committee disintegrated with the announcement of the election. Central campaign organisation devolved onto a small group of individuals, each of whom carried out a specified function (e.g.

Elliott was in charge of Party finances, Keogh of production of printed material). But because of interpersonal and functional rivalries no Campaign Director was appointed. The ALP completely lacked the authority structure essential to any organised bureaucratic effort.

As a consequence of this organisational disarticulation, as much as because of a shortage of material and human resources the Territory Labor Party was forced to run a highly decentralised campaign. In effect there were three campaigns: in Darwin, Alice Springs and the 'rural' area.

In Alice Springs the two branches established a Central Australian Campaign Committee to organise the four Alice Springs urban seats and Macdonnell and Stuart. Nominally this Committee was responsible to the central Campaign Committee but except for vetting of its press releases it acted independently. In the rural seats (including the three 'provincial' seats - Nhulunbuy, Elsey and Barkly) the Labor candidates ran their own campaigns. They received how-to-vote cards, posters and limited assistance with charter aircraft from the central campaign. For the rest they were thrown on to their own resources. In the provincial seats the candidates had ALP Branches to lend them assistance. In the rural seats Arnhem, Arafura and Victoria River each had a branch within the electorate. The Victoria River and Arafura branches, at Pine Creek and Jabiru respectively, were of little assistance beyond their immediate localities. The Arnhem branch at Alyangula had a potential influence over the three Groote Eylandt communities within that electorate. In this case, because of the pre-selection wrangle, the branch did not provide the ALP candidate, Lanhupuy, with any assistance. The Darwin Rural branch based on Howard Springs-Humpty Doo assisted in the northern parts of Victoria River. But the realities were that the candidates in the rural seats had to rely upon their own social networks and reputations within the electorate.

The Darwin seats were also organised on a decentralised basis, though, as in Alice Springs and the provincial seats, there was a structure of branches to assist. The Darwin branch was responsible for the Darwin electorate. The Parap branch organised the campaign in Fannie Bay and Ludmilla. Elements of this branch also formed the campaign team in Jingili because one of its members, Jacob, obtained preselection there. The Nightcliff branch covered the Nightcliff and Millner electorates. Casuarina branch was responsible for Sanderson and Casuarina. The Buffalo Creek branch organised in the Leanyer and Wanguri electorates. The Wagaman electorate was organised by a group of people around the candidate, Reid. This group subsequently formed the Marrara branch. Young, the Labor candidate for Berrimah, also organised on the basis of a group of personal supporters, leaning heavily on the Darwin Rural branch, which was also directly responsible for Koolpinyah as well as assisting in Victoria River.

The Rural Electorates

For the Labor party organising the rural electorates and Barkly was the most difficult part of the election campaign. This is a 'traditional' problem because the party's branches are confined to the major towns. Thus the Katherine branch in the past has been responsible not just for Elsey (before 1983 re-distribution twice the size of the current electorate) but for the southern half of Victoria River. Some 20 party members were expected to cover an area the size of Victoria, with eight large settlements and dozens of small communities on cattle stations and outstations. In 1983 the Katherine branch concentrated upon Elsey, individual members helped in the other areas with which they were familiar. The electorates of Stuart and Macdonnell had no branches within their boundaries. Victoria River had one, Pine Creek, but that was virtually moribund with a mere handful of members.

In the past this situation had not been so serious for the Territory ALP. Its strength in the rural areas had been its widespread informal network of supporters and sympathisers actually resident on the Aboriginal bush settlements. These networks had been mobilised by the party's candidates to secure

effective local representation on polling day and in disseminating the ALP's viewpoint during the campaign period. By contrast, with the growth of Aboriginal communities and the Gibb communities (on pastoral excisions) and out-stations, the influence of the CLP's bush organisers, the pastoralists, had declined dramatically since the mid-1970s. In 1980 (and in the 1983 federal election) in many bush settlements the CLP had to fly in teams of polling booth attendants from Darwin and Alice Springs. This utilised the CLP's advantages in numbers and money in the major Territory centres but reflected its lack of localised support. But in 1983 the NT Electoral Office changed the organisation of polls in most of the rural area. The change away from static booths to reliance upon mobile polling presented several difficulties for the ALP, and advantaged those candidates with the types of resources, financial as well as human, that the CLP could muster in abundance.

In 1983 the mobile polling system was extended dramatically. In 1980 it had been introduced in an experiment to make it easier for voters (mostly Aboriginal) in areas isolated from the larger settlements and thus with at best difficult access to a polling booth. Though it proved an expensive exercise in terms of Electoral Office expenditure per vote - it netted less than 2 per cent of votes cast (Jaensch et al., 1980, 31) - it was a promising experiment. A similar exercise in 1983 could have been expected to produce better returns as the Aboriginal voters became used to the innovation. The basic organisation of the mobile poll, operating out of and centred upon larger central settlements, was acceptably established (Jaensch et al., 1980; Jaensch and Loveday, 1981, ch 12). The previous gross abuse of the postal vote system, principally by pastoralists, was prevented.

But in 1983 the ALP was suddenly faced with a whole scale expansion of the mobile polling system. All the major Aboriginal settlements in the Northern Territory, except Nguiu and those on Groote Eylandt, were polled by mobile polls in the week preceding the election. In some cases voters went to the polls only four days after the close of nominations! In Victoria River only Batchelor, Adelaide River and Pine Creek had static booths on the Saturday of the election. In Arafura, Nguiu and Jabiru had statics. In Arnhem the three communities on Groote had statics. In Barkly, Tennant Creek had a static as did Warrego.

The Territory ALP interpreted this method of polling the bush as disadvantaging Labor. They pointed to the fact that none of the predominantly white communities in the rural areas of the Northern Territory had mobile polls, while only three of the dozens of predominantly Aboriginal communities in the Territory had statics. This situation was pointed up most starkly in Victoria River, where Adelaide River, Batchelor and Pine Creek had static booths while Wadeye, Daly River Mission and Dagaragu-Kalkaringi, with 182 per cent more votes than the three white communities (759 versus 269) had mobile polls in the week preceding the election.

The expansion of mobile polling advantaged the types of resources the CLP had while neutralising the on-ground advantage of the ALP. Weekday polling in these communities meant that employees at the places could not act as scrutineers, booth workers, etc. The ALP received complaints from several Aboriginal community school headmasters that the Secretary of the Department of Education had forbidden school teachers (a great source of rural sympathisers for ALP) to take time off from work other than to vote.

The CLP had long been hostile to Labor's Aboriginal community-based supporters, feeling that they manipulated the Aboriginal vote. A CLP backbencher, Dennis Collins, had articulated this suspicion:

...consider the following scenario, however. The presiding officer is the community adviser, and ideologue of party A, the scrutineer of party A is the community teacher, both people of influence in the closed community who frequently fill out forms for Aboriginal people.

With little stretch of the imagination one can see these people telling the Aboriginal people just before the election 'We will know how you vote and if you don't vote for party A's candidate you will be in strife'.

The 'forced' assisted vote does indeed allow these two people to know how a person voted and lends itself to threat and manipulation in the closed community (NT News, Letters to the Editor 14 July 1983).

The overall 'Aboriginal vote' (as represented by the rural electorates) decreased slightly (cf Table 5.1). But the experience of the static booths in Aboriginal communities indicates that if more statics had been organised Aboriginal turnout would have increased markedly over the 1980 election. Of the three Aboriginal statics only Nguiu saw fewer votes cast than in 1980; at Umbakumba the vote increased by 83.5 per cent and at Angurugu by 35 per cent. Experience at the white rural statics of Batchelor, Pine Creek and Adelaide River was similar; the votes cast increased by between 18.5 and 45.6 per cent over the 1980 election.

The experience at Aboriginal communities that had mobiles in 1983 and statics in 1980 was mixed. In Arnhem the vote was down at Galiwin'ku and Milingimbi, where the ALP's Lanhupuy could have been expected to poll well, but up at Ngukurr and Numbulwar, where Rogers and Daniels (Democrat and CLP candidates respectively) drew their home support. In Macdonnell turnout increased overall because the mobiles picked up more people in the far west of the electorate than had happened in 1980. But communities that had had statics in 1980 showed a decreased vote by margins up to 45 per cent at Iwupataka, Areyonga, Hermannsburg and Santa Teresa. In Stuart communities that had previously had statics experienced reduced numbers of votes cast, ranging from 15.6 per cent at Ti Tree to 25.7 per cent at Ali-Curung (Warrabri) and 26.9 per cent at Willowra. Willowra had special problems due to the wet weather that occurred during polling and the mobile team turning up a day early (on an Aeromed helicopter) and on the day of a fatal fracas when the community was in turmoil.

The new mobile polling introduced in 1983 did not cost the Territory ALP any seats. It did reduce the voter turnout in the rural seats marginally but this cannot be correlated with the Labor vote (cf Table 5.1). The Labor Party lost Victoria River at Wadeye and Daly River Mission, where it received only a minority of the formal votes cast. Probably because the CLP government called the election on the Ayers Rock issue, widely interpreted by the Territory's Aborigines as indicating its hostility to Aboriginal land rights, the Aboriginal vote (except in the Daly River reserve) held for Labor.

The Campaign

The 1983 election was in many ways a repeat of the 1974 Legislative Council election; the issue was 'Canberra'. The results were extremely disappointing for Labor as it was comprehensively thrashed, 19 seats to six. But there was no repeat of the 1974 disaster when the ALP failed even to secure a single seat.

In Alice Springs the ALP focused upon local issues such as its opposition to high rise developments in the centre of town. But in the locale of Ayers Rock, the powerful symbol of the CLP campaign, the vigorous Labor campaign proved fruitless, continuing the Party's failure to secure Alice Springs representation.

In the rural areas, because of the election's central issue, the ALP was more successful. Stuart, where Labor had an excellent candidate, Ede, and Macdonnell, where Labor had the sitting member, Bell, were easily won despite the CLP's logistic advantages. The Labor Leader, Collins, also easily won Arafura, though the press (and presumably the CLP?) had felt that he was in danger. In Victoria River the ALP lost because it ran an inappropriate

Table 5.1

Voter Turnout 1980, 1983 and Labor Vote 1983

	Voter Turnout 1980 (%) (b)	Voter Turnout 1983 (%)	ALP Vote 1983(c) (2 P/P, %)(m) (Jaensch 1984 estimates)	ALP Vote Federal Elect. 1983 (2 P/P, %)(m) (author's est.)
<u>Rural Seats</u>				
Arafura	75(d)	69.5	61.7 (est.)	53.4
Arnhem	67	64.9	58.6	68.5
Macdonnell	61	63.8	58.9 (est.)	69.5
Stuart	71	64.4	64.3	54.4
Victoria River	73	75.7	34.8	47.9
Average*	67.9	67.7		
<u>Provincial Seats (a)</u>				
Barkly	71	73.1	39.7	52.3
Eley	75	81.4	34.2	47.9
Nhulunbuy	78	77.5	51.2	
Average*	74.3	77.7		
<u>Urban Seats</u>				
Araluen	81.3(e)	89.1	27.6 (est.)	38.4
Berrimah	78.8(h)	82.5	31.3	47.8
Braitling	79.4(f)	79.5	22.2	38.8
Casuarina	81.8	91.4	34.6	55.1
Fannie Bay	88.3	88.9	40.2 (est.)	49.0
Flynn	79.4(f)	82.4	30.8 (est.)	38.8
Jingili	82.2	89.0	28.2	54.6
Koolpinyah	82.5	86.2	29.9 (est.)	43.5
Leanyer	84.5(j)	90.8	34.1	50.9
Ludmilla	82.3	82.2	41.8	50.1
Millner	84.7	85.6	54.4 (est.)	57.1
Nightcliff	79.2	82.6	32.5 (est.)	40.7
Port Darwin	80.5	79.9	31.4	42.8
Sadadeen	78.0(g)	82.7	29.5	38.8
Sanderson	84.5(j)	91.8	45.2	53.6
Wagaman	83.5(k)	89.1	38.9	55.4
Wanguri	83.3(l)	86.8	38.6	53.8
Average*	81.6	86.1		

*Calculated on total voters in each category (thereby making allowances for the bigger electorates)

- (a) Provincial seats are defined as having a single centre that produces more than 60% of votes
- (b) Calculated from Jaensch & Loveday, 1981, 187, table 5.6
- (c) Calculated from Jaensch, 1984 (simply transposing electorates that covered roughly the same areas in 1980 and 1983 in most cases)
- (d) Estimated by averaging Tiwi and Arnhem
- (e) Estimated by transposing Gillen
- (f) Estimated by averaging Gillen and Alice Springs
- (g) Estimated by transposing Alice Springs
- (h) Estimated by transposing Stuart Park
- (i) Estimated by transposing Tiwi
- (j) Estimated by transposing Sanderson
- (k) Estimated by averaging Jingili and Sanderson
- (l) Estimated by averaging Casuarina and Sanderson
- (m) Two-party preferred vote

candidate (the party president, Bree) who was not well known in the electorate, the sine qua non of electioneering in an Aboriginal electorate. Bree did not have the Aboriginal supporters (as did, for example, Ede) who could have helped him to overcome these disadvantages.

Arnhem provided the most interesting contest of the rural electorates. The CLP had preselected one European, Amos, who was expected to poll well on the stations and at Alyangula. As in Victoria River they had a second candidate who was calculated to appeal to the Aboriginal vote. In Arnhem this was David Daniels, Ngukurr Community Council President and Vice-Chairman of the NLC. The ALP candidate was expected to win on the north coast but the CLP expected strong support on Groote Eylandt and at Ngukurr-Numbulwar. They got the support on Groote where Amos got 75 per cent of the votes at Alyangula and Daniels out-pollled Lanhupuy at the two Aboriginal communities of Angurugu and Umbakumba. But Lanhupuy surprised the outside pundits and out-pollled Daniels and Rogers (the Aboriginal Democrat candidate) on their home ground of Ngukurr and Numbulwar. This belied the Buffalo Creek Mob's claim that an Aboriginal would vote first for a local candidate and then for a 'whitefella' in preference to any 'blackfella' from another locality. The strong vote for Lanhupuy was a reaction to the CLP government over-riding the successful Roper Bar land claim.

The result in Darwin was the most demoralising for Labor. Not only did it fail to secure any new seats but it lost about one third of the support it had gained earlier in the year in the successful House of Representatives campaign (cf table 5.1). Also in the losses in Fannie Bay and Sanderson, Labor lost its Deputy Leader, O'Neil, and economics spokeswoman D'Rozario, both extremely capable women and irreplaceable in Caucus.

The result was not unexpected. The ALP carried out an opinion poll survey on the two weekends prior to the calling of the election. This showed Labor support at 36 per cent of the primary vote in the six northern suburbs seats surveyed, which was extrapolated out to indicate about 32 per cent for the whole of Darwin (including Koolpinyah). The four major issues, the opinion poll revealed were: uranium, Ayers Rock, the railway and relations with Canberra. Only the fourth contained any glimmer of hope for the ALP because a significant proportion of respondents agreed that a Territory Labor government could get more from Canberra than could the CLP government. The Labor stress on this latter theme may explain the slightly better vote it obtained than indicated by its opinion poll. Certainly it was an argument that worried the CLP, as Everingham showed when he dropped his confrontationalist attitude towards the Hawke government in the last few days before polling and claimed that after the election it would be 'business-as-usual' with Canberra.

But the campaign period was too short for Labor to make any impact upon the handicaps with which it entered the lists. It was widely admitted that Labor had the better candidates. And that its policies were better; it released 15 policies in the 19 day campaign (but perversely was accused of 'neglecting local issues!'). But there was only one issue in the campaign - 'They took Ayers Rock away from us'. The '...and gave it to the Aborigines' was an unstated but potent obverse in the CLP's electioneering. This latter element was enhanced by an un-savoury whispering campaign during the election about the Labor Leader, Collins's, Aboriginal wife. Collins had been told two months before the elections by a political correspondent with a good entree into the CLP that the fact that he had an Aboriginal wife was to be a behind-the-scenes issue in the forthcoming election. This claim received some credence when a former (failed) Assembly candidate for the CLP rang Collins on talkback radio during the campaign to ask if the electorate was aware that his wife was an Aboriginal. Collins was also asked about his wife in 'question and answer' sessions after two of his major public addresses during the campaign.

In such a political climate the ALP's attempts to stress its positive policies - such as the TAB; the Territory University; the sport policy; the Arts and Cultural Affairs policy; the alternative health policy; policies for youth

and women and the economic policies package (tourism, housing, Territory Bank, rural policy, foreign ownership in the pastoral industry; small business corporation, fishing policy and employment) did not attract any voter interest.

Paradoxically while the Territory ALP Caucus had never been better equipped to govern it was never less likely to achieve that aim.

Chapter Six

CAMPAIGN ORGANISATION: THE AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS

Fay Lawrence

Unlike the older parties the Australian Democrats didn't have an established branch network for support nor did we have a campaign organisation for 25 electorates. I will elaborate on how we organised our campaign for the five electorates we did contest.

Our basic organisation was centralised, with two exceptions. A campaign manager assisted our endorsed candidates in the Alice Springs area, and the Koolpinyah candidate had a campaign secretary to help. The campaign coordinator was responsible for the overall support given to the candidates.

This support included lodging nominations at the electoral office in Darwin; designing, printing and distributing how-to-vote cards and posters; providing Australian Democrats' policy statement for the Northern Territory; coordinating policy speeches for the media; arranging visits of two Australian Democrat senators; placing advertisements in local media and distributing media releases.

Although this support was executed centrally the campaign was planned at a meeting held on Saturday, 19 November. Candidates, party officials, members and resource people attended. A minimum budget of \$2,100 was set, together with priorities on how to spend donations received over that amount. Agreement was reached on the design of the posters for the predominantly Aboriginal electorates with discretion being given on whether a poster would be designed and printed for Koolpinyah. Each candidate was to be supplied with 3,000 how-to-vote cards and 200 posters. Two half-page advertisements in the Advertiser were approved as well as the production of 10 tapes of a supporting policy statement by Senator Don Chipp. Any additional advertising was to depend on donations being received. (A series of short ads was taken out on the commercial radio.) The campaign themes decided upon were:

a FAIR GO for all Territorians;
the ADs will be watchdogs in the Assembly;
Territorians will have an ally in Canberra.

Some of the issues identified were: the criminal code; the railway; education; responsible government; communications and uranium. Candidates were responsible for their travel expenses and nomination fees.

Mr Everingham, in calling the NT election six months ahead of time, created difficulties in organisation for the Australian Democrats. It caused us to concertina our preselection process and stalled us from the possibility of fielding a larger team. For the record, on the Wednesday prior to the announcement of the election date we had issued a press release stating that four people would be seeking preselection from the ADs. This release was then embargoed until Monday, 14 November, the day the election was announced.

The timing affected the conduct of our ballots to endorse the candidates and on how to number the how-to-vote cards. Time did not allow the preferred postal vote and so telephone ballots were conducted. Members delegated their preferences to the management committee. Neither action is considered the ideal, but were considered the best solution with such little time.

There was also another timing factor that was even more devastating. It was the extremely short time-span between the close of nominations at noon on the Wednesday and [mobile] polling day the following Monday morning for many of the rural electorates - just two and a half working days to have how-to-vote cards printed and distributed to isolated communities from the most northerly to the most southerly. Our candidates had very little time to campaign in

their electorates and great difficulty in getting to a polling place before the mobile booth arrived. (Being called in the wet season also added to the problem of communications.)

The method used to distribute the cards varied. For the electorates of Arnhem and Victoria River, we air freighted them to people nominated by the candidates: Macdonnell's were despatched to Alice Springs for distribution by the candidate. The Arafura candidate personally delivered his, except for Jabiru. And for Koolpinyah the secretary organised booth helpers to hand out cards on the polling day proper.

The distribution was carried out to plan with one exception. We did not get the cards printed in time for some of Arnhem. The only air service to the southern part of the electorate was on Thursday morning. We missed the deadline. The decision was taken to charter a plane on Saturday morning and deliver them personally by Senator Macklin who was in the Territory for the campaign.

How to vote cards Arnhem Electorate.

AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS

VOTE THIS WAY

- 4 Amos, David Thomas
- 2 Daniels, David
- 3 Lanhupuy, Wesley Wagner
- 1 Rogers, Kevin Kuyuruyurr (Balung)

Authorised by Fair Play League
24 110 Esplanade Darwin Tel. 614482

STAND UP FOR THE TERRITORY
N.T. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTION 1983
ARNHEM

START HERE →

- 2 AMOS, D.T.
- 1 DANIELS, D.
- 4 LANHUPUY, W.W.
- 3 ROGERS, K.K.

PLACE A NUMBER IN EVERY SQUARE
IF YOU SPOIL YOUR BALLOT PAPER, ASK FOR ANOTHER

HOW TO VOTE WES LANHUPUY ARNHEM

YOU MUST NUMBER EACH SQUARE

START HERE →

- 3 Amos, D. T.
- 4 Daniels, D.
- 1 LANHUPUY, WES
- 2 Rogers, K. K.

Australian Labor Party

STAND UP FOR THE TERRITORY
N.T. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTION 1983
ARNHEM

START HERE →

- 1 AMOS, D.T.
- 2 DANIELS, D.
- 4 LANHUPUY, W.W.
- 3 ROGERS, K.K.

PLACE A NUMBER IN EVERY SQUARE
IF YOU SPOIL YOUR BALLOT PAPER, ASK FOR ANOTHER

VOTE 1 CLP

Chapter Seven

A SURVEY OF THE URBAN ELECTORATE

Dean Jaensch

In the preceding analysis of the results of the 1983 election we suggested that there were at least three questions - what happened, where, and why it happened? This chapter is focussed on the third question.

One finding of earlier surveys is that the Territory's population is in a state of flux - in population mobility, party allegiance and political attitudes. Surveys were conducted in Alice Springs in 1980, in the main urban centres in 1982, and in four urban centres (Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine, Nhulunbuy) in 1983, and from these a bank of data about the electorate over time is being established. One limitation is that the samples have been drawn from urban areas only. It has not yet been possible to conduct a full-scale sample survey of the rural population, including the Aboriginal population, especially in the outback where transport, interpreters and a different methodology would be needed.

However, the 1983 survey provided data which builds on the 1982 study, and offers a basis for interpretation of the election result and further exploration of party allegiance and political attitudes of the urban residents.

The questionnaire was deliberately limited in scope and length. In the first place, the survey was self-administered by respondents and so had to be fairly short if respondents were not to be deterred from answering it. In fact, 846 (just over 22 per cent) of the selected sample completed the questionnaire and returned it (in a reply-paid envelope). This response provided a completed sample of just over 2 per cent of the urban electorate from which the sample was drawn.

The questionnaire was designed to elicit information concerning the 1983 election - to establish the 'why' of the patterns of party support; to replicate some questions which were used in the 1982 survey to enable analysis over time and to further explore attitudes to the complex and important area of Aboriginal policy among the Northern Territory urban residents.

The 1983 survey reinforced the findings of the 1982 study into population mobility and party allegiance (Jaensch and Loveday eds, 1983). The mobility of the urban population was again emphasised. Of the 846 respondents in December 1983, a total of 169 (20 per cent) were not resident in the Territory in 1980. In terms of party allegiance, the 1983 survey found patterns similar to those discovered in 1982. The following paragraph summarises those findings.

Party identification in the Northern Territory is somewhat weaker than in the national and state electorates, and the link between party identification and party vote is also weaker than elsewhere. Urban Territorians appear to be more willing and able than voters elsewhere to distinguish between Territory (or state) and national election contests, and tend to be more willing to cross party lines in different contests. The urban electorate also seems to be more receptive to personality and local issues than the national electorate. Perceptions of, and attitudes to class are different in the urban areas of the Territory than elsewhere, and an important finding of both surveys is that those who do identify with and vote for both major parties are drawn more from across the range of classes than elsewhere in Australia. In the small electorates of the Territory, regional variations have the potential to be electorally important. Overall, three tentative conclusions from the 1982 study appear to be supported by the 1983 survey.

The more changeable factors may well have a greater influence than elsewhere in shaping the vote....Local features may well be of increased relative importance....

The implication is that the Territory parties need to be more sensitive and responsive to their voters than the parties elsewhere in Australia if they are to win their enduring partisanship (Jaensch and Loveday, 1983, 104-5).

Stability, Consistency, Change

At first sight, the results of the four elections held for the Assembly suggest both stability and change - stability, because the CLP won government on all four occasions, and because its share of the vote, after an actual and estimated distribution of preferences, has been within 2 or 3 per cent over 10 years; change, because the shares of seats in the Assembly have fluctuated considerably, and there have been major shifts in the patterns of first preference votes at the level of the individual electorate and the NT as a whole. And, as the 1982 study emphasised (Jaensch and Loveday, 1983, 26), a pattern of stability (or change) of aggregate electoral patterns may result from the sum of consistent or inconsistent individual voting behaviour. For example, the stability of the CLP's share of the aggregate two-party vote over time occurred through a massive increase in the enrolment from 39,027 to 62,178, a massive turnover of population, and very different party contests. Hence the complexity of individual transfers of votes between political parties needs to be kept in mind.

The 1983 survey emphasised these factors.

Table 7.1

		<u>Recalled Votes, 1980, 1983</u>		
		(% of respondents: N = 824)		
<u>Stability</u>		<u>Change</u>		
		1980	1983	
Both CLP	39.8	CLP	Labor	3.8
Both Labor	19.2	Labor	CLP	5.8
Ind./AD	0.6	CLP/Labor	Ind./AD	2.2
	<u>59.6</u>	Ind./AD	CLP/Labor	2.7
	(N = 491)	Non-vote	CLP/Labor	5.5
		Other		1.1
				<u>21.1</u>
				(N = 173)
		Not in NT	CLP	12.6
		Not in NT	Labor	6.8
				<u>19.4</u>
				(N = 160)

The extent of change as a proportion of the respondents who were in the Territory in 1980 and 1983 is 173 out of the total of 664 - that is, 26 per cent changed their vote. The mobility of the urban electorate is emphasised by the fact that 160 respondents of the total of 824 who gave a response to these questions were not in the Territory in 1980 - a 20 per cent addition in the electorate in three years. And, of course, some who voted in 1980 would have moved elsewhere in the intervening years, but we have no data on this element of change in the electorate.

The net change in the various party movements in the 'change' column also emphasises the 'benefit' obtained by the CLP. Among the voters who were in the NT in both elections, the net shifts were CLP +5.7 per cent, Labor +0.4 per cent.

Of the new voters in 1983, the party split was almost 2:1 in favour of the CLP. The net shifts, including the new voters, was therefore CLP +18.3 per cent, Labor +7.0 per cent.

This apparent advantage for the CLP in the Territory electoral context is emphasised by a comparison of voting patterns in the national and NT elections in 1983. The 1982 study (Jaensch and Loveday, 1983, 104-5) suggested that the evidence was that

a substantial proportion of voters retained their party commitments in federal elections, but change them in elections for the Territory Assembly, and that this split commitment benefits the CLP in the Territory.

Such benefit is clear in 1983.

Table 7.2

Stability		Change		
		1983(Nat.)	1983(NT)	
Both CLP(L/NP)	45.7	Labor	CLP	16.9
Both Labor	30.2	CLP(L/NP)	Labor	2.4
Both AD	*	CLP	Ind./AD	2.0
		Labor	Ind./AD	1.7
			Other	1.0
	<u>75.9</u>			<u>24.0</u>
	(N = 613)			(N = 193)

*Less than 0.5 per cent.

The net effects of the various changes were CLP +14.0, Labor -16.6 per cent.

Given such a proportion of the electorate willing to change votes, it is likely that intensity of party allegiance is also weaker than elsewhere. Both the 1982 and 1983 surveys suggest that is the case (see table 7.3, next page). Before drawing any interpretations from these data, it should be noted that the sample in 1983 was not entirely comparable with those of 1979 and 1982: it was less than half the size of the earlier samples and in 1983 enrolled voters in Tennant Creek, Jabiru and the rural area of Darwin were not included in the sampled population.

Two developments are suggested by the data: the proportion of the NT urban voters who do not identify with a party is significantly higher than in the rest of Australia, and seems to be increasing; the intensity of allegiance to parties among those who do identify seems to be increasing. Both trends enhance the electoral strength of the CLP. The second effect is apparent in table 7.3 - the ratio of CLP to Labor identifiers is just over two to one, and an increase in intensity of commitment provides the CLP with a solid advantage.

That the apparent increase in the proportion of those who claim no party allegiance benefits the CLP is shown by analysing the voting choices of these respondents. There are some differences between the 1982 and 1983 data, but the overall trends contain similar themes: more NT respondents were willing to vote against their party identification; the leakage as a result benefits the CLP; the party choices of those with no party identification strongly benefit the CLP, and did so more strongly in 1983 when there were also more respondents who claimed no party allegiance (table 7.3).

Table 7.3

Party Identification, Intensity and Direction
(% of respondents)

	Australia*			NT*			NT		
	1979			1982			1983		
Identified with a party	85			75			62		
No party identification	15			25			38		
	(N)			(1982)			(1906)		
	(827)								
	Australia 1979*			NT 1980*			NT 1983		
	Labor	L/NP	(N)	Labor	CLP	(N)	Labor	CLP	(N)
Very strong	32	37	(524)	40	35	(531)	39	42	(199)
Somewhat strong	46	47	(712)	38	39	(545)	44	41	(203)
Not very strong	22	16	(282)	21	26	(332)	17	17	(81)
	(N) (760) (758)			(682) (726)			(156) (327)		

*Source: Jaensch and Loveday, 1983, 54.

Table 7.4

Party Identification and Vote
(% of respondents)

	Australia 1979*	NT 1980*	NT 1983
Voted in agreement with party identification	93	89	92
Voted, but not in agreement	5	10	7
Did not vote	2	1	1
	(N) (1639)	(1032)	(513)

Table 7.5

Party Identification and Party Support
(% of respondents)

Party Identification	(N)	Voted						
		1980*			1983			
		CLP	Labor	Other	(N)	CLP	Labor	Other
CLP	(529)	93	5	3	(346)	95	3	3
Labor	(496)	10	87	3	(161)	6	93	1
No ident.	(291)	55	33	12	(304)	60	34	6

*Source: Jaensch and Loveday, 1983, 57, 58.

Reasons for Change of Vote

As in the 1982 study, all respondents were asked to give the main reason for their votes in the 1983 election. (In the 1982 study, respondents were invited to give up to three reasons.) A total of 799 gave the reason for their

votes, and the 59 separate headings were brought together under nine heads, using the same format as in 1982 (see Jaensch and Loveday, 1983, 22-3 for a description of the heads).

In 1983, the respondents' reasons emphasised people and issues even more than in 1982. The reasons, in percentage form with 1983 given as the first figure were as follows: people (28, 18), Aboriginal policy (1, 2), management of government (18, 14), party, party ideology (24, 30), issues (18, 8), family/habit (8, 26), and a residual 'other' category (both less than 0.5). The sample again showed that urban Territorians appear to place more emphasis on the candidate than elsewhere in Australia - 12 per cent stated 'candidate' as their reason for voting for (or against) a party - but the miniscule electorates do offer an environment for personal politics to be effective. A further 9 per cent of the sample named Paul Everingham (8 per cent in favour, 1 per cent against) as the main reason for their votes.

Part of the explanation for the different patterns of reasons one year after the 1982 survey is the nature of the 1983 campaign. It was dominated more than ever by the Chief Minister, the Opposition Leader, the Prime Minister (in the speeches of Mr Everingham), and by specific issues such as uranium mining, Uluru, and the railway.

A total of 119 respondents stated they had changed their vote from 1980 to 1983. The reasons (up to two) given for the change emphasised the important role of personality in the NT electoral context, the impact of the policy decisions of the Hawke government, and the perception of the CLP as the best government for the Territory among a significant proportion of the urban electorate. The 'other' category included 'uranium' and 'time for a change', both 5 per cent of total responses.

Table 7.6

Reasons for Change 1980, 1983

(% of responses)

	Total	Voted in 1983	
		CLP	Labor
People	50	42	63
(Candidate)	(30)		
(Hawke/govt)	(9)		
Party	29	31	23
Aboriginal Policy	9	12	9
Other	12	15	6
(N)	(131)	(67)	(35)

Socio-Economic Factors

Some socio-economic characteristics of the 1983 urban voter are presented in table 7.7. Some of the characteristics are as might be expected elsewhere in Australian urban areas: CLP support is stronger among upper middle than among lower working class respondents; males and females have tended to show similar patterns of party support in recent elections; respondents involved in small business, agriculture and managerial occupations tend to support the non-Labor parties; and people employed in the government sector give more support to the Labor party than those employed in the private sector.

There are some figures which suggest that the Territory urban voters are different. For example: there is high CLP support among upper working class respondents, and among those in the blue collar, white collar and professional occupations, and among Catholic respondents.

Table 7.7

A 'Profile' of the 1983 Urban Voter
(% of respondents)

		Recalled Vote in 1983			(N)
		CLP	Labor	Ind./AD	
Party Identification (NT)	CLP	95	3	3	(346)
	Labor	6	93	1	(161)
	None	60	34	7	(304)
Class (self-description)	Upper Middle	69	28	3	(241)
	Lower Middle	63	34	3	(262)
	Upper Working	64	31	5	(226)
	Lower Working	48	44	8	(50)
Self-description	Australian	61	35	4	(601)
	Territorian	80	17	3	(170)
Employment Sector	Government	58	39	3	(441)
	Non-Government	71	24	4	(359)
Length of Residence in NT	Less than 2 years	56	38	6	(64)
	2-5 years	62	36	3	(199)
	6-10 years	64	34	2	(183)
	More than 10 years	66	29	5	(377)
Town of Residence	Darwin	63	34	3	(556)
	Alice Springs	68	28	4	(191)
	Katherine	57	20	23	(35)
Religion	Anglican	69	29	3	(210)
	Catholic	67	29	3	(180)
	Uniting	70	21	9	(67)
	None	53	45	2	(225)
Sex	Male	64	31	4	(469)
	Female	64	33	3	(347)
Occupation	Professional	65	33	2	(102)
	Semi Prof./Tech.	55	43	3	(115)
	Administrative	65	33	2	(52)
	Managerial	67	24	9	(46)
	White Collar	66	29	5	(269)
	Small Business	83	13	4	(53)
	Ag./Mining	55	36	9	(11)
	Blue Collar	57	42	1	(100)

The data can also be analysed to yield an internal NT comparison. If we consider only those who voted formally (832 respondents, 63.7 per cent CLP, 32.5 per cent Labor, and 3.8 per cent Independent/Democrat), it is possible to find the sub-samples of the urban total in which the CLP had an advantage (and Labor a corresponding disadvantage), and where Labor secured support at a level greater than the mean. And if these sub-samples are then considered in terms of their size in relation to the whole sample, then the 'advantage' to the CLP noted above is further emphasised. The CLP appears to have won support at a level higher than the mean among the upper middle class, among those identified as 'Territorian', were employed in the non-government sector, resided in Alice Springs and Katherine, and owned a small business. Labor's support is clearly above the mean in the lower working class, among those who claim no religion, and among semi-professional/technical and blue collar workers.

Attitudes to Issues of Aboriginal Policy

In both the 1982 and the 1983 surveys, urban respondents agreed that questions of Aboriginal policy were important in the Territory. The question in both surveys was 'In your opinion what are the most important problems the NT government should do something about?' and 'Aboriginal policy' was a common general answer in both of them. In 1982, 18.2 per cent gave that answer and in 1983 it was 17.8 per cent of all responses (N = 2,151). However in 1982, respondents did not acknowledge that policy on Aboriginal questions was important in determining how they voted.

Given the importance of the topic, the inadequacy of the 1982 questionnaire to unpack the various responses, and the apparent disjunction between seeing 'Aboriginal policy' as an important problem and its low impact on party choice at elections, the 1983 survey included specific questions designed to aid in understanding the connection, if any, between the attitudes of respondents to Aboriginal policy and their votes.

Party Policies

Respondents were asked two sets of questions concerning party policies. The first was:

Do you think that the policies of Labor and the CLP in regard to Aborigines are different?
(If yes) in what ways are they different?

Given that a high proportion of the urban respondents considers Aboriginal policy important, and that in the past decade party differences on this subject have been emphasised, it is surprising that nearly one quarter of the sample considered that the policies of the CLP and the Labor party were not different. Of 797 respondents who replied, 606 (76 per cent) believed the policies were different and 191 (24 per cent) did not perceive any difference. And, more surprising, these proportions were similar in both CLP and Labor voters.

A total of 38 different statements were given by the 558 respondents who named one or two differences between the policies of the parties. These 38 statements were condensed to general headings 'for' or 'against' the perceived policies of the two major parties.

Of 828 responses, 415 (50 per cent) were critical of Labor policy. Only 11 per cent of responses were critical of CLP policy. Those critical of Labor policy were of two general types. One criticised Labor especially for an alleged policy of 'handouts only' (140 responses) or 'giving the NT away' (130 responses). But in each response the reference is to policies and practices of the federal parties, because the administration of the Land Rights legislation, and the programs of benefits to Aboriginal people, are under federal control. In terms of NT electoral politics, however, these respondents clearly perceived the NT Labor party as responsible for the actions of which they were critical.

The other general criticism of Labor, amounting to 11 per cent of responses, was to the effect that the party emphasised Aboriginal policy and issues so much that the interests of non-Aborigines were neglected or virtually excluded from its consideration. The same proportion - 11 per cent - were critical of the CLP for alleged concentration on the interests of non-Aborigines to the neglect of the interests of Aborigines.

The responses favourable to the parties were in a minority, and on the themes set out in table 7.8 (see next page). These favourable perceptions were almost completely along party lines. However, there was evidence in the answers to these questions that some respondents continued to vote for a party whose policy on Aboriginal affairs they did not agree with.

Table 7.8

<u>Perceived Differences of Party Policies</u>		N	%
(% of (up to two) responses)			
Labor	'handouts only, buying votes, giving NT away, using Aborigines'	321	39
Labor	'only for Aborigines, dividing NT, too hasty, Canberra controlled, weak'	94	11
CLP	'anti Aboriginal, racist, victimises, confrontationist, paternalist'	94	11
- - - - -			
Labor	'fair, for equality, honest, works with Aborigines, creates jobs, for self-determination, humanitarian'	113	14
CLP	'balanced white/black, for development, practical, for self-sufficiency, conservative, understands, more control, realistic'	187	23
Other		19	2
		(N) (828)	(100)

The second question on party policy asked:

Which party's policy on Aborigines do you most agree with?
What is the main reason you agree with that policy?

Table 7.9 summarises the results (see next page), again with the range of responses condensed to 'pro' and 'anti' themes. A total of 65 per cent of the respondents who replied agreed with the CLP policy, and 24 per cent agreed with Labor. But there was also evidence of a significant dichotomy of opinion when the question of agreement with party policy is analysed in terms of party allegiance and party support. Of the 301 respondents who voted CLP in 1983, 89 per cent stated that they agreed with the CLP policy on Aboriginal affairs, and only 3 per cent disagreed. Among Labor voters, however, only 68 per cent agreed with Labor's Aboriginal policy, and 20 per cent disagreed. The analysis of policy agreement in terms of party allegiance emphasises this 'leakage' of opinion from Labor identifiers, and emphasises the majority opinion in favour of the CLP. Of CLP identifiers, 93 per cent agreed with their party's policy. Of Labor voters, 14 per cent agreed with CLP policy and 6 per cent agreed with no party. Among the 236 respondents with no party allegiance, 61 per cent agreed with the CLP policy.

These data raise complex questions of the relationships of party allegiance, party support, and perceptions of party policy, questions which are subjects of debate within all political systems. To what extent, for example, are voters fully aware of specific party policies, whether of their own party, or of other parties? To what extent does party allegiance over-ride disagreement with specific policies? These questions are beyond the scope of this chapter, but the data in table 7.9 do suggest that opinions about the perceived policies of the Labor party, for a significant proportion of Labor identifiers and voters, are less important than party in the electoral arena.

The responses concerning the main reason for agreement with party policy reinforce the 'leakage' from Labor to the CLP in terms of perceptions of party policy. Of the total of 355 CLP voters who responded, a total of 88 per cent

gave a response which was favourable to the CLP or antagonistic to Labor. Only 6 per cent of CLP voters made a favourable comment about perceived Labor policy. On the other hand, 25 per cent of Labor voters gave an opinion which was favourable to the CLP or antagonistic to Labor.

Table 7.9

<u>Agreement with Party Policy</u>						
(% of respondents)						
	Total	Party Identification			Voted 1983	
		CLP	Labor	None	CLP	Labor
Agrees with CLP	65	93	14	61	89	20
Agrees with Labor	24	2	79	20	3	68
Agrees with none	8	4	6	15	1	3
Policies same	2	1	1	3	6	9
Undecided	1	1	-	-	*	*
	(N) (724)	(301)	(143)	(236)	(458)	(229)

<u>Main Reason for Agreement with Policy</u>						
(% of responses)						
		N	%	Voted 1983		
				CLP %	Labor %	
Labor	'handouts only, give NT away, land rights only, too much money, weak, dishonest, Canberra control'	63	11	13	7	
CLP	'victimises, for money only, for urban only'	7	1	*	2	
Labor	'offers more for Aborigines, offers dignity/future, constructive, equality white/black, honest, for traditional rights, for self-determination'	139	25	6	69	
CLP	'less divisive, more reasonable, equality white/black, less land rights, cooperates, stability, for self-determination'	326	58	75	18	
Other		27	5	6	5	
		(N) (562)		(355)	(175)	

*less than 0.5%

The third question asked for an assessment by respondents of the importance of six issues of Aboriginal policy which had been matters of public debate. The question was:

The following are questions of Aboriginal policy in the NT. Please rank them 1 to 6 in the order you think they are important.

Land Rights
Sacred Sites

Employment
Alcohol

Bicultural Education
Town/Fringe Camps

The matrix of responses was complex, and a simplified version, is given in table 7.10. It shows the proportion who ranked each issue as most or second most important, and the proportion who ranked each issue as least or second least important.

Table 7.10
Ranking of Questions of Aboriginal Policy
 (% of respondents)

		Total	Voted 1983		Residence	
			CLP	Labor	Darwin	Alice
Land Rights	Most	33	28	40	34	24
	Least	45	50	35	45	51
	(N)	(799)	(495)	(258)	(537)	(181)
Employment	Most	54	54	53	54	56
	Least	12	10	15	11	14
	(N)	(797)	(493)	(258)	(534)	(183)
Bicultural Education	Most	33	36	31	34	32
	Least	28	24	35	27	26
	(N)	(798)	(495)	(257)	(535)	(184)
Sacred Sites	Most	19	18	23	21	14
	Least	47	53	35	44	59
	(N)	(795)	(492)	(257)	(533)	(181)
Alcohol	Most	51	66	43	48	60
	Least	19	16	26	20	15
	(N)	(801)	(497)	(258)	(534)	(187)
Town/Fringe	Most	10	10	10	10	14
	Least	49	46	54	52	36
	(N)	(796)	(492)	(258)	(533)	(183)

The total sample revealed two issues considered as important above the others - employment and alcohol. For both, more than half of the respondents named the issues as most, or second most important. The issue of employment was considered as important by an equivalent proportion across party and town of residence. Alcohol was perceived as an important issue by more CLP than Labor voters, and by Alice Springs residents more than Darwin residents.

Given the intensity of the debates in the Territory on the question of land rights, especially with the evidence from tables 7.8 and 7.9, the responses in table 7.10 in relation to land rights and sacred sites are surprising. Only one third of respondents placed land rights as most or second most important, although there was a significant difference between CLP (28 per cent) and Labor (40 per cent) voters. Sacred sites, included in the question as closely linked to land rights, was ranked as most important by a much smaller proportion of respondents. The issue of bicultural education was ranked as important as land rights across the total sample, party voters, and Darwin and the Alice Springs residents.

The final question was designed to provide comparative data with the 1979 national survey. The question used in 1979 was repeated in the 1983 NT survey:

Which of the following is closer to your view?

- (a) Aborigines should get special benefits from governments.
- (b) Aborigines should be treated no differently from anyone else.

The first point to be noted is that this question, more than any other, prompted voluntary comments from a number of respondents. Some quite reasonably

identified problems with the wording of the question itself. Comments on the questionnaire criticised the term 'special benefits' as too vague, others wrote (some at length) comments that the 'exclusive' nature of the two statements over-simplified a complex policy area, and others wrote (again at some length) that each statement needed to contain a range of qualifications. Each criticism is reasonable, but the question and the wording was intended to provide a comparison with the national survey, and hence precisely the same wording was used.

Table 7.11

Responses to Policy Statements Concerning Aborigines
(% of respondents)

	Aborigines should get special benefits from governments	Aborigines should be treated no differently from anyone else		
NT 1983	26	74	= 100	(N=790)
Australia 1979	26 (It depends 7)	67*	= 100	
NT 1983 - breakdown:				
Voted CLP	18	82	= 100	(N=500)
Voted Labor	42	58	= 100	(N=249)
CLP Identification	19	81	= 100	(N=324)
Labor Identification	47	53	= 100	(N=155)
No Identification	24	76	= 100	(N=292)
Darwin	28	72	= 100	(N=490)
Alice Springs	21	79	= 100	(N=163)
Agreed CLP Policy	15	85	= 100	(N=448)
Agreed Labor Policy	53	47	= 100	(N=167)
Agreed No Policy	16	84	= 100	(N= 51)
Identification:				
Australian	27	73	= 100	(N=578)
Territorian	16	84	= 100	(N=159)

*Including 'get too many benefits as it is'.

The 1979 national survey analysis included a category 'It depends...' in the answers. In the Northern Territory analysis it was possible to divide such responses between the two policy statements. Even allowing for the 7 per cent in the national sample who remain 'between' the policies, there is no significant difference between the NT and national samples.

There were significant differences in the analysis of the sub-samples of the NT respondents as shown in the table. Opinions were very different between CLP and Labor identifiers and CLP and Labor voters. The Darwin respondents were more supportive of the statement that Aborigines should get special benefits than were residents of Alice Springs, and those respondents who identified as 'Territorian' were the most convinced that Aborigines should be treated no differently from anyone else.

Chapter Eight

ABORIGINAL VOTES AND ABORIGINAL CANDIDATES

P Loveday and W Sanders

About 18 months before the NT election, it was announced that an Aboriginal party would be formed to contest the election, representing urban and tribal Aborigines (NT News 16 June 1982). The Darwin NAC representative, Willy Clayton backed the move, in the face of criticism from the Labor leader, Bob Collins (NT News 18 June 1982). The NT News editorially criticised the proposed party as 'divisive' (19 June 1982). Not much more was heard about the proposal until June 1983 when it was reported that a conference of Aborigines at Lake Bennett had decided to try again to form an Aboriginal party (NT News 28 June 1983).

Aboriginal leaders were, presumably, divided and uncertain about the proposal because, by the time the election was announced, the party had not materialised. It was suggested on radio on 18 and 21 November that a number of Aboriginal candidates would stand as independents, perhaps as grouped independents, but it was also announced that several of them would be endorsed by the Australian Democrats. In the end, of those named, neither Vince Forrester nor Rosie Kunoth-Monks nominated and the nomination of Betty Pearce was ruled invalid. Of those mentioned in the news releases, only three stood, all as Australian Democrat candidates: Maurie Ryan in Victoria River, Ted Hampton in Macdonnell and Kevin Rogers in Arnhem. Kevin Doolan, a non-Aboriginal who was thought likely to attract Aboriginal votes, stood for the Democrats in Arafura.

The public announcements were usually about how many seats an Aboriginal party might win. There was very little public speculation about the possibility of exchanging (or withholding) preferences in contests where an Aboriginal victory was not likely in order to influence the outcome of a contest between major party candidates. There was no public speculation on what might be done in the Assembly if an Aboriginal group won seats.

The seats the Aboriginal leaders thought an Aboriginal party might win are the five electorates which have over 50 per cent Aboriginal population. The Australian Democrat candidates mentioned above stood in four of these. The fifth is Stuart, in which an Aboriginal candidate, Bobby Liddle, stood for the CLP. There were two other Aboriginal candidates in the 1983 NT election, both in the electorate of Arnhem: David Daniels, from Ngukurr, stood on a joint CLP ticket with David Amos, a non-Aboriginal candidate from the predominantly non-Aboriginal mining town of Alyangula on Groote Eylandt. Wesley Lanhupuy stood for the ALP. The NT branch of the ALP at first chose a non-Aboriginal candidate, a trade unionist from Alyangula, for the electorate, after an internal dispute. The federal executive intervened to overturn this selection in favour of Lanhupuy.

In this flurry of pre-election activity, people, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, were acting on some rough practical understandings about Aborigines and voting in the NT, even though people in the parties are reluctant to refer unnecessarily to 'race' in explaining their actions. But it was apparently an important consideration for the two major parties, especially in two electorates with a high proportion of Aborigines, Arnhem and Victoria River. These electorates, spread over vast areas with poor communications and very varied terrain, encompass populations and localities with little community of interest. They are economically diverse and much of the competition of interests is between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal economic activities. The CLP accepted two candidates in each of these electorates - an Aboriginal and a non-Aboriginal in Arnhem, as we have seen, and two non-Aborigines in Victoria River. Their how-to-vote cards were designed to secure an exchange of preferences, if preferences were counted.

In effect the CLP decided not to choose between its prospective candidates, when to do so might antagonise one section or another of the electorate, but

left the choice to the voters. The ALP's rules for selecting candidates do not, however, give it this option. If there is a contest between would-be candidates it must be decided within the organisation. On this occasion the decision in favour of a non-Aboriginal candidate was made after considerable strife in the party, much of which was made public. It went against the wishes of the party leader and it was thought likely that Aboriginal voters not only in Arnhem but generally would be somewhat sceptical, if not contemptuous, of a party which proclaimed its sympathy for Aboriginal interests but could not field even one Aboriginal candidate, especially when that candidate was as strong as Lanhupuy. The federal executive was therefore invited to intervene.

The assumptions of the Aboriginal leaders pushing for the formation of an Aboriginal political party seem less complicated. If they did in fact believe they could win some seats and were not just 'talking themselves up', then they were acting on the assumption that a large proportion of Aboriginal electors would, to put it simply, vote 'Aboriginal' if they were given the chance to do so.

But if there is such a thing as an Aboriginal vote, very little is known about it. It is hard to say whether Aborigines vote on party lines, regardless of whether candidates are Aboriginal or not. It has often been assumed that they vote overwhelmingly in support of Labor candidates, primarily on party grounds. But at the same time the parties seem to have occasionally thought it advantageous to have Aboriginal candidates in predominantly Aboriginal electorates. Aboriginal leaders trying to decide whether to put up independent Aboriginal candidates or to form a party to group these candidates, had little evidence to go on to decide whether independent Aboriginal candidates would draw Aboriginal votes away from the established parties. And they had no evidence at all on the even more complex question: the likely effect on Aboriginal voters of an Aboriginal party fielding Aboriginal candidates.

Voting Patterns - Party and Aboriginality

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal voters are not, of course, distinguished in the election, but there are ways of analysing the results to obtain some information on these questions. There are some electorates or polling places where most of the voters are Aborigines; these are all in rural parts. First of all, 21 polling places and mobiles can be considered for an overall vote from predominantly Aboriginal electorates or parts of electorates: all in Arafura except Jabiru; all in Arnhem except Alyangula; the mobiles in Barkly, Elsey and Victoria River; Yirrkala and the mobile in Nhulunbuy; and the electorates of Macdonnell and Stuart. In these 53 per cent of the primary vote went to Labor candidates, while 35 per cent went to CLP candidates. For the Territory as a whole, Labor and CLP's share of the primary vote in December 1983 were 35.6 per cent and 58.2 per cent respectively.

In five of the eight electorates from which we have drawn these 21 polling places and mobiles servicing predominantly Aboriginal electorates there were three or more candidates, one Labor, one CLP (two CLP in Arnhem and Victoria River) and one or more independent and Australian Democrat candidates. But in the other three - Barkly, Nhulunbuy and Stuart - there was a straight contest between Labor and CLP. In the two Barkly mobiles the vote divided 57 per cent ALP and 43 per cent CLP. In the Yirrkala and mobile booth in Nhulunbuy the vote division was 65 per cent ALP and 35 per cent CLP and it was much the same in Stuart. This suggests that the Aboriginal vote in 1983 in rural parts was strongly but not overwhelmingly Labor, even if the CLP candidates drew a large share of the local non-Aboriginal votes. But these rural Aboriginal voters may not be typical of the NT's Aboriginal voters as a whole. It is often assumed, for example, that the votes of rural and urban Aborigines might well be different from one another, even though there is no hard data on the subject. A survey is the only way to obtain data on the voting of Aborigines in electorates in which they are only a small proportion of the population.

In the week before the 1983 election a survey was conducted of self-identifying Aboriginal and Islander electors in Darwin, Nguiu and Yirrkala. A total of 116 interviews were carried out, most of them in Darwin. Eleven of these were removed from the analysis on the ground that the respondents did not clearly identify as Aboriginal or Islander. Of the remainder, 17 were from Nguiu (Arafura electorate), 13 from Yirrkala (Nhulunbuy electorate), seven from Victoria River, six from Arnhem and the rest from Darwin electorates; all except Berrimah were represented. The inclusion in the survey of 43 respondents from predominantly Aboriginal Top End rural areas allows us, however tentatively, to compare rural and urban Aboriginal voters.

Before discussing the substantive questions, it is necessary to emphasise that this survey, although it is the second of its kind (see Loveday and Jaensch eds, 1982, ch8 for the first), was experimental. Its methodological limitations must be stressed at the outset. A survey related to an election, especially one called at short notice in a charged atmosphere, must be carried out quickly and as near to the event as possible. It is also very difficult to decide how to sample the Aboriginal population and even if some method for that were devised, it would almost certainly take more time to administer the questionnaires than was available to us during the short period of the election. We therefore adopted the method of 'street' survey. An Aboriginal woman and two non-Aboriginal men did interviews in Darwin; in Nguiu a white male outsider known to local people did the interviews; and in Yirrkala a local white male, speaking one of the main local languages, did the interviews. It was to be expected that the respondents would be disproportionately male. The questionnaires were simple and interviews lasted about five minutes as a rule. Interviewers approached anyone who they believed might identify as an Aboriginal and appeared to be old enough to vote. The interviewer's interest in the forthcoming election was established immediately, though no indication of special interest in Aboriginal electoral issues was made evident at the outset. This emerged during the interview from several of the questions.

One of these was a question inviting respondents to tell us how they would describe themselves. The respondents were offered a choice of the terms Aboriginal, Australian, Urban Aboriginal, Part European, Traditional Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Thursday Islander and Mixed Race which had been provided for us by Aborigines and had been tested in earlier interviews. They were also offered the opportunity to specify another term if they wished and to drop out of the interview if they wished to do so at this point. A few did. The results of the self description question are in table 8.1. Although a number of respondents chose a term of self description which did not indicate positive self identification as Aboriginal or Islander - Australian, Part European and Mixed Race - interviews with them were completed unless they also pointed out that they felt this self description was incompatible with identification as an 'Aboriginal', however the term is qualified. In the subsequent analysis, those who identified as Australian or as 'other' were omitted on the ground that they had not identified as Aboriginal or Islander in some sense.

The limitations of the survey are considerable, as we are well aware. The sample is small and we have no basis for comparison with non-Aboriginal electors. The sample is also slightly skewed by sex - 65 males and 40 females. The age distribution of respondents, at table 8.2, may also be skewed but we have only impressions of the general population to use as our standard of comparison. And the education question was not discriminating enough. By 'tertiary' many people meant something like 'post secondary' - it might have been a trades course or a bookkeeping course of some kind - and by both secondary and tertiary they meant us to understand 'attended', not 'completed'. These are defects to be corrected in later surveys.

Table 8.1

Using these names how would you describe yourself?

	N(=116)	%
Aboriginal	48	41
Australian	8*	7
Urban Aboriginal	4	3
Part European	16	14
Part Aboriginal	12	10
Traditional Aboriginal	5	4
Torres Strait Islander	3	3
Thursday Islander	2	2
Mixed Race	1	1

Tiwi	11	10
Yulngu	1	1
Urban Australian Aboriginal	1	1
Australian Aboriginal	1	1
Other and no data	3*	3

*omitted from subsequent analysis

Table 8.2

Age of Respondents

	N(=102)	%
18-20	12	12
20-30	47	46
30-39	25	25
40-49	13	13
50-59	3	3
60+	2	2
no data	3	

We asked our respondents how they intended to vote in the election. The results, at table 8.3, reinforce our conclusion based on the analysis of the results from the rural polling areas that in 1983 Aborigines voted strongly, but not overwhelmingly for Labor.

Table 8.3

Intend to Vote in 1983 NT Election

	All (N=94)		Darwin Urban (N=55)		Top End Rural (N=39)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
ALP	77	82	46	84	31	79
CLP	13	14	8	15	5	13
AD & Ind.	1	1	0	0	1	3
dk, undecided	3	3	1	2	2	5
no data	<hr/> 11					

On first reading they suggest a slightly stronger ALP and slightly weaker CLP vote than our analysis of the results from the 21 rural polling areas with predominantly Aboriginal population, but the survey was of too small a number of voters to permit firm conclusions on this point. It is important to decide whether the Aboriginal vote cast for a particular party is 'solid'. To determine this question, it is necessary to consider the vote over time, in different election contests (NT Assembly, Australian House of Representatives) and from different areas and places. Since June 1980 there have been four elections, two for the NT and two for the House of Representatives. There has been a common roll and there are not in fact many Aborigines on the NT roll (for which enrolment has been compulsory since 1980) who are not on the Commonwealth roll - for which enrolment is not compulsory. For both, voting is compulsory for those on the roll. In five places we have comparable figures for four elections and in three more for three, of which one is the NT, 1983. Six of the places are from the Top End, two are the Centre electorates, Macdonnell and Stuart, shorn of their votes in Heavitree Gap and Braitling polling places for the elections before December 1983. Except in the calculations for Macdonnell and Stuart, postal and section votes are excluded from the totals because they cannot be allocated to individual polling places. The figures are presented in table 8.4. In addition the votes in a number of communities, comparable in the three earlier elections, are shown in table 8.5.

People who talked about the Aboriginal vote in the 1980 election sometimes spoke as if it was 'solid' across the Territory and overwhelmingly for Labor. Some party people seem to have reacted accordingly, taking the vote of Aborigines for granted on one side in politics or as hostile and unwinnable on the other.

But the figures suggest that even if the Labor party has attracted a larger proportion of the vote than the CLP, the Aboriginal vote is by no means 'solid' across the Territory or through time. The votes have varied markedly over time in several places listed in table 8.4, and between elections for the Territory and federal legislatures and between places.

The inroads on the ALP vote from Aborigines, which is how some people have been inclined to think of it, have not all been made by Aboriginal, independent or Democrat candidates but by the CLP too, which has attracted varying and sometimes substantial proportions of the vote. The figures in table 8.5 limited by the exclusion of the NT 1983 results, tell the same story.

Table 8.4

Voting, Selected Communities 1980-1983

* = Aboriginal candidate

Place and 1983 NT electorate		NT June 1980	HofR Oct. 1980	HofR Mch 1983	NT Dec. 1983
Nguiu, Arafura	Labor	% 65.3	45.8	41.6	65.2
	CLP	% 32.1	20.7	36.1	21.0
	Others incl. AD	% 2.5	17.3	22.3	13.8
	Yunupingu	%	16.2*		
	Total formal (N)	404	382	341	420
Angurugu,	Labor	67.4	18.7	66.9	21.1*
	CLP 1	27.4*	27.6	21.3	29.7
	CLP 2				30.8*
	Other incl. AD	5.2	37.3	11.8	18.4*
	Yunupingu		16.5*		
Total formal (N)	135	134	178	185	
Umbakumba, Arnhem	Labor		16.2	83.3	16.9*
	CLP 1		12.0	3.5	40.8
	CLP 2				27.5*
	Other incl. AD		36.8	13.2	18.4*
	Yunupingu		35.0*		
Total formal (N)	N/A	117	114	142	
Galiwin'ku,	Labor	86.3	60.5	74.2	82.6*
	CLP 1	11.2*	21.9	16.2	9.9
	CLP 2				4.1*
	Other incl. AD	2.4	7.0	9.6	3.5*
	Yunupingu		10.7*		
Total formal (N)	205	215	198	172	
Milingimbi,	Labor	79.8	59.2	41.4	77.4*
	CLP 1	18.1*	14.2	41.4	13.7
	CLP 2				5.5*
	Other incl. AD	2.1	12.3	17.2	3.4*
	Yunupingu		14.2*		
Total formal (N)	193	162	128	146	
Yirrkala, Nhulunbuy	Labor	74.4		43.2	59.6
	CLP	17.6		36.7	40.4
	Other incl. AD	7.7	20.1		
	Total formal (N)	182	N/A	139	198
Macdonnell	Labor	62.4*	61.5		53.5
	CLP	37.6*	15.9		38.0
	Other incl. AD		8.7		8.4*
	Yunupingu		13.9*		
Total formal (N)	1158	872	N/A	1399	
Stuart	Labor	53.1	63.4	63.4	64.3
	CLP	46.9	21.7	27.2	35.7*
	Other incl. AD		3.0	9.4	
	Yunupingu		12.0*		
Total formal (N)	1391	836	744	1416	

Table 8.5

Voting, Selected Communities 1980-1983

* = Aboriginal candidate

Place and 1980 NT electorate		NT June 1980	HofR Oct. 1980	HofR Mch 1983
Gapuwiyak, Minjilang and Croker Island, Arnhem	Labor	%	66.4	65.7
	CLP	%	18.2	16.7
	Other	%	7.7	17.6
	Yunupingu	%	7.7*	
	Total formal (N)	N/A	143	233
Maningrida, Arnhem	Labor	90.6	58.4	67.1
	CLP	8.1*	21.9	25.7
	Other	1.3	6.2	7.2
	Yunupingu		13.5*	
	Total formal (N)	234	178	152
Oenpelli, Arnhem	Labor	90.3	37.8	53.8
	CLP	8.3*	19.7	23.9
	Other	1.4	40.9	22.2
	Yunupingu		1.6*	
	Total formal (N)	144	127	117
Warrabri (Ali-Curung), Barkly	Labor	60.4	63.0	54.5
	CLP	27.5	6.9	16.5
	Other	12.1	4.2	29.0
	Yunupingu		25.9*	
	Total formal (N)	149	189	200
Borroloola, Barkly	Labor	55.8	81.8	38.4
	CLP	39.8	10.6	41.5
	Other	4.4	5.3	20.1
	Yunupingu		2.3*	
	Total formal (N)	113	170	164
Bamyili, Elsey	Labor	67.4	50.4	70.5
	CLP	20.9	32.8	22.5
	Other	11.6	6.4	7.0
	Yunupingu		10.4*	
	Total formal (N)	129	125	129
Beswick, Ngukurr, and Numbulwar, Elsey	Labor	63.3	74.5	63.4
	CLP	19.7	7.7	20.1
	Other	17.0	8.7	16.5
	Yunupingu		9.1*	
	Total formal (N)	218	286	273

An Aboriginal candidate stood as an independent in the 1980 House of Representatives election. He was Galawrruy Yunupingu. Prominent in Territory affairs and briefly in national politics before the election, Yunupingu had been recently displaced as chairman of the Northern Land Council at the time. His home country is near Yirrkala. Yunupingu's vote in the House of Representatives election in 1980 varied greatly. From a low of 1.6 and 2.3 per cent at Oenpelli and Borroloola, most of the selected communities recorded about 10 to 16 per cent, with 26 per cent at Warrabri (Ali-Curung) and 35 per cent at

Umbakumba being the exceptional high figures. Other candidates, independents and Democrats alike, polled only about 5 per cent or less of the vote. In other words, Yunupingu made some inroads on the party vote, but by far the largest part of the party vote remained intact in that election. In most of the places, he drew more from the parties than all five non-Aboriginal 'other' candidates together; the exceptions where 'other' candidates polled well were Oenpelli (40.9 per cent) and the two Groote Eylandt communities, Umbakumba and Angurugu (36.8 per cent and 37.3 per cent).

One example is suggestive rather than conclusive. This one suggests that only a small proportion of Aboriginal voters will vote for a non-party Aboriginal candidate in competition with non-Aboriginal party candidates and that the proportion who do so will vary from place to place.

The experience of the Democrats in the 1983 NT election seems to confirm this impression. The fortunes of their Aboriginal candidates varied from place to place and none made much impact on the votes for the candidates of the major parties. The Democrats' 1983 Aboriginal candidates were Rogers, Arnhem; Hampton, Macdonnell and Ryan, Victoria River. Ryan's vote varied from 1 per cent to 32 per cent of the polls on different mobile runs in Victoria River; Hampton took 8.4 per cent in Macdonnell and Rogers had three different levels of support in Arnhem - in polling places near his home country at Ngukurr in the Roper Valley he took over 23 per cent of the vote; in Angurugu and Umbakumba he took 18 per cent and 15 per cent of the vote; in Top End coastal and island communities (Ramingining, Gapuwiyak, Milingimbi, Galiwin'ku) he took between 3 and 4 per cent.

The CLP's Aboriginal candidate, Daniels, is from the same area as Rogers. He too polled poorly in the Top End coastal and island communities (between 4 and 10 per cent of the votes); but he polled strongly in the two Groote Eylandt communities (Angurugu 30.8 per cent, Umbakumba 27.4 per cent) and less strongly in the Roper area (24 per cent on one mobile and 14 per cent on the other).

The winning candidate in Arnhem, Labor's Wes Lanhupuy, has connections with the coastal communities and he polled strongly there (68.6 to 82.6 per cent in Gapuwiyak, Ramingining, Milingimbi and Galiwin'ku); he polled well in the Roper valley (42.9 and 55.4 per cent) and poorly in Groote Eylandt Aboriginal communities (16.9 and 21.1 per cent).

A variety of factors made the contest in Arnhem unusual, even by Territory standards, and general conclusions are difficult to draw from it. 'Local connection' plays some part in the vote for Aboriginal candidates. Connection includes an element of 'family' which non-Aboriginal candidates could not have, but it includes other elements too which Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal candidates alike can build up - being known, having 'worked' for communities in administrative positions and so on. And family connection is a two-sided matter, it may well entail antipathy and loss of votes in some communities, but whether that or the locals' reaction to the pre-selection fight over the candidate for Arnhem in the Labor party was responsible for Lanhupuy's low vote in Groote Eylandt is debatable.

Apart from the three Aboriginal candidates in Arnhem, and the Democrats' candidates in Macdonnell and Victoria River, there was only one other - the CLP's Bobby Liddle in Stuart - and, as compared with the NT 1980 election, his vote fell substantially, though by comparison with the two intervening federal elections it was up substantially. Conclusions about the relative importance of 'party' and 'Aboriginality' can scarcely be drawn from this instance, any more than they can from Hampton's showing in Macdonnell. The one thing that seems clear is that 'Aboriginality' does not annihilate or override 'party' in the judgment of the voters. But this raises questions about whether individual Aborigines vote consistently for one political party and whether they identify with that party.

We can approach these questions through some of our survey results. As well as asking respondents who they intended to vote for in the 1983 NT election, we asked whether they 'usually' voted for one political party and which party they voted for in the 1983 federal election. The results are at tables 8.6 and 8.7.

Table 8.6

	All		Darwin Urban		Top End Rural	
	N(=91)	%	N(=52)	%	N(=39)	%
ALP	75	82	43	83	32	82
CLP	8	9	6	12	2	5
no usual party	8	9	3	6	5	13
no data	14					

Table 8.7

	All		Darwin Urban		Top End Rural	
	N(=98)	%	N(=57)	%	N(=41)	%
ALP	74	76	43	75	31	76
CLP	11	11	6	11	5	12
did not vote	13	13	8	14	5	12
no data	7					

The data in tables 8.3, 8.6 and 8.7 indicate steady support for the ALP at between 75 and 85 per cent and support for the CLP at 10 to 15 per cent, with only minor variation between urban and rural electorates. Aggregate voting stability can, of course, mask individual voting inconsistency if transfers of votes between the parties cancel each other out. However, cross tabulation of the answers to these three questions suggests considerable individual voting consistency as well as aggregate voting stability among Aboriginal electors. While 77 (79 per cent) respondents indicated that they intended to vote for the party they usually support (69 ALP, 8 CLP), only three (4 per cent) indicated that they did not. All three intended to vote CLP, but usually voted ALP. Personal inconsistency was higher (12 per cent) when measured against the 1983 federal election vote: six intended to vote CLP but had voted ALP in the federal election, while three intended to vote ALP but had voted CLP in the federal election. Stable and consistent party voting seems then to be fairly well established amongst Aboriginal electors of the Top End at least. In this regard they are little different from NT electors generally.

But voting stability is not necessarily the same as party identification or party loyalty. The question is whether Aboriginal voters 'identify' with a party as non-Aboriginal voters 'identify' with one party or the other. The question has only to be posed to draw attention to the difficulty it presents. If we were to assume that class position mainly determines partisanship - a debatable assumption - and that Labor is the lower class party (also debatable) then the expectation that Aborigines identify with the ALP seems plausible - at least for many urban Aborigines and Aborigines on cattle stations. But things are not so simple, even for people who appear to be 'objectively' lower class.

Broadly speaking, most identifications and party loyalties of non-Aboriginal voters are laid down in their teens and are transmitted forward with only small changes from one generation to the next within the family context. It is difficult to see how we can talk of the party loyalty of Aborigines in the same sense, although it may well be that partisanship laid down in the late

sixties and in the seventies in a variety of struggles may form the foundation for the individual partisan loyalty of following generations of Aboriginal voters.

The survey provides some information on this point. After asking people how they voted in the past, we asked had they heard talk of an Aboriginal political party. The next question to each person was whether he or she would vote for the candidate of an Aboriginal political party. We did not say an 'Aboriginal candidate'. We were therefore testing 'loyalty' to existing parties, or stability of vote for existing parties; since an Aboriginal party had not been formed, we were not testing intention to vote for existing parties. And contrary to a lot of speculation on the point, we did not have any sign that respondents had difficulty with the hypothetical question. About half (59 per cent) of the respondents indicated unconditionally that they would vote for the candidate of such a party, while another 8 (8 per cent) said they probably would depending on their own assessment of such a party and its candidates at the time - see table 8.8. Again the urban/rural distinction seemed relatively unimportant.

This finding must limit the extent to which the foregoing results relating to stable and consistent party voting patterns can be interpreted as reflecting any deep party loyalty. Aboriginal electors appear willing to contemplate voting outside two party lines and along 'Aboriginal' party lines, were the opportunity to be given them. The Democrats did not provide this opportunity; at least they seem to have been unable to tap the latent support for an Aboriginal party that we have identified. In the three Top End rural electorates in which Australian Democrat candidates stood, the vote for the Democrats fell far short of the support for an Aboriginal party shown in our survey - see table 8.9.

Table 8.8

Would you give your vote to the candidate of an
Aboriginal Political Party?

	All		Darwin Urban		Top End Rural	
	N(=97)	%	N(=56)	%	N(=41)	%
Yes	57	59	30	54	27	66
Yes, if...	8	8	6	11	2	5
No	24	25	16	29	8	20
dk, undecided	8	8	4	7	4	10
no data	8					

Table 8.9

Comparison of Latent Support for Aboriginal Party and Australian
Democrat Vote in Victoria River, Arnhem and Arafura

Would Vote for Candidate of Aboriginal Party			Australian Democrat Vote			
	N(=29)	%		Formal Votes	AD Votes	%
Yes	19	66	Victoria R.	1616	155	10
Yes, if...	2	7	Arnhem	1440	157	11
No	5	17	Arafura	1830	318	17
dk, undecided	3	10				
no data	1					

Participation, Knowledge and Interest

Given our argument that Aboriginal voters probably do not 'identify' with the established parties as many non-Aboriginal voters do, the question is bound to be asked whether Aborigines 'know what they are doing' when they vote. Our survey provides some evidence that they take an active interest in elections and vote discriminatingly.

Our first question was whether respondents were enrolled to vote, and our second whether they intended to do so - see tables 8.10 and 8.11. Ninetyone (88 per cent) respondents indicated they were enrolled and all of these said they intended to vote. Three said they were not enrolled but claimed a general intention to vote. Although these anomalous cases may indicate a misunderstanding of the need to be enrolled in order to vote, we believe most of them can be explained by our interview structure. Respondents may be taken aback by being asked at the outset whether they are enrolled to vote: it is, after all, compulsory.

The level of Aborigines' interest and participation in the election process appears to be quite high to judge by answers to a variety of questions about knowledge of the election. Thirtynine (39 per cent) respondents could name and identify the party of two or more of the candidates in their electorate, while another 27 (27 per cent) could do so for one candidate - see table 8.12. A common response in the case of the latter, when pushed for the name of a second candidate, was to comment that they were only interested in the one. Their knowledge, though not as comprehensive, was clearly adequate for their voting intention.

Interest, as well as knowledge, appeared to be considerable. In response to a question asking whether they had tried to follow news about the election, 37 (36 per cent) respondents said yes they had, while another 20 (20 per cent) indicated they had tried a little - see table 8.13. We also sought information about the relative importance of various media of communication as sources of knowledge about the election - see table 8.14. Radio and TV were generally the most important sources. General talk and newspapers were as important for the urban respondents, but newspapers in particular, were slightly less important for the rural respondents, which is to be expected given the poor circulation of papers in the rural parts. Party meetings and pamphlets and personal knowledge of and contact with the candidates were less significant sources of information for all. In another question we asked respondents whether they had heard talk of an Aboriginal political party and a large proportion said they had - some 43 per cent - see table 8.15.

The question about talk of an Aboriginal party was one of only two which revealed significant differences in participation, knowledge and interest when respondents were grouped in urban and rural electorates. Knowledge of the talk varied from 31 (53 per cent) respondents in the urban electorates to 12 (29 per cent) in the rural electorates. This could perhaps be linked to the relative lack of importance of newspapers as information sources in the rural electorates. The rumblings of the aspiring Aboriginal politicians about their own party were probably most fully reported in the press. The results should not, however, be taken as indicating any generally lower level of knowledge among rural electors. The only other instance of significant urban/rural differences was in the ability to name and identify the party of candidates in the respondent's own electorate. On this measure, knowledge in the rural electorates was clearly superior. Twentyseven (63 per cent) respondents in rural electorates could name two or more candidates correctly whereas only 12 (21 per cent) of respondents from urban electorates could do so. The result is, we think, fairly easily explained. Most Darwin urban electors probably conduct their lives across the boundaries of a number of the city's 12 electorates, all of which had been considerably changed in the 1983 electoral redistribution. Identification with electorate may be low and fairly unimportant except at election

time. Although some of the rural electorates represented in our samples had also changed, the electors we interviewed were still likely to conduct their daily lives within the boundaries of a single electorate - a situation which could plausibly lead to greater identification with the electorate or, at least, greater knowledge of specific electoral details such as names of candidates.

Generally, however, the survey results in this part revealed two important facts - that Aboriginal knowledge of and participation and interest in the 1983 Northern Territory Legislative Assembly election were considerable and that there were few differences between rural and urban electors.

Table 8.10

<u>Are you enrolled to vote?</u>						
	All		Darwin Urban		Top End Rural	
	N(=103)	%	N(=62)	%	N(=41)	%
Yes	91	88	53	85	38	93
No	9	9	7	11	2	5
dk, undecided	3	3	2	3	1	2
no data	2					

Table 8.11

<u>Will you vote?</u>						
	All		Darwin Urban		Top End Rural	
	N(=101)	%	N(=59)	%	N(=42)	%
Yes	94	93	53	90	41	98
No	5	5	4	7	1	2
dk	2	2	2	3	-	-
no data	4					

Table 8.12

Name candidates and parties they represent in own electorate

	All		Darwin Urban		Top End Rural	
	N(=100)	%	N(=57)	%	N(=43)	%
Could name two or more	39	39	12	21	27	63
Could name one	27	27	20	35	7	16
Could not name any, or some named wrongly	34	34	25	44	9	21
no data	5					

Table 8.13

Have you tried to follow news about the election?

	All		Darwin Urban		Top End Rural	
	N(=102)	%	N(=60)	%	N(=42)	%
Yes	37	36	22	37	15	36
A little	20	20	13	22	7	17
No	45	44	25	42	20	48
no data	3					

Table 8.14

<u>Respondents indicated that this Media was a source of their information about the election</u>						
	All N(=103)	%	Darwin N(=60)	Urban %	Top End N(=43)	Rural %
Radio	55	53	35	58	20	47
TV	54	52	37	62	17	40
General talk	49	48	34	57	15	35
Newspapers	45	44	34	57	11	26
Party meetings and pamphlets	16	16	12	20	4	9
Personal knowledge of and contact with candidates	12	12	6	10	6	14
no data	2					

Table 8.15

Have you heard talk of an Aboriginal Political Party?

	All N(=101)	%	Darwin N(=59)	Urban %	Top End N(=42)	Rural %
Yes	43	43	31	53	12	29
No	58	57	28	47	30	71
no data	4					

We asked respondents what they thought were the most important problems that the Northern Territory government after the election, be it Labor or CLP, should do something about. Respondents were given the opportunity to nominate up to three problems, though few went that far. By far the most commonly mentioned problem was Aboriginal employment - 24 times. Land rights was mentioned 10 times and a variety of other specifically Aboriginal problem areas, communities and outstations, culture, racial division and Aboriginal relations with the police (including more Aboriginal employment in the force), were together mentioned 14 times. Among general issues, the Alice Springs-Darwin railway was mentioned 12 times, education (including the NT university proposal) 13 times, housing and pensions and other social services nine times, and mining (including uranium) and health six times.

We also asked respondents whether they thought the policies of the ALP and CLP with regard to Aborigines were different - see table 8.16. Fiftyseven (70 per cent) respondents felt that there were differences, while 18 (22 per cent) felt there were not. The rest offered no opinion. On this, as on most other variables, there was no significant rural/urban difference. Just precisely what differences between the policies of the parties those who answered in the affirmative did perceive was beyond the scope of the survey, but we can say that the group comprised both ALP and CLP voters.

Table 8.16

Do you think the Policies of Labor and the CLP with regard to Aborigines are different?

	All N(=82)	%	Darwin N(=49)	Urban %	Top End N(=33)	Rural %
Yes	57	70	33	67	24	73
No	18	22	11	22	7	21
dk	7	9	5	10	2	6
no data	23					

Tentative as the findings are they nonetheless throw doubt on popular generalisations about the Aboriginal vote. It was once supposed that Aborigines would vote for an Aboriginal candidate, regardless of party considerations, if one stood against non-Aboriginal party candidates. It followed that an Aboriginal standing as a major party candidate should be unbeatable in a predominantly Aboriginal electorate. That assumption has been proved wrong by two unsuccessful Aboriginal candidates, G Djerrkura in 1980 and B Liddle in 1984, but it has been replaced by another, that the Aboriginal vote is overwhelmingly Labor and will not be much eroded by Aboriginal candidates, even if they stand as candidates of other parties. Another cluster of assumptions is that, because elections are fundamentally at odds with Aboriginal culture and because Aborigines are not very experienced or interested in election politics, their voting is less sophisticated than non-Aboriginal voting and may, in addition, be open to manipulation of some kind. These assumptions are sometimes refined to distinguish urban Aborigines from rural - or as it is sometimes said tribal - Aborigines. Those living in cities are accustomed to elections and party politics and vote in much the same way as non-Aborigines whereas the rural Aborigines do not.

This distinction, used by Aborigines themselves in their talk about the NAC election in 1981, appeared then to have no substance to it and the data collected in 1983 from a similar survey give a little further support to the proposition that, whatever their other differences, rural and urban Aborigines have similar knowledge of the electoral system and regard voting, as non-Aborigines do, in basically instrumental terms. That is, they vote to indicate their preferences between parties, candidates and policies. It follows that skilful campaigning, attractive candidates and policies might move a few Aboriginal votes as they do non-Aboriginal votes. Aboriginal candidates discovered this in the NAC election in 1981.

The figures for enrolment and turn out do not suggest any massive rejection of or culturally based indifference to the electoral system, but rather the reverse. Levels of recall of past voting and of intention to vote now and of knowledge of parties and candidates not only confirm acceptance of and interest in the system, but cast doubt on the assumption that Aborigines don't understand what they are doing when they vote. That assumption is also untenable given the information we obtained about Aboriginal voters' sources of information about the election and their views about problems for government and party policies for Aborigines. And most important of all - at least for the practical politician - is the evidence that, while the votes of Aborigines are not easily 'moved' to Aboriginal candidates standing independently or for the major parties, a substantial proportion may be cast for the candidates of an Aboriginal party if one were to be formed.

Chapter Nine

POLLING IN THE NT IN 1983

P Loveday

The 1983 NT election was the second in which a large number of votes were collected by mobile polling teams. As in 1980, these teams were organised for the rural electorates but on this occasion they were used much more extensively and at many centres which in 1980 voted at static booths. All told, 5,539 votes were collected by mobiles, about six times as many as in 1980. All polling in Macdonnell and Stuart was carried out by mobiles; a few votes were collected in this way in Elsey and, for the first time, from some of the outstations in Nhulunbuy; and substantial numbers were collected in Arafura, Arnhem, Victoria River and Barkly by mobile teams.

Mobile polling is a way of improving the access of voters to the poll, the more necessary once enrolment and voting are made compulsory and the electorate to be polled is small and dispersed over vast distances. A large proportion of the voters in these rural electorates are Aboriginal and many live well away from the administrative centres which are the places at which static polling booths are most reasonably located. They have only indifferent means of travelling to the polls and are less likely to be administrative centres on the usual day of polling, a Saturday. But others beside Aborigines also live in remote places and their access too can be improved by mobile polling.

Once the decision to use mobiles has been taken, it still remains to be decided where they should be sent. In 1980 the general rule was that static polling places would be set up on the Saturday where more than 50 voters were expected and that mobiles would visit places where more than 10 and less than 50 voters were expected. The automatic postal vote, widely used in earlier elections, would still be given to people residing more than 20 km from a fixed polling place (Jaensch and Loveday, 1981, 158-9).

In 1983 the automatic postal vote was abolished and, given the success of mobiles in 1980, it seemed no longer necessary to confine them to places where less than 50 voters were expected, especially since it seemed that the access of voters might be improved by polling in some of the larger Aboriginal centres on a weekday, especially Thursday or Friday rather than the Saturday.

There are other considerations besides these and they impose some limits on the system. Trucks, planes and helicopters and supporting equipment from fuel to ballot boxes must be available at the right times and places; back up vehicles must be available; communities have to be given advance warning; polling staff must have means of communication with base and, in case of emergency or change of plans, with communities to be visited. A sequence of polling places must be worked out which gives people time to vote and polling teams time to keep their books and gear in order and to prepare overnight stops. Given these considerations, there is bound to be some argument about the details of mobile polling and even about the principles behind it.

There is room for disagreement about the standard by which mobile polling is to be judged. Since voting is compulsory, it is possible to criticise the polling arrangements if less than 100 per cent of the enrolled electors vote. But it is also possible to use levels of polling in past elections as a standard. Then, if the proportion of electors who vote has increased as a result of changes in the administration of the poll, criticism can be rebutted. Of course, it is an argument which has force only with those who are prepared to admit that the administration of a poll in circumstances like those of the Territory is difficult in practice and that access will never be perfect.

The figures for turnout on election day give us some evidence, but it is not entirely conclusive. Turnout - that is, the proportion of those enrolled to vote who actually voted on polling day - has increased since 1974 when it

was 75.5 per cent. In 1977 it was 76 per cent for the Territory as a whole and in 1980 78 per cent. In 1983 it rose to 82 per cent, but in a few electorates the figure was lower. They were Macdonnell (64 per cent), Stuart and Arnhem (each 65 per cent), Arafura (70 per cent), Barkly (74 per cent), Victoria River (76 per cent) (percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number). In Elsey, Sadadeen and Flynn, turnout was about the same as for the NT as a whole. In other words, turnout was lowest in the rural electorates, though Nhulunbuy (78 per cent) was also fairly low. As compared with 1980, allowing that the electorate boundaries are no longer quite the same, turnout was up by about 3 per cent in Macdonnell, Barkly and Victoria River and down in Arnhem and Stuart.

Two things may contribute to turnout below average in these electorates. First of all, it is arguable that parties and candidates are not able to campaign at the same level of intensity in these electorates as in the urban areas and are less likely therefore to 'get through' to all the possible voters. Secondly the voters will have much less information about the election through the media in these electorates, if only because radio and TV do not reach out into all parts.

The Electoral Office takes special steps to prepare for the election in Aboriginal communities and in September 1982 it announced the reactivation of the electoral education and enrolment campaign, in order to get the rolls as up to date as possible before the redistribution to take place for the new electorates. Extracts from the rolls were sent to the presidents of 39 communities, inviting them to check enrolment in their places, to check the spelling of names, duplications and so on. In 1983 the Electoral Office distributed a video cassette about the election to 50 communities just before it was held. The steps taken in 1983 were similar to those taken to inform the electorate in 1980.

Polling - Mobile and Static

The Electoral Office is always ready for an election and planning for mobile polling was at an advanced stage well before the election was announced but much of it was based on the assumption that a poll was more likely in 1984 than at the end of 1983. As a result a mobile team called at one or two stations in the Arnhem electorate where work had ended for the year and there were therefore only one or two voters. It also seemed to some people that mobiles would run into mud and floods in the Top End but as it turned out unexpectedly heavy rain disorganised some teams in the Centre, not in the Top End.

In the Centre there were one or two more serious difficulties. At one place where the polling officials had inadequate information there was uncertainty and discussion about the location of the polling place and one group of people, 18 km from the place chosen, had to make special arrangements to get to it. An injury, resulting in death, at Willowra meant that the polling team, already disorganised by rain which had rendered their airstrips unserviceable and now in a helicopter, was diverted for a medical evacuation. Polling was disorganised as a result and, because of the death itself, many at Willowra did not vote anyway even when the team arrived.

At Oenpelli, most people are on the roll for the township and only a handful are enrolled for the outstations and so the polling team had to go to the town rather than outstations. Whether any votes were lost for this reason is unknown. A polling schedule was interrupted in the southwest corner of the Macdonnell electorate when a plane burst a tyre. And there were other similar mishaps. Because of ceremonies in some places, e.g. a funeral at Yirrkala, polling arrangements were changed. We do not know whether votes were lost because of changed arrangements.

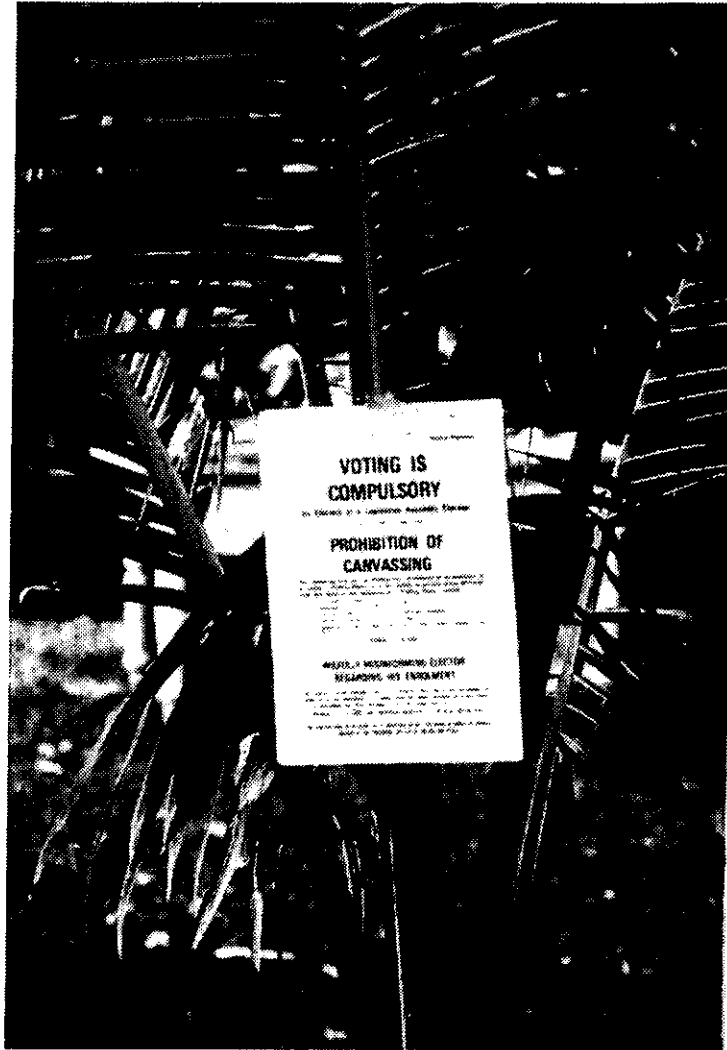
The Electoral Office approved official observers from NARU at a number of polling places, but for a variety of reasons we were unable to arrange to accompany more than one mobile team, a team in Arnhem electorate. We have

therefore been unable to report independently on the effect of mishaps on the polling or on most other alleged shortcomings.

Some people were concerned not because they disapproved of mobile polling but because they thought that votes might well be lost where what had been a static polling place, open all day on a Saturday in June 1980, was now a mobile, open for a shorter period and on a day during the week before the Saturday when all other polling took place. Another speculation was that for places where mobile polling began on Monday 28 November - six days before election day - the period between the close of nominations and polling was short and, in theory at least, too short for adequate campaigning. Yet another criticism was that it was 'inconsistent' to use mobiles for large Aboriginal centres like Maningrida, Oenpelli, Lajamanu, Yuendumu and so on while small, largely non-Aboriginal places like Pine Creek, Adelaide River and Batchelor had day-long static booths. The implication was that this might be seen as discriminatory or that it might disadvantage the Labor party. It is difficult to make an independent assessment of these arguments without direct observation. It seems that none of the candidates complained of having too little time for their campaigns (but see the comments of the Australian Democrats, Fay Lawrence, this volume). Many residents of Pine Creek and Adelaide River are unavailable at these centres during the week and polling is therefore best carried out on the Saturday - though it could be done by mobiles, rather than have a static booth open all day for a handful of voters. Somewhat similar arguments may be offered for carrying out polls in the larger Aboriginal centres late in the week when people are more likely to be in town to pick up their cheques, than on a Saturday when they are more likely to be dispersed. I have not heard of complaints that people accustomed to voting on a Saturday missed the publicity about the polling on a different day and did in fact miss voting altogether. Our observer in the Centre reported that Aborigines knew of the times and places of polling and that no complaints were made about this.

NARU observers were able to spend time at a number of static polling booths in Arafura, Nhulunbuy, Elsey and Victoria River, and in several Darwin area and Alice Springs electorates, as well as on a mobile in Arnhem. As in 1980, the Electoral Office recommended to local presiding officers that they employ Aboriginal assistants in one capacity or another. Practice varied: some places had Aboriginal assistants (e.g. Yirrkala, Nguuiu) and others did not (e.g. Katherine). In Pine Creek and at Nhulunbuy outstations local Aborigines fluent in English helped informally; in Arnhem, the mobile team had such help in one or two places, but not in others. Our observers reported that where Aboriginal assistants were employed, they facilitated polling considerably - by helping non-Aboriginal officials identify names on the rolls, by helping Aborigines identify themselves and so on. An electoral officer working out of Alice Springs - not one of the NARU team - reported that, in the Centre, the use of electoral office staff to preside at mobile and static booths greatly reduced complaints of bias by booth staff and of harassment of voters by candidates' representatives; that interpreters were used in all static booths and nearly all mobiles; that the employment of Aborigines, including local assistants, considerably reduced problems of identifying voters, spelling names and taking assisted votes and that the photographs of candidates on the ballot paper made voting easier for non-literate people. The NARU observer confirmed these comments, adding that Aboriginal assistants were 'invaluable', given that there was confusion in many places about the spelling of names and in the identification of voters. He added that men and women voted separately, either in place or time, in several communities.

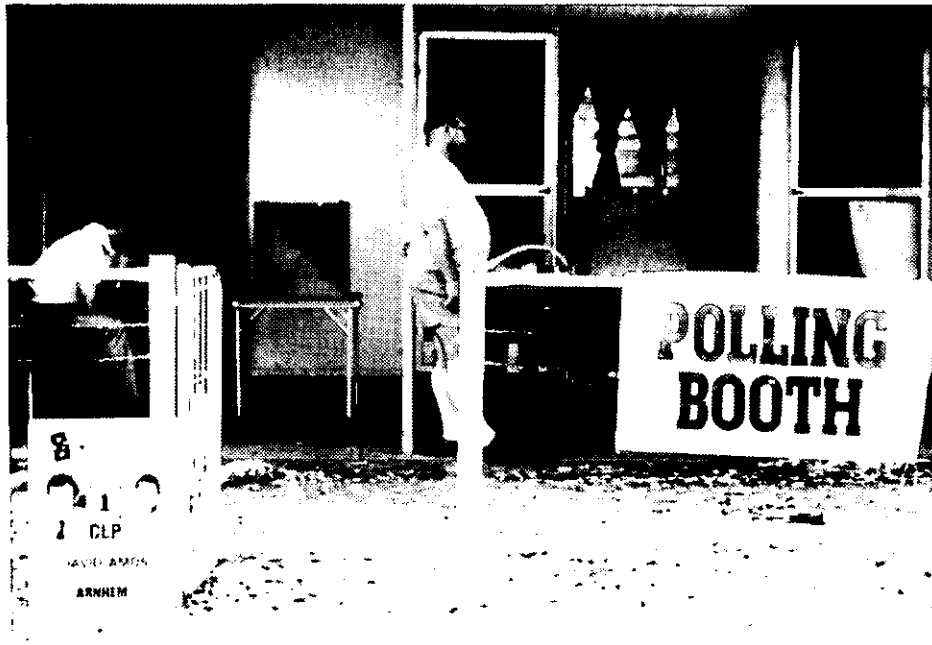
The principal shortcoming at Katherine was that the school house was too small and the approaches to it too constricting for uncrowded polling. This made it harder to cope with other problems. Had Aboriginal assistants been employed at Katherine, it is probable that some of the difficulties in polling there would have been reduced. During proceedings, two people - one Aboriginal one non-Aboriginal - who were well-known in the Aboriginal community came to vote and were asked to help out by identifying voters to the polling officials, but they had other work to do and could give only limited help even though the



Notice of Election



Handing out How to Vote Cards



Waiting for the Voters



Watching Voters



Assisting a Voter

need for it was well-recognised. The presiding officer had tried and failed to get an assistant (in all likelihood four or five would have been needed) and, given the cramped quarters of the polling place, it was inevitable that long queues built up as white officials struggled to figure out the spelling of Aboriginal names, to find out from supplementary information whether a person might be entitled to vote, though not on the roll and to carry out the special procedures for voting when the voter wanted assistance in casting a vote. At Katherine many non-Aborigines too claimed to be on the roll and were not, or had other special problems which helped to slow down the voting. Although notices about the changes of electorate boundaries were sent out by post before the election, some people were confused, people who thought they were still in their old electorates, and even though the officials had lists of localities and streets they also badly needed locality maps to help them sort these problems out. Observers at other polling places also noted this need.

Most observers - NARU had nine - reported that, as in 1980, the wording of the questions to be asked of voters (section 75b (i) and (ii)) caused confusion. The second question in particular delayed proceedings while arguments were sorted out to the satisfaction of the polling officials and in many instances, perhaps in most instances with Aboriginal voters, the questions prescribed in the Act cannot be asked in the form set down without obtaining misleading answers. Candidates' representatives must be tolerant and sympathetic in these situations and our observer in the Centre reported an agreement between them and polling officials that they would not 'cause trouble' when officials had to modify the questions and that some of them helped officials identify voters and find names on the rolls.

Some Aborigines, especially women and older voters, were evidently disturbed by the crowding in the Katherine polling booth. Although assistance was frequently given under section 79(1) of the Act, help under section 79(2) was rarely offered or allowed and on several occasions old people, especially women, were deprived of help from younger Aboriginal women and were given help by non-Aboriginal officials instead under section 79(1). Aborigines had no one to tell them they could claim help under section 79(2) and officials to whom the observer spoke seemed unfamiliar with it. One - from interstate - privately expressed considerable scepticism about the special procedures employed by the NT Electoral Office. Polling officials also exhibited some impatience with how to vote cards, notwithstanding section 79(3), when a person sought help under section 79(1), and in a number of cases, got the voter to refer instead to the official list of candidates posted up in the voting cubicles. Since this is their point of reference, with a strict instruction about how to ask to obtain the voter's choice, their actions were defensible and evoked no comment from candidates' representatives.

One or two comments relate specifically to mobile polling. As a rule, the best location for the polling place was discussed with local people and, allowing for some misunderstandings, compromises were reached which seemed satisfactory to most people. In the Centre, our observer reported that polling places were moved in several instances, at the request of local Aborigines. In one or two places (especially where polling teams had enjoyed overnight hospitality from stations) polling officials found it difficult to 'distance' themselves and their polling places far enough from station homesteads and, as a result at one place, some of the women were rather shy about coming in to vote. It should be emphasised that polling was almost completely free of 'incidents' - but at one place, where whites had been ejected from the polling booth area, intimidatory talk continued openly outside, beyond the area under the observation and control of the polling officials. It was a brief and isolated incident which appeared to have no effect on voters, the great majority of whom were Aborigines. The candidates' representatives travelled independently of the polling team and although they were not always 'on time', representatives turned up at most polling places. In 1980 few mobile teams had accompanying or following teams of representatives as far as we were able to determine; in 1983, given that so many places were to be polled by mobiles, it was much more important for parties to have their own representatives at the polling. The complaint voiced by one

candidate that he could not follow more than one mobile around to hand out how to vote cards, does not carry much weight, except on the one point that it is expensive and may disadvantage the poorly financed parties. Though expensive - especially if a plane has to be chartered to follow the Electoral Office plane - it is clearly not impossible for the parties to watch mobile polling.

In the course of polling a number of people including non-Aborigines were enrolled at various polling places, many of whom incorrectly thought they were on the roll. Those about whom there was some doubt were given votes under sections 80(1) and (2) of the Act, sections designed to allow the Electoral Office to make exhaustive checks at head office in cases where there is some doubt about a claim. Much depends on the care and vigour with which rolls have been updated but even in places where a major effort had been made, with a lot of Aboriginal help, omissions from and duplications on the roll were still discovered on polling day. It may be added here that one of the observers travelled to a number of communities in this period (late 1983) and it was obvious not only that communities varied in their interest in updating the rolls but also that the formal requirement that an 'objection' notice should be issued in specified circumstances, was widely misunderstood and resented. Why, people said, is the Electoral Office sending us these things when they say they want us to be on the roll?

That the 'objection' process is not foolproof is indicated by some figures from 1980. In that election, 1,392 section votes were issued and, after checking, 250 were admitted to the count. Of these, 131 had been removed - erroneously as it turned out - by the objection procedure. In other words, there was a breakdown at some point in the chain of correspondence through the post between the Electoral Office and the voter.

Of the 1392, about half (685) were simply not on the roll but evidently thought they were. Figures for 1983 are not available at the time of writing, but a total of 499 section 80(1) and (2) votes were admitted to the count and so, if the 86 per cent rejection rate applies - which the Electoral Office says is about normal - about 3000 claims must have been lodged for section votes. Although the section votes are obviously a poor guide to the state of the rolls, it may be noted that the largest numbers of section votes admitted to the count came from Elsey (55), Flynn (46), Stuart (37), Nightcliff (31), Barkly (26), Casuarina and Millner (23 each), Fannie Bay (21) and Macdonnell and Victoria River (20 each). Twenty votes is about 1 per cent of the average size of the electorates. It will be noted that two rural electorates (Arafura and Arnhem) are less than this and that the list above includes several suburban electorates, so it is unlikely the rolls are any worse in the electorates where Aborigines predominate. In the NT it is difficult if not impossible to maintain the rolls to the same standard as elsewhere in Australia because of the high mobility of the population. The Report by the Distribution Committee in 1983 (Distribution Committee, 1983, Vol. 1, attachment C2) pointed out that intrastate mobility was 213 per 1000 for the NT as compared with 141 for Australia and interstate mobility was 156 per 1000 into the NT and 101 per 1000 out of the NT as compared with 19 into and 19 out of the other states on average. Indeed, the Electoral Office estimates that about 88 per cent of eligible Aborigines are now on the rolls - and it is unlikely that the proportion of eligible non-Aborigines on the roll is much higher (see also Jaensch and Loveday, 1981, 172).

It is of passing interest that in rural electorates section 80(1) and (2) votes were predominantly for Labor candidates, except in Macdonnell and Victoria River, and that postal votes (section 80(3)) in all electorates were predominantly for CLP candidates.

APPENDIX
Election Statistics

Table 1

Territory wide comparisons 1974, 1977, 1980, 1983

	1974	1977	1980	1983
Enrolment	39027	43284	53218	62185
Voted (%)	29428 (75.5)	32861 (76.0)	41484 (78.0)	50716 (81.6)
Formal (%)	27935 (94.9)	31817 (96.8)	40156 (96.8)	49184 (97.0)
CLP (%)	13690 (49.0)	12769 (40.1)	20065 (50.0)	28637 (58.2)
Labor (%)	8508 (30.5)	12165 (38.2)	15818 (39.4)	17505 (35.6)
PP (%)		3104 (9.8)	210 (0.5)	
AD (%)			352 (0.9)	887 (1.8)
Other (%)		61 (0.2)	460 (1.2)	
Ind. (%)	5737 (20.5)	3718 (11.7)	3251 (8.1)	2155 (4.4)

Table 2

Regional comparisons 1980, 1983, enrolment and voting

	1980	1983	Change
<u>Darwin Urban</u>			
Enrolment	25544	30921	5377
Voted (%)	21097 (82.6)	26872 (86.9)	5775 (4.3)
Informal (%)	440 (2.1)	625 (2.3)	185 (0.2)
Formal (%)	20657 (97.9)	26247 (97.7)	5590 (-0.2)
<u>Alice Springs Urban</u>			
Enrolment	5863	9119	3256
Voted (%)	4670 (79.7)	7616 (83.5)	2946 (3.8)
Informal (%)	148 (3.2)	189 (2.5)	41 (-0.7)
Formal (%)	4522 (96.8)	7427 (97.5)	2905 (0.7)
<u>Rural*</u>			
Enrolment	21811	22145	334
Voted (%)	15717 (72.1)	16228 (73.3)	511 (1.1)
Informal (%)	740 (4.7)	718 (4.4)	-22 (-0.3)
Formal (%)	14977 (95.3)	15510 (95.6)	533 (-0.3)

*Includes Koolpinyah (1983), Stuart (1980).

Table 3
Regional comparisons 1980, 1983

	1980			1983			Change
	Cands	Votes	%	Cands	Votes	%	%
<u>Darwin Urban</u>							
CLP	9	10974	53.1	12	15964	60.8	7.7
Labor	8	7697	37.3	12	9326	35.5	-1.8
Other	7	668	3.2	-	-	-	-3.2
Ind.	3	1318	6.3	4	957	3.6	-2.7
Total	27	20657		28	26247		
<u>Alice Springs Urban</u>							
CLP	2	2538	56.1	4	5125	69.0	12.9
Labor	2	1206	26.7	4	1822	24.5	-2.2
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ind.	2	778	17.2	2	480	6.5	-10.7
Total	6	4522		16	7427		
<u>Rural</u>							
CLP	8	6553	43.8	11	7548	48.7	4.9
Labor	8	6915	46.2	9	6357	41.0	-5.2
Other	3	354	2.4	5	887	5.7	3.3
Ind.	8	1155	7.7	3	718	4.6	-3.1
Total	27	14977		28	15510		

Table 4

1983 Results by Electorate (*sitting member, elected in capitals)Format

Enrolment Voted	(% enrolment)	Candidate	Party	First Preference Votes No.	Percentage
Informal	(% voted)				
Formal	(% voted)				
Preference distribution					
Polling Places (where more than one)					

Arafura

2763		COLLINS*	Labor	930	50.8
1921	69.5	Doolan	AD	318	17.4
91	4.7	Woodward	CLP	582	31.8
1830	95.3				

Polling Places	Labor	AD	CLP	Formal	Inf.	Total
Jabiru	127	11	297	435	8	443
Nguiu	274	58	88	420	17	437
Mobile: Milikapiti (131), Pularumpi (131)	122	87	35	244	18	262
Mobile: Minjilang (44), Warruwi (64), Oenpelli (116)	141	21	50	212	12	224
Mobile: Maningrida (265) and 11 outstations (103)*	195	125	21	341	27	368
Postal	20	4	43	67	4	71
Absent S.80 (3)	48	11	47	106	5	111
Regulation S.80 (1) (2)	3	1	1	5	-	5

*Ji-Marda (37), Gamadi (2), Namokardabu (3), Marrkolidban (10), Mumeka (5), Manmoyi (10), Barnamarra-Kkakandra (9), Gochan-Jiny-Jirra (7), Ji-Balbal (13), Borlkjam (4), Ngankorlord (3)

Araluen

2341		Joy	Labor	368	17.9
2086	89.1	Letts	Ind.	420	20.4
30	1.4	ROBERTSON*	CLP	1268	61.7
2056	98.6				

Arnhem

2451		Amos	CLP	445	30.9
1592	65.0	Daniels	CLP	206	14.3
152	9.5	LANHUPUY	Labor	632	43.9
1440	90.5	Rogers	AD	157	10.9
Preferences:		Amos	445 + 21 = 466	+ 134 + 600	41.7
		Daniels	206 + 69 = 275		
		Lanhupuy	632 + 67 = 699	+ 141 = 840	58.6
		Rogers	157		

(Arnhem contd next page)

(Arnhem contd)

Polling Places (all mobile)	CLP Amos	CLP Daniels	Labor	AD	Formal	Inf.	Total
Alyangula	217	15	50	7	289	31	320
Angurugu	55	57	39	34	185	27	212
Umbakumba	58	39	24	21	142	3	145
Galiwin'ku	17	7	142	6	172	13	185
Milingimbi	20	8	113	5	146	14	160
Bulman (6), Numbulwar (106)	11	29	51	28	119	3	122
Ramingining (42), Gapuwiyak (75)	19	10	72	4	105	12	117
Hodgson Downs (27), Roper Valley (16), Urapunga (29), Mainora (-), Mountain Valley (2)	12	25	98	42	177	22	145
Postal	18	5	9	1	33	2	35
Absent S.80 (3)	20	15	31	12	78	7	85
Regulation S.80 (1) (2) (Recheck)	2 (-4)	2 (-6)	7 (-4)	- (-3)	11 (-17)	1 (17)	12 -

Barkly

2426	Hallett	Labor	688	39.7
1800 74.2	TUXWORTH*	CLP	1045	60.3
67 3.7				
1733 96.3				

Polling Places	Labor	CLP	Formal	Inf.	Total
Tennant Creek	384	697	1081	31	1112
Warrego	43	68	111	3	114
Mobile: Mallapunya (5), McArthur River (15), Robinson River (15), Borroloola (158)	106	69	175	18	193
Mobile: Epenarra (19), Karundi (3), Avon Downs (11, Alexandria (12), Alroy Downs (17), Beetaloo (12), Brunette Downs (22), Rockhampton Downs (23), Banka Banka (9)	65	60	125	3	128
Postal	45	86	131	4	135
Absent S.80 (3)	33	53	86	6	92
Regulation S.80 (1) (2)	12	12	24	2	26

Berrimah

2471	COULTER	CLP	1364	68.7
2041 82.6	Young	Labor	621	31.2
56 2.7				
1985 97.3				

Polling Places	CLP	Labor	Formal	Inf.	Total
Berrimah	457	212	669	22	691
RAAF	546	238	784	16	800
Palmerston	210	81	291	8	299
Postal	75	36	111	2	113
Absent S.80 (3)	9	6	15	2	17
Regulation S.80 (1) (2)	67	48	115	6	121

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(Table 4 contd)

Braitling

2205		Kerridge	Labor	377	22.2
1754	79.5	VALE*	CLP	1325	77.8
52	3.0				
1702	97.0				

Casuarina

2481		Crompton	Labor	765	34.6
2268	91.4	DONDAS*	CLP	1449	65.4
54	2.4				
2214	97.6				

Elsey

2470		Forscutt	Ind.	448	22.8
2013	81.5	STEELE*	CLP	978	49.7
47	2.3	Surplice	Labor	540	27.5
1966	97.7				

Preferences:		Forscutt	488		
		Steele	978 + 316 = 1294		65.8
		Surplice	540 + 132 = 672		34.2

Polling Places	Ind.	CLP	Labor	Formal	Inf.	Total
Katherine	368	738	327	1433	30	1463
Mobile: Eva Valley (10), Beswick (69), Mataranka (38), Djembere (21), Bamyili (126)	31	100	123	254	10	264
Postal	16	66	32	114	2	116
Absent S.80 (3)	23	53	36	112	3	115
Regulation S.80 (1) (2) (Recheck)	10 (-)	22 (-1)	21 (+1)	53 (-)	2 (-)	55 (-)

Fannie Bay

2596		Luck	Ind.	81	3.6
2308	88.9	O'Neil*	Labor	874	38.4
33	1.4	PERRON*	CLP	1321	58.0
2276	98.6				

Polling Places	Ind.	Labor	CLP	Formal	Inf.	Total
Parap	39	604	854	1497	20	1517
Stuart Park	35	173	321	529	6	535
Postal	2	60	93	155	4	159
Absent S.80 (3)	4	28	45	77	-	77
Regulation S.80 (1) (2)	1	9	8	18	3	21

Flynn

2420		Gardiner	Ind.	60	3.1
1995	82.4	HANRAHAN	CLP	1306	67.7
65	3.3	Hughes	Labor	564	29.2
1930	96.7				

Polling Places	Ind.	CLP	Labor	Formal	Inf.	Total
Flynn	32	886	335	1253	34	1287
Heavitree Gap	17	270	156	443	21	464
Postal	2	67	34	103	1	104
Absent S.80 (3)	7	55	27	89	5	94
Regulation S.80 (1) (2)	2	28	12	42	4	46

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(Table 4 contd)

Jingili

2502		EVERINGHAM*	CLP	1577	71.8
2229	89.1	Jacob	Labor	619	28.2
33	1.5				
2196	98.5				

Koolpinyah

2630		Leeder	AD	139	6.2
2269	86.3	PADGHAM-PURICH*	CLP	1397	62.5
35	1.5	Sanderson	Ind.	175	7.8
2234	98.5	Wesley-Smith	Labor	523	23.4

Polling Places	AD	CLP	Ind.	Labor	Formal	Inf.	Total
Humpty Doo	48	713	68	236	1065	20	1085
Howard Springs	59	483	87	207	836	9	845
Postal	19	132	13	40	204	4	208
Absent S.80 (3)	12	62	6	40	120	-	120
Regulation S.80 (1) (2)	1	7	1	-	9	2	11

Leanyer

3355		PALMER	CLP	1940	65.9
3047	90.8	Waters	Labor	1002	34.1
105	3.4				
2942	96.6				

Polling Places	CLP	Labor	Formal	Inf.	Total
Leanyer	822	417	1239	30	1269
Karama	920	470	1390	65	1455
Postal	82	36	118	6	124
Absent S.80 (3)	108	76	184	3	187
Regulation S.80 (1) (2)	8	3	11	1	12

Ludmilla

2312		FIRMIN	CLP	1117	58.2
1972	85.3	O'Neil	Labor	803	41.8
52	2.7				
1920	97.3				

Polling Places	CLP	Labor	Formal	Inf.	Total
Ludmilla	759	508	1267	26	1293
Coconut Grove	224	192	416	14	430
Postal	63	33	96	2	98
Absent S.80 (3)	63	60	123	9	132
Regulation S.80 (1) (2)	8	10	18	1	19

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(Table 4 contd)

Macdonnell

2308		BELL*	Labor	749	53.5
1473	63.8	Hampton	AD	118	8.4
74	5.0	McKinley	CLP	532	38.0
1399	95.0				

Polling Places (all mobile)

	Labor	AD	CLP	Formal	Inf.	Total
*Kintore (64), Papunya (196), Haasts Bluff (52), Iwupataka (29) Areyonga (39), Hermannsburg (200)	200	30	95	325	16	341
*Docker River (83), Ayers Rock (103) Mt Ebenezer (35), Santa Teresa (147)	121	17	91	229	10	239
*Finke (51), Yulara (33), Maryvale (43), Alcoota (33), Hart's Range (11), Aileron (3)	133	5	41	179	7	186
Postal	127	28	10	165	17	182
Absent S.80 (3)	54	13	99	166	8	174
Regulation S.80 (1) (2)	33	12	140	185	-	185
	73	10	48	131	15	146
	8	3	8	19	1	20

Millner

2554		Fenner	Ind.	79	3.7
2188	85.7	Palfy	CLP	934	43.8
36	1.6	SMITH*	Labor	1130	52.5
2152	98.4				

Nhulunbuy

2488		Graetz	CLP	916	48.8
1930	77.6	LEO*	Labor	960	51.2
54	2.8				
1876	97.2				

Polling Places

	CLP	Labor	Formal	Inf.	Total
Nhulunbuy	752	754	1506	44	1550
Yirrkala	80	118	198	3	201
Mobile: Gurrumuru (6), Gan Gan (10), Baniyala (11), Wanadway (7), Garrthalala (9)	3	38	41	2	43
Postal	54	29	83	3	86
Absent S.80 (3)	21	9	30	1	31
Regulation S.80 (1) (2)	6	12	18	1	19

Nightcliff

2420		Dyer	Labor	292	14.8
2001	82.7	HATTON	CLP	1069	54.2
27	1.3	Lawrie*	Ind.	613	31.1
1974	98.7				

Port Darwin

2853		HARRIS*	CLP	1510	68.6
2281	80.0	Kearney	Labor	690	31.4
81	3.6				
2200	96.4				

(Port Darwin contd next page)

(Port Darwin contd)

Polling Places	CLP	Labor	Formal	Inf.	Total
Darwin	729	385	1114	46	1160
Larrakeyah	558	191	749	15	764
Postal	111	40	151	2	153
Absent S.80 (3)	105	70	175	18	193
Regulation S.80 (1) (2)	7	4	11	-	11

Sadadeen

2153	COLLINS*	CLP	1226	70.5
1781 82.7	Flint	Labor	513	29.5
42 2.4				
1739 97.6				

Sanderson

2451	D'Rozario*	Labor	973	45.2
2202 89.8	MANZIE	CLP	1180	54.8
49 2.2				
2153 97.8				

Stuart

2312	EDE	Labor	910	64.3
1489 64.4	Liddle	CLP	506	35.7
73 4.9				
1416 95.1				

Polling Places (all mobile)	Labor	CLP	Formal	Inf.	Total
Mt Allan (44), Yuendumu (340), Napperby (69)	241	196	437	16	453
Woola Downs (22), Ti Tree (98), Sterling (21), Neutral Junction (9), Murray Downs (53), Anningie (15), Ali-Curung (136)	219	115	334	20	354
Lake Nash (29), Ammaroo (42), Willowra (68), Lajamanu (176)	256	40	296	19	315
Baikal (44), Dnieper (3), Utopia (116), Derry Downs (12), Macdonald Downs (12)	125	53	178	5	183
Postal	16	76	92	3	95
Absent S.80 (3)	29	17	46	6	52
Regulation S.80 (1) (2)	24	9	33	4	37

Victoria River

2297	Bree	Labor	425	26.3	
1741 75.8	Doolan*	I(Lab)	95	5.9	
125 7.2	McCARTHY	CLP	615	38.1	
1616 92.8	Ryan	AD	155	9.6	
	Wright	CLP	326	20.2	
Preferences:	Bree	425 + 33 = 458	+ 72 = 530	+ 33 = 563	34.9
	Doolan	95			
	McCarthy	615 + 26 = 641	+ 42 = 683	+ 370 = 1053	65.2
	Ryan	155 + 22 = 177			
	Wright	326 + 14 = 340	+ 63 = 403		

(Victoria River contd next page)

(Victoria River contd)

Polling Places	Labor	I(Lab)	CLP McC.	AD	CLP Wright	Formal	Inf.	Total
Batchelor	26	6	37	5	36	110	5	115
Adelaide River (71), Pine Creek (83)	29	9	35	5	72	150	4	154
Mobile: Peppimenarti (62), Palumpa (15), Kildurk (17), Auvergne (21), Wadeye (384)	97	25	310	5	21	458	41	499
Mobile: Daly River Mission (139), Tipperary (7), Belyuen (81), Kalkaringi (81), Pt Stuart (4)	108	15	97	46	26	292	26	318
Mobile: Killarney (3), Montejinnie (5), Wave Hill (18), Dagaragu (149), Timber Creek (35), Victoria River Downs (62)	85	6	33	77	38	239	33	272
Mobile: Nutwood Downs (1), Newcastle Waters (11), Elliott (104), Larrimah (10)	42	18	22	8	27	117	9	176
Postal	21	6	55	2	92	176	-	176
Absent S.80 (3)	13	8	22	6	12	61	-	61
Regulation S.80 (1) (2) (Recheck)	5 (-1)	2 (-)	6 (-2)	2 (-1)	3 (-1)	18 (-5)	2 (+5)	20 (-)

Wagaman

2388	FINCH	CLP	1265	61.1
2130 89.2	Reid	Labor	807	38.9
58 2.7				
2072 97.3				

Wanguri

2538	Burke	Labor	750	34.7
2204 86.8	DALE	CLP	1229	56.8
41 1.9	Miller	Ind.	184	8.5
2163 98.1				

Polling Places	Labor	CLP	Ind.	Formal	Inf.	Total
Wanguri	578	965	131	1674	30	1704
Hospital	94	141	29	264	5	269
Postal	36	67	11	114	3	117
Absent S.80 (3)	37	48	10	95	1	96
Regulation S.80 (1) (2)	5	8	3	16	2	18

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